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IRVINE

Spinning the Bottle: Ethnic Mexicans and Alcohol in Prohibition Era Greater Los Angeles

DISSERTATION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

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Dedication

Ramona and Esther
You both know why...

All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.
--Toni Morrison

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Spinning the Bottle: Ethnic Mexicans and Alcohol in Prohibition Era Los Angeles, 1900-1939

By

Nick Bravo

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Ethnic Mexicans' relationships to alcohol reveal conflicts and survival strategies in the stratified social world of Prohibition era Greater Los Angeles. Their traffic in and consumption of alcohol inspired various forms of surveillance based on ideas about race, citizenship, gender, and class. Yet these systems of surveillance, whether legal or familial, always had their blind spots and this dissertation considers ethnic Mexicans who sought cover in these concealed spaces as they followed the economic and social opportunities alcohol offered. The project integrates records from various courts, police departments, incarceration facilities, and governmental inquiries, as well as oral histories. A diverse collection of narrators speak not only about daily experiences, but also about topics such as bootlegging, illicit sex, and family violence—realities often shrouded in secrecy within families.

Producers, purveyors and consumers of contraband alcohol encountered various forms of surveillance and a central question of the dissertation is how individuals negotiated this with their own economic and social needs, and their methods of concealment. Chapter one contextualizes and interrogates the intersections of Prohibition and anti-Mexican discourses through newspapers, academic studies, and governmental reports, which to varying degrees framed Mexican criminality and degeneracy around alcohol in ways that rationalized

heightened policing and exclusion. In chapter two, I examine bootlegging as a survival strategy and means of upward mobility. For some families, the informal economy expanded into illegality, and while the profits supplemented and sometimes replaced the labor market, they also increased ethnic Mexicans' visibility to authorities. Bootleggers creatively sought to mitigate this visibility while seeking the rewards of the black market. Chapter three focuses directly on the family by questioning the generational, gendered, and classed boundaries of drinking within households. For many upwardly mobile families in this era, alcohol abstention separated them from the perceived lower classes of Mexican immigrants, and as oral interviews reveal, many such families forbade drinking within their home. Chapter four considers alcohol in social relationships from courtship to celebration, and also in domestic violence. Neither romanticizing nor dismissing the evils of alcohol, my dissertation documents events and trends unrecorded by history and often silenced by the historical actors themselves.

Introduction

Early twentieth-century attitudes about alcohol and efforts to enforce them open windows into the history of ethnic Mexicans' economic, social, and cultural decisions and experiences in Greater Los Angeles, the single largest center of ethnic Mexicans in the United States.[1] Through the rise and fall of Prohibition, alcohol more than ever became attached to often competing ideas about class, gender, and race in an era that also witnessed similarly intensifying efforts to restrict Mexican immigration.[2] In 1914, USC social scientist William McEuen traced the "problems" ethnic Mexicans caused in Los Angeles specifically to alcohol, arguing, "The excessive use of liquor is the Mexican's greatest moral problem. With few exceptions both men and women use liquor to excess. This is not only destructive of their morals and a leading cause of their criminality but also produces the irregularity, uncertainty and inefficiency which are the chief objections to Mexican labor."[3] Ten years later—at the apex of Prohibition and the early years of debates concerning Mexican immigration restriction —an internal Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) study made a strikingly similar claim in explaining ethnic Mexicans' allegedly disproportionate criminality in the city, asserting, "Practically one-third of all

1 Here I use David Gutierrez's term "ethnic Mexicans," to indicate individuals of Mexican birth or heritage. David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Matt García defines the spatial, social, and cultural world of A World of its Own as part of "Greater Los Angeles," and calls for historians to widen studies of Los Angeles beyond La Placita and East Los Angeles. By broadening studies of Los Angeles to include surrounding counties and unincorporated towns, we better understand the flow of people, labor, capital, and liquor, and accoridngly I situate my study within this local. Matt García, *A World of its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

2 As Ann Stoler argues, these are not discrete categories of analysis but rather mutually formative and affirming. As daily realities and social constructs, each becomes distinct but never discrete. Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

3 William McEuen, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Los Angeles" (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1914), 83.

[Mexican] arrests are therefore attributable directly to use of, or commerce in, intoxicants."[4] For those surveying and policing ethnic Mexicans in early twentieth-century Los Angeles, ethnic Mexicans simply drank too much and could not control what liquor did to them, and consequently what they did to the city.

But this discourse was not merely projected upon ethnic Mexicans but rather one they understood, adopted, recrafted, and oftentimes rejected. Some ethnic Mexicans blamed their crimes on the bottle and, by promising temperance, hoped to be pardoned.[5] For example in 1907 and 1910, Antonio Corona and Jesus Quiros both assured the Governor they had committed violent crimes in the throes of intoxication and, promising to avoid drink henceforth, they would become law-abiding citizens.[6] As some blamed it on the bottle, others blamed the place. In 1927 interviews, Trinidad Vega and David Villaseñor both railed against Prohibition legislation and the way it criminalized—and sanctioned violence against—Mexicans in Los Angeles, while other ethnic Mexican narrators favored highlighting the drunken crimes and chaos of Euro Americans.[7]

4 S.H. Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period", 1924, 5, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

5 According to contemporary popular practice and current social theory, the idea that one can "blame it on the alcohol" pardoned individuals from culpability: for many narrators and observers, intoxication constituted a "time out" in which an individuals could be absolved of their destructive actions. GT Hotaling, "An Analysis of Risk Markers in Husband to Wife Violence: The Current State of Knowledge," *Violence and Victims* 1, no. 2 (1986): 101-24; J Fagan, "Intoxication and Aggression in Drugs and Crime," in *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, ed. M Tonry and JQ Wilson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 241-320; Robert Nash Parker and Kathleen Auerhahn, "Alcohol, Drugs, and Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (January 1, 1998): 291-311; Robert Nash Parker, *Alcohol and Homicide: A Deadly Combination of Two American Traditions* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Craig MacAndrew, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co, 1969).

6 In the third person format common in probation and pardon appeals, Quiros vowed, "The lesson taught him by his incarceration has been a very severe one, and he is willing to promise your excellency to refrain from the use of intoxicating liquors," while Corona similarly wrote his "greatest fault was the drinking habit, which made him rather quarrelsome and abusive whenever he became intoxicated." "Application for Pardon, Jesus Quiros", August 19, 1910, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 7777, California State Archives; "Antonio Corona, 6616", 1911 1907, Folsom Case File number 6616, California State Archives.

7 Trinidad Vega confided a story about a "poor man" from his neighborhood who "bought a bottle of of whiskey to drink in his house...On his way, he stopped when he realized the police were there and raised his hand to take out the bottle when the police, without anything more, shot him and killed him; he had done nothing to the police...and there are infinite cases like this. I know of others." David Villaseñor

As Edward Escobar's study of ethnic Mexicans and the Los Angeles police department makes clear, during Prohibition the Los Angeles Police Department did indeed over police ethnic Mexicans with Prohibition violations.[8]

Alcohol shaped ethnic Mexicans' daily economic and social lives. In my first interview with Mary Caralejo, it became apparent that, throughout her youth, alcohol profoundly touched her economic and social experiences. Born in the height of Prohibition in Wilmington, California, and reared by her bootlegging maternal grandparents in a home with her heavy drinking uncle, Mary reflects, "Growing up there were drunks all around. Thinking about it now, it was a way of life for us."[9] According to Mary and various oral narrators in this study, alcohol touched and indeed shaped their daily experiences for better and for worse.[10]

Through a social, economic, and cultural history of alcohol, this dissertation examines the ways authorities and individuals surveyed ethnic Mexicans in regards to race, class, and gender in the years 1900-1940. Prohibition sentiment cast alcohol as a potent symbol of degeneracy and criminality, one that sanctioned the policing and exclusion of ethnic Mexicans in the United

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railed, "I have never liked this country...Here to drink...one has to go around hiding." A Taylor informant in Chicago observed, "I laugh and keep still when I see some of those cabezas de nieve going to jail. They have some bad ones themselves." He rejected monolithic representations of Mexicans, saying, "They think all the Mexicans are like that. They always tell us that." Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Trinidad Vega", April 18, 1927, Bancroft Library; Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de David Villasenor", May 4, 1927; Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), 143.

8 Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

9 "Mary Caralejo," interview by Nick Bravo, July 27, 2010.

10 Manuel Contreras believes his father's premature death resulted from an intoxicated bar fight while Petra Vasquez recalls her father's tendency to become violent towards she and her family during drunken periods. Beatrice Clifton Morales, however, recalls many joyful experiences drinking as a young girl with her father. "Manuel Contreras," interview by Nick Bravo, May 5, 2010; "Vásquez, Petra," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 30, 1979, Interview 1a Segment 2 (1:42-5:01), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha; "Clifton, Beatrice Morales," interview by Sherna Berger Gluck, January 30, 1981, Interview 2c Segment 2 (1:13-6:04), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

States, particularly in the years leading up to and during the Depression. This dissertation further argues that ethnic Mexicans were not merely passive objects in this history but rather utilized Prohibition laws to craft their own representations about race and alcohol, subverted them for profit through bootlegging, and enforced them in daily ways within their families and communities. Family conflicts about alcohol stemmed from gendered and classed ideas about respectability, and while some subverted or avoided these standards, others found it difficult to escape them. Many ethnic Mexican narrators articulated alcohol as an essential ingredient to the destructive behavior they witnessed and the abuse they suffered at the hands of an intoxicated family member. Embracing the contradictions and conflicts alcohol inspired, at its core this dissertation strives to historicize the daily decisions, disputes, and compromises ethnic Mexicans made in regards to alcohol within a stratified economic and social world.

To my knowledge, only one Chicano/a historian has written at any length about alcohol and ethnic Mexicans in the twentieth-century. In the third chapter of *Making Lemonade out of Lemons,* José Alamillo discuses the ways in which alcohol, for Mexican male citrus laborers during and after Prohibition, provided a mechanism to assert masculinity in the face of dehumanizing economic and social conditions.[11] Alamillo's conclusions prove informative, and throughout this dissertation we not only see this public drinking culture but also one that developed around private settings during Prohibition for both men and women. Other Chicano/a historians have briefly considered alcohol in twentieth-century southern California, often seeing it as one of many tropes used to describe the undesirable Mexican.[12] This dissertation builds on

11 See the chapter "Saloons, pool Halls, and Bootlegging." José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 57-77.

12 Similarly, Bill Deverell's Whitewashed Adobe shows Los Angeles Boosters and citizens associated the Spanish and Mexican eras with "public drunkenness and debauchery," in constructing their idyllic city in opposition to the Mexican period and effacing the city's Mexican legacy. William Deverell, *Whitewashed*

this limited historiography to understand how ethnic Mexicans in Greater Los Angeles, negotiated these frames with their own self-perceptions and responded to them by articulating their own representations of respectability and criminality.

Much of the attention to ethnic Mexicans and alcohol emerged from their position as low-wage laborers. The first four decades of the twentieth century witnessed the mass migration of Mexican laborers into the United States, and the simultaneous emergence of immigration and liquor restriction.[13] Initially seen by many as a viable alternative to depleted indigenous and degraded (and, after 1892, excluded) Chinese labor, popular representations often praised ethnic Mexicans as ideal laborers, physically fit for often back-breaking tasks, and intellectually and culturally simple enough to tolerate the monotony and indignity of such work.[14] Coinciding with the ideal laborer image, nineteenth-century representations of the brutal Mexican "greaser," "cholo," and "peon" remained salient in the early twentieth-century—Ken Gonzales Day demonstrates that such emerging racial knowledge rendered ethnic Mexicans vulnerable to popular and state violence, marking their bodies as deviant and subject to discipline.[15] Links

Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Otto Santa Ana's criticial discursive analysis of anti-Mexican representations in recent newspaper coverage highlights the power of this discourse and speculates on its material consequences. Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002).

13 While most historians argue that the sheer violence and displacement of the Mexican Revolution caused this mass migration, Gilbert González and Raul Fernández argue that the United States economic empire shaped conditions that mandated this northern migration towards available employment. Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton,and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Gilbert G. González and Raúl Fernandez, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (February 2002): 19-57.

14 As Natalia Molina notes, however, such praise necessarily limited ethnic Mexicans options in the Los Angeles labor market. See Natalia Molina, "Medicalizing the Mexican: Immigration, Race, and Disability in the Early-Twentieth-Century United States," *Radical History Review* 51, no. 3 (December 2005): 22-37; Douglas Monroy and Matt García discuss Mexicans as ideal alternatives to Indigenous and Chinese labor, respectively. Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 246; García, *A World of its Own*, 48, 55, 59-61.

15 Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

between Mexicans and banditry, the violence of the Mexican Revolution, and pejorative ideas about their' infantile minds incapable of self-control, all rendered them more visible and vulnerable to abuse.[16]

When immigration restriction in 1924 placed quotas on European immigration to the United States without similarly restricting migration from Mexico, nativist ire in Los Angeles and across the southwest began to focus almost exclusively on ethnic Mexicans. Historians Mae Ngai and Alexander Stern argue that in this era ethnic Mexicans became the "prototypical illegal alien" as concerns about territorial sovereignty and racial hygiene materialized in increased attention to migrant traffic, leading to the establishment of the border patrol in 1924.[17] Seen as a threat to increasingly limited economic resources, nativists claimed ethnic Mexicans disproportionately broke laws, drained charities, and refused to acquiesce to Americanization efforts. They further claimed that, in their status as low wage laborers, ethnic Mexicans undercut the value of wage labor and took jobs that would have otherwise gone to Euro Americans. Ideas about ethnic Mexicans emphasized their biological and cultural undesirability, and thus rationalized their exclusion.

In their observations of ethnic Mexicans, academics, journalists, and state authorities struggled to explain the roots of their chronic drinking and its supposedly disastrous effects. As

16 Matt Garcia's A World of Its Own, for example, argues that descriptions of intoxicated Mexicans, "characterized them as children with little control over their passions." García, *A World of its Own*, 67; Mark C. Anderson shows the ways that bandit tropes guided press depictions of ethnic Mexicans, while Laura Isabel Serna shows how demeaning films characterized ethnic Mexicans as chronically intoxicated and violent. According to Serna, these frames had significant material consequences to ethnic Mexicans' daily lives. Mark C. Anderson, ""What's to Be Done with 'Em?" Images of Mexican Cultural Backwardness, Racial Limitations, and Moral Decrepitude in the United States Press, 1913-1915'," *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 23-70; Laura Isabel Serna, "'As a Mexican I Feel It's My Duty:' Citizenship, Censorship, and the Campaign against Derogatory Films in Mexico, 1922-1930," *The Americas* 63, no. 2 (October 2006): 225-244.

17 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

Mae Ngai, Alexander Stern, and Natalia Molina all demonstrate, this era marked a transition from notions of biological determinism to a seemingly more enlightened era of cultural determinism. Contemporary thinkers such as Paul Taylor and Manuel Gamio followed pioneering intellectual Franz Boas's lead, believing that environmental, conditions dictated ethnic Mexicans' disposition and behavior, arguing that exposure to United States customs would allow ethnic Mexicans to shed their cultural baggage.[18] While emerging criminology theories supposedly explained allegedly disproportionate arrest rates for ethnic Mexicans through these cultural models, the majority of press and popular attention focused not on the causes of ethnic Mexican inferiority but rather its affects.[19]

Though Los Angeles did not become "bone dry" until 1921, federal and state Prohibition came on the heals of local ordinances that restricted saloons to the Mexican area of Los Angeles.[20] Well before the Volstead and Wright Acts, up to forty percent of arrests in Los Angeles were for public intoxication and drunkenness.[21] Curtis Marez argues that substance legislation was "a means not of excluding Mexicans from the labor market but of incorporating

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18 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*; Manuel Gamio, "Preliminary Report to Social Science Research Council", n.d., Bancroft Library; In "Race, Language, and Culture," Boas argues that "the cultural factor is of the greatest importance and might well account for observed differences." Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

19 See for example, a 1924 LAPD study of Mexican arrests in the United States, written by officer SH Bowman. In explaining the "fact" that "Practically one-third of all arrests are therefore attributable directly to use of, or commerce in, intoxicants," Bowman straddled biological and cultural determinist models. He observed, "It is evident that our Mexican population who are caught in the meshes of the law are very largely in trouble because of weakness of will and lack of initiative. The serious crimes are, to be sure, a predictable consequence of these character defects, when associated with economic stress and with opportunity, sought and unsought." Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period."

20 Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983); Isabela Seong-Leong Quintana, "National Borders, Neighborhood Boundaries: Gender, Space, and Border Formation in Chinese and Mexican Los Angeles, 1871-1938" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2010).

21 "Annual Report of the Los Angeles Police Department", June 30, 1913, Box 1061, Folder 1913, Los Angeles City Archives; "Annual Report, Los Angeles Police Department", June 30, 1915, Box 1061, Folder 1915, Los Angeles City Archives.

them into it as disciplined, subordinated workers."[22] Indeed, Edward Escobar shows that under Prohibition, press representations and police actions reinforced one another in a cycle that criminalized intoxicated Mexicans through excessive arrests for liquor charges.[23] In 1924, the LAPD arrested 942 ethnic Mexicans for drunkenness and 558 for vagrancy—both laws required little evidence and could be capriciously applied based on ideas about race, class, and desirability.[24] While studies often focus on representation and popular action, this dissertation takes them to life on the ground, examining the daily ways ethnic Mexicans interacted with, adapted to, and even deployed the law. These were not merely pawns moved around in a game of targeted enforcement, but active historical agents making decisions in particular political and social contexts.

The majority of scholarship related to Prohibition in Los Angeles focuses on the LAPD, emphasizing the futility of policing, the city's rampant corruption, and the activities of a few large scale Euro American bootlegging operations.[25] Within this climate, as small-scale bootleggers ethnic Mexicans negotiated their needs with Prohibition law on a daily basis, seeking to bend it but never let it snap in their face. Discussing ethnic Mexican bootleggers does not affirm criminalized portraits, as Luis Alvarez argues when describing Zoot Suiters of the 1940s, but

22 Curtis Marez, *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 151.

23 Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*.

24 Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 3-4.

25 Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*; Gilman Ostrander and Joseph Gerald Wood separately emphasize the unpopularity of Prohibition, arguing that Progressive voters and legislators overestimated popular support and underestimated the financial cost of enforcement. Similarly, Kenneth Rose argues that this unpopularity, coupled with police corruption undermined any effort to dry out Los Angeles. Joseph Gerald Woods, *The Progressives and the Police: Urban Reform and the Professionalization of the Los Angeles Police* (Ann Arbor Mich.: University Microfilms International, 1985); Gilman Marston Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957); Kenneth D Rose, "'Dry' Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," *Southern California Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1987): 51-74.

rather accepts their criminality and considers it as the decision of historical actors.[26] Providing the economic and social context surrounding ethnic Mexicans' decision to enter the black market introduces new agents into Los Angeles's Prohibition history and also expands definitions of labor within Chicano/a historiography.

Labor histories of ethnic Mexicans in the early twentieth century emphasize the laws and prejudices that incorporated ethnic Mexicans into Los Angeles and other cities' economies, racialized as a source of cheap and menial labor in agriculture and industry.[27] Understanding bootlegging as labor, albeit unique, illuminates survival strategies that allowed some ethnic Mexicans to subvert the limitations of Los Angeles's racialized job market. The majority of ethnic Mexican bootleggers supplemented wage labor through alcohol production and sale, with family members maintaing day jobs and bootlegging profits helping to relieve the pressures of low wage labor. Others avoided such work entirely through the trade. Aware of the illegality and heightened visibility attendant to their work, bootleggers balanced this visibility with their economic need and deployed clever techniques to avoid scrutiny and punishment.

Beyond its legal and sometimes economic implications, ethnic Mexicans, like Euro Americans, also experienced Prohibition as a tangible social issue. According to historians, the national march towards Prohibition epitomized the Progressive era, displaying race, class and gender hostilities that encapsulated multiple concerns related to morality and crime. Studies of

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26 Alvarez considers the Zoot body not solely as part of criminalized discourse but as an agent to assert dignity in a dehumanizing and alienating era. Though mindful of popular criminalization and police abuse, Alvarez neither effaces nor romanticizes the illegal activities of these historical actors but rather accepts their criminality and examines it for its analytical value. Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

27 Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "Women, Work, and Community in the Mexican Colonias of the Southern California Citrus Belt," *California History* 74, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 58-67.

Prohibition generally focus on the upwardly-mobile aspirations of Euro Americans seeking to distance themselves from immigrant populations, and women reformers entering the political arena to assert themselves as moral gatekeepers. Indeed, legendary historian Richard Hofstadter's interpretation of Prohibition as an expression of class anxiety and hostility continues to hold sway among historians of this "symbolic crusade," who argue that the Euro American middle class fought to distinguish itself from working-class and immigrant groups maligned as chronic drinkers.[28]

Like many Euro Americans, some ethnic Mexicans deliberately positioned themselves in classed and gendered hierarchies based on temperance ideology. David Gutierrez's *Walls and Mirrors* examines the classed relationship between Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, arguing that Mexican Americans often sought to distance themselves from the traits associated with Mexican immigrants, and the immigrants themselves.[29] In interviews and publications, many ethnic Mexicans positioned themselves as modern, temperate proponents of Americanization and Prohibition and frustrated by the intoxicated activities of more recent migrants. In such criticisms, they sanctioned and even participated in the surveillance of the

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28 Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955); Joseph Gusfield emphasizes the class character of Prohibition, claiming it marked a symbolic crusade for individuals seeking to climb economic and social ladders. Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); *Law, Alcohol, and Order: Perspectives on National Prohibition* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985); John Rumbarger takes a different approach, focusing on materiality and arguing that the demands of modern industry meant a sober workforce could be more productive, and thus emphasizes the profitibility of Prohibition and the role of owners in its passing. John J Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America, 1800-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989); Women's historians have noted the ways in which Prohibition represented a singular political platfrom from which Euro American women could express an array of concerns and assert themselves as gatekeepers of morality and respectability Catherine Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); *Against the Tide: Women Reformers in American Society* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1997); Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).

29 Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

supposedly intoxicated working-class. Furthermore, aware of the criminalization and police abuse Prohibition fostered, ethnic Mexicans called into question the drinking habits and criminal activities of Euro Americans, using Prohibition language to invert criminalized tropes. As popular presses and public officials decried ethnic Mexicans as drunken bandits, ethnic Mexicans often focused on large scale and violent Euro American bootlegging operations. Though they lacked the numbers to organize en masse to support or oppose Prohibition, many ethnic Mexicans nonetheless understood that temperance represented a tangible political, economic, and social issue, and positioned themselves accordingly.

According to Linda Gordon, increased scrutiny came upon "at-risk" homes marked by violence, parental separation, neglect, and intemperance.[30] Mexican mothers, seen as primary caregivers and transmitters of moral values, found themselves targeted by academics, Protestant missionaries, and state authorities.[31] In Los Angeles, state officials and private reformers targeted ethnic Mexican families for intervention, believing such action would save society from another generation of degeneracy. As Miroslava Chávez-García points out, the California Youth Authority at Whittier incarcerated youth declared delinquent or dependent on the state, and intervened into "at risk" families.[32]

Peggy Pascoe argues that reformers' descriptions of and efforts on behalf of marginalized

30 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*.

31 As Mary Odem argues, though offering assistance, reformers enforced their vision of traditional family models, focusing on children in "broken" homes, often marked by intemperance, and counseling women to remain in abusive relationships. Mary E Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

32 Chávez-García's work on the Whittier institution focuses predominately on the racialized ideas that guided state officials actions towards the youth, and also on expressions of resistance from the incarcerated population. Miroslava Chávez-García, "Youth, Evidence, and Agency: Mexican and Mexican American Youth at the Whittier State School, 1890-1920," *Aztlán.* 31, no. 2 (2006): 55-84; Miroslava Chávez-García, "Intelligence Testing at Whittier School, 1890-1920," *The Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (2007): 193.

populations speak more to the prejudices and self-perceptions of the reformers themselves, and less to actual conditions among the impoverished.[33] Yet the condescension authorities displayed in their interactions with these families should not blind us to the ways in which they documented very real problems connected to alcohol including domestic violence, the incarceration of parents —often on liquor related charges—and cases of abject parental neglect. Through their destructive behavior, intoxicated parents shaped the early experiences of their children in abusive ways. These children found themselves in often untenable situations marked by violence, poverty, and neglect, and in need of genuine assistance. Yet those confined at Whittier were forcefully committed to an institution more concerned with rooting out the biological and environmental causes of crime and dependency than ameliorating their situation.

Indeed, alcohol figured prominently in the surveillance of ethnic Mexicans, yet in focusing on ethnic Mexican's relationships to alcohol, we see that ethnic Mexicans also policed one another, particularly within families. As theorist Michel Foucault argued, surveillance extends beyond state authorities' enforcement of legal codes—everyday individuals on the ground police one another, affirming and enforcing ideas of race, class, and gender. This dissertation offers a close examination of the internal workings of a variety of ethnic Mexican families, and by considering the gendered rules of alcohol consumption we see the ways in which ethnic Mexican households regulated their members.

In considering ethnic Mexican families, scholars note their fluidity; family is neither static through time nor contained within the home in any given moment.[34] Ricky T. Rodríguez argues

33 Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Edward Escobar makes similar claims concerning arrest statistics in twentieth-century Los Angeles, noting that high rates of Mexican criminality do not indicate their disproportionate criminal proclivity as much as they reveal the attitudes officers displayed towards ethnic Mexicans. Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*.

34 In "Flexible Families," Ana Rosas posits the (transnational) Mexican family as a fluid set of

that ideas about family as essentially reproductive and hetero normative guide academic and cultural depictions of what constitutes this institution.[35] Some ethnic Mexicans in this dissertation extended family to include individuals not related through blood or marriage, forming partnerships that complicate the very notion of family. Family also extended well beyond the home. To discuss ethnic Mexican homes runs the risk of dichotomizing them and the outside world, regressively arguing that home is private and everything beyond the front door falls into the public sphere.[36] Yet with regards to alcohol consumption, this sharp distinction between public and private prevailed among most families. As analytical categories, we cannot separate home from community or workplace; ethnic Mexicans nonetheless often regarded the home as a barrier to the outside world, one that mandated distinct behaviors from men and women.

In questioning who could drink and where, we see that gendered divides dictated the rules: in the words of historian Stephanie Reyes, a “lady drinker” was, for the most part, an “oxymoron.”[37] A woman's presence in a public drinking space coded her as sexually available and, in the years before Prohibition, the city enacted laws barring women from saloons to prevent

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commitments, responsibilities, and affections that traveled with braceros migrating to the United States and also remained with their families in Mexico that proved adaptable to context and contingency. Ana Rosas, *Flexible Families: Bracero Families' Lives Across Cultures, Communities, and Countries, 1942-1964*, 2006.

35 Richard Rodríguez, *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

36 Indeed, as Vicki L. Ruiz argues in From Out of the Shadows, however, “One's positionality inside the home, the community, and the workplace cannot be separated into neat categories of analysis." Vicki Ruíz, *From out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

37 Stephanie Lynn Reyes Bell, “Gendered and Racialized Constructions of Alcoholism in the Postwar Era” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2001); Mary Villarreal, “Cantantes Y Cantineras: Mexican American Communities and the Mapping of Public Space” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2003); This idea emerges clearly in Mario Garza's poem “Tus Jefecitos,” where he writes, “Now you have a Chicana/Chicana like yourself/…/but sometimes/she drinks and dances / tus jefecitos say/‘es Chicana/es muy puta.’” See Carla Mari Trujillo, ed., *Living Chicana Theory* (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1998), 396.

sex work and protect women's virtue. Within ethnic Mexican families, Chicana/o historians and theorists observe that different standards governed men and women's social interactions.[38] In policing the behavior of their daughters, ethnic Mexican families practiced "familial oligarchy" to preserve family honor and respectability—an intoxicated and loose daughter in public would be an affront to this respectability.[39] Gendered as obedient, demure, and modest, daughters and mothers acquiesced to, avoided, and/or resisted these prescriptions revealing generational and gendered conflicts.

This dissertation reveals an array of lady drinkers who often imbibed in private settings among friends and family, but did not venture into the public drinking world. While, as Jose Alamillo argues, a rough, working class masculine culture emerged around drinking in the first half of the twentieth-century, no such public drinking culture emerged among women though many did privately partake.[40] Some, however, escaped these cultural and familial mandates in pursuit of their social desires. In oral interviews, some ethnic Mexican women shared their experiences with illicit sex, binge drinking, and divorce—topics frequently shrouded in illegality and shame. They embraced what they saw as modern American identities, binge drinking with friends and engaging in illicit sexual encounters away from the supervision of their families. Such actions required women to sneak around their parents' watchful eyes or to live independently from familial control, something only possible with a sustainable wage.[41] As

38 Norma Williams, *The Mexican American Family: Tradition and Change* (Dix Hills, N.Y: General Hall, 1990); Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.
39 Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows*.
40 José M. Alamillo, "Peloteros in Paradise: Mexican American Baseball and Oppositional Politics in Southern California, 1930-1950," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (July 1, 2003): 191-211.
41 Early sociologist Mary Lanigan observed generational gendered conflicts among ethnic Mexicans in Belvedere to revolve around public alcohol consumption and sexual expression, noting, "On Christmas eve in old Mexico it is customary among the families to hold a tamalada after the midnight mass. One family will make great preparation for such an occasion and will invite all its relations and perhaps one other family to be present at the festivities...the tamaladas here are not of that type. Instead of a private home, they are held in a rented dance hall. Everyone goes. There is not much order and a great deal of

temperate ethnic Mexicans articulated their alcohol avoidance as a modern American choice, daughters found their parents' restrictions of their social activities and enforcement of "dated" gender norms to be distinctly anti-modern. Such conflicts over drinking behavior appear at once mundane and significant, showing the daily ways families policed and individuals subverted expected gender behavior. Finding ways to avoid this, young women like Elisa Morales snuck around with friends to enjoy the pleasures of Los Angeles's nightlife, while others like Angelita Cisneros Mariscal escaped strict restriction through early marriage.[42]

Beyond social desire, economic need—as Robin DG Kelley suggests—also demanded that many women redefine their gender identities to reconcile their ladyhood with their stigmatized labor as bootleggers and dime dancers.[43] In studying ethnic Mexican women and families, one must always consider material conditions. The women in this study labored as part of, and modified, the family wage economy, which envisioned family members entering the wage labor market to pool their resources and collectively make ends meet.[44] As Vicki L. Ruiz demonstrated when she introduced the concept to Chicana/o historiography, for ethnic Mexicans this often meant that women and daughters would enter the informal economy or paid labor

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confusion. The girls sometimes smoke and drink, which would never be tolerated in Mexico. The older people consider this a desecration of a sacred custom." She also offers the following quote from a distressed ethnic Mexican mother discussing her daughter Juanita: "Juanita has joined a club and now she wants to learn to dance. This is what comes of these clubs. It is wrong to dance and my Juanita wants to do it because the others do. Because everybody does it does not make it right. I know the things I was taught as a girl and right and wrong cannot change." See Mary Lanigan, "Second Generation Mexicans in Belvedere" (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1932), 30 and 62.

42 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución", April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library; "Mariscal, Angelita," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 15, 1979, Interview 1b Segment 9 (25:41-28:03), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

43 Robin D.G. Kelley observes that women of color in stratified labor markets reshape gender to harmonize with available though often degraded forms of labor. Dime dancers were employed by nightclubs to dance with male customers for money. While Prohibition allegedly made these dry spaces, in actual practice drinking remained prominent. Robin D. G Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 70-74.

44 Louise Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

market to supplement the wages of the family's primary breadwinner.[45]

Ethnic Mexican bootlegging families often summoned all hands on deck. As they straddled both the wage and illicit economy, they incorporated the unique labor of women and children into their enterprise. Women often produced the alcohol, extending gendered ideas of domesticity into illegality, while women and children both proved less likely to draw suspicion when selling on behalf of the family. Here, ethnic Mexicans not only recrafted gendered ideology to reconcile with their illegal trade, they also strategically deployed it by capitalizing on authorities' gendered perceptions of criminality as predominately male. For them, the family wage economy extended into the black market, complicating our understandings of employment opportunities and economic survival strategies available to ethnic Mexican families in this era. Women and children did not supplement a patriarch's wages but instead contributed directly to a collective family profit, helping families stay afloat through rough economic times. Furthermore, individuals wishing to live beyond the control of parents or spouses developed their own family wage economy, such as Gloria Navas who lived with two male friends, sharing financial responsibilities, emotional support, and binge drinking.[46] As a dime dancer, Navas's labor existed outside the boundaries of ladyhood, but allowed her to live free of family surveillance. Elisa Morales, also a dime dancer, shared her profits with her mother and brother, as well as a close friend who lived in the family home.

While ethnic Mexican family proved both adaptable and cooperative, many families also erupted in conflict. Early Chicana/o historiography often valorized “la familia” as a singular support system in a dehumanizing era marked by racialization, social exclusion, and economic

45 Vicki Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
46 Luis Felipe Recinos, “Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución”, April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library.

marginalization. While, as Richard Griswold de Castillo, and Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez suggest, family fortified ethnic Mexicans financially and spiritually against the stratification they encountered.[47] Discussing slave communities in the nineteenth-century US south, Dylan Pennigroth calls for historians to move beyond a similar historiographical model, noting, "It is safe to say that black people argued, cursed, loved, and nursed one another about as much as whites did." For Penningroth, monolithic visions of supportive families and communities flatten our capacity to understand the complexities and contradictions of daily life.[48] As previously noted, George Sanchez and Vicki L. Ruiz separately argue issues of gender and generation often led to conflicts between parents and children, and among partners.[49] Both deftly outline the contours of these conflicts, often related to the policing of women's sexuality and the restriction of their movements, and this dissertation builds on this work by more thoroughly examining the often violent experiences such struggles begat.

This dissertation illuminates conflicts about alcohol as they related to bootlegging, finances, gendered propriety, and sexual jealousy. These hostilities did not always deteriorate in physical violence, brutality did occur, particularly when men returned home intoxicated or drank at social gatherings. Women facing poverty after a husband's expenditures on alcohol and

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47 For example, in Decade of Betrayal, the family emerges as the primary coping-mechanism of Mexican immigrants and repatriates, central to Mexicans' endurance. Balderrama and Rodriguez's focus on the family illustrates the ways in which family members relied upon one another for information, hospitality, support, and strength. Yet in their analysis they obscure difference and complexity, and occasionally fall into cliché. Describing food, the authors tell us that "special delicacies were lovingly prepared whenever the lean food budget permitted it." It is important to emphasize they do not describe a particular Mexican family, but rather the authors' vision of a triumphant and proud, monolithic entity. Yes, Mexican families conspicuously and gloriously endured during this (and all other) eras, yet surely there existed households where food was not lovingly prepared and where the family is not an always enduring, always supportive historical given. Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; Richard Griswold del Castillo, *La Familia: Chicano Families in the Urban Southwest, 1848 to the Present* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

48 Dylan C Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 12.

49 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*; Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows*.

women facing physical violence at the hands of an intoxicated partner all necessarily had to overcome the economic burden of finding a sufficient wage in order to leave their breadwinner.[50] In seeking to escape an unhappy or abusive relationship, women further faced significant cultural pressure to remain, but also found support from family, community, and relatively liberal U.S. laws.[51] Families did not need alcohol to have a reason to fight yet through its social connotations and narcotic properties, alcohol provides a unique window with which to glimpse both violent and non violent gendered strife within ethnic Mexican homes.

Through four chapters, I demonstrate that ethnic Mexican producers, purveyors and consumers of contraband alcohol encountered various forms of surveillance and conflict. Systems of surveillance, whether legal or familial, always had their blind spots and this work considers ethnic Mexicans who sought cover in these concealed spaces as they followed the opportunities alcohol offered. In doing so, it integrates ethnic Mexicans into Prohibition historiography, introducing a cast of characters unfamiliar to Chicana/o historiography by focusing on their daily relationships to alcohol, state laws, social norms, economic realities, and one another.

Chapter one, "Of Wets and Dries: Liquor Prohibition, Immigration Restriction, and Representations of Intoxicated Mexicans" considers the common trajectory of efforts to restrict alcohol and Mexican immigrants in Greater Los Angeles. From 1900-1930, debates about labor

50 Sociologist Patricia Zavella argues that "Capitalist patriarchy is a system in which the control of wage labor by capital and men's control over women's labor power and sexuality in the home are connected...women's labor market activities are restricted through the bearing and rearing of children and men's efforts to control home life." She thus calls for scholars to "examine the relationship of women to men in both the labor market and families." Patricia Zavella, *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley*, 1982; See also Beatríz M. Pesquera's contemporary study of ethnic Mexican women, domestic conflict, and employement. Beatríz M Pesquera, "'Work Gave Me a Lot of Confianza': Chicanas' Work Commitment and Work Identity," in *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, ed. Vicki Ruíz (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000), 161-180.

51 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 148.

and criminality in California regularly centered around alcohol as multiple communities appropriated Prohibition language to articulate who belonged, who did not, and who decided. Examining links between Prohibition and Mexican immigration restriction reveals they shared a common language, addressed similar social and economic concerns, and had material consequences to ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles. For Prohibitionists and restrictionists, both drinkers and Mexican immigrants appeared as "wets" in this era, the binary opposite to the "dry" teetotaler and citizen. Spanish-language presses however articulated their own understanding of criminality, class, and race by emphasizing police prejudice and similar liquor violations among white Americans. Crime and alcohol represented tangible concerns for multiple communities and agendas, and each borrowed from discussions about Prohibition to articulate the qualifications for social membership.[52]

While many ethnic Mexicans certainly heralded the end of Prohibition as the conclusion of a particularly abusive chapter in their relationship with the police and city, for ethnic Mexican bootleggers, the end of Prohibition signified the closing of this unique window of illicit economic opportunity. "Selling the Bottle: Ethnic Mexican Bootleggers, Labor, and Family in Prohibition Era Greater Los Angeles," examines bootlegging as a viable, though perilous, survival strategy. Ethnic Mexicans produced, smuggled, and sold alcohol in a wide diversity of operations most often small scale but sometimes expanding into large enterprises. Bootleggers creatively sought to mitigate their visibility while seeking the rewards of the black market, relying on the labor of women and children to maximize profit and minimize risk.

Chapter three, "What's Inside the Bottle: Class, Gender, and Intoxication," argues that

52 For historian Natália Molina, "social membership" indicates a notion of belonging that transcends citizenship and speaks to the practical incorporation and participation of Los Angeles residents. Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

when ethnic Mexicans made decisions about whether to drink—and where—it spoke to classed and gendered ideas about respectability, masculinity, and ladyhood. In the eyes of many temperate ethnic Mexicans, alcohol avoidance signified a modern, upwardly mobile, and distinctly American trait; these individuals believed their intoxicated countrymen behaved in ways that hurt public perceptions of all Mexicans, and that their own alcohol avoidance distanced them from these "lower class" individuals. Though some individuals did drink destructively, many ethnic Mexicans responsibly consumed alcohol with little fanfare, drinking in private and semi private spaces, quietly and responsibly. Yet women found public drinking spaces frequently closed to them as their public proximity to liquor marked them as morally corrupt and sexually available. Prohibition supposedly removed alcohol from formerly wet public settings, and during Prohibition dime dancers entered these spaces to make a living. Struggles between parents and their children about alcohol consumption emerged from generational conflicts between surveillance of parents and the freedom of youth.

Many wives and children of destructive drinkers found alcohol to be a key ingredient for the painful realities they encountered—the final chapter, "Blaming it on the Bottle: Intoxication and Violence in Prohibition-Era Ethnic Mexican Families," considers alcohol's role in destructive drinking, and the ways in which families responded to this behavior. As current scholars continue to debate alcohol's relationship to family violence, ethnic Mexican narrators articulate it as central to the often tragic episodes they witnessed. While the responses of women and children to family violence reveals an array of survival strategies and negotiations, the ways in which state authorities and academics surveyed these families shows that ideas about intemperance shaped the ways state authorities interacted with families under their supervision, and the ways racialized and gendered ideologies limited any potential benefit for these families.

Throughout these chapters, I integrate national and local records from various courts, police departments, incarceration facilities, and governmental inquiries, with academic publications and the popular press. These sources show us the ways alcohol prominently figured in representational and physical surveillance efforts towards ethnic Mexicans in Greater Los Angeles. This study draws substantially from oral histories.[53] While inherently mitigated by the expectations of the interviewer and the imprecision of memory, oral history remains a singular, invaluable means of incorporating individuals who did not leave traditional historical sources.[54] Oral history is not a question of giving voice to narrators but rather one of providing historical context necessary to understand the daily decisions individuals made from a limited set of options.[55] As I strive to contextualize and historicize their decisions, I am deeply grateful for the generosity of the fourteen narrators who shared their life stories with me.

I do not argue that ethnic Mexicans drank any more or less than anybody else, nor any more problematically. Nor do I describe alcohol from a medical perspective or treat alcoholism as pathology. Though some individuals in this study display more problematic and seemingly additive behaviors than others, the relationship between intoxication, dependency, physiology, and environment remains unclear. As Stephanie Reyes-Tuccio argues, "experts" historically

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53 These narratives emerge four main sources bases. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, pathbreaking social scientists Manuel Gamio and Paul Taylor separately conducted extensive field research on ethnic Mexicans for their forthcoming publications—The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant and Mexican Labor in the United States, respectively— interviewing a wide spectrum of individuals in Los Angeles and across the nation. These rich collections reveal a broad spectrum of experiences and expectations related to liquor, including teetotalers, bootleggers, social and binge drinkers, and dime dancers. Additionally, California State University, Long Beach's Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive holds interviews conducted in the late 1970s and early 1980s with narrators born in the early twentieth century reflecting on their youthful experiences with alcohol in southern California. Individuals who came of age in this historical moment also appear through the fourteen interviews I conducted for this study. Manuel Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant: Autobiographic Documents.* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971); Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*.

54 Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-797.

55 Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows*, xiv.

constructed alcoholism as a disease after centuries of seeing it as a moral failing, and this shift was "the result of social conditions, not scientific discoveries in a laboratory."[56] Even today, social scientists, pathologists, and religious communities remain internally divided about the origins, treatments, and consequences of excessive drinking.[57] "Spinning the Bottle" explores what daily decisions about alcohol meant to everyday relationships and decisions among people in a specific historical context. I do not seek to confirm stereotypes within anti-Mexican discourses concerning criminality, chronic drinking, and violence, but instead to help complete our portrait of daily life in this era. Neither dismissing nor romanticizing the ills and benefits linked to alcohol, I contextualize them, arguing that ethnic Mexicans' relationships to alcohol reveal systems of surveillance and survival strategies in a stratified social world.

56 Reyes Bell, "Gendered and Racialized Constructions of Alcoholism in the Postwar Era."

57 Craig McAndrew was one of the first scholars to suggest that alcohol consumption and intoxicated behavior resulted not from physiological predisposition but rather contingent social, cultural, and economic systems. For a survey of current sociological and medical perspectives on alcohol, alcoholism, and intoxicated aggression, see Parker and Auerhahn's 1998 literature review. MacAndrew, *Drunken Comportment*; Parker and Auerhahn, "Alcohol, Drugs, and Violence."

CHAPTER ONE

OF WETS AND DRIES: LIQUOR PROHIBITION, IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION AND REPRESENTATIONS OF INTOXICATED MEXICANS

Early in 1928, *Saturday Evening Post* columnist and Pulitzer-Prize winner Kenneth Roberts wrote a three part series that appeared at the climax of agitation to restrict Mexican immigration to the United States. To describe the threat Mexicans posed, Roberts relied on wet metaphors—the first article in the series, titled "Wet and Other Mexicans," warns of a "dark brown flood" of Mexican "peons...rolling across the border" in a "moist state."[1] These metaphors dehumanize Mexican immigrants and code them as illegal—their wetness serves as a metaphorical marker of their illegality, and formed the basis for today's slur: "wetback." Wet Mexicans literally and symbolically exist outside the boundaries of U.S. citizenship serving as the binary opposite of the dry citizen. Yet there is something more imbedded within this language. The same era of restriction debates and repatriation (1924-1934) also saw the rise and collapse of Federal Prohibition (1920-1933). Like restrictionists, temperance advocates imagined themselves in wet/dry binaries: wets were immoral drunks and drys teetotaling crusaders. In another article, "The Docile Mexican," Roberts asserts that ninety percent of arrests for crime in the United States relate to "bootlegging and smuggling and pounding people on the heads with bottles" and are "committed by Mexicans."[2] In this light, Robert's "Wet and Other Mexicans" assumes new significance as it unites immigration and temperance debates through a common wet/dry lexicon.

Representations of ethnic Mexicans—as immigrants, as laborers, and as racial and social

1 Kenneth Roberts, "Wet and Other Mexicans," *Saturday Evening Post*, February 4, 1928.
2 Kenneth Roberts, "The Docile Mexican," *Saturday Evening Post*, March 10, 1928.

dangers— regularly relied on alcohol to construct them as twice-wet, both drunk and illegal; invoking their alleged alcohol consumption framed them as undesirable immigrants and residents of Los Angeles. In the first third of the twentieth century, debates about Mexicans in California regularly turned to alcohol as multiple communities appropriated Prohibition language to articulate who belonged, who did not, and who decided. Examining the wet links between Prohibition and Mexican immigration reveals they shared a common language, addressed similar social and economic concerns, and had material consequences to ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles.

This chapter considers the common trajectory of attempts to limit the movement of alcohol and Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles by surveying representations of intoxicated Mexicans. Los Angeles newspapers—particularly the *Los Angeles Times*, *Examiner*, *Herald,* and *Record* and *La Opinión*—figure prominently, as well as articles written by contemporary businessmen, growers, academics, political pundits, and government officials. Crime statistics and government-commissioned studies also also inform this work. For example, The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) sponsored in 1924 a "Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles," which claimed disproportionate liquor violations and violent crime among Mexicans. The tenth volume of the Wickersham Commission's Study 1931 study of Prohibition enforcement, titled *Crime and the Foreign Born,* rejected these statistics, though it made similar claims about Mexicans' violent relationship with alcohol. Paul Taylor's "The Problem of the Mexican"—the third chapter in *Crime and the Foreign Born*—sparked much debate about Mexican crime in Los Angeles, and his findings figure prominently in this chapter. Similarly, interviews from Manuel Gámio's work on Mexican immigrants in California allows Mexicans to articulate themselves in regards to crime, labor, and liquor.

Discussions about Mexicans' economic, racial, cultural, and social integration into the United States pivoted around liquor; representations of Mexican labor in the United States reveal that labor activists, managers, contractors, and legislators all framed ideas about labor efficiency and dependability around intoxication. Academic and newspaper descriptions of drunk Mexicans focused on their helplessness and savagery, allegedly born as half-breeds and socialized as bandits. Criticisms of Mexican immigration relied on liquor to link them to Native American intemperance and to cast them as mindless, blood thirsty bandits. These representations appeared as academics debated the hereditary and/or environmental origins of undesirable character traits, and alcohol fit into both biological and cultural determinist models, both of which warned of the dangers of drunk Mexicans.

Nativists, however, had no monopoly on representation. According to Laura Isabel Serna, denigrating films of Mexicans "hitting women, getting drunk, and dedicating themselves solely to vice and prostitution" affected Mexicans' "everyday lives in material and less tangible ways." Yet, Mexicans did not "engage mass culture passively."[3] Far from merely "talking back," *La Opinión* coverage and Mexicans themselves crafted their own discourse concerning race, crime, liquor, and the politics of respectability. In examining *La Opinión* (the largest Spanish-language daily in the United States) and several contemporary interviews, we hear conversations among participants who shared class understandings about intoxication and its link to crime, but differed in racial perceptions. Mexicans, aware of their criminalization as violent and stupid drunks, developed their own ideas about white Americans' uses and abuses of alcohol, and the ways that police officers used ideas of Mexican intoxication to harass and harm them. Everybody tried to

3 Laura Isabel Serna, ""As a Mexican I Feel It's My Duty:" Citizenship, Censorship, and the Campaign against Derogatory Films in Mexico, 1922-1930," *The Americas* 63, no. 2 (October 2006): 234-235, 239, 244.

spin the bottle.

The restriction of "wet" liquor and Mexicans emerged as part of the Progressive movement that allowed individuals to express anxieties about social evils to which they could draft solutions. Chicana/o historians have well documented Mexican's representational and day-to-day existence in Los Angeles, focusing on immigration, economic incorporation, and policing.[4] Though many ethnic Mexicans lived in California before 1900, US economic expansion into Mexico and the tumult of the Mexican Revolution led many Mexican nationals to migrate to the United States in the early twentieth century.[5] Though regularly depicted as violent, dangerous, and racially suspect, Mexicans in California also appeared an ideal solution for a dwindling supply of manual labor, particularly in agriculture.[6]

With the passing of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act in 1924, however, attitudes about Mexicans shifted. While the legislation imposed quotas on European immigrants, no such limitations were placed upon Mexicans. Public officials had bowed to agribusiness pressure for a steady supply of Mexican labor, as well as to diplomatic concerns as the federal government did not wish to offend their southern neighbor.[7] The limitation of European immigrants contrasted with Mexican's fluid and prolific migration, leading to a swell of nativist hysteria that cast

4 George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Matt García, *A World of its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

5 Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Gilbert G. González and Raúl Fernandez, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (February 2002): 19-57.

6 Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Natalia Molina, "Medicalizing the Mexican: Immigration, Race, and Disability in the Early-Twentieth-Century United States," *Radical History Review* 51, no. 3 (December 2005): 22-37.

7 García, *A World of its Own*.

Mexicans as "the prototypical illegal alien."[8] This anti-Mexican sentiment manifested in restrictions on Mexican immigrants with the establishment of the Border Patrol in 1924, and increasing attention to the physical and social undesirability of this population, "unfit to be citizens."[9] US citizens of Mexican ancestry could not sidestep this heightened policing, because, as Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez note, "Once a Mexican, always a Mexican."[10]

As popular opposition to Mexicans and Mexican immigration crystallized, federal proposals to implement quotas on Mexicans failed, but nonetheless stoked nativist fires. In one 1928 speech before the House of Representatives, Congressman John Box outlined his reasons for supporting tighter restrictions against Mexicans: "The Mexican peons are illiterate and ignorant. Because of their insanitary habits and living conditions and their vices they are especially subject to smallpox, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, and other dangerous contagions."[11] Box's words not only outline popular stereotypes about Mexicans as diseased, but also focuses on Mexican behaviors, particularly "their vices." As opposition to Mexican immigration gained currency, the nation also found itself embroiled in another contentious issue: the restriction of these vices through Prohibition.

Federal Prohibition enjoyed support from an array of social and cultural groups, most notably religious communities (particularly Protestants), women's associations, and a powerful white middle class. Despite this support, before the Volstead Act passed in 1920, a steady succession of proposed city, state, and national "bone dry" prohibition measures failed because

8 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

9 Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

10 Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 114, 218.

11 "Immigration Problems by Hon. John C. Box of Texas" (Congressional Record: Seventieth Congress, First Session, May 23, 1928), Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 13, Folder 22, Bancroft Library.

major sectors of the population, notably organized labor and business, opposed the effort. Discord among supporters such as the California Progressives, the Anti-Saloon League, and the Women's Christian Temperance Union, also hurt early legislative attempts and there existed much rancor about the correct legislative path to dry out a drunk nation.[12] Several attempts to codify state- and nation-wide Prohibition failed in the years leading up to World War I, until in 1918 Congress passed wartime prohibition—a temporary moratorium on liquor production. After this success, Prohibition activists yoked their agenda to jingoistic anti-German sentiment, arguing that liquor manufacturers supported the nation's foe.[13] Furthermore, the national flu epidemic between 1918 and 1919 suppressed voter turn out and, with the support of the press, the Volstead Act became the 18th Amendment to the United States Constitution after being ratified by thirty-six states, including California.[14]

Perhaps from afar, Los Angeles seemed to be a dry stronghold; as Kenneth Rose notes, “If there was any city in the country where Prohibition should have been a success, that city was Los Angeles. Los Angeles, after all, had been largely populated by 'sober, Protestant, native Americans of modest means' from midwest and south—precisely the sort who would be most sympathetic to Prohibition."[15] But as the *New York Times* reported in 1926, “Los Angeles [was] far from dry.”[16] With a long stretch of coastline, proximity to the Mexican border, and expansive vacant spaces, Prohibitionists underestimated the capacity to bootleg, and grossly overestimated public support of the legislation.[17]

12 Gilman Marston Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 120-123.
13 “A Border-Line Case” (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, April 26, 1919), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.
14 Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, 143-147.
15 Kenneth D Rose, “"Dry" Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924,” *Southern California Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1987): 52.
16 “Los Angeles Far from Dry,” *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, March 22, 1926.
17 John J Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition: Alcohol Reform and the Industrializing of America,*

Richard Hofstadter's interpretation of Prohibition enjoyed much favor in the heyday of the new social history and, like Hofstadter, historians continue view Prohibition predominately as an expression of class anxiety and hostility—the middle class fought to distinguish itself from working-class and immigrant groups through temperance.[18] This "symbolic crusade," according to Joseph Gusfield, allowed historical actors to express their social and economic concerns, and also their discomfort with a modernizing world.[19] Prohibition fervor fixated predominately Catholic immigrant groups—particularly the Irish in New York, Polish in Chicago, and Mexicans in Los Angeles—as excessive drinkers and the cause of the nation's moral undoing. Indeed, according to Kitty Calavita's recent work, "The political fight for Prohibition was precipitated by the association of drinking with dangerous classes of immigrants and the social disorder these classes were now thought to provoke."[20]

John Rumbager challenged historians' emphasis on class conflict and identity, arguing it ignored the political economy of Prohibition: "The actors in this drama appear as obscure, resentful of the world confronting them, and seeking to take refuge in their status by abandoning 'genuine' reform and securing for themselves and families symbolic honor." For Rumbager, "Prohibition triumphed because enough urban capitalists believed such a ban was, in existing circumstances, a necessary precondition of the social reform required to ensure successful and permanent transformation of American society into an industrial order."[21] While these

1800-1930 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 96.

18 Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955); Ira M. Wasserman, "Status Politics and Economic Class Interests: The 1918 Prohibition Referendum in California," *The Sociological Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 475-484.

19 Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); *Law, Alcohol, and Order: Perspectives on National Prohibition* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1985); Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*; Wasserman, "Status Politics and Economic Class Interests."

20 Kitty Calavita, "Immigration, Social Control, and Punishment in the Industrial Era," in *Race, Gender, and Punishment: From Colonialism to the War on Terror* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 125.

21 Rumbarger, *Profits, Power, and Prohibition*.

interpretations appear in conflict, they are not mutually exclusive. For some leading the charge, Prohibition represented a way to regulate the time, work, and discipline of a labor force, keeping workers out of the saloon and clocked in on time.[22] For others, it represented a political arena to perform ethnic and classed identities in opposition to an intoxicated other; in Los Angeles, the wet other was Mexican.

Yet to discuss Federal Prohibition, its champions and critics, in terms of support and opposition simplifies a rather complex issue. Indeed, particularly in the late 1920s and early 1930s, it was possible to both support temperance and oppose Prohibition. D.M. Gandier, namesake of Los Angeles's 1910 Gandier Act liquor ordinance, favored liquor restriction but believed absolute Prohibition would prove untenable. "In wet territory the sight of a drunken man in the gutter brings the comment 'See what the liquor traffic has done!' In prohibition United States a drunken man will bring the comment 'See what Prohibition has done!'"[23] Disputes over Prohibition efficacy raged throughout the 1920s, with critics describing it as impotent and counter productive, and supporters trumpeting its success in limiting crime and drinking deaths.[24] Contention particularly germinated around crime statistics, which Prohibition supporters and agents touted as evidence of the legislation's success while detractors claimed these statistics resulted from senseless policing of often victimless crimes.[25]

For many critics and former supporters, the experience of World War I and the economic success of the 1920s made Prohibition an elephant in the room, "A grim reminder of the moral

22 E.P. Thompson, *Time, Work-discipline, and Industrial Capitalism* (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1967).
23 Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, 147.
24 "Orange County Draft Article," ca 1930, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 36, Bancroft Library; "Prof. Lombroso on Drink and Crime" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, n.d.), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.
25 Upton Sinclair, *The Wet Parade* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1931); Irving Fisher, *Prohibition at its worst,* (New York N.Y.: Alcohol information committee, 1927).

frenzy so many wished to forget, a ludicrous caricature of this reform impulse, of the Yankee-Protestant notion that it is both possible and desirable to moralize private life through action."[26] According to critics of Prohibition— "the great American tragedy," for the *Los Angeles Examiner*—the legislation exacerbated crime, proved ineffective in curbing drinking among the nation's youth, and created a world of dangerous vice more harmful than alcohol itself.[27] Responding to this collective disillusionment, President Herbert Hoover established in 1929 the Presidential Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement (called the Wickersham Commission after its chair, George Wickersham) to survey the legislation. In its final report, presented in summer of 1931, the commission toed the line, arguing that Prohibition had not come without failures and that police abuses proved rampant, but also noted the decline in drinking around the country.

According to the Commission, the people had "nullified" Prohibition; it would take at least two generations for the laws to become naturalized, gain respectability, and enjoy the support of a law abiding public.[28] The Great Depression would afford Prohibition no such opportunity, depleting its moral authority and already dwindling support. In these years, books supporting Prohibition emerged with such titles as *The Price of Prohibition*, *Economics of Prohibition*, and *Prohibition and Prosperity,* which replaced formerly moralistic arguments with hard economic analysis.[29] As economic panic mounted, Prohibition became an economic, not moral, question with the Depression ultimately eclipsing it in national consciousness.

Indeed, as the roaring twenties became the Great Depression, debates about both Mexican

26 Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform*.

27 "The Great American Tragedy," *Los Angeles Examiner*, January 20, 1931.

28 United States., *Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws of the United States, etc.* (pp. viii. 162. Washington 1931., 1931).

29 Samuel Crowther, *Prohibition and Prosperity* (New York: The John Day Company, 1930); Malvern Hall Tillitt, *The Price of Prohibition* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and company, 1932); Herman Feldman, *Prohibition; Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton and company, 1927).

immigration and Prohibition shifted to economic costs. Restrictionists, particularly labor unions like California State Federation of Labor, claimed that Mexicans immigrating to the United States overpopulated the labor supply, taking jobs away from unemployed Euro Americans and driving down the price of labor in general.[30] Restrictionists further argued that, in seeking welfare, Mexicans further depleted already drained government coffers.[31] Economist Glenn Hoover in 1930, for example, claimed that "although the peon is comparatively unassimilable, he is proving an adept at assimilating American charity, constituting up to 50% of relief rolls." Reports from charitable organizations in Los Angeles echoed these comments about the disproportionate amounts of Mexicans seeking relief.[32] These economic fears combined with long established social stereotypes about Mexican criminality, laziness, and filth, culminating in Mexican Repatriation. In 1931 alone, 50,000 "Unwanted Mexicans" made government sponsored—and allegedly 'voluntary'—journeys to Mexico.[33]

Public pressure, poverty and police intimidation informed individual decisions to repatriate.[34] For example, in a February 3, 1931 press release, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Chief Roy Stekel declared that forthcoming immigration roundups "will be aimed mainly at deportable aliens who figure in crimes." He continued, "Most of our crime problems are caused by aliens without any respect for the laws of the country…many of them are open to deportation."[35] Stekel directly appealed to popular images of immigrant criminals, which in 1931

30 "Unionists Fight Over Mexicans," *Los Angeles Times*, October 12, 1927.
31 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.
32 Glenn E. Hoover, "Our Mexican Immigrants," *Foreign Affairs* 8 (1929): 99-107; Los Anglees County Employment Department, "Fiscal Year Report," July 1926, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 31, Bancroft Library.
33 Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation pressures, 1929-1939.* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1974); "Great Migration Back To Mexico Underway," *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1931.
34 Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*.
35 "U.S. and city join drive on L.A. aliens; many criminals and those associated with them liable to deportation," *Los Angeles Examiner*, February 3, 1931.

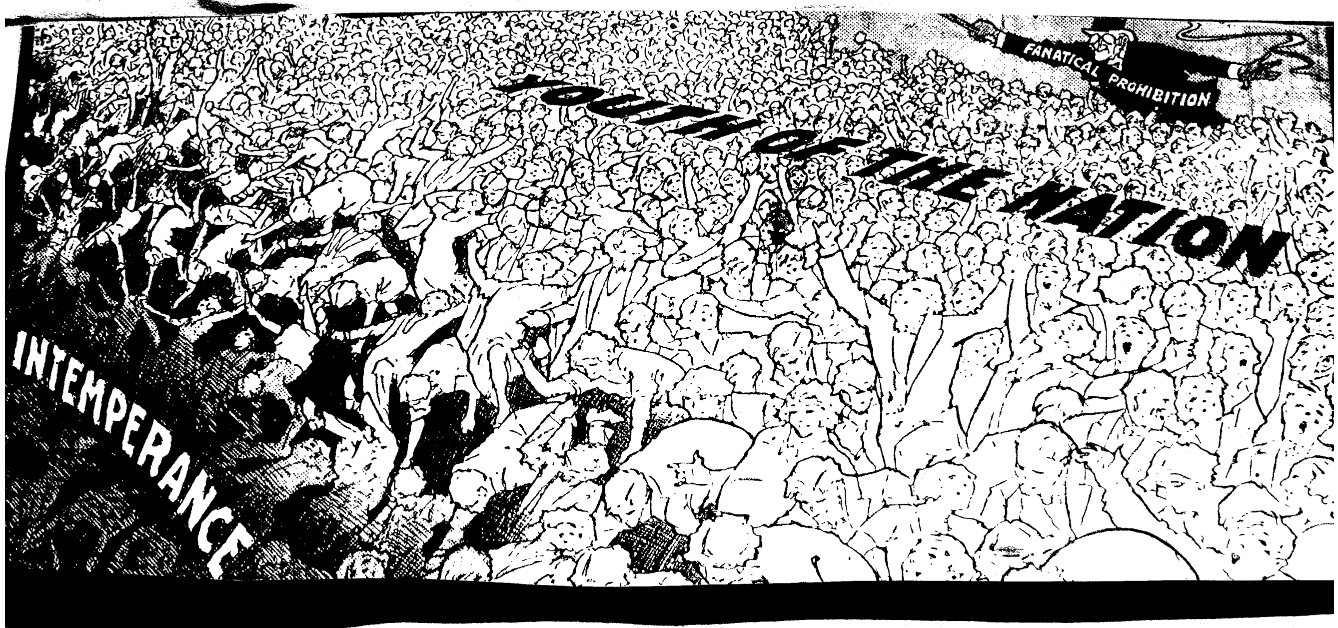
Los Angeles, meant predominately Mexican. Such harassment could prompt Mexicans to repatriate for fear of future encounters with law enforcement. Depictions of these “criminal aliens,” regularly relied on representations of intoxication, and the LAPD targeted Mexicans particularly for public intoxication and other alcohol-related charges.

The city's two largest daily newspapers, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Examiner* could agree that Mexican immigrants' violence and improvidence must be addressed, but the economic cost of immigration restriction divided the two papers. While emphatic in its coverage about the evils of Mexican crimes and violence, the *Times* remained ambivalent about the need for immigration reform, favoring an economic interpretation that saw Mexican labor as good for business. Of course, this did not mean that the *Times* believed they were good for society, instead contrasting their economic necessity with their disproportionate criminality and social undesirability. The *Examiner*—published by newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst—demonstrated no such ambivalence, constantly clamoring for immigration restriction, railing against ineffective immigration policies and “criminal aliens.” While the *Times* and *Examiner* could agree on the undesirable social consequences of Mexican immigration, the *Times* still saw Mexican immigrants as necessary for a healthy Los Angeles economy; the *Examiner* disagreed, citing jobs white Americans allegedly lost to Mexicans, and suggesting the economic toll of policing this criminal population eclipsed their financial benefit to the city. Though often expressed in terms of social problems, immigration agendas often hinged on economics.

Similarly, opposition to Prohibition took on an economic character with critics bemoaning liquor tax dollars lost to Prohibition and declines in national exports. Opponents charged that the nation's myopic focus on Prohibition detracted from the bigger, and more significant, problems of a devastated economy. Indeed, the 1928 conventions for both political parties focused almost

entirely on Prohibition, leaving Charles Dewey to bemoan, "Here we are in the midst of the greatest crisis since the Civil War and the only thing the two national parties seem to want to debate is booze."[36] While the *Los Angeles Record* reminded readers in 1931 that there were issues "more important than alcohol," newspapers and public officials treated Prohibition as a sensational wedge issue to captivate readers and voters alike.[37]

The *Los Angeles Times* supported Prohibition, though somewhat quietly, reflecting the "damp" politics of its publisher, mogul Henry Chandler. The paper buried stories showing Prohibition enforcement in an unfavorable light and foregrounded stories chronicling the urban grime and squalor that signaled the need for need for liquor reform.[38] The *Examiner* also bemoaned saloons, irresponsible drinking, and crime associated with liquor, but favored liquor regulation rather than absolute Prohibition, which, according to the paper, hurt the economy



through lost tax dollars and inflated police and prison budgets.[39] Whereas the *Times* kept quiet about the legislation itself, the *Examiner* excoriated it. The disparities in Prohibition sentiments between these two newspapers mirrors that of public opinion: some wanted the the freedom to drink quietly as they saw fit without government intervention, many wanted to limit drinking but thought Prohibition erred in its methods, and others remained "bone dry" temperance advocates.

Yet there was one thing everybody agreed upon; all parties understood the language of the debate: Prohibitionists were dry, anti-prohibitionists were wet.[40] Wet metaphors guided Prohibition scripts, yet while they could agree on the terms, few could agree on the solution. A cartoon from the *Examiner* demonstrates how support for temperance did not necessarily translate into Prohibition advocacy, as well as the prominence of wet metaphors: in "The Stampede to Intemperance," a Puritanical man labeled "fanatical Prohibition" drives an indistinguishable mass of the nation's youth to oblivion. A plethora of contemporary editorial

cartoons similarly bemoaned Prohibition's unintended consequences. According to “The Stampede,” rather than promoting moral efforts to curb youth drinking, absolute Prohibition drove these children over the edge. In *Metaphors We Live By,* Mark Johnson and George Lakoff discuss the power of metaphor, not just in terms of comparative device, but also in shaping popular perception and action: “Metaphors may create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may be a guide for future action.” This future action is often dictated by those who “have the power to define reality…and what is at issue is not the truth or falsity of a metaphor but the perceptions and inferences that follow from it and the actions that are sanctioned by it.”[41] Considering Lakoff and Johnson’s analysis, notice the ways in which the youth in the cartoon take on the qualities of a river, flowing towards a waterfall that will submerge them in debauchery and ruin: they stream en masse until cascading downwards. Within this cartoon, no actual liquid can be seen, yet water informs the conceptualization of the youthful stampede toward intemperate ruin. This metaphor also appeared in one teetotaler’s speech coming a year later, which advised listeners to consider the “wrecks on either bank of the stream of death, of the suicides, of the insanity, of the ignorance.”[42] Upton Sinclair even titled his Prohibition protest piece, *The Wet Parade*.[43] There was no disputing the negative connotations of wet, just contests over who caused the flood: drinkers or prohibitionists themselves. These debates about crime, morality, and economy dominated popular conversations, and nativists harnessed this popularly understood register to describe the other wets in the room: Mexicans.

Building on Lakoff and Johnson’s work, Chicano theorist Otto Santa Ana writes, “Metaphors foreground certain features while back grounding or ignoring others, meaning that

41 George Lakoff, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 156-158.
42 “Legal and Illegal,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 1932.
43 Sinclair, *The Wet Parade*.

aspects of immigration perceived as negative can come to frame the issue without consideration of the contributions (economic, social, cultural) immigrants make." Through his examination of late twentieth-century sources, Santa Ana concludes that water metaphors shape representational form and structure, taking "well developed frameworks of everyday knowledge of floods and tides and impos[ing] it on an entirely human activity (migration)." For Mexicans, water implies "undifferentiated quantities that are not human…energy and power…and danger."[44] Another *Examiner* cartoon, "It Cannot Come Too Soon," demonstrates the visual representation of wet metaphors in relation to immigration, criminality, and exclusion. The cartoon depicts a belabored Uncle Sam throwing undistinguishable, unidentifiable individuals labeled "criminal alien" across a body of water. They cascade across, one below the next, streaming across the flowing river. Here, water operates as a metaphor for the border (the Rio Grande), but also informs the movement of expelled immigrants who move across it as though shot out of a hose.[45]

Public perception of immigration, informed by such representations, was part of an anti-Mexican climate in which many individuals felt compelled to repatriate on their own terms.[46] The hostility and coercion implied in the cartoon certainly reflects the brutality of immigrant sweeps, which the *Los Angeles Record* described as fraught with "tyrannical abuses" and a "wanton disregard of human rights."[47] Like this cartoon, "The Battle Rages" also depicts an "alien criminal" forcefully removed from the United States in settings at or near obvious bodies of water.[48] This cartoon shows Uncle Sam, particularly as symbolized by his inadequate knife, to be

44 Otto Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 18, 72-80, esp 76.

45 "It Cannot Come Too Soon," *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 19, 1931.

46 Repatriating on one's own terms afforded individuals the time to put their affairs in order, send word to Mexico of their plans, and a modicum of dignity by avoiding detention. See Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*.

47 "Alien Residents of L.A. Harassed," *Los Angele Record*, March 13, 1931; "Immigration Men Use Inquisition Methods," *Los Angele Record*, March 18, 1931.

48 "The Battle Rages," *Los Angeles Examiner*, August 21, 1931.

impotent to halt this dangerous immigration—an emasculation and uselessness caused by ineffective immigration legislation. Both encourage the exclusion of wet immigrants, labeled criminal, in a time and place where the viewer could paint in racial membership.

True, these cartoons do not specifically code immigration as Mexican but instead refer to a monolithic "criminal alien." Anthropologist Leo Chávez has persuasively argued that late twentieth-century representations of Mexican immigration relied on links between their own movement and that of water, and we encounter this same metaphor in the early days of the Depression.[49] "It cannot come too soon," and "The battle rages," appeared in August of 1931—a peak month in Mexican repatriation. Six months after LAPD Chief Stekel's vow to expel "deportable aliens," days before the Wickersham Report on foreign-born criminality, and with Mexicans repatriating daily, there can be little doubt about the identity of the wet "criminal

49 Leo Chavez, *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and Politics of the Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 73-73; Santa Ana, *Brown Tide Rising*, 76.

alien"—at least to readers in 1931 Los Angeles.

Like visual representations of wet metaphors, written descriptions of Mexican immigration and Prohibition also summon this imagery. Roberts's articles drip with wet metaphors, from "overflows," to "tides," and "seas" of immigrants, and even in animalizing Mexicans, Roberts selects the "water buffalo," which "can scarcely exceed [Mexican] dumbness in educational matters."[50] Pioneering Latin American historian Hubert Herring critiqued these articles in 1931, noting that Roberts' "nomenclature is significant...the words are not used about people we like."[51] Like Roberts, however, printed media described not just "floods of wet propaganda" and "floods of liquor," but also "streams" of Mexican bodies "running" and "pouring" across the border, "flooding" into the United States.[52] The *New York Times* reported that whiskey "filters over the Mexican border," and one irate nativist in 1929 even proposed building "a dyke against Mexicans."[53] Flood metaphors would have been particularly adept at connoting danger to Angelinos who had endured the Los Angeles River's 1914 flood.[54]

In restrictionist eyes, the United States suffered from a blinding addiction to immigrant labor; many nativists believed that U.S. agribusiness, particularly in the Southwest, relied on the affordability and 'docility' of Mexican labor, ignoring its undesirable qualities and focusing solely upon their own profits.[55] Labor contractors, as we shall see, opposed restriction to

50 Roberts, "The Docile Mexican."

51 Hubert Herring, "Relations Between Americans and Mexicans in the United States," *Religious Education* 26 (December 1931): 132-137.

52 "Group to Give Prohibition Aid," *Los Angeles Times*, February 7, 1931; "Mexico Aids in Drive on Smugglers," *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1931; Paul Taylor, "Note on Streams of Mexican Migration," *American Journal of Sociology* XXXVI, no. 2 (September 1930); J. Blaine Gwin, "Immigration Along our Southwest Border," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* XCII, no. 93 (1921): 126-130; "Liquor Flood Cuts Prices," *Los Angeles Times*, December 17, 1922; Helen Walker, "Mexican Immigrants as Laborers," *Sociology and Social Research* 13, no. 1 (September 1928): 55-62.

53 "Los Angeles Far from Dry"; Robert McLean, "A Dyke Against Mexicans," *The New Republic*, August 14, 1929.

54 William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 92 and 108.

55 Nicholas De Genova, "Introduction," in *Racial Transformations: Latinos and Asians Remaking the*

Mexican labor, and in doing so, according to nativists, they sold out the nation. The Los Angles Chamber of Commerce opposed restricting Mexican immigration for the same reason it opposed Prohibition: both represented threats to business and profit.[56] Favorable representations of Mexican immigration appearing in mainstream presses often spoke to such business interests, exalting Mexicans as "the most dependable common laborer of the southwest" based on their supposedly unique suitability for field work. Interestingly enough, these articles often reversed wet metaphors, speaking of the "drought" of labor, which has been "diverted" back to Mexico. Mexicans appear, quite literally, as part of a labor pool being irreparably "depleted"—a reservoir that will need to be tapped come summertime drought conditions.[57]

Representations of Mexican laborers demonstrate the elasticity and flexibility of alcohol tropes, which could be manipulated to fit multiple agendas in labor debates. Economic opportunity drove Mexican migration to the United States and labor drew the battle lines for those in favor of restriction and those opposed to it. According to Curtis Marez, drug laws in the early to mid twentieth century were "a means not of excluding Mexicans from the labor market but of incorporating them into it as disciplined, subordinated worker...other crimes such as 'vagrancy,' created an environment that made it easier to manage labor."[58] Liquor figured regularly into labor policies, and discussions about Mexican workers often turned to alcohol to

United States, ed. Nicholas De Genova (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 14.

56 Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, August 2, 1916," August 2, 1916, Carton 8, USC Regional History Center; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, September 12, 1917," September 12, 1917, Carton 9, USC Regional History Center; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, October 3, 1918," October 3, 1918, Carton 9, USC Regional History Center; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, June 10, 1920," June 10, 1920, Carton 10, Book 1, USC Regional History Center; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, July 5, 1923," July 5, 1923, Carton 11, Book 2; Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, "Board of Directors Minutes, March 22, 1928," March 22, 1928, Carton 14, Book 1, USC Regional History Center.

57 "Mexican Labor Scare Rapped," *Los Angeles Times*, June 8, 1931; "Mexican Labor Dearth Feared," *Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 1931.

58 Curtis Marez, *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 137.

emphasize certain characteristics and to foster a climate that policed the activities, movements, and work of a marginalized labor population. Iterations about intoxicated Mexican labor enjoyed almost universal application but to varying, and often competing, ends. As infantalized laborers, intoxicated Mexicans appeared in stories about the abuses of unscrupulous bosses and capitalism in general, printed by the Communist Party's *Daily Worker*. These articles detailed poor working and sanitation conditions provided for Mexican labor as examples of capitalist greed and worker powerlessness. This greed, according to several stories, led some bosses to encourage poverty and docility in their labor force with alcohol.[59]

For example, the *Daily Worker* reported in 1930 that on salmon fishing boats departing California for Alaska, "Throughout the [three month] season the [Mexican, black, and Asian] men are plied with booze, kept drunk and systematically robbed by gamblers and dope peddlers." Beyond greedily exploiting the work force, the article alleged bosses violated Prohibition in pacifying their workers. The article further suggested governmental complicity, noting that "under the protection of the packers and under the 'supervision' of the packer's government agency—the state bureau of labor statistics...unmentionable vice flourishes...under indescribable conditions of of (sic) filth and misery."[60] Like the above story, reports of employers encouraging liquor consumption among ethnic Mexican workers abounded during this era and emerged as part of a broader critique of US capitalism. Another *Daily Worker* article on workers in the Imperial Valley noted, "Contractors, who supply 40% of the labor in this area, hold up wages, in some instances fail to pay in full and even force the men to buy liquor."[61] Forced intoxication led to debt and a subservient labor force.

59 "Cantaloupe Pickers Strike," *The Brawley News*, May 11, 1928; "Celery Strikers Win Higher Wages," *The Rural Worker*, January 1937.
60 "Mexican and Negro Salmon Boat Crews Robbed by Bosses, State," *Daily Worker*, August 23, 1930.
61 "Untitled," January 1937.

The Federal Writer's Project, commissioned as part of the New Deal, produced a documentary history of migratory labor in California that similarly exposed this trend. Though the FWP published five years after Prohibition's repeal, their work began in its twilight and maintained tropes from temperance debates that link alcohol to exploitation, Mexicans, and violence throughout California. The FWP focused on migratory beet workers in Sacramento, where "irresponsible beet contractors...sell beer and wine in the camps, and are encouraged in this to force the workers to be in direct obligation to the contractor, due to debts." Furthermore, "In many cases they are sold whiskey, without seller's permit, in violation of the law, and when drunk are robbed of what little wages they have. Some contractors will fire any man who does not consume at least six bottles of beer daily."[62] Far from subjects in these narratives, Mexicans appear as objects broken by capitalist greed.

Producing their work during the reform-minded, pro labor climate of the New Deal, the FWP perhaps exaggerated the ferocity with which bosses forced liquor upon workers, but nonetheless documented a tendency within agribusiness consistent with labor practices through over one and a half centuries of California's history. Leftist periodicals and the FWP drew parallels between contemporary capitalists exploiting Mexican laborers and similar abuses of Native Americans by Spanish missionaries, Mexican rancheros, and American capitalists. In all three economic systems, "Somebody had to do the work;" one thing that landed Spanish, Californio, and Anglo elites could agree upon was that 'somebody' was not them. They ensured this through coercive practices that included plying the indigenous labor force with alcohol.[63] Indeed, indigenous subordination in the missions of Alta California relied, according to historian

62 Raymond P. Barry, ed., "Monographs Prepared for A Documentary History of Migratory Farm Labor, 1938" (Federal Writer's Project, 1938), 191, Bancroft Library.

63 Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture inFrontier California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 190.

Douglas Monroy, on "two spirits:" God and alcohol—the Church provided the system to extract, discipline, and rationalize forced labor, and "alcohol easily overpowered any remaining restraints."[64] Despite the liberal rhetoric of the independent Mexican Republic, by controlling access to land and market goods, and by intoxicating the indigenous labor force, Californio elites continued these practices through Mexico's reign.

In crafting a history of migratory labor in California, the FWP saw the state's history not as a succession of nations but rather as a continuity of labor exploitation, often by manipulating people with alcohol. Thus, in explaining contemporary examples of intoxicated and coerced labor, the FWP turned to an earlier chapter of California's history, quoting author and early Los Angeles booster Horace Bell.

> The ruin of this once happy and useful [Native American] people commenced. The cultivators of the vineyards began to pay their Indian peons with aguardiente, a real "firewater." The consequence was that on receiving their wages on Saturday evening, the laborers habitually met in great gatherings and passed the night in gambling, drunkenness, and debauchery. On Sunday the streets were crowded from morning till night with Indians — males and females of all ages, from girls of ten and twelve to the old man and woman of seventy or eighty. At sundown, the pompous marshal, with his special Indian deputies, who had been confined in jail all day to keep them sober, would drive and drag the combatants to a great corral in the rear of the Downey Block, where they slept away their intoxication. The following morning they would be exposed for sale, as slaves for the week. Los Angeles had its slave market as well as New Orleans and Constantinople, — only the slaves at Los Angeles were sold fifty-two times a year, as long as they lived, a period which did not exceed one, two, or three years under the new dispensation. They were sold for a week, and bought by vineyard men at prices ranging from one to three dollars, one-third of which was paid to the peon at the end of the week, which debt, due for well-performed labor, was invariably paid in aguardiente, and the Indian made happy until the following Monday morning, he having passed through another Saturday night and Sunday's saturnalia of debauchery and bestiality.[65]

64 Ibid., 134.
65 Barry, "Monographs Prepared for A Documentary History of Migratory Farm Labor, 1938," 7-8.

While Bell's description appears somewhat hyperbolic and says nothing about American exploitation of racialized labor populations, studies of nineteenth-century Californios' bookkeeping records show most Indian laborers received at least part of their wages in brandy or other liquor.[66] Liquor fostered dependency, kept wages lower, and left laborers intoxicated and distracted beyond the point of resistance. The FWP connected this legacy with the experiences of contemporary laborers in the twentieth century, including Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

After the US-Mexican War, despite promises of citizenship under the Treaty of Guadalupe, Californias/os found the path to equality elusive. Demographic changes resulting from mass Euro American migration, political and legal manipulation concerning land rights, and the dismantling of the agrarian hide and tallow economy through US capitalist integration all combined to expropriate and disenfranchise Californios/as in the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Albert Camarillo, "Anglo racism was an oppressive social force," one supporting vigilantism, state violence, and criminalization.[67] The Anti-Vagrancy act of 1855, more commonly known as "The Greaser Act," emerged within and helped to shape this climate.[68] The law sanctioned the arrest of "idle Mexicans" who faced a fine for being out of work, which they could either pay off, or in the likely case they could not afford such a fine—they were, after all, out of a job—labor the debt away through unpaid work.[69] This legislation plotted ethnic Mexicans on a similar path to forced labor as Native Americans in the previous century, relying on ideas about laziness and over indulgence to subjugate the impoverished. Those finding

66 Maria Raquél Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-Mexican Women and Interethnic Marriage in California, 1820-1880* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007); Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers*, 101-191, 242-243.

67 Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California,1848-1930* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), 101-141, esp 107.

68 Ibid., 108-109.

69 Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

themselves on the fringes of the new economic order could be conscripted into menial labor or placed in jail. As Californios fell (or were pushed) down California's socioeconomic ladder and more Mexicans migrated to what was now the United States, the relationship between alcohol and labor continued into the twentieth century.

In the throes of a supposed agricultural labor shortage during World War I, University of California Agricultural Economist R.L. Adams proposed wider application of anti-vagrancy laws would solve this "farm labor problem." Under the law, Adams reminded his audience, if individuals were "unwilling to work they could be jailed as vagrants, and the sentence would include hard labor." This policy, he argued, represents "a savings to the community...as of course no wages would have to be paid for the forced labor" of "common drunkard[s]."[70] While for those seeking to reverse urban decay, vagrancy and drunkenness appeared unattractive, for employers, it proved good business. According to Carey McWilliams, in 1918, Mexicans arrested for vagrancy "curiously" found their sentences coincided with harvest timetables: incarcerated Mexicans would be released at harvest and literally taken to the fields to work or face further jail time.[71] Coding Mexicans as vagrants rendered them vulnerable to labor exploitation and also contributed to popular perceptions of their detrimental presence in the United States.

As LAPD officer S.H. Bowman acknowledged in 1924, vagrancy was an elastic charge that officers used when they had a bad feeling about somebody and could find no other reason to arrest them.[72] Indeed, vagrancy violations claimed more Mexican arrests than any other violation in 1920s Los Angeles.[73] For restrictions, representations of Mexicans as vagrants spoke

70 R.L. Adams, "The Farm Labor Problem," *University of California Chronicle* 22 (1920): 200-216.

71 Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 180-181.

72 S.H. Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 1924, 5, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

73 Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

to a broader need to halt their migration. According to immigration policy dating back to 1892, migrants declared “likely to become a public charge” (LPC) could be denied entry to and deported from the United States. Between 1921 and 1930, according to INS data, 37,175 individuals were refused entry into the United States. Nativist descriptions of ethnic Mexicans often seem almost interchangeable with descriptions of impoverished white vagrants. When reading Kenneth Roberts stories from the mid 1920s, one could very easily substitute 'bum,' 'tramp,' or 'hobo' for 'peon' without the connotations significantly shifting: the squalor, feeblemindedness, mobility, and immorality linked to these groups appears as a common pejorative for (and a way to police) a labor supply.

Though concerns about Mexican laborers' economic and social impact remained central in southern California in the years leading to and through the Depression, newspapers and government officials were similarly concerned about the migration of impoverished whites into Los Angeles. As early as 1920, the LAPD worked to turn away this population and by 1935 had established their own “border patrol.”[74] Particularly during the Depression, presses chided the Chamber of Commerce for advertising job opportunities in California where there were none to be had, and when the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) dissolved its migrant relief program, leaders became “hysterical,” fortifying the city's borders with LAPD officers to prohibit the entrance of white migratory labor.[75] These efforts, which Carey McWilliams labeled “unconstitutional,” dispatched over one hundred officers to counties surrounding Los Angeles to discourage migrant traffic forcibly until the economic resurgence of World War II. Though crime statistics indicated that Mexicans constituted a disproportionate

74 “Annual Report, Chief of Police,” July 22, 1920, Box 1061, Folder 1920, Los Angeles City Archives; “Border Patrol's Program Lauded,” April 1, 1936.

75 McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 310.

amount of vagrants, these measures targeted whites' westward migration, and it is interesting to note that as the US-Mexican border fortified and militarized, local authorities similarly constructed and defended domestic boundaries to keep away unemployed "indigent alien" whites.[76]

Before and through the Great Depression, Mexicans could be favorably compared to this white migrant population of "hoboes" and vagrants, inverting stereotypes about Mexican intoxication to highlight their suitability for work whites could not perform. However, those singing the praises of Mexican temperance and efficiency did not want to better Mexicans' condition.[77] As businesses sought to lower costs by employing an exploitable Mexican population, leaders could highlight the necessity of Mexican labor by besmirching whites as hoboes and drunks. One FWP narrator reported, "many white men, who only want a whiskey stake...will work a couple of days, demand their money, and leave the ranch."[78]

Paul Taylor's interviews across the United States reveal similar sentiments: "We like the Mexicans very much because they stick...There is a lot of overhead expense in handling hoboes. They work a pay day or two, then come in to get drunk, then ship out again. The hoboes are more experienced than the Mexicans, but less steady." Mexican dependability and temperance also contrasted that of Black labor as well as specific European ethnic groups, such as Italians, and Greeks: "The Greeks come into this office drunk lots of times; the Mexicans never that I can remember. The Mexicans are as good or better than the Italians. They are much more reliable than the Greeks. The Greeks were always fighting, drunk, and kniving each other."[79]

76 Lieut. James Lyons, "Work of the Crime Crushers," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives; McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 310-311.

77 García, *A World of its Own*, 87-120.

78 "Labor Problems In California Agriculture, 1887-1902" (Federal Writer's Project, n.d), Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 68, Folder 39, Bancroft Library.

79 Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), 83-86; See also Robert O'Brien, "The Northern Mexican," *Pomona College Magazine*

Interestingly enough, Paul Taylor recorded similar observations about drunken knife fights among Mexicans. One police officer in Indiana summarized: "the Mexicans are not worse than the others, but they will kill quicker...knives are usually carried..and when [they are] drunk, these instruments come into use."[80] The congruence of these stereotypes shows the elasticity of ideas about labor and immigration.

Indeed, most popular press depictions of Mexican laborers portrayed them as malicious drunks waiting out the work days until payday when they could go crazy. In these stories, focused on the social cost of cheap labor, Mexicans appear undesirable for labor because they exist outside the moral compass of the United States. In 1923, the *Los Angeles Times* story "Gambling Orgy Ended by Raids" reported, "Yesterday was pay day and for the last several pay days, gamblers, women and bootleggers, it is alleged, have been reaping bountiful harvests by plying their traffic among the hundreds of Mexican laborers there." From the "lawless characters," the Riverside Sheriff seized "cash stakes, cards, three women, one alleged bootlegger, bootleg liquor, twenty assorted gamblers and one perfectly good Ford car."[81] Stories described similar nighttime mayhem among Mexican laborers, who proved "ungovernable on account of the liquor they consume" and linked this chaos to paydays: "Since the pay days about the middle of the month industries employing many of the Mexicans have been forced to run with short help."[82] Here alcohol fit into critiques of unreliable Mexican laborers always on the move, saying nothing about the more pressing economic and social conditions that foster this itinerancy.

Coverage of beet pickers living in Los Alamitos, an unincorporated township bordering

(October 1931): 29-33.

80 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 86, 143, 144.

81 "Gambling Orgy Ended by Raids," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1923.

82 "Liquor Making Trouble," *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1912.

Long Beach, described them as bandits in a wild west town with regular all night parties and fights resulting from "bad liquor."[83] The violence—which, according to the *Times* and the *Register,* came on paydays—culminated in the murder of Los Alamitos constable José Orosco, who "held town down by sheer force of his experience with a gun."[84] According to press accounts, the Spanish constable attempted to halt a drunken brawl between laborers who then stabbed him. After his death, the unsupervised "carousing, gun-loving Mexican population" engaged in a "carnival of wine and shooting in the Mexican quarter of the sugar factory hamlet."[85] Both papers constructed Mexicans in Los Alamitos as drunk barbarians uncontrollable without brute force, and expressed fear about the chaos among the "cholos" after the constable's death.[86] Whatever their suitability for labor and significance to the national economy—which the *Times* regularly emphasized—the social cost of this laboring population appears too great. The *Times* didn't want to limit the number of Mexican immigrants in the United States, it wanted to police them.

Those seeking to control Mexican labor, such as managers, growers, the police, and local authorities held often conflicting attitudes about liquor based on competing impulses: the intoxicated could prove easily draftable into low wage labor, but could also be undependable and violent, hurting bottom lines. This contradiction—by which alcohol was both good and bad for business—meant that as workers were plied with alcohol, agriculturalists simultaneously sought to restrict their laborers' access. In 1919, the California Growers Convention agitated for national

83 "Torn by Load of Bird Shot," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1906; "South of the Tehachepi," *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1907; "Pick Man to Restore Order," *Los Angeles Times*, October 27, 1907; "Thrusts Close to Heart," *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1908; "Thought He Was Dead," *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1909; "Man Shot in the Stomach," *Los Angeles Times*, April 22, 1912.

84 "South of the Tehachepi."

85 "South of the Tehachepi," *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1907.

86 "Deputy Constable Orosco Was Murdered by Man He Arrested," *Santa Ana Register*, August 26, 1907; "Murderer was Handed Gun to Kill Juan Orosco," *Santa Ana Register*, August 27, 1907.

wartime prohibition, arguing, "in this crisis we need crops more than we need saloons."[87] Explicitly linking worker sobriety and food production, growers argued that the temptation of a nearby saloon could prove too much for workers. Such saloons led men to move on in search of another whiskey stake, and excessive Sunday drinking led to "blue Mondays" in which the majority of the workforce stayed home recovering.[88] Other business interests shared these concerns and saw the utility of liquor restriction—in the the years leading up to the first World War, according to Prohibition historian Gilman Ostrander, "Purely economic arguments for Prohibition began to be felt by businessmen, who had not previously been moved by traditional religious and social arguments. Employers, it was argued, would get much more work for their money if their workers were denied the bottle."[89]

Into these economic concerns, dry legislators folded their Prohibition agenda, inserting "wartime prohibition" into the Congressional Food Act passed November 22, 1918. The first national prohibition of liquor—which did not amend the Constitution and thus required no state ratification— came in an act to "Provide further for the national security and defense by stimulating and facilitating the distribution of agricultural products." Thus, the legislation underpinning wartime prohibition appeared in a bill to stabilize agriculture. Indeed, the nation's first national prohibition specifically linked liquor to laborers and their productivity, growers and their profitability, and food supplies and national security. Had the act merely limited liquor production to conserve the produce required for its manufacture, the bill would have further outlawed wine and beer, which it did not. Instead, the Congressional Food Act sought to stabilize

87 "Proceedings: 50th State Fruit Growers' Convention, Nov. 1917," *Monthly Bulletin, State Dept. of Horticulture*, February 1918.

88 In its 1930 defense of Prohibition, The Bureau of Prohibition claimed that the legislation eradicated "blue Mondays." See Department of Justice, Bureau of Prohibition, *The Value of Law Observance: A Factual Monograph* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1930), 11.

89 Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, 111.

labor and justify Progressive restrictions on intoxicants. Incidentally, wartime prohibition did not go into affect until eight months after the war concluded, but remained law throughout demobilization and until National Prohibition took over.[90]

Alcohol figured centrally in representations of the (un)desirability of Mexicans and their labor. Whether cast as drunk victims easily exploited by unscrupulous capitalists, drunk madmen squandering their pay on the liquor that made them violent, or temperate, ideal laborers, a diversity of depictions of Mexican labor revolved around alcohol. As people grappled with Progressive attempts to limit or prohibit liquor, and wet attempts to repeal these initiatives, alcohol served as a commonly understood symbol that colored representations of ethnic groups, their labor, their social time, and their desirability for US citizenship.

Alcohol framed depictions of Mexicans' racial, cultural and social integration into the United States, with liberals and conservatives agreeing that problems with Mexicans stemmed from intoxication. Such ideas percolated into liberal periodicals such as *Survey* magazine where, in 1912, author Samuel Bryan noted, "In California, the offenses for which [Mexicans] were committed were in in the large majority of cases traceable to gambling or excessive drinking." For Bryan, these statistics illustrate that Mexicans' highly-touted criminality rates do not, for the most part, involve violent crimes. Those crimes that do involve violence, however "arise from quarrels among themselves which interfere very little with the white population."[91] On this point, Paul Taylor agreed in his report for the Wickersham Commission, saying that drunken "personal violence" among Mexicans rarely spilled over into the white community, despite

90 United States., *Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws of the United States, etc.*, 4-5; Clifford James Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years* (Barstow, California: Backdoor Publishing, 1999), 25.

91 Samuel Bryan, "Mexican Immigrants in the United States," *Survey* 28 (September 7, 1912): 726.

representations that claimed otherwise.[92] According to both authors, these small crimes provided fodder to criminalize Mexicans, yet both authors agreed that Mexicans drank too much, and when they did they became violent.

A student of pioneering Chicago School of Sociology thinker Robert E. Park, USC professor Emory Bogardus wrote in 1929, "The drinking of liquor plays havoc with many [Mexicans], arousing passions beyond all control, leading to serious crimes, demoralizing an otherwise quiet pleasant people."[93] Such essentialist descriptions took Mexican alcohol addiction as fact and reduced Mexicans to children with little control over their passions and consequential actions.[94] According to a police officer Paul Taylor interviewed, "Carrying a weapon is the [Mexicans'] greatest offense and getting drunk is the second. The other people peddle out the poison and the poor devils drink it."[95] Bogardus student William McEuen's masters thesis included statistics from the 1913 LAPD annual report to claim "drunkenness is responsible for a majority of the arrests of Mexican offenders...Many of the other crimes are due to drinking and hot passions."[96] Mexicans were not inherently evil: alcohol and their "hot blooded passions" unfortunately combined to make a pleasant and formerly useful people violent and irresponsible.

Ideas about alcohol's power over Mexicans' "hot blood" appealed to prominent racialist ideas about biological determinism: many believed the answer was, quite literally, in the blood.[97] As early twentieth-century eugenicists such as Paul Poepone sought to trace character defects like alcoholism and criminality to hereditary causes, ideas about biological precondition informed

92 Edith National Commission on Law Observance and Prohibition, *Report on Crime and the Foreign Born.* (Washington: U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1931), 400.
93 Emory Bogardus, "Second Generation Mexicans," *Sociology and Social Research* 13 (1929): 53-54.
94 García, *A World of its Own*, 67.
95 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 143.
96 William McEuen, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Los Angeles" (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1914), 81.
97 Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 12.

representations of Mexicans in the United States.[98] As Alexander Stern argues in *Eugenic Nation*, Mexicans' allegedly impure racial composition, lineage from an inferior race, and the imperfections of parents' genetic material all combined to produce undesirable bodies according to eugenicists.[99] Representations of Mexican biological inferiority highlighted their "mixed stock" and often turned to a supposed racial cousin of theirs: the Indians of the United States and Mexico. Associations between the groups' racial ancestry, excessive alcohol consumption, backwards civilizations, and violence reinforced one another, as though their shared blood dictated similar character flaws.

In 1907 Needles, California, New Hampshire native Albert Duniger admitted violating the 1904 federal law against selling liquor to Indians. In his defense, however, Duniger pleaded ignorance, insisting that he sold alcohol only to people he believed to be Mexican but, "Mexicans and reservation Indians all look alike." Having only seen Indians in "picture books," Duniger told the *Los Angeles Herald*, "When I get out of the government web I am going to delve deeply into ethnology. I want to be able to detect the difference between a Yaqui and a Mexican."[100] In the heyday of eugenics and biological racism, Duniger's case was not unique.[101] So common was this excuse that in 1910, William Johnson, Chief Special Officer of the United States Indian Service, cautioned Los Angeles residents that in a forthcoming campaign against illegal liquor sales to Indians, that a seller's knowledge (or lack of knowledge) of a customer's racial/ethnic classification would be considered immaterial.[102] Selling to an Indian, even if he looked like a Mexican, was a federal crime and the the government placed the onus on the vendor to know the

98 "The Role of Heredity" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, August 2, 1915), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

99 Stern, *Eugenic Nation*.

100 "U.s. Arrests Six-Footer and He Weeps for Miles," *Los Angeles Herald*, May 7, 1910.

101 "Assert They're Fooled," *Los Angeles Times*, September 20, 1912; "Redskins Hot After Scalp," *Los Angeles Times*, July 9, 1903.

102 "Government Agents Probe 'Bootlegging'," *Los Angeles Herald*, September 29, 1910.

difference.

Yet government officials encountered difficulties discerning and defining the difference between ethnic Mexicans and Native Americans. Using an example that would dismay Duniger, Secretary of Labor James Davis noted this complexity: “The Mexican people are of such a mixed stock and individuals have such a limited knowledge of their racial composition that it would be impossible for the most learned and experienced ethnologist or anthropologist to classify or determine their racial origin.”[103] According to the Handbook of Federal Indian Law, when differentiating between the two, “The biological question of race is generally pertinent, but not conclusive. Legal status depends not only upon biological, but also upon social factors...he may or may not reside on an Indian reservation.” Particularly in legal questions of citizenship and tribal enrollment, US Courts attempted to sort out the racial milieu, as in 1897's Supreme Court Case concerning the ethnic identity of Ricardo Rodríguez.

Rodríguez's petition to naturalize as a US citizen met opposition from Texas courts on the grounds that he was neither white nor African but instead an Indian and thus not entitled to the rights of citizenship. Rodriguez, as a Mexican citizen, claimed that nationality, not race, should determine his eligibility for naturalization. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed, noting the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo's vow to naturalize Mexicans in the United States, and the legal dilemma of distinguishing between Indians and Mexicans. Like Rodríguez, the Court could not identify “where his race came from,” but according to Mae Ngai, the treaty language privileged nationality over race, and in staying consistent with this interpretation, the Court sidestepped the cumbersome task of clearly classifying these genetically related but legally distinguished racial groups.[104] Representations of Mexican's inferior blood and disposition capitalized on this

103 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 53-54.
104 Ibid., 53.

ambiguity and association.

Throughout the early twentieth century, popular presses, government officials, academics, and contemporary pundits compared and conflated ethnic Mexican disposition and biology to that of Native Americans.[105] These sources fixated on Mexican's mixed ancestry, which according to historian John Nieto-Phillips, maligned Mexicans as a "mongerelized" group whose mixed blood compounded their inferiority even beyond that of the Native American.[106] Historian Walter Prescott Webb exemplified these sentiments when he wrote in 1959 that Mexicans blood,"when compared with that of the Plains Indians was as ditch water."[107] He later argued that Mexican cruelty could be traced to an unfavorable mixture of Spanish and Indian blood, but, "The Mexican warrior...was, on the whole, inferior to the Comanche and wholly inferior to the Texan."[108] This thinking enjoyed great currency in the early twentieth century; according to Congressman Box in 1928, "The Mexican is a mixture of mediterranean-blooded Spanish peasant with low grade Indians who did not fight to extinction but submitted and multiplied as serfs. Into that was fused much negro slave blood."[109] Mexican's mixed blood, derived from inferior races, stood to pollute white genes, and its attendant violence to harm white Americans.

Mexicans and Native Americans also shared a debilitating fondness for liquor; authors compared Native Americans, pejoratively linked with "firewater" since the colonial era, to similar problem drinking among Mexicans. The biological impulse to drink came from a

105 Peter C. Mancall, ""I was Addicted to Drinking Rum": Four Centuries of Alcohol Consumption in Indian Country," in *Altering American Consciousness: The History of Alcohol and Drug Use in the United States, 1800-2000*, ed. Sarah W Tracy and Caroline Jean Acker (Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 2004), 91-108.

106 John M Nieto-Phillips, *The Language of Blood: The Making of Spanish-American Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 46, 54, and 70.

107 Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1959), 24-25.

108 Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers; a Century of Frontier Defense*, 2nd ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965), 14.

109 "Immigration Problems by Hon. John C. Box of Texas."

common racial ancestor among Mexicans and Native Americans, a point Edward Ross made rather clear in his 1923 *Social Revolution in Mexico*,

> The whites in Mexico are not beset by the vice of excessive drinking. Mexicans, on the other hand show, like our redskins a terrible weakness for firewater. Tequila and aguardiente are great favorites. These liquids are very often the causes of the assaults and homicides among the masses. Pulque is also an important factor to consider when attempting to solve the Mexican riddle.[110]

Ross's comparison between Indians in the United States and Mexicans explains the supposed degeneracy of Mexican immigrants, tracing it to the same evil plaguing "our redskins." Another author highlighted the thirst of Mexican racial ancestors, going so far as to suggest the Chimichec civilization vanished because of the people's excessive indulgence in pulque.[111] Each text implicates ethnic Mexicans in the United States as racial threats by tracing their irresponsible consumption of alcohol to a biological predisposition passed on by their ancestors and shared with "redskins." Citizens concerned about Mexican immigration expressed themselves in similar terms as A.J. Bertersworn's letter to Secretary of Immigration James Davis illuminates. Complaining about Mexican "cholos," Bertesworn emphasizes both race and alcohol: "They are of Indian and mestizo blood. As a means of livelihood, they work in the fields, but all of their leisure hours are spent around the wine dumps, blind pigs, and pool rooms."[112]

These biologically-derived explanations for Mexican inferiority existed in tandem with similar determinist understandings revolving around culture and environment. Pioneering

110 Edward Alsworth Ross, "Social Revolution in Mexico" (The Century Co., 1923), Carey McWilliams Papers, Box 28, Folder 3, Charles E. Young Special Collections His emphasis.
111 Emil Harry Blichfeldt, *A Mexican Journey*, 1919, 15-16.
112 "A.J. Bertersworn to Secretary James Davis and Congressman Arthur M. Free," January 18, 1926, Record Group 85, Box 4913, Folder 55224/358C, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC.

anthropologist Franz Boas led this revolution against heredity, arguing in *Race, Language and Culture* that most scientists and racial thinkers overestimated the amount of "unfavorable" traits ascribed to biological determinism. Boas claimed biological determinists ignored the significance of environmental/social condition in shaping "character." For Boas, "The cultural factor is of the greatest importance and might well account for observed differences." If heredity could explain criminal behavior, Boas noted, then Australia would to this day be full of the criminal descendants of the convicts originally sent there. While radical in his critique of the science underlying nativism and eugenics, Boas also noted that cultural factors, while most important, "do not preclude the possibility of biologically determined difference." Boas's work substitutes culture for biology, reaffirming difference, and holding race as a suitable (albeit imperfect) category of classification; he seemingly struggles to save 'race' from the determinists, making it more pliable and less severe, open to environmental factors.[113]

In 1929, lawyer and social scientist Glenn E. Hoover showed how environment could explain the problems of "Our Mexican immigrants," as he explained the social evils of Mexican immigration through a pseudo-anthropological study of Mexico itself. Like Hoover, many academics and journalists took "journeys to Mexico" to study the Mexican culture and better explain the origin of Mexican undesirability.[114] In his study, Hoover pointed to calculations that allegedly tabulated Mexican drinking at 7.9 liters per person per year, and despite the efforts of the Mexican government to "reduce illiteracy, morality, and drunkenness," Hoover alleges, there still exists "a gap of some thousands of years that separates Mexican civilization from the

113 Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

114 Blichfeldt, *A Mexican Journey*; Stuart Chase, *Mexico: A Study of Two Americas* (New York: The Macmillan company, 1931); Wallace Thompson, *The Mexican Mind: A Study of National Psychology* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1922); Eric Saint Clair, "Adventures in a Mexican Jungle," *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 1931; "Knives and Guns Flash at Election," *Los Angeles Times*, July 5, 1926; "Mexican Peons Lap up Gutter Tequila," *Los Angeles Times*, September 28, 1919; "Pulque and Mescal," *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1916, sec. III18.

European type."[115] This destructive addiction appeared timeless to Hoover: "In many important respects [Mexico] has remained an Indian civilization with but a veneer of European culture...The ancient way of living has changed but little for the masses, who till the soil in the native way, eat the native food, and wash it down with pulque just as their forefathers did a thousand years ago."[116] Pulque and mescal, both native Mexican alcohols, were seen as "the poorer masses" alcohol of choice and implied cultural and economic poverty; some academics believed drinking beer instead of pulque even marked Mexicans' progress.[117] Focusing on native customs—the "native way"—in regards to food, labor, and alcohol consumption implicates culture as the source of Mexican backwardness.[118]

Similarly, seven years earlier, psychologist Wallace Thompson journeyed not just into Mexico itself, but into Mexican history to explain the attitudes and condition of Mexicans in the united States. In his monograph, *The Mexican Mind*, he argued that "lower class" Mexicans' enthusiasm for "drinking, smoking and sex, all of which rank as amusements as well as among the true national vices," and their consequential improvidence, all emerged from the fusion of Spanish and Indigenous cultures in the Americas.[119] According to Thompson,

> The Mexicans have lost no opportunity to amuse themselves...From the beginning of Mexican history these amusements have been recorded and described. Bernál Díaz, the chronicler of the conquest, and Cortéz himself, in his letters, described the wonderful sights which greeted their eyes on the weekly market days in Tenochititlan, the Aztec capital. The Spaniards, themselves lovers of the festival,

115 Hoover, "Our Mexican Immigrants."

116 Ibid.

117 William Vail, "Seeing Mexico," *Los Angeles Times*, January 20, 1928; Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty.* (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 7.

118 For a discussion of United States authors and their descriptions of Mexico and Mexicans, see Gilbert G Gonzalez, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico, and Mexicanimmigrants, 1880-1930*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

119 Thompson, *The Mexican Mind*, 91.

> found it pleasant to graft their own customs upon those of the Indians. The conquerers built parks and recreation centers, bull rings, band stands, gambling halls, and most powerful of all, established drinking places upon a firm financial basis. The native race responded to this phase of the enthusiasm of the Spaniard, and in this matter the mixed breed has never felt any confusion in his heritages.[120]

Thompson's interpretation speaks of customs and heritage, not blood, marking an early transition in racial thinking built around environment, which explains Mexicans' love of vice and their happy-go-lucky attitude as part of the legacy of Spanish and Indigenous cultural fusion.

Environment, however, did not always mean culture. The *Los Angeles Times* article, "Of Desert Ghosts and Legends," postulated both tangible biological connections to Mexican drinking and fantastic environmental ones that had less to do with culture and more to do with geography and geology. According to the author, a powerful legend dominated the southwest, one of "resurgent mescal hot springs" in Arizona that "brewed a potent invoice of tequila which appeared during periods of a subterranean spring's overflow." Liquor literally bubbled up in the environment around the pre Anglo Southwest, and was chased by Spaniards and Indians "into the ground when it receded. Probably they had become so addicted to their desert tipple they couldn't bear the thought of it getting away from them."[121] This article traced Mexican drinking to racial ancestors, who literally chased alcohol into the ground, but also showed the source of this alcohol to quite literally emerge from their environment. Other articles, particularly those taking place in Mexico, trace Mexican violence and lack of civilization to their drinking, with the Mexican nation acting as an incubator of cultural deficiency.[122]

That Mexicans were prone to drink alcohol and that alcohol summoned violent passions

120 Ibid., 76-77.
121 Joe Chisholm, "Desert Ghosts and Legends," *Los Angeles Times*, May 24, 1931.
122 George Wycherley Kirkman, "November in California History," *Los Angeles Times*, November 6, 1927.

in them seemed to gain uniform acceptance; however academics, presses, and government officials disagreed about the origin of these tendencies, and the representations they inspired. As a researcher for the Wickersham Presidential Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, Paul Taylor wrote "The Problem of the Mexican," a title that, in of itself, reifies Mexicans as a problem. In this chapter—a pasting together of Taylor's previously published research from *Mexican Labor in the United States*—he argued that criminalized perceptions of Mexicans might be easy and habitual, but do not reflect statistical reality: Mexicans commit no more crimes than natives of the United States.[123] He found it unfortunate that "racial antipathies swell the figures of their apparent criminality," and urged a comparison between Mexican and European immigrants' "standing before the law."[124] The significance of this finding cannot be overstated as it directly contradicted popular notions and police statistics, and met fierce opposition. A radical critique of dominant thinking concerning Mexicans, the chapter encouraged more attention to native US criminals and cautioned against facile assumptions regarding race and criminality, and even inspired other academics to draw similar conclusions. Using data from Taylor's report, Constantine Panunzio noted in a study of Prohibition and immigrants, "It is much easier for the foreign born and even the children of the foreign born to be apprehended for the violation of any law than the native born."[125]

In explaining those Mexicans who did violate the law, most frequently in episodes of "drunken personal violence," Taylor cited the cultural disparities between the United States and Mexico. In Mexico, Taylor argued, excessive drinking—which intensified emotional responses

123 G Wickersham and National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement., *Report on Crime and the Foreign Born* (Montclair NJ: Patterson Smith, 1968), 211-212, 400.

124 Ibid., 240.

125 Constantine Panunzio, "The Foreign Born and Prohibition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163 (September 1932): 153.

to conflict—and carrying knives were both cultural norms. Taylor's interviews with police officers, labor contractors, and Mexicans across the United States seemed to affirm this trend, particularly in regard to knives, which informants claimed made the difference between a relatively benign, drunken scrimmage and a deadly fight—and for many liberals, it was these altercations exacerbated by alcohol and knives that fed criminal representations of Mexicans. Newspaper articles in the *Los Angeles Times* consistently reinforced this association between drunk Mexicans and knives with headlines such as "Mexicans use knives," "Seeking Second Savage Slasher," among a vast array of other articles documenting cases of intoxicated, knife oriented violence.[126] Yet even in 1931, Taylor's acceptance of this interpretation had its critics. As Robert O'Brien pointed out, "from the earlier impression 'that all mexicnas carry knives and know how to use them' have developed many attitudes toward this group. These attitudes, varied and not always reconcilable, tend to shape their relations and adjustments to other cultural groups."[127] O'Brien believes that popular ideas about Mexicans, even those emerging from liberal thinkers of the era that proved incompatible with nativist representations, nonetheless detrimentally influenced ethnic Mexicans' experiences in the United States

For Taylor, Mexicans did not violate the law more than whites, and when they did, their reasons for doing so could be explained by cultural divergence. Thus their drunken violence could be eradicated through prolonged exposure to United States "customs and legal codes," which encouraged temperance, frowned upon physical altercation, and did not normalize carrying

126 "Mexicans Use Knives," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 1911; "Seeking Second Savage Slasher," *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 1913; "Border Ripper Slashes Victim.," *Los Angeles Times*, November 5, 1907; "One Dead; Two Others Dying," *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1912; "Thrusts Close to Heart"; "Mexican's Knife Out and in Man's Thigh," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1902; "Attacks an Officer," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1927; "Beet Cutters Kill Mexican.," *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1913; "Fight Rioters on Cliff Edge," *Los Angeles Times*, October 22, 1906; "Kicked Him Out," *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1904.

127 O'Brien, "The Northern Mexican."

weapons on a daily basis.[128] Above all, Taylor's chapter must be seen as a liberal critique of biological racism, chiding nativists for their myopia when it came to Mexicans. Like Boas, Taylor's insights provide a concise critique of the eugenics-minded arguments that derrided Mexicans. But we must also recognize it as culturalist reasoning that reinscribes Mexican criminality by substituting environment for blood and calling for patience as Mexicans assimilate.

Manuel Gámio made similar observations about cultural divergence in his 1928 preliminary report to the Social Science Research Council, describing alcohol consumption as an undesirable cultural skin that Mexican immigrants shed with prolonged exposure to United States customs. "Taking into consideration the difference of point of view on moral points, we can mention some respects in which the Mexican immigrant undeniably improves[with time in the United States]: greater respect for property and for the authorities; religious and social tolerance; relative or absolute abstinence from alcoholic drink." For Gámio, temperance makes Mexican immigrants more responsible and prudent—in the United States, the sober Mexican, "Economizes more, saves money as is evident in the respectable sums he sends back to Mexico and the modest property he acquires after some time."[129]

According to Taylor and Gámio, alcohol abstinence marked a prominent transition for Mexican immigrants who find themselves upwardly mobile once free of it, and signals the potential for better social relations within and outside of Mexican communities. It is interesting to recall the Wickersham's summary of Prohibition enforcement, which emphasized a two generation gap between implementation and general acceptance; chapter three will consider

128 Wickersham and National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement., *Report on Crime and the Foreign Born*, 239 and 404.
129 Manuel Gamio, "Preliminary Report to Social Science Research Council," n.d., Bancroft Library.

alcohol's role in Mexican class identity and desires for upward mobility, but the parallels between Gámio and Wickersham's descriptions cannot be missed. Both suggest that only time will bring Mexican temperance. Similarly, sociologist Robert O'Brien argued in 1931 that, for Mexican immigrants, not temperance but their choice of "alcoholic drinks show the introduction of the new culture with beer, rum, whisky, and gin taking the place of vino seco and tequella (sic)."[130] Alcohol preferences marked generational assimilation for these academics who read cultural difference directly into ethnic Mexican drinking choices.

The field research Gámio and his assistants conducted supports his interpretation, with several subjects noting that, on their path to the United States, they also found the way to temperance. For example, Gregorio López, Santiago Rivera, and Leonardo Soto Mercado all separately described their decisions to stop the drinking that had been so problematic for them in Mexico—a drunken Rivera even assaulted and robbed his father before coming to the United States. Their descriptions of their drinking life in Mexico describe poverty, violence, and laziness—they could not support their families. All three found the Protestant church in the United States, however, and quit drinking; they went on to assist other Mexican immigrants who wish to quit.[131] Many Protestant sects appealed to early twentieth-century ethnic Mexicans who, while predominately Catholic, joined less hierarchical, more autonomous churches such as the Methodist, and Baptist, and particularly Pentecostal, all of which emphasized temperance as a mandatory step on the path to salvation.[132] Indeed, Protestant support carried Prohibition, and these narratives fit harmoniously with Protestant and Prohibitionist emphasis on exorcising

130 O'Brien, "The Northern Mexican."

131 M Robles, "Vida de Gregorio López," April 20, 1927, Bancroft Library; M Robles, "Vida de Santiago Rivera," April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library; Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Leonardo Soto Mercado," May 19, 1927.

132 Arlene M Sánchez-Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

alcohol's evil. Such conversion stories further emphasize the teleological power of United States cultural values to save Mexican immigrants from what makes them undesirable, and underline the heterogeneity of Mexicans in the United States: not all Mexicans are drunks, and those who are may quit if they spend enough time with Americans.

Though most observers only saw a stereotypical drunk, some recognized the diversity of ethnic Mexicans' relationships to alcohol. Taylor's Wickersham Commission interviews across the United States reveal that everyday historical actors expressed concerns about Mexicans carrying knives, drinking too much, and fighting.[133] Yet several narrators also observed that the press unfairly exaggerated Mexicans' reputation for drunkenness, with one claiming "the Mexicans get a bad reputation through their drunkenness and court cases, which are played up by the papers and are the only things we hear about the Mexicans."[134] Other sympathetic observers went even further: In 1931, Will Rogers, a famous liberal humorist proud of his mixed Cherokee heritage, described how the sheriff's department "finally found a car with no liquor in it, but it had to be occupied by Mexicans...so they shot two of 'em for being unusual." The sarcasm of his letter to the *Los Angeles Times* should be obvious, with Rogers mocking negative representations of Mexicans, alcohol, and criminality—for police and press, a Mexican not committing a crime is unusual. He continued, "If [the sheriff] had showed his badge instead of his gun, this whole thing wouldn't have happened. Well, it's lucky for Mr. Pershing, for if the conditions had been reversed he would have been marching into Mexico today 'to clean that country up and make 'em civilized."[135] Rogers clearly saw the sheriff as culpable and turned to recent history, reminding readers of U.S. hypocrisy considering that similar senseless violence between

133 Paul Taylor, "Field Notes: Series A, Set 1," 1929, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 4.
134 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 144.
135 Will Rogers, "Will Rogers Remarks," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1931.

Mexicans and Americans that spawned the Punitive Expedition.[136]

What Rogers recognized—a reinforcing cycle of anti-Mexican representations among the press, police, and popular perception—has been theorized by historian Edward Escobar. Escobar argues that, while government officials and the press did not jointly hatch plans to (mis)represent Mexican criminality through fabrication, the press did write stories with the "active assistance, support, and encouragement of law enforcement and public officials." He further notes that representation, policing, and public perception operated in a cycle in which each fed one another, inflating criminalized perceptions, representations, and policing of Mexicans.[137] The LAPD-produced "Brief Study of arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles," claimed in 1924, for example, that "two thirds of Mexican arrests result from their use of or commerce in intoxicants." Furthermore, 25% of all Mexicans arrested, the report claimed, faced drunk in public charges. Such police reports affirmed press representations of Mexican intoxication, and also relied on the work of contemporary academics: "A study of observations made by criminologists among various races and extending over long periods points in the same direction as do the figures secured for this twelve-month period among Mexicans."[138] The police produced statistics, criminologists would study them and publish their findings and newspapers papers would report them. Newspaper and academic sources created the impression that Mexicans committed a majority of crimes, which would lead to greater scrutiny in policing. Drunk in public charges, according to Escobar, were based on the cultural and racial perceptions of police officers. Preconceptions about Mexicans' likelihood to be intoxicated and language barriers that limited

136 After Pancho Villa's raid on Colombos, New Mexico, President Wilson dispatched General Willaim Pershing into the Mexican interior in search of Villa and his army. This military invasion, dubbed the "Punitive Expedition," ultimately failed. See John S. D Eisenhower, *Intervention!: The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993).

137 Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 198.

138 Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period."

effective communication could both lead an officer to arrest a sober man for drunkenness. Also, like vagrancy, public drunkenness could be wantonly applied to individuals officers wanted to arrest but had no other sustainable charge.[139]

Newspaper and police representations of Mexicans, alcohol, and crime had much to do with space: Sonoratown, Los Angeles's largest Mexican enclave, situated to the north and west of the Plaza, appeared frequently in police blotters and newspaper crime reports. As Euro Americans migrated increasingly into Los Angeles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the plaza ceased to be the center of civic life in Los Angeles, and Mexican communities in the surrounding area saw whites construct municipal buildings further south and build their homes outside the district.[140] By the twentieth century, according to Isabel Seong-Leong Quintana, "The plaza area became not only an industrial zone, but also a working-class and immigration ghetto, in which people, industry and vice proliferated—things that were unwanted in the city's anglo suburbs and subdivisions."[141]

Confining vice in Sonoratown kept it away from the southern downtown civic center and out of Anglo communities. In 1903, Mayor Meredith Snyder called proposals to license saloons on fifth street "a bad idea...tourists might get a bad impression of the town in coming from the arcade depot."[142] As complaints about the city's two-hundred-plus saloons poured in from business leaders, religious groups, and women's organizations, calls for city-wide Prohibition mounted and, in 1910, the Los Angeles City Council passed the Gandier Liquor Ordinance. The ordinance restricted saloons in Los Angeles to three zones, and Sonoratown represented the

139 Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*, 157.

140 William D Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008).

141 Isabela Seong-Leong Quintana, "National Borders, Neighborhood Boundaries: Gender, Space, and Border Formation in Chinese and Mexican Los Angeles, 1871-1938" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2010), 54.

142 "Police Expense Account for the Fiscal Year," *Los Angeles Times*, July 15, 1903.

largest of the three districts, both in terms of quantity of liquor permits and of geographic expanse.[143] Civic leaders chose to locate the city's largest sanctioned drinking space squarely in the Mexican community, shaping Sonoratown's landscape and its representation as a vice den in popular perception. A prelude to National Prohibition, Gandier permitted liquor in the very district where alleged acts of drunken Mexican violence so concerned the police and press. Until Prohibition's implementation in 1921, one-third of the city's saloons were located in Sonoratown.[144]

Depictions of violently intoxicated Sonoratown Mexicans folded into their criminalization and sanctioned excessive policing. In March of 1916, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that, amidst growing concerns of Mexican Revolutionary violence spilling into Los Angeles, LAPD Chief Clarence E. Snively forbade the sale of "arms and liquor" to Sonoratown Mexicans. "For the benefit of Mexicans," whose "aggravated condition" could only be amplified by liquor, Chief Snively "warned that any evasion of the orders would result in an immediate charge against the man making the sale." These steps, according to the *Times*, aimed to "protect our property and the lives of our citizens against this awful gang of murders and bandits."[145] Two days later, the paper reported that over 1,000 men stood ready to defend the city against any possible Mexican uprising, which would be led by "agitators" who "[stir] up hatred against the 'gringo' in the land that has given them shelter during the times of trouble in their own country." These agitators "rile up" the city's Mexicans, who "are dangerous if they drink too much."[146] Well before Federal Prohibition, the Los Angeles Police Department temporarily outlawed the sale of liquor to Mexicans, implying that the combination of the two spelled trouble for Los Angeles. The stories

143 "Ordinance No. 20640," July 26, 1910, Box 1332, Folder 20626-20674, Los Angeles City Archives.
144 Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 76.
145 "Draw Teeth of War Breeders," *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1916, sec. II 1.
146 "Thousand Armed Men Ready for any Call," *Los Angeles Times*, March 16, 1916.

represent Mexicans as a mindless, child-like powder kegs without initiative and judgement, but explosively violent nonetheless.

It is no accident that the article refers to the supposed plotters as "bandits" with "links to Pancho Villa." The tired bandit caricature predates the Revolution and enjoyed currency in the racialized struggles of 1848 and the subsequent Gold Rush, yet the iconography surrounding the Mexican Revolution and Pancho Villa further popularized this trope.[147] Bandits, according to popular representations were drunks, thieves, and murderers. Thus it is also no accident that, in rationalizing Mexican restriction, John Box bemoaned how the United States had been "blighted by irresponsible Mexican bandits."[148] During the height of repatriation, stories in the *Los Angeles Times* and *Santa Ana Register* regularly turned to bandit tropes.[149] In 1931, for example, forty-two *Los Angeles Times* stories chronicled the doings of "Mexican bandits" while only six referred to "Mexican criminals" and one to "Mexican thieves." While the *Times* and *Register* utilized this bandit trope, the *Los Angeles Herald* and *Los Angeles Record* did not employ the term, describing alleged Mexican criminals as just that—alleged criminals—reflecting the more liberal leanings of these publications.

The *Times* article, "Adventures in a Mexican Jungle," chronicles one reporter's fictional capture by "bandits," emphasizing their "typical peon" dress, with "shabby" clothes and "tire casing as the soles of their sandals." "Peon," a favorite anti-Mexican pejorative of Kenneth Roberts, conflates class, nation, and race to articulate Mexican poverty. Articles that frame

147 Mark C. Anderson, "What's to Be Done with 'Em?" Images of Mexican Cultural Backwardness, Racial Limitations, and Moral Decrepitude in the United States Press, 1913-1915," *Mexican Studies / Estudios Mexicanos* 14, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 23-70; For a discussion of Mexican banditry tropes in the nineteenth century, see Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Gold Rush* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), Introduction.

148 "Immigration Problems by Hon. John C. Box of Texas."

149 "Bandits Kill L.A. Booze Sleuth; man Slain as Crowd Nearby," *Santa Ana Register*, January 16, 1923; "Open Re-Trial of Two held As Bandits," *Santa Ana Register*, January 22, 1923; "Hot Battle Marks Bandit Case," *Santa Ana Register*, January 23, 1923.

Mexican banditry as an enterprise of the impoverished tacitly speculate on their future as public charges once inside the United States. Banditry implied a level of poverty that would lead Mexicans to steal from "Americans," whether through crime or welfare. This sentiment informed the 1919 *Times* headline, "Mexican peons lap up gutter tequila."[150] Noticing the bottle of tequila the jungle bandits passed around, the author pointed to it and screamed, '"Tequila!' They loved it. A couple of them picked up the bottles and insisted that we drink…they were thrilled…typical of children."[151] With minds of children, the dress of peons, and bellies full of tequila, Mexicans appear foolish and simple, yet they also carry the weaponry of a small army, adding danger and violence to this construction. This mindless violence was perhaps best captured in a *Times* story that described a Downey resident "stabbed by an unidentified *liquor-crazed Mexican*."[152]

While liberals like Paul Taylor and William McEuen argued intoxicated Mexican violence remained confined to the Mexican community, the press often ran stories to prove otherwise. "Bandits kidnap women," details the exploits of five "Mexican bandits" rampaging across the city, raping, kidnapping, and robbing, while forcing their victim to "drink whiskey...and subject[ing] her to many indignities."[153] These Mexican bandits are twice wet, brown and drunk, forcing themselves and alcohol upon the white victim as they terrorize the city. An article from three years earlier reads almost identically, with a mother and daughter claiming that pair of Mexican bandits, "while she struggled to free herself," had "force[d] liquor down her throat and attempted to attack her."[154] Such nameless, wanton bandits are, no doubt, the criminal aliens

150 "Mexican Peons Lap up Gutter Tequila."
151 Saint Clair, "Adventures in a Mexican Jungle."
152 "Two Killed, Many Hurt in Revelry," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1931.
153 "Bandits Kidnap Women," *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 1931.
154 "Mother and Daughter Battle With Quartet Who Kidnap Them," *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1928.

Chief Stekel invoked when declaring his quest for deportable and criminal aliens.[155]

Ideas about Mexican "banditry" sanctioned police intrusion. When Felipe "Little Phil" Alguin, described by the *Times* as leading "desperate gang of bandits," murdered police officer John J. Fitzgerald in 1921, the subsequent manhunt "invaded every house and building" in Sonoratown.[156] The *Times* reported that Alguin's "brazen courage has been buoyed up...by an abundance of marajuana and bootleg liquor." The liquor, according to the paper, "is undoubtedly being furnished to him by his Mexican friends."[157] Later, "the police learned little Phil had broken into a blind pig, where he stole a jug of liquor to strengthen his nerves."[158] Alcohol appears as an essential, emboldening ingredient of Phil's depravity. Press coverage of the manhunt lasted for two years, with Alguin fleeing to Mexico, and ended in some mystery: some believe he died at the hands of police, others hold that he was never caught. Authorities' inability to apprehend him had much to do with Mexicans being unwilling to assist in the effort: what the United States described as banditry, Mexicans deemed heroic. While the *Times* noted that "no other criminal has been hounded more by police authorities than Little Phil," attempts to capture and extradite him from Mexico proved fruitless because Mexican authorities believed such action would "agitate" his Mexican countrymen who had "proclaimed him a hero."[159] That he enjoyed a favorable reputation among Mexican communities highlights the suspicion and resentment Mexicans felt at police intrusion, and seems consistent with the exalting of Mexicans on the

155 An array of Times headlines encouraged readers to associate Mexicans with banditry and crime. See, for example, "Ten Killed in Mexican Bandit Raid," *Los Angeles Times*, April 20, 1931; "Mexican Trio Robs Owners of Grocery Store," *Los Angeles Times*, January 4, 1931; "Armed Pair Rob Women Motorists," *Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1931; "Border Raid Scoffed at by Mexican," *Los Angeles Times*, September 21, 1931.

156 "Determined to get Murderer," *Los Angeles Times*, September 23, 1921, sec. II.

157 "Killer Suspect Flees to Port," *Los Angeles Times*, June 21, 1921.

158 "Glides Away Like a Specter," *Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1921, sec. II.

159 "Fifth Attempt to Take Little Phil Foiled," *Los Angeles Times*, December 22, 1922, sec. I.

wrong side of the law, such as early twentieth-century 'outlaw' Gregorio Cortez in Texas.[160]

Mainstream portraits of Mexicans emphasizing their intoxicated violence had material and often tragic consequences for historical actors who became targets for police suspicion and violence. Ethnic Mexicans knew the ways liquor influenced their policing, which brought harm to innocent men in their community. Gámio informant Trinidad Vega described in 1927 several personal encounters with over zealous police officers before confiding a story about a "poor man" from his neighborhood. The man "bought a bottle of of whiskey to drink in his house...On his way, he stopped when he realized the police were there and raised his hand to take out the bottle when the police, without anything more, shot him and killed him; he had done nothing to the police...and there are infinite cases like this. I know of others."[161] Three years later, *La Opinión* reported a similar story—the tragedy of Manuel Pérez whose soft drink police officials mistook for alcohol when they ordered him (in English) to freeze. They shot him when he did not. The story portrayed Pérez as a victim of racial profiling and unwarranted violence, and would certainly be read as such by a Mexican community familiar with such abuses.[162]

Tuscon resident Jose Luis Acuña, who was planning to move to Los Angeles, regretted having to leave behind an organization he had established to redress a miscarriage of justice.

> Sometime ago I began the organization for the Committe Pro Crijalva which is collecting funds in order to get the liberty of the Mexican Alfredo Crijalva who finds himself in the penitentiary at Florence sentenced to life imprisonment. He is innocent of the crime of which he is accused, that is the death of a federal prohibition official...we have received money from Los Angeles and other places to help this paisano.[163]

160 Américo Paredes, *"With His Pistol in his Hand,": A Border Ballad and its Hero* (University of Texas Press, 1958).
161 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Trinidad Vega," April 18, 1927, Bancroft Library.
162 "Fue herido un Mexicano; Le eisparó un agente prohibicitionista," *La Opinion*, February 26, 1931, sec. 4.
163 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de José Luis Acuña," April 28, 1927.

Acuña's efforts on behalf of Crijalva show that Mexicans not only understood the way alcohol and violence shaped their experiences with police, but that some also took action. Indeed, according to Cynthia Orozco, ethnic Mexicans' early organizational efforts often centered around a specific injustice rather than around broader civil rights agenda.[164]

La Opinión similarly portrayed Mexicans as bystanders and victims in a violent, and often anti- Mexican, U.S. landscape. Never using the Spanish equivalent of "bandits" when discussing Mexican crime, the paper instead favored focusing on the organized criminal activities of other immigrant and native groups. Two articles during the peak of Mexican repatriation, for example, educated readers on the cause of crime on Los Angeles streets: the migration of eastern crime families drawn to Los Angeles to fill the void in alcohol supply caused by Prohibition. The paper anticipates Taylor's findings by implicating native (white) citizens, and echoes mainstream criticism of Prohibition, which paved the way for their emergence. The articles also betray a common social panic with mainstream presses by asking "why has crime increased so much?" and specifically target criminals "del este" as opposed to del sur.[165] Rather than disputing common assumptions about crime, alcohol, and ineffective Prohibition, *La Opinión* readily accepted them, simply substituting the stereotyped native white and ethnic Italian gangster for the Mexican bandit.

La Opinión also acknowledged the feeblemindedness intoxication implied, inserting itself into classed hierarchies, only disagreeing on the drunk's name. A translated version of the

164 Cynthia Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

165 "Los Angeles Es Invadida por los Hampones," *La Opinion*, January 29, 1931, sec. a1, a10; "¿Porque Ha Aumentado Tanto el Crimen?," *La Opinión*, January 25, 1931, sec. a4.

popular comic strip "Bringing up Daddy" frequently ran in *La Opinión* and depicted the foibles of an upwardly mobile Irish immigrant lottery winner unable to leave his low class fondness for alcohol behind, much to the chagrin of his social-climbing wife.[166] While this comic appeared in many English-language papers, its class dimension takes on a racialized meaning when run in Spanish for a Mexican audience eager to see representations of intoxication that did not focus on them. While Mexican readers may have found justice in such depictions of white intoxication, the cartoon would not have been nearly as funny if alcohol were not an explicit marker of the lower class. Indeed, *La Opinión* seemingly relished printing articles describing 'low class' white citizens running afoul of Prohibition laws. From articles describing the stupid ("Five people died of alcohol poisoning when they drank radiator fluid"), to the mundane ("Liquor causes four more deaths"), *La Opinión* catalogued many case of whites violating Prohibition in inglorious and shameful fashion.[167] In one particularly interesting flip, the paper reported a Euro-American tourist who drank too much and died of alcohol poisoning while in Tijuana.[168] By placing the bottle in white hands, the paper gave its readers the opportunity to reflect on nativist hypocrisy and invert the bandit trope.

Like *La Opinión*, ethnic Mexicans countered claims of intoxication and criminality by pointing out that whites similarly misbehaved but not under the same scrutiny. One Taylor narrator said, "I laugh and keep still when I see some of those cabezas de nieve going to jail. They have some bad ones themselves." He rejects monolithic representations of Mexicans, saying, "They think all the Mexicans are like that. They always tell us that."[169] Similarly, a

166 Geo McManus, "Educando A Papa," *La Opinión*, January 1, 1931.

167 "Causan Cuatro Muertes Mas Los LIcores," *La Opinión*, March 6, 1931, sec. a7; "Cinco personas mueren envenenadas con alcohol; tomaron una solucion para radiador," n.d.; "Muere a Causa Del Alcohol," *La Opinion*, February 28, 1931, sec. 5.

168 "Un Muerto Hubo En Tijjuana por el Alcoholismo," *La Opinion*, February 28, 1931, sec. 5.

169 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 143.

Mexican in Chicago thought the Poles deserved a worse reputation than Mexicans: "They say we are drunk and low. They are not better than we, but they are worse. They say we are not fit to associate with...They raise hell in this town. The Mexicans do their drinking inside; the Poles go out into the street hollering and cursing."[170] Like Taylor, these sources claimed that reports of Mexican violence prove exaggerated and myopic when not honestly compared to similar crimes among non Mexicans.

Though most Los Angeles newspapers railed against the excesses and violence Prohibition sought to ameliorate, divisions between respectable drinking and the stereotypical undesirable drinker remained paramount, even in *La Opinión.* Indeed, *La Opinión* joined the *Times* and *Examiner* in condoning proper—though not legal—alcohol consumption among the upper classes. The wealthy often advocated temperance among the poor in the streets, while also insisting Prohibition proved too expansive in trying to curb their own, private, drinking.[171] During and after Prohibition, class identities dictated a hierarchy of acceptability and, in a move common to the era, *La Opinión* joined English publications in chiding public alcohol consumption among impoverished whites while railing against efforts to control upper class drinking among glamorous Hollywood actors, Mexican diplomats and politicians, and the everyday restrained drinker within his home.[172]

The class position of the individuals involved in alleged crimes shaped English and Spanish-language coverage of these events—a truth underscored by Los Angeles area press coverage of incidents in Oklahoma in the summer of 1931. In June of that year, Oklahoma City

170 Ibid., 144.
171 Catherine Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 90-104.
172 "Cerveza con Sandwich, por 5 Centavos," *La Opinión*, August 19, 1931; "Tres Actores Capturados En Un Raid Ayer," *La Opinión*, March 1, 1931, sec. a8; "No Sabia Como Beber Vino Del Rhin," *La Opinión*, August 18, 1931; "Una Botella de Champagne para Zamora," *La Opinión*, August 23, 1931, sec. a10.

Sheriff deputies shot and killed two Mexican students—one a cousin of Mexican President Ortiz Rubio—after "mistak[ing] them for bandits" running contraband liquor.[173] Shortly after the deputy's acquittal on the grounds of self-defense, Oklahoma City police arrested Mexico's acting Chicago Consul, H. Valdez, who was in Oklahoma overseeing the shooting investigation on behalf of Mexico. According to police, when they pulled Valdez and his sister-in-law over for speeding, they discovered bootleg beer, for which they charged the two with manufacture and possession. The timing of the Consul's arrest appeared curious to say the least. Regardless of police motivations for arresting Valdez, both his case and the slaying of a cousin of the president pivoted around alcohol and reflected the abusive over-policing of ethnic Mexicans with Prohibition laws. Yet unlike most cases involving Mexicans and Prohibition, this story's cast included several members of the Mexican economic and political elite: these were no common "bandits" or "greasers," but rather men whose class position demanded deference. Under federal pressure local authorities quickly dismissed and expunged the charges against Valdez, and the governor of Oklahoma offered his apologies.

Though occurring in Oklahoma, the events enjoyed national and international coverage, particularly as Mexican officials expressed concern and outrage. In Los Angeles, the *Times* sought to mollify international tensions in an editorial, assuring its readers that justice is no different for a "Canadian, Italian, or one of our own people," and that Mexicans "have no better friends in the outside world than Americans." The editorial—titled "Those Mexican incidents"—continued, "President Ortiz Rubio himself declares that the incidents, for which he correctly blames 'inferior local authorities,' have not marred the cordial relations of the two governments.[174] The paper's pledges of friendship seem out of touch with the realities of 1931 Los Angeles and its

173 "Ortiz Rubio Kin Slain," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1931.
174 "Those Mexican Incidents," *Los Angeles Times*, July 20, 1931.

own track record of criminalizing Mexicans in the city.

Like the *Times*, throughout its coverage, *La Opinión* focused most prominently on protecting diplomacy and business interests between the two nations, but also took some pleasure in the state's back-peddling as it underscored the importance of favorable Mexican relations for U.S. business and political leaders. The paper highlighted the emasculation of local officials, who the federal government "ordered" not only to vacate the arrest warrant, "but also to apologize to Valdez and the Mexican government." Indeed, according to *La Opinión*, "the government could afford no further difficulty with Mexico," and they thus "rapidly exonerated him."[175] Valdez and Ortiz-Rubio could not be subsumed by the bandit trope, and *La Opinión* highlighted this unique moment not as a victory for wealthy and powerful Mexicans exclusively, but as a triumph for Mexico and all Mexicans. The article regularly speaks of "all of us" ("todos nosotros") and "our homeland," including Los Angeles readers in this exceptional case.

George J. Sanchez notes that *La Opinión*'s class perceptions meant that they "did not necessarily report adequately on the barrios in which they were published," and the newspaper did frequently focus on the business side of Prohibition.[176] Despite the *Record's* appeals to "issues more important than Prohibition," such as a collapsing economy, in 1931, the *Examiner, Times* and *La Opinión* all agreed that Prohibition was, in fact, the issue—that the legislation adversely affected an already crippled U.S. economy through the costs of enforcement and lost taxes. Like the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, most newspapers, including *La Opinión*, favored examining Prohibition's economic impact in the face of depression. Yet the paper's class position should not obfuscate that it regularly reported boycotts of businesses known to discriminate against Mexicans and, by reframing crime reports. The paper often sought to better the public

175 "Fue Arrestado en Oklahoma City El Consul Mexicano," *La Opinión*, July 18, 1931.
176 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 116, 298-299.

perception of Mexicans and Mexican Americans by questioning the judiciousness of enforcement and nativist hysteria.[177] The paper aligned itself with the upper class but, at the same time, ran headlines such as “In defense of the Mexicans” and “Denigrating films,” which refuted demeaning accounts of Mexicans as a whole.[178]

Ethnic Mexicans understood that criminality, laziness, and poverty framed popular perceptions of them, and that these perceptions often came from the press. Interviewed by Paul Taylor in 1928, Mr. Martínez of Whittier, California said Mexicans “are not cutthroats and paupers as the papers say they are.” Martínez, a father of five who Taylor found with his family sleeping on public land under a walnut tree (“because it's better than being in a company shack”) provided a different vision of ethnic Mexicans.

> We like to work, not for low wages, but for the highest we can get. We are not loafers...we never beg and if we must ask for charity it is only a small part of our people and they cannot do more. They are down to their last resort because of no work and because of the hard working conditions...We want to be with the Americans because we are next door neighbors, Mexico and the United States, and we will help all we can.[179]

Martínez disputed newspapers' impressions of Mexican laziness and improvidence, asserting that economic and social position, not predisposition, limited Mexicans' opportunities.

Liberal academics came to similar conclusions, as shown by Constantine Panunzio's observations concerning immigrants, Prohibition laws, and crime statistics: “The immigrant occupies the lowest rung in the American economic ladder: he receives the lowest wages, suffers

177 “Boicot al Comercio,” *La Opinión*, February 5, 1931; “Boicot Contra Algunas Casas,” *La Opinión*, February 2, 1931.

178 “En Defensa de Los Mexicanos,” *La Opinión*, January 23, 1931, sec. 4; “Las Peliculas Denigrantes,” *La Opinión*, February 6, 1931, sec. 5.

179 “Mr. Martinez. Clovis, Calif.,” September 5, 1928, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 9, Bancroft Library.

most from intermittent labor and unemployment, and at all times lives on the verge of economic want." For Panunzio, comparing the crime rates of native born whites and immigrant groups revealed that immigrants did not prove significantly disproportionate in their criminality, but such comparisons obfuscated the larger picture: " A true comparison...would need to take into consideration economic and social status, length of residence in the United States, and factors of adjustment."[180] Though their perspective and terminology differ, Martínez and Panunzio agree that material reality, not ethnic predisposition, dictated Mexicans standing in popular perception and before the law.

Daniel Aguilar similarly argued that economic hardship shaped relations not just between ethnic Mexicans and the law, but also between everyday ethnic Mexicans and whites. He did not mince words: "The truth is that we hate these people and they hate us and that is why we are different. It doesn't matter how much good will there is for at bottom we hate each other...the Americans want to take everything we have and we won't let them." His hostility, he says, comes from his poor wages, "hardly enough to save a few pennies," and also the way police "do whatever they want" with Mexicans, treating them "as though dealing with thieves rather than working people." Ethnic Mexicans insisted that the root of their condition emerged not from an inherent character flaw but conditions on the ground, and that animosity between Mexicans and whites came from social and economic inequality, not Mexican intractability.[181]

While Aguilar proved all too willing to share his opinion with an ethnographer, some Mexicans simply refused to participate in discussions about alcohol. Elizabeth Hymer's 1924 survey of Mexicans in Pasadena noted that, "Confessions of pleasure in drinking and gambling are made by a small minority of only six and eleven percent, respectively, as compared with

180 Panunzio, "The Foreign Born and Prohibition," 153.
181 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Daniel Aguilar," May 22, 1927.

sixty-seven percent negative answers." While this statistic seems to suggest less Mexicans drink than popular representations depicted, Hymer distrusted her informants, pointing out, "It is significant that nearly twenty-five percent declined to commit themselves on this point;" she believed "a sincere response from a peon group would undoubtedly result in a different set of figures."[182] Regardless of whether her sample misled her with their answers or Hymer misled herself with assumptions about Mexican intemperance, that almost one quarter of her respondents refused to answer the question shows Mexican informants were aware of the negative connotations of their drinking and perhaps suspicious of Euro American researchers. Some surely were "insincere" when claiming they did not drink, but more significantly twenty-five percent opted out of the discussion, distancing themselves from questions of intoxication.

The *Los Angeles Times* did not need Mexicans to address the issue as it provided its own answers on Mexican intoxication. The paper demonstrated as much in its coverage of Taylor's chapter in *Crime and the Foreign Born*, in which Taylor refuted ideas about Mexicans disproportionately violating Prohibition. The day the report was released (August 24, 1931) the *Times* headline read: "Mexicans involved; tally of crime announced; Wickersham Report asserts percentage high among those in California; trouble in part however, charged to difference in native custom."[183] The multiple phrases in this headline successively decrease in size, meaning "Mexicans Involved" appears at least ten times larger than the final clause, which more accurately reflects the Taylor's culturally-pluralistic and anti-law enforcement findings. The *New York Times* headline from the same day— "Wickersham board frees foreign-born of big crime blame"—provides a more sober account of the report.[184] *La Opinión,* on the other hand, ran a

182 Elizabeth Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Masters Thesis, University of Southern California, 1924), 32-33.
183 "Mexicans Involved," *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1931.
184 "Wickersham Board Frees Foreign-Born of Big Crime Blame," *New York Times*, August 24, 1931.

back page story that day, “Wickersham Commission accuses Mexicans.”[185] In headlines alone two local newspapers seek to redefine the report in harmony with their perceptions: the *Times* takes Mexican criminality for granted, *La Opinión* views it as something uncertain, something said about them.

While the *Times* article ignored Taylor’s claims that law enforcement officials unfairly target Mexicans and thus inflate crime rates, *La Opinión* made no such oversight, quickly pointing out that “The report refers to the abuses of certain authorities…It also discusses police who subject prisoners to the ‘third degree’ and illegally deport non-natives.”[186] The *Los Angeles Record* also documented this abuse of police authority—an abuse that appears nowhere in the *Times*.[187] The story in *La Opinión* quickly focuses on Taylor’s reference to Italian criminality, which equals if not exceeds that of Mexicans, while ignoring Taylor’s discussion of Mexican “drunken violence.”

Less than a week later, the *Times* ran “Criminals of Los Angeles; What Nationality—Why They Go Wrong” to more clearly refute Taylor's claims. The article asserted that Mexicans surpass all ethnic groups (by at least 5,000 cases) in criminal arrests but only arrived at this conclusion by conflating crime statistics of Mexicans and “members of the red race.” Again the ambiguous relationship between Mexicans and Native Americans appears to manipulate perceptions of Mexicans in the United States. The *Times* statistics further ignored native-born ‘white’ populations, only focusing on ethnic immigrants and thus sidestepping the most damning claim of Taylor’s work. The *Times* redefined statistical reality by manipulating its sample and scope. The article mocked Taylor's conclusions, beginning, “When…the Wickersham Crime

185 “Acusa a los Mexicanos la Comisión WIckersham,” *La Opinión*, August 25, 1931, sec. A8.
186 “Rinde un Informe a Mr. Hoover,” *La Opinión*, August 26, 1931, sec. a1, a7.
187 “Alien Residents of L.A. Harassed”; “Immigration Men Use Inquisition Methods”; “Illegal entry never great, says official,” *Los Angele Record*, March 25, 1931.

Commission branded as false the public ‘impression’ that the foreign born are the motivating force beneath the nation’s swelling volume of crime, it started some overtime thinking on the part of a great many U.S. citizens.”[188] By labeling the thinkers as “U.S. Citizens” the paper immediately established the boundaries of belonging, leaving “Mexican criminals,” with their “worthless and predatory…bad character,” on the periphery. Also note the article's wet diction: a “swelling volume of crime.” The paper repositioned Mexican bandits on top of criminal statistics and labeled them as “beyond rehabilitation” and “without respect for laws.”

These laws, namely prohibition, frustrated David Villaseñor, who complained to Gámio's research assistant about the policing of morality. Villaseñor admitted perplexity about US laws and broke them not violently or out of malice, but because he did not believe they should be policed.

> I have never liked this country but now less than ever that they have one without freedom. There are now laws which don't allow one to drink nor go around with women freely and so many things that one doesn't even know one is breaking. It is better to go back to your own country than live that way. There, there is liberty. Here to drink...one has to go around hiding because if you are found and put in jail the best that can happen is you pay a fine."[189]

His interview seems to affirm Gámio and Taylor's point, that Mexican immigrants chafed against United States regulations, committing acts not criminalized in Mexico.

An informant for Paul Taylor's case study of Mexicans in Chicago reveals similar sentiments, again demonstrating ethnic Mexicans' perception that police inflated victimless crimes—the mere presence of alcohol sanctioned harassment, arrest, and violence. Prohibition

188 Bart Wheeler, “Criminals of Los Angeles,” *Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File)*, October 4, 1931.
189 Luis Felipe Recinos, “Vida de David Villasenor,” May 4, 1927.

sanctioned the policing of innocuous acts such as alcohol consumption, celebration, and even laughter.

> The Mexicans take a lot of abuse here in this town. The authorities are always after us. If the Mexican drinks a glass of something and a policeman knows it, into the calaboose for him. If they commit a nuisance, the same...If the Mexicans have a party and somebody laughs too loud, they raid the place and call it disorderly conduct...the police are bad to the Mexicans. They do not wait for an explanation but catch every Mexican they suspect and hit him over the head.[190]

By 1933 nobody denied the economic and social challenges facing the nation, and no one believed Prohibition could solve them. The fervor of the first One Hundred Days made it all seem trivial, yet before the New Deal, those desiring social and economic order agitated for the regulation of alcohol and Mexican immigrants. In labor disputes, alcohol proved an elastic trope that could victimize, praise, and malign Mexicans depending on context. Crime and alcohol represented tangible concerns for multiple communities and agendas, and each borrowed from discussions about Prohibition to articulate the qualifications for social membership.[191] Attempts to trace the origins of Mexican crime and alcohol abuse relied on emerging ideas about biological and cultural determinism, and pivoted on Indian and bandit tropes. Interestingly, the class contours of temperance advocacy transcended ethnicity as published sources almost universally accepted a classed moral hierarchy of alcohol consumption by focusing on violent and stupid intoxication among the impoverished while resenting its impact on businesses and the privacy of the respectable.

Those looking to secure unrestricted Mexican labor saw the white working class as the undesirable. For nativists, Mexican violence, intemperance, and feeblemindedness served to

190 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 150.
191 Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?*

rationalize exclusion. *La Opinión* summoned similar constructions of violent, feebleminded drinkers to excoriate white criminals, and focused on police brutality. As seen in oral interviews, ethnic Mexicans understood the preconceptions of the press, police, pundits, and academics—some opted out of the discussion while others offered their own perspective. Prohibition language framed discussions of what to do during economic and social peril, and, whether the threat lay in Mexican bandits or Anglo gangsters, nobody disputed that alcohol and danger went hand in hand. They just questioned who spun the bottle.

Though Prohibition withered away, the restriction of Mexican immigration continues to enjoy political currency. Alcohol lost relevance as a wedge issue but nativism continues to follow economic cycles as the Mexican immigrant scapegoat remains convenient during financial crises. Corporations, government officials, and pundits continue to debate the social and economic costs and rewards of Mexican immigration, and though liquor has faded somewhat in these debates, drugs now dominate representations of Mexicans. Just as liquor and violence framed Mexican immigration in the early twentieth century, drug cartels and murders similarly operate today. During Prohibition, Mexican bootleggers often figured into depictions of immigration, and the smuggling of liquor across the Mexican border was regularly conflated with that of Mexicans themselves.

In his letter to Secretary Davis, A.J. Bertersworn expressed concern about the bootlegging activities of Mexican "cholos," claiming "just as soon as the men get 'onto the ropes' as the saying goes, they become cappers for bootleg joints or turn to peddling the stuff themselves. Santa Maria, one of the prettiest residence towns in the state, is being overrun with them."[192] Just as alcohol consumption among Mexicans drew the attention of nativist sources, their alleged

192 "A.J. Bertersworn to Secretary James Davis and Congressman Arthur M. Free."

traffic in alcohol further implicated wet Mexicans in California's social problems. While Bertersworn draws on bootlegging to criminalize Mexican laborers, he also observes that these laborers entered alcohol commerce during tough times, when they were “on the ropes.” Though representations of Mexican bootleggers certainly exaggerated their numbers, District Court records and oral interviews reveal that ethnic Mexicans did indeed bootleg to supplement or replace wage labor, and found creative ways to make the business work for them.

Indeed, Mexicans did not just spin the bottle—many also sold it. The following chapter historicizes ethnic Mexicans for whom bootlegging was an enterprise, a way to make ends meet. Often restricted to manual, low-wage labor, Mexicans had few economic options in Prohibition-era Los Angeles and bootlegging proved a tenable (yet perilous) survival strategy in a stratified social and economic world. In smuggling, manufacturing, transporting liquor, women and children labored alongside the male head of house; these families uniquely integrated labor, gender, and criminality in seeking to maximize profit and limit risk.

CHAPTER TWO

SELLING THE BOTTLE: ETHNIC MEXICAN BOOTLEGGERS, LABOR, AND FAMILY IN PROHIBITION ERA GREATER LOS ANGELES

Late on a summer night in 1931, Ramón and Lila López sat in the back of their family automobile as their father drove south from Los Angeles towards their Wilmington home. Often accompanying their parents on late night trips, on this particular night Ramón remembers their mother telling them to spread out across the back and feign sleep: A police officer was behind them, pulling them over. The children did as they were told, keeping their eyes closed and their mouths shut. The officer, who Ramón remembers as "professional" and speaking quietly for fear of waking the children, let the family go after a few minutes. At the time, Ramón had no idea the back seat upon which he and his sister 'slept' concealed a large quantity of contraband liquor. From before his birth in 1925, his mother and father had made and sold corn whiskey.[1] While the illicit liquor trade often conjures images of tommy-gun-toting gangsters, this story reminds us of the diversity of bootlegging operations and the opportunity this economy represented for many ethnic Mexicans and families in greater Los Angles during the first half of the twentieth century.

Bootlegging—for-profit violations of liquor laws—proved a unique, though perilous survival strategy in a stratified economic and social world. This black market offered lucrative material gains, and for some autonomy, but demanded adaptability as bootleggers balanced profit and risk in unique ways. As we shall see, for most ethnic Mexicans bootlegging was not an exclusive career but rather represented one way to make ends meet. For others, it provided a way to avoid the wage labor market and, for those disadvantaged in this market, bootlegging could prove a singular refuge. Contextualizing ethnic Mexicans in greater Los Angeles, their

1 Ramon Lopez, "Interview One," interview by Nick Bravo, February 23, 2009.

relationship to the labor market and the city's relationship to liquor laws, this chapter historicizes bootlegger's importation, manufacture, and sale of alcohol, focusing on the years of National Prohibition, 1920-1933. Federal court cases related to Prohibition violations show the contours and trends among these bootleggers, who mostly dealt in small quantities, not the large scale operations made legendary during Prohibition. While examining history from the "bottom up" we must remember that these events did not occur in isolation: smuggling, for example, brought the weight of US anxieties about Mexican immigration and alcohol onto the bootlegger, who risked punitive fines, incarceration, deportation, and property loss. Smuggling, usually the work of men, proved dangerous not just for the bootlegger but also for those around them.

Though few families smuggled liquor across the border, many made and sold liquor. Turning on the lights in the black market shows shifts to a gendered division of labor within the families, particularly in their modification of the family wage economy and the unique role of children. Children involved in their family's bootlegging expand definitions of labor to include their contributions. For Mexicans willing to break the law, bootlegging could be profitable and perilous, and that at least 517 ethnic Mexicans faced federal prosecution for this trade speaks volumes about the economic and social opportunities available to them in this era, and the ways that these limitations could be undermined.[2]

This chapter relies heavily on federal and county court archives, Los Angeles County and city archives, California state records, and the Wickersham Commission's study of crime and Prohibition. Cases of successfully clandestine bootleggers, however, remain mostly unreachable. According to a Bureau of Prohibition study, only 10 percent of Prohibition violators in 1923 Los Angles ever faced prosecution and, though police targeted Mexicans disproportionately, this

2 This total includes offenders prosecuted under Volstead, for sales to Indians, and for wartime prohibition violations in the twentieth century.

statistic nonetheless reveals the myriad operations unrecorded in state records.[3] Ethnic Mexicans deployed a panoply of avoidance techniques, and without being caught, such individuals rarely appear in traditional archives. However, oral interviews—conducted by social scientists Manuel Gámio and Paul Taylor in the 1920s, interviews conducted during the 1970s and stored at Cal State Long Beach's Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive—give insight into the daily workings of such operations. Recent interviews conducted by current scholars and by the author further complete the study.

Through the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods, California and Los Angeles had been home to multiple prohibitions through various federal, state, and city laws.[4] Indeed, the front page of the first edition of California's first newspaper, the *Californian* in 1846, included a warning to men selling liquor to soldiers, who would be, "Looked upon with the greatest severity."[5] Congressional acts against selling to Indians predate California's statehood and became federal law after incorporation. Twentieth-century ordinances such as Los Angeles's 1910 Gandier Act, which mandated that all liquor sales occur in licensed establishments within liquor zones, and federal laws like Wartime Prohibition between 1918 and 1920, both ensnared many ethnic Mexicans making illegal sales before the Volstead Act.[6] Early Los Angeles County records document ethnic Mexicans charged with illegal sales in violation of Gandier, and federal court records show a wide array of wartime Prohibition and federal Indian Law violators.[7]

3 Kenneth D Rose, ""Dry" Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," *Southern California Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1987): 60.

4 Andrés Reséndez, *Changing national identities at the frontier : Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111.

5 "Notice," *Californian*, August 15, 1846.

6 "Ordinance No. 20640," July 26, 1910, Box 1332, Folder 20626-20674, Los Angeles City Archives.

7 In County records, see, for example, "Jail Sentence Reduction A Aguilar," July 15, 1909, Box HBP00094, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; "Jail Sentence Reduction Pura G Herran," May 1, 1918, Box HBP00094, OD1538J, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; "Jail Sentence Reduction of C Gutierrez," December 31, 1913, Box HBP00094, OD1070J, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; For Indian sales, see "The USA vs. Jose Corona," December 12, 1904, United States District Court of

The post World War I era favored individuals with "simple, persuasive answers" who could "strip away the veneer of restraint and translate assumptions into actions;" federal Prohibition represented one such "symbolic crusade" for U.S. Americans' emerging anxieties concerning social class and decay.[8] As enumerated in the Eighteenth Amendment, the Volstead Act—and California's Wright Act, which followed in 1922—outlawed "the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States." After Volstead became the law of the land, the United States District Court assumed federal responsibility for prosecuting its alleged violators; cases from San Diego, Los Angeles, Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and Ventura Counties fell under the District Court of Southern California's (District 22) jurisdiction. Files from this court reveal that between 1920 and 1933, 449 ethnic Mexicans faced Volstead charges for smuggling, transporting, producing, possessing, or selling alcohol.

"Greater Los Angeles" provides an ideal environment to study ethnic Mexicans implicated in violations of these laws. Los Angeles boasted the largest concentration of Mexican immigrants (21,637 in 1920, and 60,000 by 1925) and the city's economic development depended Mexican labor.[9] George Sánchez's seminal *Becoming Mexican American* documents these ethnic Mexicans' immigration to Los Angeles, the economic opportunities and social dangers

Southern California General Case File Box 154, Folder 2043, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; For Wartime Prohibition, see, "The USA vs. Emilio Meza," December 19, 1919, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 125, Folder 1885, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Valentin Hernandez," December 30, 1919, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 125, Folder 1889, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

8 Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

9 J.B. Gwin, "Social problems of Our Mexican Population," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work* 53 (1926): 326; Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Verso, 2006), 111.

they encountered, and their survival strategies in this climate.[10] While building upon Sánchez, I also expand his geographic focus by incorporating the counties surrounding Los Angeles. Liquor traffic in southern California benefited greatly from the expansion of highways and automobiles, making liquor highly mobile and it would be impossible to glimpse Los Angeles bootlegging without including inter-county movement.

Links between Mexicans and alcohol became particularly prolific during Prohibition, especially in the years leading up to the Great Depression, and bootleggers fit perfectly into this criminalized discourse. Nativist writer Kenneth Roberts asserted in *The Saturday Evening Post* that "nearly 90 per cent of the arrests for petty crimes—for fights and bootlegging and smuggling and pounding people on the heads with bottles—are of Mexicans."[11] No more a statistician than humanitarian, Robert's conclusions are dubious to say the least and part of a larger trend of anti-Mexican representations. Indeed, as noted in chapter one, newspapers such as the *Los Angeles Times*, novelists, and early social scientists like William McEuen—who claimed in 1914 that liquor was "Mexicans greatest moral problem"—all framed Mexican immigration and criminality in terms of bootlegging.[12] Historians for the most part have been critical of this discourse, but few studies of ethnic Mexicans have engaged criminality on its own terms, as a means of mobility or survival.

Nativist's criminalization of ethnic Mexican bootleggers should not blind us to their existence or allow them to be mired in analysis that considers "criminals" as pieces in battles

10 George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
11 "Kenneth Roberts, "The Docile Mexican," Saturday Evening Post, 12 March 2009, 39,," n.d., 39.
12 "Gambling Orgy Ended by Raids," *Los Angeles Times*, September 8, 1923; Bart Wheeler, "Criminals of Los Angeles," *Los Angeles Times (1886-Current File)*, October 4, 1931; William McEuen, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Los Angeles" (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1914); Don Ryan, *Angel's Flight* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927).

over representation. Katherine Bliss's analysis of sex workers in Revolutionary Mexico City shows that women often had little economic and social alternative to the trade, but asserted their agency by manipulating laws to gain leverage over pimps, clients, and their male partners.[13] Similarly, Luis Alvarez's work on Zoot Suiters in 1940s Los Angeles and New York considers the Zoot body not solely as part of criminalized discourse but as an agent to assert dignity in a dehumanizing and alienated era.[14] Bliss and Alvarez neither efface nor romanticize the illegal activities of these historical actors but rather accept their criminality and examine it for its analytical value. Taking their lead, I contextualize ethnic Mexicans' economic and social position and consider their criminality as the decisions of historical agents.

Laws and discourses disproportionately targeted ethnic Mexican communities, materially shaping their daily lives by using the legislation to inscribe criminality and police a racialized labor force.[15] Ideas of racial hygiene and public health, for instance, policed this labor population and excluded it from "social membership."[16] Often incorporated into California agribusiness, Los Angeles's expanding rail system, industrial manufacturing, and a wide variety of other menial jobs, ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles found themselves for the most part excluded from opportunities for upward mobility during the early twentieth century.[17] According to Paul Taylor's study of Orange County, "The Americans of Orange County do not generally think of the

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13 Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

14 Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

15 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 62; Kitty Calavita, "Immigration, Social Control, and Punishment in the Industrial Era," in *Race, Gender, and Punishment: From Colonialism to the War on Terror* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 117-134.

16 Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

17 Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928).

Mexicans as working in any capacity except that of manual laborer." Taylor illustrated this point with the story of one Mexican immigrant who "was a trained cabinet maker." When the man applied for this work in the United States, "he was met by the protest that 'Mexicans can not do that kind of work. They all work with a pick and shovel.' This man is now picking oranges."[18] Racially type-cast as imported low wage labor, Mexicans found few alternatives and could even internalize this discourse, as shown in an interview with an unnamed Mexican child related by Emory Bogardus in 1929.

> A lady who was passing a ranch, saw a Mexican boy picking up nuts. She recognized him as one who had had the advantages of a fairly good education and she said to him: "What are you doing here?" "Picking nuts," was the reply. Then she said: "You do not need to do this. There are other things for you to do. You have a good education. You speak English well." "Yes, but I am a 'dirty greaser' as they say."[19]

The narrative, if somewhat embellished, nonetheless captures the spirit many Mexicans may have felt when confronted with their racialized positions in the labor market.

Curtis Marez argues that substance legislation was "a means not of excluding Mexicans from the labor market but of incorporating them into it as disciplined, subordinated workers."[20] This certainly proves true when considering copious amount of Los Angeles Mexicans arrested for drunkenness and vagrancy (in 1924, 942 and 558 respectively) as both laws required little evidence and could be capriciously applied based on ideas about race, class, and desirability.[21]

18 "Orange County Draft Article," ca 1930, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 36, Bancroft Library.

19 Emory Bogardus, "Second Generation Mexicans," *Sociology and Social Research* 13 (1929): 276-283.

20 Curtis Marez, *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 151.

21 S.H. Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 1924, 3-4, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

This relationship between laws and labor, however, does not hold for bootleggers who could use the economic space created by liquor laws to avoid entirely or at least to limit dependance on low-wage labor markets. Neither heroic historical actors nor politicized agents struggling for economic rights, ethnic Mexican bootleggers nonetheless found in bootlegging shelter from the primacy of wage labor.

Bootlegging expanded Mexican's employment opportunities beyond the jobs they typically could secure. Anthropologist Phillipe Bourgois theorizes the underground substance market as "the ultimate equal opportunity employer," and materially, Prohibition laws offered ethnic Mexicans great opportunity by expanding the profitability of black market alcohol.[22] With this space, some individuals and families could make significant profits. A 1930 government report of social workers in Los Angeles declared, "Prohibition has improved the economic status of many families formerly dependent...by providing new and lucrative occupations connected with bootlegging."[23] Indeed, according to the daughter of one successful ethnic Mexican bootlegger in Wilmington, "For us, there was no depression."[24] Selling predominately within their own communities, between 1920 and 1933, federal court records reveal that ethnic Mexicans arrested for selling alcohol charged a median price of $1.75 per quart of wine and $2.50 per pint of moonshine, mere fractions of the 50 gallons of product a manufacturer could produce everyday.[25] After the initial investment in a medium-sized still, listed in court documents as costing between $50 and $65, producing alcohol required little capital to turn

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22 Philippe Bourgois, "Crack in Spanish Harlem: Culture and Economy in the Inner City," *Anthropology Today* 5, no. 4 (August 1989): 9.

23 Homer Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families," May 29, 1930, 13, Record Group 10, Box 54, Folder 227, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

24 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 236.

25 Jess Carr, *The Second Oldest Profession; an Informal History of Moonshining in America* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall, 1972).

profits.[26] In 1929 Los Angeles, twenty pounds of cornmeal sold for $1.40, which combined with 100 gallons water and six ounces of yeast, resulted in roughly twenty gallons of raw alcohol, or forty gallons of marketable liquor.[27] In the wholesale market, an individual could expect to earn roughly $2 per gallon derived from a $1.40 investment in cornmeal and the profits greatly increased in smaller sales.[28]

As farm laborers, ethnic Mexicans stood in 1918 to earn between $2.25 and $3.50 per day (around the average amount charged per pint during Prohibition), and by 1930 Mexican laborers earned, according to a United States Chamber of Commerce survey, between $2.75 and $6 per day.[29] Paul Taylor's work adds nuance to these figures, showing that Mexican railroad workers averaged $3.06 per day, and that 60 percent of Mexicans employed in industrial manufacturing earned less than $4.50 per day.[30] At times these wages, Mexicans claimed, were not paid by unscrupulous bosses and were earned in unsafe and degrading conditions.

For many ethnic Mexicans, bootlegging supplemented, not replaced, wage labor, relieving some economic pressure and decreasing the primacy of the market. Some individuals who found themselves unemployable in this labor sector turned exclusively to the liquor business. Before the Immigration Act of 1924, discourses constructed Mexicans as “biologically suited only for manual labor (and not much else), which did nothing for improving their position in the U.S.

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26 “The USA vs. Ramon Hernandez,” September 18, 1929, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 541, Folder 9794-9800, Case 9800, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

27 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 43.

28 “The USA vs. Ramon Hernandez”; Carr, *The Second Oldest Profession; an Informal History of Moonshining in America*, 75-78.

29 United States Chamber of Commerce, Immigration Committee, *Mexican Immigration* (Washington, D.C: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1930), 3, 8, 27, 32, 38.United States Chamber of Commerce, Immigration Committee, *Mexican Immigration*, 3, 8, 27, 32, 38; R.L. Adams, “The Farm Labor Problem,” *University of California Chronicle* 22 (1920): 2.

30 “Mexican Occupations and Wage Rates,” 1930.

racial hierarchy."[31] Even when "positive" in praise of Mexican strength, racialized representations nonetheless dictated the boundaries of employment, restricting Mexicans to manual labor. District Court case files do not include physical examinations, but anecdotally at least five differently-abled individuals turned to exclusively to bootlegging in this era.

Some individuals could rely on the kindness of their friends and family, like Gustavo, who Gloria Navas supported as a dime dancer after "his severe rheumatism" forced him to quit his service industry job in 1926.[32] For those without such assistance, bootlegging appeared attractive. Ester Mejia, born in 1915 and Los Alamitos's oldest living resident, recalls a man named Don Lalo—a partially-paralyzed bachelor who lived down the street from her family where he made and sold liquor. Unable to work in the sugar beets of Los Alamitos, Don Lalo spent his days drinking and selling the liquor he made in his small corner house.[33] Similarly, Francisco Nieto suffered a childhood accident that kept him out of manual labor, and he turned to smuggling liquor.[34]

Ramón Moreno, a Los Angles still operator, worked as a cement finisher until "acute rheumatism" made him unemployable and led him to liquor manufacturing to support his wife and sister.[35] Dave C. Martínez's physician, Dr. W.H. Corses, provided a doctor's note to postpone a jail sentence because of his arthritis, which kept him confined to his home and sometimes in bed for two to three weeks at a time.[36] J. Lara, described by the *Los Angeles Times* as a

31 Natalia Molina, "Medicalizing the Mexican: Immigration, Race, and Disability in the Early-Twentieth-Century United States," *Radical History Review* 51, no. 3 (December 2005): 28.

32 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución," April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library.

33 Esther Mejia, "Interview One," interview by Nick Bravo, April 29, 2010.

34 "Francisco Martinez Nieto, No. 67," June 18, 1928, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 111, Folder 2, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park.

35 "Application for Pardon, Ramon Moreno," January 3, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10421, California State Archives.

36 "The USA vs. Dave C. Martinez," June 2, 1930, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 554, Folder 10039-10046, Case 10045, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

"Mexican cripple," faced charges for selling to minors in 1919.[37] Also, while alcohol addiction remains a contested topic in scientific and medical communities, four oral interviews describe bootleggers who drank to the point of being unemployable. In an era in which discourses praised the Mexican body as ideal for manual labor, bootlegging emerged as a profession for those not fitting this mold. As we shall later see, unmarried women also faced similar stigma and economic limitation, and many too turned to contraband liquor.

The illegality which made bootlegging possible obviously rendered its violators more vulnerable to surveillance and punishment. In *Lynching in the West,* Ken Gonzales Day theorizes the visibility of Mexicans in California, arguing that racial knowledge made them vulnerable to popular and state violence, marking their bodies as deviant and subject to discipline.[38] For bootleggers, the added layer of criminality attendant to their work heightened their visibility and that of those around them. Described by Gilman Ostrander as "a bootlegger's paradise," for Mexicans, Los Angeles proved a troubled paradise: one 1924 LAPD report alleged that two-thirds of Mexicans arrested in Los Angeles during a twelve-month period faced charges of "commerce in, or use of, intoxicants." [39] In that year, the LAPD identified Mexicans as 62 of the 239 (25.9 percent) Wright Act violators arrested in the city though Mexicans constituted an estimated 10 percent of the population in 1924.[40] Edward Escobar rightly notes that such statistics speak more to Los Angeles Police predisposition than actual criminality, and this focus on hyper-visible Mexicans rendered them vulnerable to increasingly intense police attention.[41]

37 "From South of Tehachepi's Top," *Los Angeles Times*, May 20, 1919.
38 Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
39 Gilman Marston Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 149; Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 5.
40 "Classified Arrests During FIscal Year Ending June, 1924," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives; Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period."
41 Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los*

Prohibition laws gave authorities incentives to keep arrests up as fines and auto forfeitures went directly to government coffers. And the enforcement of these laws proved valuable: city, county, and federal agencies all had their hand in the Prohibition pie. So profitable was Volstead that in late 1920, US District Court Judge and Los Angeles resident Benjamin Bledsoe pleaded with the Los Angeles City Council to establish a law in harmony with Volstead so it too could collect money from Prohibition.[42] By 1924, the California's Wright Act provided the laws necessary for the city to do just that, and that year the LAPD Vice Division collected $118,929 in fines for Prohibition violations.[43] In 1930 alone, the southern California district of the Bureau of Prohibition reported $1,029,560 in collected fines.[44] On a county level, between July 1922 and June 1923, Los Angeles County Sheriffs secured $93,060 and, in a two-week period, the county Dry Squad accumulated $2700 in fines.[45] Prohibition profits could come from other sources as well: federal defendants and convicts held in county jails (the federal government lacked nearby incarceration facilities) earned county coffers $.50 per day, and the city also received federal money when housing "aliens" as their incarceration was not covered by local tax dollars.[46] Prohibition enforcement for authorities, like Prohibition violations for bootleggers, was not just a matter of law but a business in which they added to the agencies' bottom line.

In addition to over-policing, law enforcement across greater Los Angeles often turned to

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Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 121-124.

42 "Los Angeles City Council Minutes," 1920, 596-597, Volume 120, Los Angeles City Archives.

43 Capt. C.I. Plummer, "Annual Report for 1923--1924, Vice Division," July 1, 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

44 "Report of Prohibition Enforcement to December 23, 1930," 1930, Record Group 10, Box 226, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

45 "Annual Report of Criminal Div., Yr. Ending 6/30/24," July 19, 1924, 4, Sheriff's Papers, Box HBP00140, OD 1363S, Los Angeles County Board Of Supervisors; "Report of Dry Squad 9/1 to 9/15/1924," September 15, 1924, 4, Sheriff's Papers, Box HBP00140, OD 1379S, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

46 "Re Claim for Federal Prisoners," June 28, 1918, Sheriff's Papers, Box HBP00140, OD877S, Los Angeles Board Of Supervisors; "Co-Council Re-Maintenance of Immigration Prisoners," January 2, 1920, Sheriff's Papers, Box HBP00140, OD1024S, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

violence against suspected ethnic Mexican bootleggers, as in the case of Deputy Sheriff C.N. Johnson. In June 1926, Johnson pistol-whipped suspected liquor trafficker Uvaldi Corona and shot him in the face after he (admittedly) disposed of evidence out of his truck window during a low-speed chase.[47] Suspected liquor trafficker Jesús González sued the Riverside Police Department in 1926 after Captain Earl Connley's "cruel torture" during an interrogation. So abusive was Connley's attempt to secure information about a local liquor ring from González—he repeatedly struck him in the face and bent his arms—that he faced assault charges and resigned in disgrace. The resulting scandal even implicated the Chief of Police.[48] Other instances of police brutality in Los Angeles, Riverside and, San Bernardino demonstrate the physical danger suspected bootleggers experienced.[49] Federal officers gave ethnic Mexicans reason to fear them as well, as shown by the tragedy of Manuel Pérez, whose soft drink Prohibition enforcement officials mistook for alcohol when they ordered him (in English) to freeze. They shot him in the chest when he did not.[50] Of course this violence went both ways and accused Mexican bootleggers also assaulted police officers—as in the case of Ramón Hernández who shot LAPD officer W.J. Hackett—but even these stories emerged amid claims of police brutality.[51]

Bootlegging also caught the attention of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the Border Patrol, and US Customs Agents. Mexicans, as the "prototypical illegal aliens," encountered the INS regardless of their citizenship status ("Once a Mexican, always a

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47 "To Arrest Deputy Sheriff," *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 1926.
48 "Chief of Police: and Former Aid Face Charges," *Los Angeles Times*, January 6, 1927.
49 "Trio Wounded in Dance Riot," *Los Angeles Times*, October 21, 1925; "Story of Shooting Learned by Consul," *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1931; "Bullet Hole Through Him.," *Los Angeles Times*, February 23, 1908.
50 "Fue herido un Mexicano; Le eisparó un agente prohibicitionista," *La Opinion*, February 26, 1931, sec. 4.
51 "Policeman Shot in Row Recovering," *Los Angeles Times*, March 2, 1926; "Reporter's Transcript," June 1, 1926, California Court of Appeals, Second Appellate District, Division Two, Crim. 1406, California State Archive; "Attacks an Officer," *Los Angeles Times*, February 16, 1927.

Mexican") and Prohibition violations made ethnic Mexicans more visible targets.[52] According to communications between INS and Bureau of Prohibition administrators, Volstead violations did not legally constitute the moral turpitude necessary to facilitate deportation throughout the 1920s.[53] The Bureau of Prohibition, however, brought "criminal aliens" to the attention of the INS, which could then launch its own investigations into other possible violations.[54] This practice subjected Mexicans to both legal and illegal expulsions.[55] In 1922 alone, the District Court deported Leandro Leyvas, Antonio Nava, Manuel Hernández, Guadalupe Huerta, and Pedro Sánchez, all for smuggling less than one quart liquor.[56] INS officials "extralegally"deported individuals such as Gabriel Espinosa, Pablo Rosales, and Francisco Martínez after they had been suspected, though never convicted, of smuggling.[57] Martínez at the

52 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

53 "Carl White to Russell Harrison," September 28, 1924, Record Group 85, Box 4026, Folder 54933/351D, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC.

54 "In re whether aliens who violate any of the provisions of the prohibition laws are subject to deportation," September 17, 1926, Record Group 85, Box 1314, Folder 123, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington DC; "Bureau of Prohibition Contact Officer to Department of Labor Director of Naturalization," April 15, 1929, Record Group 85, Box 1314, Folder 123, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC.

55 "Commissioner of Naturalization to the Service," December 27, 1928, Record Group 85, Box 1314, Folder 123, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC; "Commissioner of Prohibition to Commissioner of Naturalization," November 14, 1928, Record Group 85, Box 1314, Folder 123, National Archives and Records Administration.

56 "The USA vs. Leonardo Leyvas," September 7, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 258, Folder 4636-4643, Case 4640, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Antonio Nava and Mario Urrea," September 11, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 260, Folder 4673-4678, Case 4673, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Manuel Hernandez and Guadalupe Huerta," September 11, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 260, Folder 4685-4690, Case 4689, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Pedro Sanchez," September 22, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 265, Folder 4777-4781, Case 4781, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

57 "Publo Rosales, No. 106," September 13, 1928, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 111, Folder 2, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park; "Gabriel Expinosa, No. 224," January 9, 1929, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 111, Folder 4, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park; Robert Openheimer's 1931 study of deportations described these cases as extralegal. See, United States, *Complete Reports, Including the Mooney-Billings Report* (Montclair, N.J: Patterson Smith, 1968), 5.

age of twenty-three, left behind his US citizen wife and infant children after being deported for smuggling a small quantity of liquor.[58]

Interviewed by a research assistant for Manuel Gámio, Miguel García's narrative affirms this trend of deportation of suspected bootleggers. A seller of illegal liquor in San Francisco, García's loud parties attracted authorities who could not find the liquor hidden in the house. "Three days later an immigration agent came and asked if I had my papers to show I had entered this country legally, and said that I had to go to Tijuana or Mexicali to pay my head tax."[59] Though the legal relationship between Volstead violations and deportations was tenuous at best and completely illegal at worst, bootlegging increased immigrants' visibility and rendered them vulnerable to immigration policing. Like so many risks attached to bootlegging, this visibility did not remain confined to the bootlegger alone but also to those around them. INS officials in El Paso deported Luisa Cantú as a prostitute after Prohibition officials found her in a hotel room with a bootlegger and his alcohol.[60] Bootleggers did not risk their own livelihood alone but invited surveillance and punishment for those around them, a truth that led manufacturer A.C. Quesada to sign a statement absolving his housemates of responsibility for his still well before being caught by Prohibition agents. The letter cemented his guilt but insulated those around him from suspicion.[61]

While not the aim of this chapter to speculate on Mexican Prohibition violations in relation those of native white or other ethnic populations, federal studies claimed Mexicans did prove disproportionately inclined to bootleg. According to Bureau of Prohibition statistics, of

58 "Francisco Martinez Nieto, No. 67."
59 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Miguel García," April 8, 1927, Bancroft Library.
60 "Luisas Cantu de Alanis, No. 53," January 2, 1928, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 111, Folder 1, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park.
61 "The USA vs. A.C. Quesada," February 2, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 216, Folder 3641, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

federal arrests, Mexican-born Prohibition violators were moderately overrepresented nationally, compromising 1.08 percent of the population and 1.44 percent of Prohibition arrests.[62] While instructive about policing, Mae Ngai argues that such "demographic data was to the twentieth-century racists what craniometric data had been to racial scientists during the 19th century."[63] Paul Taylor asserted that these statistics related to over-policing and that native US white citizens bootlegged just as much, while the *Los Angeles Times* insisted that Mexicans, not policing practices, were the true enemy of Prohibition.[64]

As bootleggers, ethnic Mexicans participated in all parts of illegal alcohol traffic. Though Volstead did not prohibit alcohol consumption, courts interpreted possession of alcohol as part and parcel of its sale, manufacture, or transportation, and therefore illegal. Thus, in the 449 case District Court sample spanning the years 1920-1933, possession proved by far the most common charge since the circumstances necessary to commit any other offense required the accused to be in possession of some quantity of alcohol. Of the 449 cases, possession appears as an accompanying charge 337 times, or in 74 percent of cases. Similarly, transportation constitutes a vital part of both smuggling and manufacturing/selling alcohol, and thus transportation charges in this sample also appear somewhat high at 178. Whereas possessing and transporting liquor constitute underlying offenses, the three overt acts for which Mexicans faced charges—selling, importing, and manufacturing liquor— all appear relatively equal at 109, 101, and 102 respectively.

In this era of sensationalized gangsters and massive bootlegging operations, the vast

62 Constantine Panunzio, "The Foreign Born and Prohibition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163 (September 1932): 147-154.

63 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 31.

64 United States, *Complete Reports, Including the Mooney-Billings Report*, 10; "Criminals of Los Angeles; What Nationality--Why They Go Wrong," *Los Angeles Times*, October 4, 1931, sec. K.

majority of cases involved small quantities of liquor. For example, only twelve of the eighty-seven alleged sales that noted the volume sold were larger than four pints. The median quantity ethnic Mexicans sold was just under one pint. While this could be the result of prohibition officials preferring to police small scale operations, the fourteen oral interviews with bootleggers and their families reveal only two cases in which the family's operation could be described as anything other than small scale.[65] Despite the arrests resulting from small quantities, ethnic Mexicans, like all other individuals before the court, found that quantity of alcohol bore little to no relationship to severity of punishment. Courts often fined individuals $1 on sale counts to avoid dismissals or in negotiating a plea to multiple charges. These fines allowed the Court and Prohibition Enforcement Bureau to manipulate their statistics by inflating conviction rates to show enforcement in a more favorable light. Such trumpeting proved necessary in the face of criticism regarding enforcement tactics and strategies.[66] Sensationalized *Los Angeles Times* stories about Mexican raids and the efficacy of Prohibition met this criticism.[67]

The number of charges an individual faced, rather than the quantity of alcohol had far more bearing on the amount of fines and length of jail sentence—Volstead had everything to do with the circumstances surrounding the arrest and how many charges could be sustained. Each count carried a separate fine or jail term that the court totaled up in summary judgement. For example, an individual caught driving smuggled liquor in the United States faced not only illegal

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65 Lopez, "Interview One"; Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 290; For a discussion of Prohibitionist preference for small scale operations, see Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, 167.

66 Rose, ""Dry" Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924."

67 "Prohibition Map Shows No Enforcement Progress," *Los Angeles Times*, March 3, 1924; "Raid Alleged Bootleggers' Headquarters," *Los Angeles Times*, November 14, 1920; "Bootleg Raid Gathers Five Into Law's Net," *Los Angeles Times*, March 30, 1925; "Sixty Caught by Raiders," *Los Angeles Times*, September 13, 1926; "Twelve Held in Ventura," *Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1928; "Liquor Raids Continue," *Los Angeles Times*, March 8, 1929; "Mexican Is Accused Under Wright Act," *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1923; "Begin War on Rum Runners," *Los Angeles Times*, April 5, 1922.

importation charges, but also possession and transportation charges as well; somebody caught by customs on the border however, would in most cases only warrant an importation charge as they had not illegally possessed or transported alcohol on US soil. Thus it could be that Alberto Leyva only faced a $300 fine on one importation charge for his twenty gallons of whiskey, while Manuel Hernández and Guadalupe Huerta faced $300 for each of the three counts (importation, possession, and transportation) associated with their meager two pints of smuggled liquor.[68] Similarly, on June 16, 1921, the court fined both Primitivo Elias and Raul Díaz $600 in separate cases even though Díaz had over eighteen times the amount of liquor in his possession at the time of his arrest. Though their quantities greatly diverged, both faced the same combination of charges—importation, possession, transportation—and thus their cases came to a common conclusion.[69] Quantity of charges, not quantity of liquor, determined punishment as government officials stripped cases of nuance to focus solely on the amount of counts that could be sustained.

Ethnic Mexicans importing liquor at the Mexican/U.S. border received much attention in the press and from government officials, particularly due to their salience to larger discussions concerning the flow of immigrant bodies across a redefined border. After 1924, the Mexican/US border became "a cultural and racial boundary," and whether to regulate the flow of surplus labor or to protect Euro Americans from the perceived social and physical evils of Mexican immigration, the increased medicalization and militarization of the US border restricted and policed migrant traffic.[70] Particularly with the onset of the Depression, anxieties about the social,

68 "The USA vs. J.L. Taylor, Alberto Leyva, and John Bertvalas," January 26, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 214, Folder 3589, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Manuel Hernandez and Guadalupe Huerta."

69 "The USA vs. Primitivo Elias," June 16, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 190, Folder 3091, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Frank Amavisca (aka Atera Amavisca, Raoul Diaz (aka William Diaz), and John Doe MEndoza.," June 16, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 190, Folder 3087, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

70 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*; Nicholas De Genova, *Working the Boundaries: Race, Space, and "Illegality"*

racial, and economic impact of Mexican migrants led to the restrictionist debates and ultimately Mexican repatriation in 1931.[71] As chapter one argued, debates about Mexican restriction, and later repatriation and deportation, borrowed from and guided contemporary debates about alcohol. Popular discourses about immigration regularly conflated the evils of Mexican "aliens" with the evils of alcohol smuggling as both involved the illicit movement of something unwanted: Mexicans and booze.[72] Like the flow of migrants across an imagined border, Prohibition laws necessitated a similar expression of "territorial sovereignty" to protect US bodies.[73]

In 1925, the eight-year veteran Chief of the State Law Enforcement League, Edwin Grant, resigned his post, declaring that Prohibition could never work so long as "alien enemy bootleggers" continued to operate in the state, and the "liquor situation at the Mexican border" went unchecked.[74] U.S. concern about this smuggling appears even more apparent in the 1926 Convention between the United States and Mexico specifically called "to prevent the smuggling into their respective territories of...commodities the importation of which is prohibited by the laws of either country."[75] As Catherine Christensen's study of Euro American prostitutes at the US/Mexican border argues, Progressive reformers and government officials fortified the border with racialized discourses about criminality in the 1920s, and similar rationalizations could be made in relation to ethnic Mexican smugglers.[76] In a 1929 interview for the Wickersham

in Mexican Chicago (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Stern, *Eugenic Nation*.

71 García, *A World of its Own*, 87-90; Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*.

72 "The Progress of the World," *Review of Reviews*, no. 67 (June 1923).

73 Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*.

74 "Anticrime Body Chief Quits Post," *Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1925.

75 "Convention Between The United States and Mexico to Prevent Smuggling and Certain other Objects," March 18, 1926, Record Group 85, Box 4913, Folder 55224/358D, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington DC.

76 Catherine Christensen, "Mujeres Públicas : Euro-American Prostitutes and Reformers at the California-Mexico Border, 1900-1929" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2009).

Commission study on Prohibition, Immigration Commissioner James Harris postulated that "not less than 95 percent of the persons engaged in smuggling liquor are aliens." Indeed, according to him, "it is the rarest thing in the world to find an American smuggling liquor from Mexico." Harris went on to strip any doubt about the ethnic identity of these aliens, defining them as "principally Mexicans."[77]

At least forty *Los Angeles Times* articles capitalized on this supposed connection, describing violent Mexican liquor smugglers under such headlines as "Agent killed by smugglers," "Fatal smugglers' battle," and "Officers fight gun battle with smuggler band."[78] These articles appeared next to stories concerning border security, like "Uncle Sam to Build Fence on Mexican Border," sanctioning increased border regulation with Mexican smugglers' alleged disregard for US law and general violence. Yet of 101 smuggling cases to appear before the court between 1920 and 1933, only one involved any sort of violence—to conceal his seventeen bottles of whiskey, Ramón Escandón fired a revolver at customs agent Charles Lenwood in 1920. While sensationalized Border Patrol Agents' accounts suggest that any violence on the border was met with death, not arrest, this single case, less than one percent of the total sample, reveals the only District Court recorded instance of violence at the hands of a smuggler.[79]

Like reports of violence, concerns about the vast quantities of liquor coming across the

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77 "Report of Meeting of National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement at 11 a.m., Wednesday, July 23, 1929," July 24, 1929, 13, Record Group 85, Box 9282, Folder 55609/4, National Archives and Record Administration, Washington DC.

78 "Agent Killed by Smugglers," *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1922; "Fatal Smuggler's Battle," *Los Angeles Times*, December 21, 1919; "Officers Fight Gun Battle With Smuggler Band," *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1926.

79 "The USA vs. Ramon Escandon," April 16, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 1929, Folder 1950, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; Thomas N Moon, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 1st ed. (New York: Vantage Press, 1975); Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*.

border seem equally exaggerated. The Bureau of Prohibition's 1930 report on the possible production of illegal liquor in the United States revealed that under 1.92 percent of all available alcohol in the United States resulted from any kind of international smuggling, the majority coming from domestic sources and diverted industrial alcohol.[80] Even this nominal percentage, 1,423,000 of the 73,831,172 gallons of illegal alcohol in the United States, did not differentiate between alcohol smuggled north across the Mexican/US border, alcohol smuggled south from Canada, and alcohol imported from the oceans by rum runners on both coasts.[81]

The din of media and government hysteria about Mexican smuggling obscured the fact that most liquor smuggled in from Mexico came from other countries. For example, 90 percent of Canadian liquor exports in 1921 ended up in the United States. Between 1920 and 1921—the first year US Prohibition would affect Canadian liquor exports—the total amount of alcohol coming out of Canada increased from 8,597 gallons to 1,127,274 gallons, an astounding jump of over 13,000 percent. By 1927, Canadian liquor exports had grown to an estimated 4,667,072 gallons.[82] These numbers indicate the Canadian liquor industry boomed (to put it mildly) with US Prohibition, and while impossible to determine the origin of every bottle of smuggled liquor, government reports indicate that alcohol smuggled across the Mexican border came from other countries, imported legally into Mexico and then brought across the border. The Wickersham Commission briefly noted this trend when it observed, "Mexico and Central America have been depots for Canadian Whiskey...importation is chiefly from Canada, both directly and indirectly."[83]

80 Bureau of Prohibition, "Possible Production of Illegal Liquor in the United States for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1930," September 1930, 50, Record Group 10, Box 56, Folder 299, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

81 Rose, ""Dry" Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," 51; Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*, 167.

82 "Canada Liquor Crossing the Border" (Association Against the Prohibition Amendment, July 1929), 1 and 4, Record Group 10, Box 50, Folder 111-112, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

83 United States., *Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws of the United States, etc.* (pp. viii. 162. Washington

Seven importation cases listed ethnic Mexican's contraband as "bottles of Canadian Club Whiskey"—a recognizable name brand that commanded a high resale value (about $15 per pint bottle)—and reached the United States from Canada through Mexican smuggling.[84] Canadian alcohol, by boat, circumvented US territory via the Pacific Ocean, docked in Mexico, and then entered the market from the south.[85] Smugglers found themselves profiting in a web of export laws, international treaties, and prohibition laws, but also found themselves paying the consequences. Similarly, five court cases included charges of smuggling liquor "with a US revenue export stamp."[86] In these cases, ethnic Mexicans simply returned alcohol exported legally to Mexico before the Volstead Act, and there exists a certain irony in policing a population for bringing into the United States what the US had so recently sent to Mexico. Just as the

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1931., 1931), 23.

84 "The USA vs. Raul Casanova and Julio Rodriguez," February 26, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 175, Folder 2810, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Jesus Amador," December 21, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 163, Folder 2608, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Francisco J. Estrella," September 12, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 196, Folder 3232, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Jesus Maria," September 12, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 197, Folder 3242, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Charles Alpin, Jesus Gomez, Chono Olaeta, Astolfo Mendoa, and Charles Doten," April 7, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 233, Folder 4040, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Mike Cubillas," June 9, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 244, Folder 4278-4283, Case 4282, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Carlos Carrillo and Jennie Carrillo," June 9, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 245, Folder 4288-4290, Case 4288, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

85 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 176.

86 "The USA vs. Manuel Silva," February 14, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 219 Folder 3697, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Jesus Plazola, Natividad Duran, and Charles C. Jones," June 19, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files Box 140, Folder 2198, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Frank Robles and Santiago Durazo," August 30, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 145, Folder 2283, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Elogio Camberos and Eduardo Lucero," October 28, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 152, Folder 2403, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Pedro Rosales," March 19, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 179, Folder 2886, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

movement of ethnic Mexican bodies across the border reflects the US economic policy that created a market for Mexican labor, US liquor policy created the economic conditions for smugglers. And in at least five cases, the United States provided the merchandise as well. Unlike contemporary drug wars in Latin America that target substance production, Prohibitionist focus fixed predominately on importation, militarizing the border while dealing only diplomatically with Canadian officials.[87] In current representations of the US/Mexican border, the fixation on drug smuggling and violence echoes these earlier trends.

Some ethnic Mexicans did indeed choose to import alcohol illegally across the border into the United States. Of the 449 Volstead violations in this era, 101 of them, or 22 percent, included charges of "unlawfully importing" alcohol into the United States. Gabriela Recio argues that the lineage of contemporary Mexican drug smuggling into the United States must be traced to Prohibition-era liquor and drug policies that initially made it profitable.[88] Bodies and merchandise move toward economic opportunity: they both follow the money; discussing the history of cocaine traffic in the Americas, Paul Gootenberg notes, "Drugs as commodities or illicitly, have never respected national borders."[89] Smuggling cases varied greatly, particularly in respect to quantity imported, which could range from one pint of liquor most certainly carried for personal use to large volumes of hundreds of pints.

Statistical analyses of the 101 smuggling cases reveals that Mexicans generally smuggled small quantities of liquor, though there existed some divergence. On average, authorities charged smugglers with carrying 43.1 pints. This statistic is misleading as several cases involved relatively large quantities of liquor: Alberto Leyva's twenty gallon (160 pints), Eduardo

87 Gabriela Recio, "Drugs and Alcohol: US Prohibition and the Origins of the Drug Trade in Mexico, 1910-1930," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 1 (February 2002): 27.

88 Recio, "Drugs and Alcohol."

89 Paul Gootenberg, *Cocaine: Global Histories* (London: Routledge, 1999), 8.

Gonzáles's and Antonio Vásquez's fifteen gallons (120 pints), and Severino Lorenzo's fifteen gallons all inflate the average.[90] More accurate representations of the typical quantity smuggled across the border can be found in the median of this statistical set, twelve pints. Thirty-five cases, or 34 percent, involved quantities two pints or less, most often the result of Customs Agents searching individuals on the border. For these cases of small smugglers, we must entertain the likelihood that these were not a for-profit smuggling attempts but rather cases of being apprehended with a personal stash of intoxicants. Many of these individuals found themselves, no doubt, trapped in a legal net that inflated their pint bottle into an importation charge. What some may describe as bringing back a bottle, Prohibition enforcers described as smuggling, possession, and transportation, and punishable with exorbitant fines.

Within the cases of alleged illegal importations before the District Court, eight individuals opted for a jury trial of which only one, Natvidad Durán, proved his innocence.[91] The US Attorney dismissed sixteen cases for insufficient evidence after arraignment, and all other smugglers pled or were found guilty on at least one charge. They paid a median fine of $306, often doing so in exchange for a lower fine. Thus Prohibition case dismissals remained low in annual reports.[92] Smuggling convictions rarely included prison sentences; only eight cases included mandatory sentences ranging from one to six months. More often judgements stipulated that offenders serve jail terms when they could not pay fines, and without county prison records, calculations about how many such individuals served jail terms in lieu of financial responsibility

90 "The USA vs. J.L. Taylor, Alberto Leyva, and John Bertvalas"; "The USA vs. Eduardo Gonzales and Antonio Vasquez," April 1, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 181, Folder 2934, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Severino Lorenzo et al.," December 23, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 164, Folder 2615, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

91 "The USA vs. Jesus Plazola, Natividad Duran, and Charles C. Jones."

92 "Criminal Cases, District Court of U.S.," 1930, Record Group 10, Box 226, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

prove difficult.

Individuals uncomfortable speaking English in their court proceedings (thus requiring a translator) were more likely to engage in smuggling than selling or manufacturing. Of the 101 violators of smuggling laws, forty (39.6 percent) required translators at their proceeding, a number that appears in stark contrast to individuals charged with "maintaining a nuisance or common room"—Volstead speak for selling out of the home—where only twelve percent (seven of the fifty cases) required interpreters. Smugglers proved twenty percent more likely than the total sample of District Court defendants to require a translator at their trials. Much of this can be explained by smuggler's apprehension near the border, and the suspicion border patrol and customs officers attach to Spanish speakers.[93] Of the cases that required an interpreter, 9 percent saw dismissal, whereas 101 of the 353 English speakers charged (29 percent) enjoyed a similar outcome. This twenty percent contrast cannot be attributed to racialized language discrimination alone, however, as smuggling cases proved far more cut-and-dry than all other offenses, requiring minimal investigation and usually producing sufficient evidence for conviction. Thus only 14 percent of smuggling cases ended in dismissal. Sale charges, with a 26 percent dismissal rate, however proved more difficult to substantiate as they often involved police stings that could be thrown out of court, with witnesses difficult to track down or unwilling to testify. Easier to prove and symbolically more important, smugglers had slim odds of acquittal.

Profit margins obviously required smugglers to carry larger amounts of alcohol. Smuggling and transporting these larger quantities necessitated an automobile or a partner, and usually both. In a business that required the movement of heavy products (one pint of whiskey weighs .92 pounds) across distances, motorized transportation extended not just individuals'

93 Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *Migra!: A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

mobility but also the quantity of liquor they could transport. In the twenty-three cases of smuggling over 50 pints, fifteen, or 65.2 percent, utilized automobiles. The eight cases without automobiles all involved multiple defendants, meaning no single individual smuggled this amount without a car.

Among Volstead violations, importing proved the most social of the charges with 30 percent of accused smugglers appearing in tandem with a co-defendant, 8 percent more than selling and 12 percent more than manufacturing. Just as 65.2 percent of large-quantity smugglers required a car, 82 percent required the assistance of a partner.[94] We can only imagine the creative teams of smugglers who transported large quantities of liquor across the border without automobiles. Joe Mendoza and Severino Bobadillo required a horse and buggy in 1922 to transport sixty pint bottles of whiskey and one 4.5 gallon keg of tequila.[95] Alberto Leyva required two co-defendants to carry twenty gallons of whiskey (147 pounds, not including containers) across the border into Imperial County before being stopped by customs, but at almost fifty pounds per individual, this still seems to require much creativity and strength.[96] Francisco Ortiz and Adam Torres divided their 80 pints between the two of them as well, concealing 40 bottles each in their suitcases.[97]

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94 "The USA vs. Francisco Murillo," December 24, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 161, Folder 2577, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Francisco Acosta," February 5, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 172, Folder 2754, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Vicente Alvarez (aka Jesus Bouillet)," February 5, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 172, Folder 2758, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Francisco J. Estrella."

95 "The USA vs. Jose Mendoza and Sefarino Bobadillo," October 5, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 145, FOlder 2280, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

96 "The USA vs. J.L. Taylor, Alberto Leyva, and John Bertvalas."

97 "The USA vs. Francisco ORtez and Adam Torres," December 17, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 163, Folder 2599, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

Cars helped smugglers and transporters of liquor carry burdens but, as with all else in bootlegging, automobiles' rewards came only with greater investment and risk. According to federal law, any device used in the transportation or smuggling of liquor could be confiscated and sold by the US government with the profits entering the general treasury. Like fines, the lost interest of a seized automobile represented greater overhead costs of operation, and the loss of the automobile itself limited the scale of future smuggling attempts. Some smugglers chose to utilize automobiles they did not own, subjecting the car's owner to government forfeiture.

In November of 1922, Prohibition officers arrested Modesto López, Juan López, Manuel Cruz, Francisco Ramírez, and Luis Enríquez, all found transporting liquor in an "overland auto." Though each defendant only faced $30 in fines, the López brothers, Ramírez and Enriquez—who all owned equal shares of the car—lost the automobile to forfeiture. Co-owners and co-defendants, the men divided their investment in a smuggling tool, divided the risk of smuggling, and would share in the rewards; partnerships among bootleggers could pool financial resources and assemble more hands on deck. Even when assessed minimal fines in court, defendants bore the added financial penalty of car forfeitures. Between 1920 and 1925, the federal government confiscated fifty automobiles, one bicycle, and one horse and carriage from ethnic Mexicans accused of transportation and/or smuggling.[98] These confiscations added to the already steep fines defendants faced. Twenty-one individuals, including those above, lost an automobile they owned, seventeen lost cars on which they still owed money to a lender, and twelve found other solutions to meet their transportation needs.

Among cars owned by the accused smuggler, court records did not document the amount

98 "The USA vs. Ernest Aguilar," June 20, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 191, Folder 3106, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Felipe Mancillas," July 22, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 193, Folder 3159, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

of money they paid for the machines, but these cars fetched a median price of $130 at public auction, which was a fraction of the initial cost. As in all other Volstead clauses, the forfeiture law did not discriminate based on the quantity of alcohol transported, meaning that men such as Esquivel Villegas and Ramón Cendejas, each caught with one pint of liquor almost certainly for personal use, faced the same consequences as Jesús Escalante, caught with twenty-five pints of whiskey.[99] Villegas only faced $2 in fines after his conviction, but when added to his car, which was sold at auction, the penalty appears much steeper.

In the seventeen cases in which men had not paid off their cars in full, their lenders petitioned the court to reclaim their interest in the automobile, and auction goers paid a median price of $350 for these cars. When car lenders petitioned the court for the auto's return, the government divided this sum between the lender and the treasury. Thus, after forfeiture, the men lost whatever investment they made in the car, and while this was often a sizable amount, the lenders also assumed a share of the loss. Thirteen days before being caught with 143 pints of whiskey in, Manuel Pena put down $644 on a $1200 Haynes seven passenger touring car; he lost the car before making his first payment of $100. Combined with his $600 fine for liquor importation and transportation, he lost a total $1244—a sobering sum.[100] As Manuel Quintero discovered in 1920, innocence did not guarantee protection from these consequences, as suspicion alone heightened an individual's visibility, who sometimes could not always withstand

99 "The USA vs. Jesus Escalanta and Felipe de Leon," April 23, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 134, Folder 2039, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Ramon Cendejas," March 20, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 227, Folder 3869, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Esequiel Villeges," July 14, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 250, Folder 4416-4422, Case 4422, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

100 "The USA vs. Manuel Pena and Juan Krog," February 15, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 173, Folder 2784, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

the scrutiny. Though the court dismissed his smuggling charges in 1920, Quintero, who had defaulted on his payments, nonetheless lost his automobile to his lender, W.L. Truitt. Truitt had been searching for Quintero to reclaim the car, but only when Quintero faced trial could he locate him.[101] Ethnic Mexicans, even if not guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in the eyes of the court, could face a multiplicity of economic and social consequences based on their heightened visibility.

While the majority of ethnic Mexicans faced serious losses in car forfeiture, twelve of the fifty in this sample found more unique ways to obtain an automobile, ways that minimized their financial risk while increasing their productivity. In doing so, however, several introduced family and friends into court proceedings for crimes in which their only participation had been lending their car. Of the fifty individuals facing car forfeiture, court proceedings revealed three rented cars near the day of their capture, four stole cars from strangers, four borrowed cars from persons known to them, and one hired a taxi driver. The auto owners petitioned the court, to varying success, seeking the car's return and pleading ignorance of the defendant's activities.

Three men who rented cars for between $20 and $35 per month faced prosecution within the first month of the rental, with the car being returned to the rental agency.[102] An expenditure, not an investment, rental fees, regardless of police detection, would never be returned—after paying the monthly fee an individual risked nothing in using a rented car. Thus, men in rented automobiles only paid the fines assessed in their cases, utilizing the rewards of an automobile

101 "The USA vs. Manuel Quintero," July 22, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 143, older 2245, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

102 "The USA vs. Francisco Murillo"; "The USA vs. Antonio Martinez and Andrew Soto," December 23, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 164, Folder 2612, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Juan Macias and Octavio Peralta," September 12, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 196, Folder 3230, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

without risking the financial penalties of its loss. In addition to renting, traffickers transfered risk to other car owners whose machines they either stole or borrowed. Frank Curran and Carlos Carillo both stole the cars they used in their activities, and though Richard Jackson successfully reclaimed the automobile Curran stole, E. Wilson was already behind in his car payments when Carlos Carillo stole it and thus the court awarded the automobile to his lender.[103] Like E. Wilson, friends or family members who loaned cars to defendants found their interests jeopardized by proximity. Early in 1922, Glendale labor contractor José Torres loaned his car to Cruz López, who used it to smuggle liquor into Imperial County, and ultimately waited over two months for its return, for which he paid storage fees.

Others were not so lucky and saw their interest forfeited by the defendant's illegal acts. Raphael Negrete borrowed R. Casares's Studebaker in 1922 and was apprehended in Los Angeles for transporting two pints of liquor. Casares had paid $125 on the car when the case came to court, and though never accused of illegally moving liquor himself, his lender called in his loan claiming Casares, even if ignorant of the car's use, had violated the terms of his contract that stipulated the car could never be used in illegal activities.[104] Similarly, when Ernestina Beléndez attempted to reclaim her automobile in 1922, saying she had no knowledge of her son's intention to transport fifty gallons of liquor across Ventura County when he borrowed it, the court denied her petition.[105] But perhaps most unfortunate of all is the fate of Lucas M. Parra, a taxi driver R. Cuevas hired in March of 1922 for $2.50 to drive him and twelve quarts of liquor across Los

103 "The USA vs. Carlos Carrillo and Jennie Carrillo"; "The USA vs. Frank A. Curran," November 27, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 282, Folder 5148-5153, Case 5148, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.
104 "The USA vs. Raphael Negrete," December 29, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 288, Folder 5307-5312, Case 5308, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.
105 "The USA vs. C. Belendez," November 17, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 278, Folder 5044-5048, Case 5046, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

Angeles. Parra and Cuevas both testified that Parra had no knowledge of the contents inside Cuevas's package, and while initially charged as a co-defendant, Parra exonerated himself. Like Casares, he nonetheless lost the taxi to his lender, who called in the loan pursuant to a "no illegal purposes" clause in the agreement.[106]

Two family members of defendants successfully reclaimed seized automobiles. In January 1921, Ester González petitioned the court to reclaim the family car which she "had no knowledge" her husband José with Eduardo Moreno "used in the transporting of intoxicating liquors or for any other illegal purposes." The court granted her petition and awarded her the car.[107] In González's case, we cannot know the veracity of her claims of ignorance or her level of complicity in her husband's smuggling, but we can say with certainty that one family successfully side-stepped car forfeiture using similar tactics. In 1921, the court seized a car driven by Frank Magdalina after being arrested with E. Delgado for transportation. Clemente Ledesma appeared in court soon thereafter on behalf of his sister, Frank's wife Juana. Ledesma showed the court papers that documented Juana's ownership of the automobile, attested to her ignorance of its use, and pled for its return. The request was granted.[108] The court did not notice that Juana had already once been convicted (under a different last name) of selling liquor with her husband Frank, and one year later she would be again arrested on a similar charge. Obviously she knew the family automobile, like her home, was full of liquor.[109]

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106 "The USA vs. R. Cuevas and Lucas M. Parra," March 24, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 228, Folder 3916, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

107 "The USA vs. Jose Gonzalez and Alexandro Morego," January 8, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 168, Folder 2681, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

108 "The USA vs. E. Delgado and F. Magdilina," June 1, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case FIles, Box 188, Folder 3045, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

109 "The USA vs. Juana Ledesma," September 19, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 198, Folder 3268, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region;

Juana and Frank's bootlegging partnership suggests married couples worked together, but only four smuggling cases from District Court records involve husbands and wives. Though women and families appeared far more frequently in cases of manufacturing and selling than in smuggling, these families illustrate many of the same dynamics extant in the manufacturing and sale operations in which the majority of families participated. In April 1922, spouses Pedro and Marie (sometimes called María) Sandoval smuggled four gallons and one quart of whiskey into San Diego County with María's brother, John Rodríguez. According to the 1920 US Census, the three lived in a rented home with Marie and John's father. Unable to post the $1,500 combined bail ($500 each), the three remained incarcerated until their case came to trial in mid-June, at which time the court assessed $2,500 in fines ($900 each for Pedro and John, $750 for Marie). Their guilty pleas, the large quantity of alcohol transported, and the absence of an automobile in the court records all indicate they divided the liquor and all three carried it across the border. This decision implicated multiple members of the same household, accruing an almost incomprehensible $2,500 penalty for the family. Their status as renters and inability to post bond suggest the family was in no way prepared to shoulder this financial burden.

Though also arrested as smugglers, two families found ways to avoid such a fate by relying on women to actually carry the alcohol and assume responsibility. In 1920 federal authorities arrested Juan Casanova, his wife Juana, and her widowed mother Severina Ruiz at the US-Mexican border for smuggling. According to court papers, the women, "Attempt[ed] to conceal and secrete [tequila] in and about their person and clothing."[110] Placing the contraband in

"The USA vs. Frank Magdalino and Juana Magdalino," January 22, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 170, Folder 2175, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

110 "The USA vs. Juan Casanova et.al.," December 19, 1919, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 125, Folder 1886, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

and on the women's bodies represents a calculated decision based on the family's perception of gender standards on the border—obviously they assumed customs officers searched women less frequently and intimately. Howard Campbell argues that women drug smugglers in the contemporary US-Mexico Borderlands often prove more adept than men at going undetected by "perform[ing] expected gender behaviors."[111] Women sidestepping searches of their body in the name of feminine modesty concealed contraband in their more accommodating clothing, and flirted with suspicious male authorities. Whether as smugglers or sellers of alcohol, women could decrease police suspicion and their own visibility by manipulating and performing expected gender behavior.

That Casanova and Ruiz stashed this alcohol both on and in their person shows their creatively gendered methods of concealment; unfortunately for the Casanovas their deception failed and the court confiscated the liquor, fining Juana and Severina $100 each. Fortunately for the family, however, the court dismissed Juan's case as he could not be linked to the tequila. Similarly, Juana Pérez and Vicente Jiminez faced smuggling charges, for which Juana paid $250 and Vicente walked. Customs discovered the 44.5 pints of whiskey concealed in Juana's trunk among pottery and flowers, which they could not tie to Vicente.[112] That Juana carried the forty pounds of liquor alone speaks to her strength and she, like Casanova and Ruiz, concealed the liquor in intimate spaces less likely to be searched by authorities. In both cases, women redefined women's work by trafficking contraband across the US-Mexican border and, by carrying the liquor, relied on gender norms to avoid detection and insulate men from punishment.

While women prove but a small minority of smugglers, and only 11 percent the total

111 Howard Campbell, "Female Drug Smugglers on the U.S.-Mexico Border: Gender, Crime, and Empowerment," *Anthropological Quarterly* 81, no. 1 (2008): 254.

112 "The USA vs. Vicente Jiminez et al.," April 27, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 130, Folder 1975, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

sample of ethnic Mexican defendants, their participation in this market proves nonetheless fascinating. Historian Mary Murphy points out a strange irony in her work on women bootleggers in Montana: Prohibition, primarily the moral crusade of women to inoculate society from the evils of alcohol, actually opened spaces for women with financial need and few options.[113] With the exception of prostitution, law-breaking is popularly gendered as male, and the women in this narrative expand definitions of femininity and perceptions of criminality in their actions. In *Making Lemonade out of Lemons*, José Alamillo argues that, through bootlegging and saloon-going, Mexican men in Prohibition-era Corona, California "fashioned their own version of working-class masculine identity." Alamillo rightly notes the relationship between bootlegging and gendered identity, which men expressed with a "patriarchal, rough and violent culture," but does not expand his focus to women similarly engaged in this profession.[114]

Women appeared in 49 of the 449 cases before the District Court, disproportionately facing charges for producing and selling alcohol. Of the forty-nine cases against women, forty involved some combination of liquor production and sale, while only four involved transportation and smuggling. Fifteen of the forty-nine women saw their case dismissed, a 10 percent higher rate than men enjoyed. While perhaps some judges tempered punishment of women due to perceptions of ladyhood and criminality, this higher dismissal rate more likely relates to the charges facing them. More frequently sellers, as opposed to importers and transporters, their cases, as previously discussed, proved more difficult to substantiate.

As Stephanie Reyes Bell and Mary Ann Villarreal separately document, commerce in or consumption of alcohol violated both Euro American and Mexican gender constructions that saw

113 Mary Murphy, "Bootlegging Mothers and Drinking Daughters: Gender and Prohibition in Butte, Montana," *American Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (June 1994): 174-194.

114 José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 58-77, esp 58.

such transgressive behavior as compromising a woman's virtue and her family's honor.[115] Tempting as it may be to argue these women bucked dominant gender discourses in making and selling alcohol, it is far more accurate to suggest they crafted their own gendered identities. Indeed, as Vicki L. Ruiz notes, issues of labor and gender "cannot be boiled down into a dialectic of accommodation and resistance, but must be placed within the centrifuge of negotiation, subversion, and consciousness."[116] While these identities conflict with hegemonic gender norms, it is reductive to conceive of them as merely transgressive; rather women and their partners redefine gender on a personal, daily basis and utilize this gender ideology in creative ways.

While most women arrested for Volstead violations committed the crime in conjunction with a family member, anecdotal evidence suggests that single women without families found some refuge in the bootlegging market. A survey of Social Workers in cities across the United States, including Los Angeles, remarked upon this trend, noting, "Most of the widows earning more than their pensions would amount to [did so] by making liquor for men in the bootlegging business."[117] Indeed, well before Prohibition, unmarried or widowed middle-aged women gravitated to the work. María Raquel Casas's *Married to a Daughter of the Land*, describes one such woman, Joaquina Machado, the unmarried mother of an illegitimate daughter in mid nineteenth-century California. Among her possessions, she bequeathed her daughter "a large still, a four-barrel vat and three empty barrels." In all likelihood, according to Casas, "She was able to maintain her independence and material comfort through the sale of distilled liquor."[118]

115 Stephanie Lynn Reyes Bell, "Gendered and Racialized Constructions of Alcoholism in the Postwar Era" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2001); Mary Villarreal, "Cantantes Y Cantineras: Mexican American Communities and the Mapping of Public Space" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2003).

116 Vicki Ruíz, "Introduction," in *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family*, ed. Vicki Ruíz (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000), 2.

117 Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families," 12.

118 Maria Raquél Casas, *Married to a Daughter of the Land: Spanish-Mexican Women and Interethnic*

Deena González describes nineteenth-century New Mexico gambling saloon operator Gertrudis Barceló as a "businesswoman." The unmarried Barceló amassed a small fortune dealing cards and serving drinks to a male clientele.[119] And during Prohibition, Manuel Contreras's single aunt began bootlegging late in life: "I think she was already elderly. Most of the family were grown ups and she didn't have a husband. She was just trying to make a living [in the] really bad years."[120] Just as differently-abled men found opportunity in the black market, women who chose not to marry and lacked a "family income" could find similar freedom in a bootlegging enterprise.

Like unmarried women, Joan Scott argues widows faced peril, "When [her husband] died, she had to become self-supporting. Older women returning to work after long absences took whatever job they could find. Their low level of skill and sporadic employment experience restricted them to unskilled, irregular, and low-paying jobs."[121] Despite its risks, bootlegging could fill the void of a deceased husband's paycheck in an inhospitable labor market. Thirty-one year old mother of four Isidore Ortiz began selling liquor with her sister after her husband died in 1920, and was arrested in 1921 after selling to a Prohibition agent and operating a "nuisance." [122] With her husband, Mónica Arce operated a saloon in Murrieta, California until his death in 1913. Unable to continue her husband's work—a woman working in a saloon was bad enough, running it almost unthinkable—she stepped into illicit alcohol distribution, selling liquor out of her home.[123] Antonio Arande, a male boarder living in her home, also faced sales charges, and it

Marriage in California, 1820-1880 (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007), 89-90.

119 Deena González, *Refusing the Favor: The Spanish-Mexican Women of Santa Fe, 1820-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 39 and 57.

120 Manuel Contreras and Nick Bravo, "Interview One," May 5, 2010.

121 Louise Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 128.

122 "The USA vs. Isidore Ortiz and Mrs. Louise Ortiz," March 17, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 178, Folder 2875, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

123 Villarreal, "Cantantes Y Cantineras."

would appear that in addition to landlord, Arce was also his boss.[124]

Unmarried women could turn to the informal market in the absence of a family wage, and wives and mothers similarly entered informal economies: Ethnic Mexican families, particularly women in them, often made ends meet by entering the informal economy. Domatila Domínguez, for example, stayed up most nights in 1920 preparing pan dulce for her son to peddle in San Bernardino.[125] As in the less stigmatized informal economy of food sales and piecework, in family bootlegging operations, women's work often remained confined to domestic spaces such as the kitchen for manufacturing or the home during sales. Indeed, though women only appeared in ten percent of the cases before the District Court, they constitute more than one quarter of all individuals prosecuted for selling liquor out of the home, showing their disproportionate representation. Gendered divisions of labor limited many women's mobility beyond the home and women making and selling alcohol out of the home certainly should be seen as an extension not just of domestic duties in the kitchen, but also of the informal economy which, here, expands into illegality.

In households, some women took responsibility for actually producing the liquor, continuing a tradition of ethnic Mexican women producing goods in the home. Indeed, with Prohibition, ethnic Mexicans did not suddenly develop the know-how to make alcohol but instead relied on knowledge from older generations already acquainted with the art. Born in 1920, Socorro Felix Delgado recalls her mother making fig wine: “She fermented the figs in a big crock, covered it with a clean dish towel, stirred it on different days, and put it in little bottles.” Her interview with Patrícia Preciado Martín highlights how this knowledge could be passed

124 “Riverside,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1905.
125 Vicki L. Ruiz, “Citizen Restaurant: American Imaginaries, American Communities,” *American Quarterly* 60, no. 1 (2008): 7.

down between mothers and daughters, saying, “That wine was very exquisite. When my sister and I got older, we did that.”[126] According to Catalina Vásquez, her mother, not her father, produced beer in their house: “Don’t ask me how she made it...She had a little spigot or a little pipe, a little rubber thing, that went in and fill[ed] all these bottles and she used to wash them carefully.”[127] Maggie González of Wilmington, California also recalls that her mother, not her father, made beer traded with merchants around the city.

Making alcohol involved multiple complicated steps and, as producers, women fit into some processes easier than others based on the gendered connotations of each task. Manufacturers started with mash, fruit or grain most commonly corn and prunes, soaked and boiled in water. To this mash, manufacturers added yeast to convert starch into sugar and then sugar into ethanol. The resulting liquid can be strained and served as a fermented beverage such as wine (if the original produce were plums or grapes) or beer (grains). Through this stage, production falls well within gendered ideas about a woman's domain—the kitchen—and both Catalina Vásquez and Maggie González's mothers regularly performed this task on behalf of the family. Such work required knowledge and care: too much yeast or the wrong strain could go rouge and turn mash into vinegar; stopping the process too early could create a weak brew, too late a sour one.

Distilling liquor, which in isolating and concentrating alcohol proved more profitable, required additional steps, materials, and skill to accomplish, and more frequently fell to men. Oral interviews do not reveal instances of women distilling liquor, and District Court records

126 Patricia Preciado Martin, *Songs My Mother Sang to Me: An Oral History of Mexican American Women* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1992), 62-65.

127 “Vásquez, Catalina,” interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 18, 1979, Interview 1b Segment 2 (10:36-15:38), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

show only four women exclusively tied to a still captured in their home.[128] The distillation of liquor takes advantage of the different boiling points of water (100C) and ethanol (71.3C): still operators heat the fermented product into a vapor, which then passes through cooling coils (most often copper) and deposits in a separate basin. The water, maintained at a temperature below its boiling point, remains in the original vat. The resulting raw alcohol would be far too concentrated for most drinkers and was thus combined with other liquids, such as juice and caramelized sugar, to produce distinct flavors.[129] The results of this process were mixed to say the least. Ramón López recalls the reputation his father's corn whiskey enjoyed: "People really liked it [because] it was not very expensive for how good it was. He never let any of us help him make it...he wanted to do it his way."[130]

Los Angeles resident Francisco Medrano must never have tried the López blend of corn whiskey: "I have always liked to have a good little cup of tequila and here there is hardly even that 'moonshine' which isn't good for anything except to make one sick."[131] Jesús Valle similarly complained that in Los Angeles, "There is nothing but corn whisky and beer that has a nasty kick, which [are] made in the houses for the times when one wants to make merry a bit." He found it so disagreeable that, "It has been a long time since I have drunk...because that filth isn't good for anything."[132] Prohibition lore is full of anecdotes concerning the kick of this harsh liquor. Mike

128 "The USA vs. Mrs. Abloa Vasquez," April 4, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 232, Folder 4001, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Mrs. Apollno Vasquez," March 29, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 230, Folder 3952, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Mrs. Marcia Rodriquez," September 13, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 261, FOlder 4709-4715, Case 4715, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Maria Mesa," September 21, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 263, Folder 4756-4760, Case 4759, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

129 Carr, *The Second Oldest Profession; an Informal History of Moonshining in America*.

130 Lopez, "Interview One."

131 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Francisco Medrano," April 6, 1927, Bancroft Library.

132 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Jesus Valle," May 18, 1927.

Rodríguez described the liquor his father distilled and sold for $1 a gallon, called mula. " It was strong clear alcohol, gave quite a kick. That's why it's called mula, the Spanish word for mule."[133]

While wealthy individuals could turn to imported Canadian Club Whiskey or secure liquor produced legally in the United States before Volstead, most had to content themselves with moonshine produced in Los Angeles stills.[134] Stories of distilled alcohol, both manufactured and imported, causing blindness and even death raged throughout Prohibition—most notably the Jake Ester panic of 1930 in which imported Jamaican rum paralyzed and killed hundreds of drinkers. Small scale cases throughout southern California included deaths from moonshine made with wood alcohol and radiator fluid.[135] According to recent research by Deborah Blum, the US government went so far as to poison industrial alcohol supplies to deter theft and consumption of these products.[136] Prohibition laws, economic realities, and fear of alcohol from unknown sources gave individuals in search of a drink few alternatives and shaped the economic market in which bootleggers, even with a harsh product, could thrive.

Not all family producers of alcohol took their product to market. Some families produced liquor for home use exclusively. Jesús Vásquez's boss and landlord at Rancho Los Alamitos once took him aside to ensure the beer he produced never left the ranch. "One time, Mr. Bixby was telling me, 'Hey Jesús, you have cerveza?' [He] told me, 'No por vender...por the house.'" Vásquez says that "everybody made some beer...all of them used to make their own beer" before

133 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 44.

134 Rose, ""Dry" Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," 64.

135 "Jake Ester," *Time*, July 28, 1930; "Bootleg Booze Death Toll Totals 103 Since Jan 1st," *Santa Ana Register*, January 12, 1922; "Poison Liquor Deaths Mount," *Los Angeles Times*, July 28, 1926; "Poison Rum Defended," *Los Angeles Times*, December 28, 1926; "Death Strikes at Tipplers," *Los Angeles Times*, October 24, 1928, sec. a.

136 Deborah Blum, "The Chemist's War; The little-told story of how the U.S. government poisoned alcohol during prohibition with deadly consequences," *Slate*, February 19, 2010, http://www.slate.com/id/2245188.

"Mr. Roosevelt opened the liquor," but nobody on the ranch took beer to market.[137] Born in 1917, Angelita Reyes Sisneros Mariscal recalls that her father similarly brewed a "white alcohol" for personal use.[138] Devoid of profit, production for home consumption offered little reward beyond a reliable source of intoxication. If a Prohibition-era individual were inclined to drink, there were essentially three options—purchase, home manufacture, and smuggling—all equally punishable by law. Of the three, however, home production best kept individuals out of the black market, away from the militarizing Mexican border, and off police radar. Though liquor odors could attract police to a home manufacturer, as they did with E. Bustos, such cases proved rare, and recalling the harsh penalties facing smugglers of less than two pints most probably for personal use, the advantages of making one's own alcohol become apparent.[139]

In its evaluation of Prohibition violations, the Wickersham Commission observed, "The line between distilling in the home for home use, distilling for neighbors, distilling in part for neighbors and in part for sale, and distilling for bootleggers is not definite and easily overpassed."[140] Most bootleggers did not suddenly enter the liquor market; more often they slowly gravitated toward profit, as was the case with José Rocha. Rocha regularly purchased alcohol during Prohibition, because "I've always liked my drinks and still do," and when finances became tight he began buying gallons, not pints, and selling them to members of his community. As he reveals in his 1927 interview, the birth of his son, outstanding loans, unreliable work, and a

137 "Vásquez, Jesús," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 23, 1979, Interview 1a Segment 7 (27:50-31:28), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

138 "Mariscal, Angelita," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 15, 1979, Interview 1b Segment 9 (25:41-28:03), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

139 "The USA vs. E. Bustos," September 29, 1927, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 483, Folder 8763-8772, Case 8767, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

140 United States., *Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws of the United States, etc.*, 33.

desire for upward mobility all informed his decision to expand from customer to purveyor. For Rocha, bootlegging supplemented other forms of income and “has given me a bit of money that has helped me very much.”[141] Those who chose to market their product found themselves between two conflicting impulses of criminal activity: maximizing profit through a wide customer base and protecting themselves from the risk of police detection. Selling liquor meant that individuals had to police their own visibility lest others do it for them. Those, like Rocha, looking to supplement income derived from other sources enjoyed more latitude without the pressure of making bootlegging profits their central livelihood. These families could limit their customer base to avoid detection, as the profits from alcohol sales did not represent the entirety of their income.

Maggie González recalls that her parents never sold the alcohol made by her mother, instead they bartered it among Japanese merchants in Wilmington who were willing to trade food for her mother's beer. The González family removed money exchange from an already informal alcohol economy, meeting their economic needs and avoiding detection: though Prohibition agents used marked bills during stings, they never passed marked chickens or beans. Indeed, González does not recall any trouble from the police or ever being concerned about them because, “Wilmington had bigger problems than us. We weren't hurting anybody.”[142] Though her family made beer most of her childhood, her father stayed employed at the Borax plant by the harbor, and liquor bartering made ends meet.

In sales involving money exchange, similar customer restrictions applied. Though bootlegging initially frightened José Rocha's wife, María, she believed she and her husband limited its dangers by only selling to “very well-known people...friends who would not report

141 Luis Felipe Recinos, “Vida de José Rocha,” April 8, 1927, Bancroft Library.
142 Maggie Gonzalez, “Interview One,” interview by Nick Bravo, June 22, 2010.

us."[143] Petra Vásquez and recalls her father making trips to the sugar factory in Los Alamitos to acquire liquor from men known to him, a familiarity that could protect buyer and seller.[144] Even when confining their sales to those known to them, bootleggers had to restrict their visibility in other key ways. Though selling to familiar faces, the Rochas remained hyper-vigilant all the same—as José describes, the coming of gas men and plumbers gave them "great scares," especially when they had not properly hidden the drinks.[145]

The awareness of their visibility that frightened the Rochas forced bootleggers to make decisions about how they would interact with their neighbors, customers, and the police. Mary Caralejo recalls an angry man coming to her grandparents home late one night in the early 1930s, drunk and yelling in the street. Her grandfather always conducted sales outside his house, and the man stood in the street where he normally parked his car to make a purchase. As his shouting became more aggressive and threatening, Mary wanted to summon the police until her grandmother, though she disapproved of her husband's trade, forbade it. Instead her grandfather spoke to the man, who Mary now believes suffered from delirium tremens ("the DTs"), and gave him a couple drinks of whiskey. After speaking to Mary's grandfather, the man apologized and even cried before leaving.[146] Turning away "addicts" could lead to trouble on multiple fronts: customers could easily turn informant for Prohibition officers, they could disturb neighbors and disrupt community relations, and their presence could bring police officers to investigate a noise disturbance.[147] Concealing one's trade from the police necessitated shunning their protection,

143 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de la Señora Rocha (María Rocha)," April 8, 1927, Bancroft Library.
144 "Vásquez, Petra," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 30, 1979, Interview 1a Segment 2 (1:42-5:01), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.
145 Recinos, "Vida de José Rocha."
146 Mary Caralejo, "Interview One," interview by Nick Bravo, July 27, 2010.
147 Bruce A. Jacobs and Jody Miller, "Crack Dealing, Gender, and Arrest Avoidance," *Social Problems* 45, no. 4 (November 1998): 559.

something lost on Mary until she realized the illegal nature of her grandfather's activities.

Cecilia Villegas recalls a similar circumstance, when an “alcoholic” male came to her father wearing women's clothing; his wife had thrown him out, he was “agitated” and needed a drink though he had no money. Her father, José Villegas, complied.[148] José, though successfully able to limit his visibility in this instance, faced punishment behind the wheel of his car after being pulled over for a drunk driving violation. Though he confined his sales to people known to him, avoided tense neighborhood conflicts with the addicts of his trade, and moved his family regularly to keep his large gas bills from drawing attention, his activities outside his business—driving while intoxicated—nonetheless made him visible to police who put an end to his business in the twilight of Prohibition.[149]

Members of José Villegas's community knew of his bootlegging but never reported him, and his daughter believes this reluctance came from their obligation to him. Cecilia describes him as “a one man welfare program” who “lent people money to pay their bills, gave some down payments for houses, never turned down anyone at the door for food.”[150] A supportive community could afford bootleggers much freedom, and José essentially gave his neighbors a piece of the action, including them in his profits.[151] Recalling Don Lalo, Ester Mejia's bootlegging neighbor in Los Alamitos, she remembers he “didn't have to hide anything. Everybody knew but he never hid it.”[152] Los Alamitos, though painted in the *Los Angeles Times* as a “wild west” town of drunken murders, supported a familiar community that, though aware of Don Lalo's trade, never reported him to authorities.[153] Similarly, narrators who spent their youth

148 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 290.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Jacobs and Miller, “Crack Dealing, Gender, and Arrest Avoidance,” 556.
152 Esther Mejia, “Interview One.”
153 “South of the Tehachepi,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 28, 1907; “South of the Tehachepi,” *Los Angeles*

in Wilmington and Pasadena similarly reported their community's awareness of bootlegging operations and unwillingness to report it: according to them, “Nobody cared.”[154]

Cultivating relationships within their community could also insulate bootleggers from suspicion by enlisting supportive neighbors. Mary Luna's father sold beer in El Monte until she was five years old when the family quickly relocated to Hawthorne. “Yeah, we moved. I think my dad got in trouble,” she recalls. “One of the main manager[s] of all the Mexican people....was looking out for my dad and he told him, 'I think you better move, I think the police are on to you that you are selling beer'…I guess he was selling beer to all those men there and so that’s when we moved to our house down here.”[155] Just as one neighbor could prove an asset, another disgruntled neighbor could be a liability. Thirty-year old Anastacio García faced a Prohibition raid and deportation proceedings after his neighbor, Julia Valent, alerted police “that there is a Mexican living near by who has been here only nineteen months and has nightly drinking parties all hours of night.” In their search of García's house, the police located a still being used to produce whiskey.[156] Bootleggers seeking a customer base needed to be at once visible and invisible: easy to locate for customers, recognizable and respected among neighbors, and unnoticed by police, informants, and disgruntled tipsters. Their decisions about how to best meet these multiple needs show an awareness of their heightened visibility, the centrality of community to their success, and their unique survival strategies

Families without the financial leeway or instinct to limit sales and visibility found

Times, October 22, 1907; “Beet Cutters Kill Mexican.,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 25, 1913; “Mexicans Are Ordered Home,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1917; “Thrusts Close to Heart,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 15, 1908.

154 Luis Manzo and Nick Bravo, “Interview One,” May 16, 2010; Manuel Contreras and Bravo, “Interview One”; Tommy Reyes, “Interview One,” interview by Nick Bravo, June 16, 2010.

155 Cindy Cleary, “Mary Luna,” February 2, 1981, CSULB VOAHA.

156 “Anastacio Garcia, No. 371,” May 4, 1929, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 112, Folder 7, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park.

themselves subject to stings and raids, Prohibition enforcement's bread and butter. In search of bootleggers, Prohibition officers frequently conducted undercover purchases, sending plain clothes officers into homes and around neighborhoods to make illegal sales. The officers would make several purchases, collect evidence, file the information with the District Court, and appear as witnesses at trial. Every under cover officer described in District Court case files was a white male, most often agent Dennis O'Leary or C.L. McGuire, and one ethnic Mexican informant, Jesús Quintinar, conducted undercover purchases.[157] Forty-two year old Josefina Pérez and her husband Eduardo, sold eight drinks of whiskey for $2.50 to undercover agents, who arrested the couple on three separate charges: sale, possession, and operation of a public nuisance. The pair sold to an individual unknown to them, one who turned out to be a liquor agent, and paid a combined total of $200 in fines, staying confined in the LA County jail until the fines were paid.[158] By selling to unfamiliar individuals, ethnic Mexicans could expand their customer base but also made themselves more visible and vulnerable to authorities.

Such risks could be ameliorated and profits amplified with the unique participation of women in this economy, though women's involvement did not always come voluntary. In family bootlegging operations women and men worked together, sometimes with their children.

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157 "The USA vs. Rosa Gonzalas," August 22, 1924, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 363, Folder 6660-6665, Case 6665, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Ventura Guerra," July 13, 1923, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 310, Folder 5786-5795, Case 5794, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Otto Guerra and Pedro Fachin," November 26, 1924, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 371, Folder 6858-6863, Case 6858, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Sam Gallo," June 14, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 245, Folder 4298-4302, Case 4300, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Sam Gallo," September 14, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 262, Folder 4722-4726, Case 4725, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

158 "The USA vs. Mr. and Mrs. Perez," February 23, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 227, Folder 3885, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

Bootlegging families did not necessarily fit a portrait of a happily-united, struggling team working together to make money and stay out of trouble. Several newspaper reports of domestic violence within bootlegging homes makes this a particularly salient point, and while the next chapter will more closely examine alcohol's role in domestic violence, it should be noted that a common goal and business did not inoculate women from violent partners.[159]

María Manzo, who kept her granddaughter Mary from summoning the police on a disgruntled customer, did not approve of her husband's business. She did not like that he and their son drank, much less made their own alcohol, but rarely complained about it. When it came to men in cars pulling up at night, parking in front of the house, walking to the door, knocking, and then going back to their car to wait for delivery, however, María protested. Sometimes, according to Mary, when her husband would return from these sales, María would "berate him."

> He would sit there, she would be banging pots and pans in the kitchen, saying, "We can't have a day of rest," and this and that and this and that. You couldn't hear a peep out of him. And then he'd all of a sudden say, "Ok, ya bastante María," and then she'd stop. I'd never hear them fight after that...I would get mad too if that was going on an I couldn't do anything about it. I wasn't aware of the word illegal, but she was.[160]

Mary does not recall when she realized her grandfather and uncle were bootleggers, but she always knew they made and bottled their own liquor in the backyard of their Wilmington home. And though María did not like it and could not stop it, she never left her husband. Los Angeles social workers observed this conflict and power imbalance, noting, "Occasionally a wife feels uncomfortable about her husband's bootlegging business." Yet the government inquiry of

159 "Pomona Police Chief Strikes Liquor Mine," *Los Angeles Times*, June 27, 1916; "Thrusts Close to Heart"; "Wife Beater Sent to Jail for Thirty Days," *Los Angeles Herald*, May 25, 1910.

160 Caralejo, "Interview One."

social workers across the country only found one “who reported her husband to the federal officers.”[161] Such action removed the breadwinner from the home and stood to break up the family. As Patricia Zavella argues, the patriarchal control men asserted in the home combined with limited wage labor opportunities for women—opportunities that could not sustain them and their families without a man's wage restricted the choices available to ethnic Mexican women. When Belen Mason Martínez divorced her husband in 1934, she quickly remarried because, “I knew I couldn’t do it with the wages I was earning, I couldn’t support my children and I couldn’t live the way I was accustomed to. So I married right away.”[162] The realities of the gendered labor market that led Mason Martínez to remarry also led several unmarried and widowed women into bootlegging, and the intersections of patriarchy and capitalism forced them to make complicated decisions about how to integrate work, family life, and community. For women present in bootlegging households, their criminality and attendant vulnerability further complicated this delicate balance.[163]

Like María Manzo, María Rocha at first did not like selling alcohol, but “little by little” she became “accustomed to it” and the money it brought.[164] Her husband José bought alcohol wholesale and both served it to customers, with the profits supporting his barbering business and her work as a laundress. Despite Marías initial reluctance, José's interview highlights the collective nature of their enterprise and shared goals: “Working with the help of my wife, I have managed to buy a little house.”[165] In serving liquor, María made conscious decisions about

161 Folks et al., “Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families,” 15.
162 “Mason, Belen Martinez,” interview by Sherna Berger Gluck, February 12, 1981, Interview 2c Segment 2 (3:35-8:04), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.
163 Patricia Zavella, *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley*, 1982, 3; Ruíz, “Introduction,” 5.
164 Recinos, “Vida de la Señora Rocha (María Rocha).”
165 Recinos, “Vida de José Rocha.”

labor and risk, decisions limited by her power in the household as well as her economic options. María's laundering and home chores certainly conform to ideas about women's work, and some of the bootleg profits even went toward buying a newfangled washing machine to help her laundering business. For the Rocha's, bootlegging served as one of many strategies for upward mobility, financing their collective operations and home purchase.

Women making alcohol like Maggie González's and Catalina Vásquez's mothers, selling it like María Rocha, and protecting family interest like María Manzo all complicate the family wage economy as it applied to ethnic Mexican homes in this era. Vicki L. Ruiz introduced the notion to Chicana/o historiography, arguing that ethnic Mexican parents and children entered the labor market, pulling their wages together (not always happily) in order to support the family.[166] Though neither grew up in bootlegging families, both Mary Morales and Louis Manzo recall surrendering their wages to their mother, who worked from the home, well after they had passed adolescence.[167] That Rocha launders and cleans while González and Vásquez's work remains in the kitchen shows the ways women's home labor could supplement male income in the family wage economy. Furthermore, as women in US District Court cases demonstrate, multiple wives and mothers left the home to contribute, but instead of going into wage labor, they went into the black market. Bootlegging women's labor contributed directly to collective family remuneration; bootlegging profits do not come in multiple paychecks to be surrendered to the head, but rather in one sum that reflects the labor power of the household. Oral interviews with bootleggers and their children do not reveal how families divided these profits, if at all, though no children remember receiving any payment for the work they did.

166 Vicki Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 63.
167 Manzo and Bravo, "Interview One"; Mary Morales and Nick Bravo, "Interview One," June 9, 2010.

Regardless of how profits were divided, US District Court records reveal interesting trends concerning the division of risk. In family operations women often assumed equal or greater risk than their male counterparts, frequently leaving the home to perform sales while men stayed concealed, and occasionally pleading guilty on charges and accepting blame before judges dismissed cases against the men associated with them. Indeed, women faced punishment equal to or greater than their male codefendants in twenty of the twenty-four cases in which men and women appeared together before the judge. Families blurred the boundaries between crime, market, home, family, and labor, but did not necessarily blur gendered borders to the point of equality. Indeed, Alamillo argues that activities of bootlegging solos and husbands "reinforced gender inequality in the home and community."[168] Furthermore, as Zavella notes, women's domestic autonomy did not necessarily increase as they entered labor markets. While perhaps not empowered by their participation, in their work on behalf of a common family profit, bootlegging women shared dangers and labors with their partners, and often served as a public face of their operation.[169]

On September 5, 1922, Benita and Sebastian Aguilar faced four counts in US District Court. On two separate occasions, Benita sold liquor to undercover Prohibition officers C.L MacGuire and U.M. Turner, and ultimately only her guilt could be sustained in court. While we cannot know how the Aguilars divided their business on a day to day level, we see in this specific instance that, two days consecutively, Benita assumed the risk of carrying the gallon jug and filling up the officers' cups, for which she charged \$3.[170] Like Benita, of the twenty women

168 Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons*, 58.
169 Zavella, *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community*, xii.
170 "The USA vs. Benita Aguilar and Sebastian Aguilar," September 5, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 254, Folder 4527-4532, Case 4532, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

convicted for the sale of liquor in this period, exactly half of them performed this sale outside the home, showing women's participation to extend beyond traditional economies and notions built around the private sphere.[171] With only Benita assuming risk outside the home/business, Juan avoided his wife's three month jail sentence and $150 fine, keeping the more employable parent with their seven-year-old daughter to pay the debt.

Similarly, John and Francis (sic) Rodríguez faced sale and possession charges after Frances sold an undercover agent one pint of whiskey for $3. The mother of four children ranging from one to ten years, Frances sold the pint in a public place, avoiding a search of their home, and ultimately forcing the government to drop its case against John. As the seller, only she could be proven culpable. The court imprisoned her until she could pay her $300 fine, $200 on sale and $100 on possession.[172] By assuming the risk of making the sale, Frances insulated her family from Volstead's full force and kept overhead costs of operation to a minimum. The same can be said for Ramón Garza and his wife (like many married women in court records, described

171 "The USA vs. Juana Ruiz," October 2, 1926, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 446, Folder 8098-8104, Case 8098, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Eneau Rodriquez," August 22, 1924, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 363, Folder 6654-6659, Case 6654, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Juan Martinez and Rosabra Martinez," June 30, 1923, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 310, Folder 5786-5795, Case 5787, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Mrs. Ramona Garcia," November 28, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 282, Folder 5154-5159, Case 5157, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Adelia Fernandez," November 24, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 280, Folder 5105, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Manuel Argonzo," September 11, 1922, Criminal Case Files, Box 261, Folder 4696-4702, Case 4702, National Archives Records Administration; "The USA vs. Benita Aguilar and Sebastian Aguilar"; "The USA vs. Antonio Munolo and Mrs. Stella Munolo," July 20, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 251, Folder 4436-4441, Case 4441, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Josefa Marquez," May 5, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case FIles, Box 186, Folder 3001, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Ysabel Flores," September 8, 1920, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 146, Folder 2306, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

172 "The USA vs. John Rodriguez and Frances Rodriguez," March 27, 1924, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 349, Folder 6389-6394, Case 6392, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

only as Mrs. Ramón Garza). While the court charged both, Mrs. Garza, who had conducted each of the six different sales, ultimately faced the judge alone; the court dismissed Ramón's case after she changed her plea to guilty. She served no jail time, but the judge fined her $900, $150 for each count. These women, by taking on the riskiest labor, minimized punitive costs to the family and kept the more employable male out of jail, working to pay the fine.[173] Four other such cases can be found in the records and, in each case, women publicly asserted culpability and faced punishment alone; in the twenty-four cases in which couples were charged, only four times did women escape the punishment of their male counterpart.[174]

For each of these families, assigning risk to women proved a wise operational strategy. This wisdom is most apparent when considering cases involving couples without such luxury or foresight. Previously discussed smugglers Pedro and María Sandoval both carried smuggled alcohol across the border and paid $900 and $750 in fines respectively. Like the Sandovals, Juan and Rosabra Martínez paid a combined total of $450 ($250 for him, $200 for her) after they were both tied to alcohol sale and possession. Unable to pay these fines, they faced a combined year of incarceration.[175] Frank and Juana Magdalina also did not divide labor nor divert their sales away from their home, and faced punishment together; charges for the sale, for the still found in their home, for possession, and for operating a nuisance all resulted in convictions. A court

173 "The USA vs. Mrs. Ramon Garza," March 12, 1918, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 94, Folder 1379, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Ramon Garza et. al. (Ernest Estudillo)," January 12, 1918, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 94, Folder 1351, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

174 "The USA vs. Josefa Marquez"; "The USA vs. James H. Gray and Viola Villa," July 22, 1927, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 476, Folder 8623-8628, Case 8623, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region."The USA vs. P.V. Velarde and Mrs. P.V. Velarde," July 13, 1925, Criminal Case Files, Box 401, Folder 7298-7303, Case 7298, National Archives Records Administration; "The USA vs. L. Castro and Mrs. L. Castro," September 7, 1922, Criminal Case Files, Box 257, Folder 4590-4597, Case 4595, National Archives Records Administration.

175 "The USA vs. Juan Martinez and Rosabra Martinez."

document from April, 1923 shows the parents only once obtained court permission to visit their children—an afternoon not counted as part of their combined two year terms. Their fourteen-year old son, Francisco, assumed head of household responsibilities, working as a laborer to support the family's five children while their parents served their sentences, and most probably his fifteen year old sister Leonadra took on her mother's responsibilities.[176] Unfortunately Juana faced charges soon after her release from prison, this time alone for selling again to undercover officers, and served an additional half year in prison.[177]

The Magdalena children and those in the other cases in which both family members faced punishment remind us that parents did not risk their livelihood alone, and children could be forced to assume their parents' responsibilities in their absence.[178] One Los Angeles social worker commented on the "disastrous effects on the families of bootleggers when [bootleggers] are caught by law enforcement and the home is disrupted by the imprisonment of the father or mother."[179] The District Court lacked jurisdiction over minors, who were never prosecuted at any level for their role in their parents' work. Some children, such as Mary Luna, did not even realize until much later in life their parents bootlegged, showing that children could be sheltered from participation or even direct knowledge of their parents' work. Others enjoyed no such ignorance according to the social worker inquiry, and were often "ashamed of the source of the family income...occasionally an older boy or girl leaves home because they "don't want to get

176 "The USA vs. Frank Magdalino and Juana Magdalino."
177 "The USA vs. Juana Ledesma."
178 "The USA vs. Juan Martinez and Rosabra Martinez"; "The USA vs. Mr. and Mrs. Perez"; "The USA vs. Ed. Perez and Josie Perez," November 3, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 274, Folder 4963-4968, Case 4966, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Gus Lucas and Juanita Espalm," November 2, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 204, Folder 3391, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.
179 Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families," 15.

mixed up in it.'"[180] For children like Mike Belarde, however, the choice to depart was made for them; Belarde was be removed from the home where his stepfather ran a blind pig and was placed with the California Youth Authority in Whittier as dependent.[181] As Miroslava Chavez-García has demonstrated, social workers, probation officers, and moral reformers greatly expanded their surveillance of supposedly "degenerate" children and their families in this era, and a child's presence in a home where family sold or made alcohol served as a clear sign of this degeneracy.[182]

Yet beyond passively sharing in risks and profits, children could also protect family interests, occasionally through active participation, and more regularly through their ability to shield their parents from suspicion. The Wickersham Commission fixated on the children of bootleggers, noting they "are an obstruction to the present enforcement of the law and a serious threat to law and order in the future."[183] In hindering the work of Prohibition enforcers, children contributed to their family's bootlegging enterprises; these contributions further complicate ideas about labor, gender, and family as they applied to ethnic Mexicans in the early twentieth-century.

In her 1924 survey of Mexicans in Pasadena, Elizabeth Hymer used school records to demonstrate "the patent fact" that Mexican children rarely remained in school after the age of sixteen, often entering the labor force well before this age as part of the family wage economy.[184] Louise Tilly and Joan Scott argue that families made decisions about women and children's

180 Ibid.

181 "Mike Belarde, 3315," September 24, 1917, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives; "Diego Ruiz, 3468," April 9, 1913, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives; "Harriet Diaz, 2848," June 28, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives.

182 Miroslava Chávez-García, "Youth, Evidence, and Agency: Mexican and Mexican American Youth at the Whittier State School, 1890-1920," *Aztlán.* 31, no. 2 (2006): 55-84.

183 United States., *Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws of the United States, etc.*, 33.

184 Elizabeth Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Masters Thesis, University of Southern California, 1924), 49.

employment to balance the number of hands on deck with the number mouths to feed. Too many mouths without enough labor could doom a family.[185] The same needs that drew children into the wage labor market could lead bootlegging families to enlist their material and symbolic labor. In a 1933 study of Mexican families in California, the University of California, Berkeley found that thirty-five percent of families in California included children who labored to contribute to family income.[186] Within these families, according to a 1931 United States Bureau of Labor report, thirty-five percent of their income came from these children.[187] These statistics only concern themselves with the typical, legal wage labor of children, and examining the diverse contributions children could make to their bootlegging families expands notions of labor to include heretofore unrecognized forms of work. Whether these children policed customers, served liquor, or merely slept in the back of a truck to conceal the alcohol under them, their work could prove invaluable to a family.

Paul Gillet recalls a particular Mexican family in Prohibition-era Imperial County that "served fine home brew" in their "large wooden two-door home," where customers "were served family style." All members of the family, including children, participated in some level of the work.[188] Beyond serving alcohol, children could assist as lookouts: Cecilia Villegas's watchful eyes alerted her parents that police had stolen her father's alcohol, and while the family had little recourse, she even at a young age protected family interests.[189] Maggie González helped her family bottle the beer her mother made on the stove for her father to trade among local merchants

185 Tilly and Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*, 105 and 126.
186 Heller Committee for Research in Social Economics of the University of California and Constantine Panuzio, *How Mexicans Earn and Live*, vol. 1, University of California Publications in Economics 13 (Berkeley: University of California, 1933), 14-17.
187 United States Bureau of Labor, "Labor and Social Conditions of Mexicans in California," *Monthly Labor Review*, January 1931, 89.
188 Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 242-243.
189 Ibid., 290.

in Wilmington. Occasionally she and her siblings would collect materials for bottling, and they regularly ventured into the backyard casita where the family packaged and concealed the booze. The children in these families contributed in regular though less visible ways and never faced punishment for their participation.

Vincent Chaves's children were not so lucky. In June of 1926, he faced a Wright Act violation and charges of contributing to the delinquency of minors, his two children, Vera, 12, and Domos, 10. According to the arresting officer, Chaves drove the children to delivery points and waited in the car while they performed the sale; officers took both children to Juvenile Hall as dependents.[190] As children, Vincent assumed Vera and Domos would invite less suspicion. Ramón López now understands why his parents dragged him and his sister around Southern California so regularly—"because they didn't want to get caught." In lying across the concealed booze, even while asleep, the López children did their part. Children's unique contributions to bootlegging families varied greatly, and stood to raise profit and lower risk.

Families unable to lower this risk sufficiently often lost the higher wage of the father, and thus wives and their children faced considerable economic hardship. The desperate circumstances of a family also allowed husbands and fathers to couch pleas for pardon in terms of patriarchal responsibility. Both in court proceedings and in requests for pardon, men regularly invoked shared notions of patriarchy by appealing to their family's need in their absence. After the repeal of the Wright Act in 1932, hundreds of Los Angeles violators appealed to Governor James Rolph Jr. for pardon, often soliciting letters of support from family and community, and penning their own pleas. Ten of the sixteen Los Angeles ethnic Mexicans begging pardon made their petitions in the name of masculine responsibility, and in each of these cases, the governor

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190 "Dance Hall Drive Near," *Los Angeles Times*, June 28, 1926.

granted the requests and released the men.[191] Ysaias Méndez asked the governor, "Will you be so kind as to grant me a full and complete pardon for a charge of violating the Wright act?...I have a number of witnesses that I'm an industrious young man...I have a wife and two small children to support."[192] His claim of industriousness appears antithetical to notions of Mexican laziness, and by coupling this industriousness with his family's dependence, Méndez makes it clear that he, as a male laborer and provider, must be returned home. Similarly, Santos Zamora and Lorenzo Aguilar each appealed to the governor on behalf of their wives and children, whose "dire circumstances" necessitated their return.[193]

Women could also take charge in such cases. Pedro García's wife Celia initiated her husband's request, personally writing to the governor, "Dear Sir, my husband Pete García was recently sentenced to Riverside County road camp for selling beer. I have three children and need him very much, will you kindly pardon him?"[194] Likely unable to secure a wage large enough to support her children, Celia pleaded for her husband's return. Ramón Moreno's wife similarly wrote the governor.[195] While many of these claims no doubt emerged from economic reality with the loss of the family's breadwinner, ethnic Mexicans understood that this family image could go a long way in influencing authorities. Indeed, John R. Díaz went so far as to

191 "Application for Pardon, Cesario Alcantara," January 7, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 20470, California State Archives; "Application for Pardon, Hipolito Silva," February 8, 1933, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10239, California State Archives; "Application for Pardon, Jose Jesus Verdin," December 20, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10425, California State Archives; "Application for Pardon, Jesus Quiros," August 19, 1910, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 7777, California State Archives; "Application for Pardon, Augustine Guerra," October 21, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10182, California State Archives.

192 "Application for Pardon, Ysaias Mendez," February 10, 1933, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10492, California State Archives.

193 "Application for Pardon, Santos Zamacona," March 4, 1933, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10441, California State Archives; "Application for Pardon, Lorenzo Aguilar," February 9, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 7557, California State Archives.

194 "Application for Pardon, Pedro Garcia," January 30, 1933, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10516, California State Archives.

195 "Application for Pardon, Ramon Moreno."

bring his young son before the US District Court for his sentencing in 1922, where he received a small, $10 fine for manufacturing and possessing a staggering sixty-four pints of liquor.[196] Anicato Elizalde also brought his wife and two small children to his court proceeding in Oxnard, where the children clung to his legs as he pled guilty to bootlegging charges.[197] Leaving the home and entering the legal arena, family members of bootleggers could help to facilitate the father's return and ensure the family's economic survival.

But bootlegging ceased to be a viable survival strategy in December of 1933 with the ratification of the Twenty-first Amendment. Though extralegal liquor commerce began the day laws began to restrict it, and continued after Volstead and through today, the Federal Prohibition years represented a unique, brief window of opportunity. In March of 1934, Ramón López moved with his family to Mexico. Born in the United States, he had only twice visited the country of his parents' birth. Asked why the decision to repatriate, Ramón responded, "We couldn't make money selling whiskey anymore...so we had to stop [that] and my father did not want to go back to work [in the United States]. So they took us to Sinaloa."[198] The Great Depression, the peak of Mexican repatriation, and the collapse of Prohibition emerged simultaneously. Some families such as Ramón's, faced with the loss of their enterprise, decided to try their luck in Mexico while others, like Mary Caralejo's family, moved entirely into wage labor. Though stories of illegal ethnic Mexican alcohol sales continued throughout the decade, the profitability and quantity of these operations greatly diminished.[199]

196 "The USA vs. John Ardiaz," March 29, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 229, Folder 3934, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

197 Frank Barajas, *Work and Leisure in La Colonia: Class, Generation, and Interethnic Alliances among Mexicanos in Oxnard, California, 1890-1945* (PhD Dissertation, Claremont Graduate University, 2001), 75.

198 Lopez, "Interview One."

199 "Darn It, Oscar's Caught Again!," *Los Angeles Times*, December 26, 1933; Norman Daymond Humphry, "The Stereotype and the Social Types of Mexican American Youths," *The Journal of Social Pshcyohology* 22 (1945): 69-78.

Liquor laws presented ethnic Mexicans with financial opportunities and risks. In deciding how to distribute and minimize risk, individuals and families creatively sought greater control of these variables. Neither romantic nor tragic, they show us the viability of the black market as a supplement to, and sometimes a replacement for, low wage labor. As seen through importation cases, these acts occurred in a minefield where more was at stake than a few pints of liquor: deportation, violence, arrest, and financial loss all could impact ethnic Mexicans offenders and those in proximity to them. Usually the work of men, some women smuggled with their husbands and, like women who sold alcohol, they contributed to the family wage economy in unique ways. Wives and children actively participated in the production, transportation, and sale of illicit alcohol, and even in the absence of day to day work, their presence insulated and aided families in their dealings with authorities. With few options, these individuals crafted clever survival strategies and bent convention to their benefit, reinventing the rules as they went down a risky path towards subsistence. They sought to spin the bottle in their favor.

Of course, the majority of ethnic Mexicans in the liquor market did not sell alcohol, they purchased and drank it, acting as the demand side for bootleggers' supply. Interviews with ethnic Mexicans suggest they drank alcohol for a variety of reasons: to relax at the end of a long day's work, to celebrate among friends, and to briefly escape the burdens of life. A Mexican informant in Manuel Peña's study of drinking among 1980s California agricultural workers acknowledged, '"We [drink] to make light of things for a moment, to forget the problems of life for a moment—the toil, the struggle."[200] The next chapter considers alcohol avoidance and consumption among ethnic Mexicans, particularly families, examining the gendered and classed layers of drinking and its significance to identity and daily life. Some parents steadfastly refused to drink and

200 Manuel Peña, "Class, Gender, and Machismo: The "Treacherous-Woman" Folklore of Mexican Male Workers," *Gender and Society* 5, no. 1 (March 1991): 43.

forbade alcohol in the home while others allowed their children to drink with the family from an early age. Aware of the connotations and consequences of intoxication, individuals shaped their gender and class identities through these decisions, and expressed their desires and autonomy.

CHAPTER THREE

WHAT'S INSIE THE BOTTLE: CLASS, GENDER, AND INTOXICATION

On March 7, 1909, over eighty ethnic Mexican men, women, and children residing in Los Angeles's Sonoratown presented Mayor Arthur C. Harper with a petition, "in the name of humanity and justice," to close "certain low, vicious grog shops."[1] Due to zoning restrictions and urban development, over one-third of Los Angeles's two-hundred-plus saloons and nearly all its gambling houses operated in Sonoratown.[2] Led by L. Gutiérrez de Lara, an exiled Mexican socialist, the petitioners claimed that in "such places of debauchery…Our Mexican brothers are constantly served vile liquor…robbed of their money and encouraged to drink to such an excess as to cause their arrest and imprisonment."[3] Furthermore, "Scores of worthy families, including many needy children, are deprived of financial support which they should, and would, receive but for the fact that their money is taken from them in all manner of unscrupulous ways, " when men are "encouraged to spend their scant savings."[4] By positioning liquor as a central problem of the ethnic Mexican community—the cause of poverty, criminalization, and violence—this petition demonstrated the ways that alcohol shaped public and private daily life for ethnic Mexicans in early twentieth century Los Angeles. In the years surrounding Prohibition, ethnic Mexicans' temperance and intoxication spoke to classed and gendered ideas that were performed, policed, and recrafted through their relationships to alcohol.

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1 "Urge Officials to Sweep Away Vice Resorts," *Los Angeles Herald*, March 8, 1909.

2 "No More Carousing in 'Toughest Dive'," *Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 1903; Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 76; Isabela Seong-Leong Quintana, "National Borders, Neighborhood Boundaries: Gender, Space, and Border Formation in Chinese and Mexican Los Angeles, 1871-1938" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2010).

3 Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 61-67.

4 "Urge Officials to Sweep Away Vice Resorts."

The 1909 petition to the mayor, and the *Los Angeles Herald*'s coverage of it, betrays assumptions made about and by ethnic Mexicans, demonstrating the way temperance intersected with class identity. Faithfully reprinting the petition in its entirety, the *Herald* repeatedly noted the signatories emerged from "the better class of residents of this district." According to the *Herald,* this better class was sizable—the paper claimed that the petition's eighty signatures represent only a fraction of this class, from which "three times that number could be secured for it today if the protestors did not feel that things had gone to such a point that further delay would likely result in further murder."[5] The petition had emerged after the murder of Jacinto Guzmal at the International Saloon—an incident that, for the signatories, typified the violent conditions associated with such notorious "grog shops."[6] Furthermore, led by an exiled socialist, the petition emphasized the ways alcohol contributed to ethnic Mexicans' economic subjugation by keeping them impoverished and too drunk to notice.

Echoing the concerns of many mainstream sources critical of Mexican intoxication in contemporary Los Angeles, the petition argued that Mexicans had difficulty refraining from drinking and controlling themselves when drunk. This petition emerged not from European American academics, growers, or public officials, but from an ethnic Mexican community publicly appealing to the press and government for further regulation. Stopping short of criminalizing intoxicated ethnic Mexicans, the petition sought instead to protect them from immoral liquor purveyors and corrupt public officials, expressing ideas about Mexican

5 The Los Angeles Times failed to report the murder itself, and offered no coverage of the subsequent petition. Ibid.

6 "Two Men Stabbed in Saloon Fights," *Los Angeles Times*, October 6, 1901; "Mexican Fatally Stabbed," *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1902; "Bloody Deed Near Plaza," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1902; "Toughest Place in Town," *Los Angeles Times*, June 3, 1903; "One Dead; Two Others Dying," *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1912.

victimization and self-control that harmonized with contemporary prejudices.[7] According to Matt García, ideas about Mexicans unable to control themselves around liquor, "characterized them as children with little control over their passions."[8] Indeed, the petitioners positioned themselves as temperate protectors of the ethnic Mexican community.

Historians have long noted how Prohibition support among Euro Americans revolved around class identity, particularly observing the ways temperance contrasted images of intoxicated immigrants and members of the working class.[9] The "symbolic crusade" of Prohibition, often led by women reformers newly entering the political scene, allowed a powerful middle class, and those with aspirations of joining it, a platform to assert their moral authority and respectability.[10] This class element, as demonstrated by historians of the Black temperance movement, also transcended racial divides—middle class Black Americans distinguished themselves from uneducated and working class individuals through personal sobriety and public support of Prohibition.[11] Fighting for full political inclusion, both Euro American women and Black Americans used Prohibition as an avenue to enter the political arena, and to assert their morality and superiority to members of the working class.[12]

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7 "The Housing and Handling of Mexican Labor at Rancho Sespe," *California Citrograph*, December 1929; "Mexican and Negro Salmon Boat Crews Robbed by Bosses, State," *Daily Worker*, August 23, 1930; "Boss Beats Worker on Job," *Daily Worker*, September 2, 1931.

8 Matt Garcia, *A World of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 67.

9 Kitty Calavita, "Immigration, Social Control, and Punishment in the Industrial Era," in *Race, Gender, and Punishment: From Colonialism to the War on Terror* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 117-134; Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955); Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920,* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

10 Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

11 Donald Yacovone, "The Transformation of the Black Temperance Movement, 1827-1854: An Interpretation," *Journal of the Early Republic* 8, no. 3 (October 1, 1988): 281-297; Paul Michel Taillon, "'What We Want Is Good, Sober Men:' Masculinity, Respectability, and Temperance in the Railroad Brotherhoods, c. 1870-1910," *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 2 (December 1, 2002): 319-338; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

12 Catherine Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore:

Little scholarship exists surrounding class identity, temperance, and ethnic Mexicans in the United States during this era. One obvious reason is that scholars have been most concerned with temperance and class as it related to political support for Prohibition from the end of the nineteenth century through first two decades of the twentieth. Ethnic Mexicans—only beginning their demographic expansion in the US Southwest—did not, in any significant numbers, organize to support Prohibition.[13] As a predominately migrant, working-class population, ethnic Mexicans lacked the numbers, time, and familiarity with the US political and social world to lobby for Prohibition.[14] Though they left few traditional historical sources—such as speeches, formal campaigns, and organizational records—ethnic Mexicans nonetheless understood that temperance represented a tangible political, economic, and social issue. As historian Ben Fallaw's work on Revolutionary Mexico demonstrates, liquor Prohibition emerged in many Mexican states as a complex political concern that betrayed long standing class conflicts and signaled the emergence of women as moral authorities.[15] Mexicans did not migrate to the United States unfamiliar with liquor restriction and many used temperance as a distinguishing class feature or a way to set themselves apart.

Like the *Herald,* social scientist Elizabeth Hymer saw clear distinctions between Mexicans from "the better residence section" of the city and the "the lower class peon who populates the congested Mexican quarter (Sonoratown)."[16] In drawing her 1924 sample from

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Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow*.

13 Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Gilbert G. González and Raúl Fernandez, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (February 2002): 19-57.

14 George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

15 Ben Fallaw, "Dry Law, Wet Politics: Drinking and Prohibition in Post-Revolutionary Yucatan, 1915-1935," *Latin American Research Review* 37, no. 2 (2002): 37-64.

16 Elizabeth Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Masters Thesis, University of Southern California, 1924), 1.

Mexicans enrolled in evening classes at a local adult education center, Hymer believed her study focused on immigrants from the former group. In addition to issues related to education, religion, and labor, Hymer also questioned attitudes about alcohol, finding that sixty-seven percent of respondents claimed they avoided alcohol entirely, an additional twenty-five percent chose not to answer, and only six percent acknowledged they enjoyed drinking. Furthermore, over ninety percent of respondents belonged to a mutual aid or benefit society, eighty-two percent held library cards, and one hundred percent desired both better jobs and to own their own home.[17] For individuals attending night classes to learn English and improve their economic stake in the United States, labeling oneself as a drinker appeared unseemly. When considering the connotations of intoxication among ethnic Mexicans, the veracity of individuals' responses becomes somewhat immaterial; this is not a question of how many respondents abstained from alcohol, but rather how many represented themselves as temperate. This upwardly mobile ethnic Mexican population articulated their relationship to alcohol in ways that reflected class politics: for sixty seven percent of respondents, pleasure in drinking was simply not compatible with upward mobility and respectability.

David Gutiérrez's pivotal interrogation of the politics that divide and unite ethnic Mexicans in the United States reveals the nuanced relationships between recently arrived Mexican immigrants, established and upwardly mobile Mexican immigrants, and American citizens of Mexican ancestry. According to Gutiérrez, for established Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans, "Immigration from Mexico in the twentieth century [had] profound consequences...in terms of daily decisions about who they are—politically, socially, and culturally—in comparison to more recent immigrants from Mexico."[18] Popular stereotypes about

17 Ibid., 28.
18 David Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of*

recent immigrants extended to encompass all ethnic Mexicans with little differentiation made based on nativity or class.[19] As shown in the first chapter, one such stereotype revolved around ethnic Mexicans' excessive public (and at times violent) intoxication.

Temperate ethnic Mexican narrators focused on how this drinking damaged perceptions not just of this "lower class" but of all Mexicans. In individual narratives, temperance marked individuals as modern and distanced them from the detrimental activities of their countrymen both in the United States and in Mexico. One narrator from Chicago told Paul Taylor in 1927,

> The Mexicans have earned their reputation. When the Irish or Poles drink they do it at home and stay home; they bother no one. But the Mexicans... ¡Que Escandalo!...they fight with other Mexicans in their houses and on the street. The police come and take them in and put them in jail; but what else can they do? ¡Es triste! The worst of all those malos hombres carry a knife or gun around. Some of them are Mexicans. They make trouble all the time. It is very bad for all of us who are quiet and want to live well with their neighbors. They think all the Mexicans are like that.[20]

In focusing on the drinking activities of Mexican "malos" the narrator positioned his own "quiet" activities in opposition.[21] Ethnic Mexicans often dismissed this "bad reputation" as the result of police predisposition and popular prejudice, but this informant instead pointed to the "scandalous" activities of intoxicated individuals in his community. Alfonso Casasola, a temperate migrant from Mexico City, similarly believed "the Mexicans here are treated perfectly

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Ethnicity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 6.

19 This was not, of course, merely an issue of representation however: negative perceptions of ethnic Mexicans led to heightened policing, segregation, and other acts of discrimination. See, for example, Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*; Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

20 Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), Book 7, p. 143.

21 Ibid., Book 6, 22-23.

well," yet, "unfortunately many of our countrymen are ready to violate the laws, commit thefts and even get mixed up in brawls on account of which the name of Mexico often suffers."[22] Both men saw themselves as miscast in the drunken Mexican stereotype, but believed there were others who fit the part.

Both recent and long established Mexican immigrants in the United States saw intoxication as a symptom of the backwards society they left in Mexico, and sobriety as a modern path to personal uplift. A man from Torreon, only in the United States for two weeks at the time of his interview, believed, "In Mexico they loaf around and drink....They do like animals because they have no education; they say, What's the use to learn when I am going to die just the same? I can earn my living just as anyone else...The Mexicans are better off [in the United States] and are better workers."[23] In constructing a portrait of a barbaric Mexican nation that produced lazy, unambitious citizens, he echoed popular criticisms of Mexico and Mexicans. Having only recently undertaken a life changing journey, his interview affirms his decision to leave his home in search of opportunity.

This thinking enjoyed currency among some local and national officials in Mexico's constantly-shifting government during and directly after the Revolution. While in the United States, popular reform groups lobbied most aggressively for Prohibition, in Mexico, as historian Gabriela Recio argues, Prohibition was "imposed from top to bottom" with various leaders instituting Prohibition for a variety of reasons, usually with a "lack of public support."[24] Some corrupt state leaders and local elites imposed prohibition laws selectively to secure monopolies while simultaneously encouraging mass intoxication to bolster their own profits. Others saw

22 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Alfonoso Casasola", March 1927.
23 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 22.
24 Gabriela Recio, "Drugs and Alcohol: US Prohibition and the Origins of the Drug Trade in Mexico, 1910-1930," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 34, no. 1 (February 2002): 29.

alcohol through a socialist, and often anti-Catholic lens.[25] For example, socialist governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto cautioned his people in 1922,

> It is a great mistake to go to the cantinas and spend money that you worked hard to earn, [leaving it] in the hands of the octopuses and spongers who never want the people to progress and better themselves. I ask all of you to promise me with all of your hearts that you will never go to the cantinas to get drunk, because if you keep doing it, the working people will be held back forever."[26]

For Venustiano Carranza, president from 1917-1920, alcoholism represented an obstacle to modern domestic productivity; he solicited a report on the issue and asked for recommendations to solve it, even turning to the United States government for assistance.[27] Yet two industries born in the wake of US prohibition—vice tourism in cities such as Tijuana, and smuggling across the US Mexican border—proved too profitable to local and national ruling elites for Prohibition to ever take root, even though many government leaders and representatives seemed genuinely committed to the issue.[28] In 1923, a year when Mexican federal revenue was roughly 250 million pesos, the federal government collected over 13 million pesos in liquor production taxes alone: Mexico could not afford prohibition.[29]

Yet, by supporting immigration restriction and United States Prohibition, according to Mexican consul Y.M. Vásquez in 1929, Mexico could dry out a portion of its population. "We wish the Box Bill would pass although we do not like some of the things that are said about Mexicans. We don't want our people to leave the country. We want prohibition of strong liquors

25 Fallaw, "Dry Law, Wet Politics," 42, 48-51.
26 Ibid., 49.
27 Recio, "Drugs and Alcohol," 28.
28 Ibid., 30; Robert Buffington, "Prohibition in the Borderlands: National Government-Border Community Relations," *Pacific Historical Review* 63, no. 1 (February 1994): 25-29.
29 Buffington, "Prohibition in the Borderlands," 29.

and want those Mexicans who have grown up in the United States without them. We want the ones who know American methods of ploughing, etc."[30] Chicana/o historians have observed the complex relationship between the Mexican government and US immigration laws. Many Mexican officials supported restriction and repatriation, which they believed would keep Mexico's labor force within its own borders, and return those already in the United States versed in modern industry and agriculture.[31] For him, a temperate migrant population of Mexican nationals in the United States signified the potential return of citizens not just exposed to modern industry, but also conditioned for it.

Like Vásquez, many contemporary social scientists, including Paul Taylor, Manuel Gamio, Emory Bogardus, and several of his students, argued that only long term exposure to modern United States laws and cultural customs could relieve Mexicans of their drinking habits.[32] In such narratives, 'exposure to the United States' could just as easily read 'distance from Mexico,' implying a similar vision of a perpetually wet and backward Mexican culture. While framing their analysis in an exceptionalist teleology that emphasized the virtues of Americanization, their conclusions do ring true for some narrators.[33] Ethnic Mexicans born in the United States or long term residents articulated their sobriety as something that separated them from "humble" recent migrants.

For example, Antonio Martínez, a New Mexico-born resident of Los Angeles in 1927,

30 Paul Taylor, "Field Notes: Series A, Set 1", 1929, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 4.

31 Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

32 Manuel Gamio, "Preliminary Report to Social Science Research Council", n.d., Bancroft Library; Paul Taylor, "Crime and the Foreign Born: The Problem of the Mexican," in *Report on Crime and the Foreign Born*, ed. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement. (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 199-243; Emory Bogardus, *The Mexican in the United States,* ([San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1934); William McEuen, "A Survey of the Mexicans in Los Angeles" (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1914); Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity*.

33 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Andres Davila", April 28, 1927.

abstained from drinking, gambling, and smoking entirely. In his 1927 interview with a Gamio research assistant, Martínez professed his admiration of the United States, its modernity, and the opportunities it offered for "enterprising" individuals such as himself. Entitled to the privileges of US citizenship, familiar with US customs, bilingual, and light complected, Martínez enjoyed many options denied other ethnic Mexicans, rising from service to white collar work. In his dealings with working class Mexican immigrants in his capacity as debt collector, Martínez displayed an "air of superiority" and a "tendency to look down on the humble Mexican workers." Martínez believed these individuals had "faults [that] cannot be corrected," which included over indulgence in alcohol.[34]

Carmen Ramírez, a Mexican immigrant to Kansas City, Missouri, perhaps best exemplified how temperance tied closely to ethnic and class politics. Ramírez arrived in the United States in 1914, worked through an apprenticeship with an electrician, became the only Mexican employed in that capacity within his company, and at the time of his interview with Paul Taylor in 1929 continued to study to ensure his further advancement. His emphatic focus on upward mobility led him, he acknowledged, to forgo "a lot of pleasure and perhaps friends." Indeed, among Mexican laborers and recent migrants, Ramírez felt a distance: "I am a little bit of an odd fellow. I like to study. I don't drink, smoke, or gamble. You feel uncomfortable if you don't do the things they do." Because of his choice of company and his temperance, "The Mexicans say, 'He is an American. He hates us. He thinks he is superior to us and has nothing to do with us.'"[35] Ramírez sensed that Mexicans perceived him as putting on airs, but believing most Mexicans bonded through vice, he felt uncomfortable when in their company. With the

34 M Robles, "Vida de Antonio Martinez", April 19, 1927, Bancroft Library.
35 Paul Taylor, "Field Notes: Series B, Set 1", 1929, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 5, Bancroft Library.

exception of one Mexican doctor, Ramírez only socialized with Euro American professionals he met when he became the only Mexican member of a local masonic lodge.

A firm believer in Americanization, which he described as a "great thing," Ramírez believed that if exposed to American customs as he had been, Mexicans could be led out of their condition along his path: "If I had stayed in my country I would never have got what I have now." Though limited in his English, Ramírez aspired to be respected within the white community. His pride surrounding his upward mobility appears palpable throughout the interview, where he emphasized the inroads he made into white communities despite discrimination against Mexicans. Though he knew that people at his job "talked about him" and his Mexican ancestry, "The general foreman, Mr. W.J. Richardson, is a good friend of mine. I am always welcome at his house. Sometimes I eat there and have social time." Beyond his boss, "I have dozens of friends. All are business men, bankers, school teachers, lawyers, etc."[36] From his perspective, to achieve the education and respectability that gained him admission to his boss's home, Ramírez necessarily forsook pleasures and people, and his narrative shows how temperance, both as a personal choice and a public declaration, contributed to significant mobility.

Forty-seven year-old Zeferino Ramírez (no relation) enjoyed great esteem in both Belvedere's Mexican and American communities as a business owner and founder of the Mexican Chamber of Commerce.[37] Ramírez believed sobriety to be central to his economic success and family stability, and credited this to the Protestant church. In Chihuahua, Mexico, he had "lived happily, getting drunk every Saturday night and staying drunk all day Sunday." Too drunk to

36 Ibid.

37 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 3, 4, 14, 274; M Robles, "Vida de Zeferino Ramirez", April 21, 1927, Bancroft Library.

care that he could not support his family, he came to Los Angeles for work with the intention of abandoning them. Yet, after months of unemployment and living in squalor and solitude, he began to regret his choice and feel empty.[38] Then, in a park where Mexicans without work gathered, he heard a Methodist preacher, began attending services, and "changed completely," giving up smoking and drinking. Finding work, he sent for his family and, because "he had no vices," the family's savings accrued, they bought a home, and are now "middle class," enjoying "unlimited credit in the commercial houses."[39]

The links between Protestantism, temperance, and Prohibition are well noted by historians, who recognize that various Protestant denominations mobilized members to support Prohibition, and proved critical to its initial success.[40] Though limited in its Mexican membership, Protestant churches inspired temperance sentiment among ethnic Mexicans congregants in Los Angeles, and through extensive Americanization programs, additionally reached non congregants. As Chicana/o historians have noted, ethnic Mexicans did not, for the most part, convert to Protestantism but rather selectively availed themselves of the services offered in settlement houses and Americanization campaigns.[41] But as Ramirez's interview shows, some found a message in Protestantism that appealed to them. Indeed, one interesting fact to emerge from the *Herald's* coverage of the 1909 petition is that the majority of signatories

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38 Robles, "Vida de Zeferino Ramirez."

39 Ibid.

40 Ira M. Wasserman, "Status Politics and Economic Class Interests: The 1918 Prohibition Referendum in California," *The Sociological Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 475-484; Gilman Marston Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957); Clifford James Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years* (Barstow, California: Backdoor Publishing, 1999).

41 Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo- Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Vicki Ruíz, *From out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

also counted themselves as members of the Spanish Presbyterian Church.[42]

According to George Sanchez, for some Mexicans and Mexican Americans, Protestantism symbolized the modern American antithesis of an archaic Catholic faith.[43] The opposition between virtuous, modern Protestantism and drunkenly backwards Catholicism enjoyed great currency in this era as Protestants asserted moral and cultural superiority to the nation's burgeoning Catholic immigrant population, particularly Irish, Italians, and Mexicans. Contemporary social scientist Paul Taylor suggested that middle-class Mexicans proved more receptive its message as it distanced them from their working-class, Catholic neighbors.[44] Yet Protestantism, for some ethnic Mexicans, spoke not only to class position but also to the modes and challenges of modern life. Historian Arlene Sánchez Walsh notes that, for Protestant churches catering to ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles during the 1920s, alcohol represented a sickness on both a physical and spiritual level, one to be purged on an individual's path to Christ.[45] Churches' ideology intersected often with upwardly mobile, middle class identity, and provided some ethnic Mexicans a path to temperance.

Indeed, in Methodism, Zeferino Ramírez found a message suited to his spiritual needs: the ethics of hard work and temperance resonated with him and, in adhering to them, Ramírez became a family man who owned his own business and home.[46] As a community leader, he "saved many weak-willed drunks with love and help without ever asking them to change their religion."[47] Though a lay minister in his church, he spread his message of temperance without

42 "Urge Officials to Sweep Away Vice Resorts."
43 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 151-156.
44 Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows*, 45.
45 Arlene M Sánchez-Walsh, *Latino Pentecostal Identity: Evangelical Faith, Self, and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 20.
46 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 3-4.
47 Robles, "Vida de Zeferino Ramirez."

necessarily attaching it to conversion. Like Carmen Ramírez, who believed sobriety central to his success, Zeferino Ramirez's temperance appears essential to his new identity as a respectable, middle class father and businessman.

Gregorio López credited his decision to quit drinking to Protestantism, which also brought him to the United States and taught him to live within his often limited means. In Mexico he found himself impoverished and "disorderly" because his drinking habit took the little money he earned away from his wife and children. Then, passing a Protestant church, he listened to the service, liked what he heard, converted with his family, and moved to the United States when his minister found him work in Arizona. At the time of his interview in Los Angeles four years later, he was studying theology to become a lay minister while his wife sewed and sold tamales to make ends meet and keep their children in school. Though work proved scarce in Los Angeles, with the help of his wife and "because he does not drink," López and his family lived modestly but comfortably.[48]

While ethnic Mexican membership within Protestant churches remained low—Elizabeth Hymer's 1924 data shows that only eight percent of respondents considered themselves Protestant —Protestants carried their message to their barrios, sponsoring recreational events, and offering support for individuals who wished to quit drinking.[49] For example, Baptist minister Leonardo Soto Mercado brought Sunday church to the county jail, preaching hard work, honesty, and sobriety to—quite literally—a captive audience. Sunday, in addition to its distinction as a day of worship also held a dubious honor as the day when jails filled to capacity with weekend drunk and vagrancy cases.[50]

48 M Robles, "Vida de Gregorio López", April 20, 1927, Bancroft Library.
49 Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity*.
50 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Leonardo Soto Mercado", May 19, 1927.

Through educational and recreational activities, Protestant churches also reached second generation Mexican youths and helped shape their vision of respectability and advancement. Protestant settlement houses offered play spaces for local Mexican youth and often sponsored social events within the community without necessarily requiring religious conversion. Second generation youth came to dominate Los Angeles's ethnic Mexican communities as immigration restriction and repatriation cut off the continuous influx of first generation migrants.[51] This population, according to historians, negotiated the traditions of their family with the world around them, and more firmly pushed for social and economic mobility in the United States.[52] Classed ideas about respectability, and individual and collective advancement, guided these efforts, and perhaps no organization within Los Angeles showed this transition more clearly than the Mexican American Movement (MAM). Growing out of the Young Man's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1934, MAM was composed of Los Angeles-area Mexican American adolescents from predominately Protestant backgrounds and, in 1938, began publishing a monthly newsletter, *The Mexican Voice*.[53] Education, hard work, and sobriety appeared centrally in MAM's description of the path to individual success and ethnic advancement.[54]

The second issue of the *Mexican Voice* offered readers an "Analysis of our people," which asserted,

51 Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

52 Ibid.; Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*.

53 In MAM's ethos, Historian David Gutiérrez sees a "stridently assimilationist political philosophy" while George Sánchez sees evidence that the cultural identity of second generation Mexican Americans had been shaped before World War II. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*; Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

54 In addition to religious influences, these individuals spent their formative years under federal Prohibition, which "seems to have the most significant effect," according to contemporary researcher Constantine Panuzio, "upon the children of the foreign born." Panuzio idealistically argued that US born children of immigrants were "under the influence of the public schools" and were not only "almost universally abstainers" but also "staunch carriers of prohibition sentiment into the home." See Constantine Panunzio, "The Foreign Born and Prohibition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163 (September 1932): 150-151.

> It is disastrous that many of our youth live just to fulfill their desires of self destruction. The vice conditions among our Mexican people are the worst of all our weaknesses. Our ambitions, our dreams, our plans for a better life are all dissolved to nothing once we let the black evil of vice enter into our delicate and fragile organism.[55]

Seeing vice as "the worst of all our weaknesses," the publication encouraged its readers to follow the examples of local ethnic Mexican athletes who "must train hard—no smoking, drinking; regular hours and clean fun." Like athletes, youth seeking education and advancement must remember, "One slip in this schedule—and flop! They'd be down with the 'also rans;'" the article encouraged readers to "be champions" not "also rans" [56] Along the way, readers would encounter "easy-going, time-wasting Mexicans (sic) fellows who drag down our name...and want you to be like them"[57] MAM members believed that drinking figured prominently and detrimentally in Mexican culture, a custom its readers must resist. Furthermore, improving public perception of the Mexican community proved paramount to MAM's ideology of racial uplift. Moreover, drinkers contributed to discrimination against all Mexicans, regardless of their economic and social position. In this attitude, MAM reflected the perceptions of many temperate Mexicans of their parents' generation.

Publishing almost exclusively in English, and predominately for members of its own organization, MAM spoke to a limited, and in the minds of the authors, exceptional audience that stood to advance the race. Indeed, "There always will be some of us who never will learn anything beyond being good pickers of lemons and oranges; but there always will be fellows who

55 Paul Coronel, "Analysis of our People," *Mexican Voice*, November 1938.
56 Manuel de la Raza, "Nosotros," *The Mexican Voice*, July 1938.
57 Ibid.

have a high keen intelligence ready for cultivation if only they are awakened to the fact that there is such a possibility."[58] Obviously MAM saw itself as speaking to members of the second category, an upwardly mobile, sober, and respectable contingent. In criticizing sweeping segments of Los Angeles's ethnic Mexican population, the *Voice* did not wish to "lower our Mexican people to a shameful position," but sought instead to "understand our weaknesses" rather than leaving them "untouched" and "inviting our own self denigration."

The *Voice* expressed "pity" for older generations of Mexican immigrants "born in 'Mexican town' with its dirty streets, broken down rented houses, its beer parlors, noise and dirty language." These conditions engrained in them "that a Mexican hasn't a chance"[59] While arrogantly sympathetic, MAM believed older generations beyond their reach, too indoctrinated in a culture of apathy, vice, and ignorance. Thus, MAM advocated focusing on "young and energetic youth who are more susceptible to reformation and correction." Members must educate themselves and become "leaders of Mexican descent, leaders in social work who will wake up" the apathetic youth. Firmly wedding education and temperance to individual and collective advancement, MAM challenged its readers to reach their full potential, and in doing so, better racialized perceptions of ethnic Mexicans as a whole.

Just as temperance fit into classed identities, so too did intoxication. Social historians of the United States observe the ways public drinking fostered a masculine, working class culture and community.[60] In his work on labor and leisure among ethnic Mexicans in Corona, California,

58 Paul Coronel, "Social Conditions of the Mexican People in General," *The Mexican Voice*, February 1939.

59 Manuel de la Raza, "Negroes Prove Worth Despire Historical Tale of Opposition," *The Mexican Voice*, December 1938.

60 Craig Heron, "The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-class Hamilton, 1890-1946," *The Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (2005): 411-452; Howard P Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1999); Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000); Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

historian Jose Alamillo detailed the ways “excessive drinking” contributed to a distinct “working-class masculine identity.” According to Alamillo, this rough masculine culture “celebrated male fraternity, rough behavior, and eventually, incipient worker resistance and workplace organizing.” Public drinking both fostered and marked a working-class identity that “brought workers together to offset their loneliness and bolster their spirits,” but also “produced social instability in the community.”[61]

In his analysis of male migrant workers in 1980s California, ethnomusicologist Manuel Peña observed a similar cultural behavior, one he termed “destructive.” Indeed, according to Peña, the men in his study, “Drank and celebrated with abandon, often with disastrous results, such as bloody fights and vehicular accidents. Almost invariably, alcohol intensified their feelings of machismo and the crudities associated with it—vulgarity, sadistic behavior, blind anger.”[62] The amount of liquor a man consumed spoke to his masculinity, his strength marked by his ability to imbibe. This dynamic appeared rather clear in Oscar Lewis's 1959 ethnography of five Mexican families, in which one man, Alfredo, mocked his brother, “Just a few beers and you fall flat. You can’t hold your liquor like a man.”[63]

Some men, at least initially, drank to belong. Tommy Reyes did not drink until he went to Needles to work construction with his cousins during the interwar years. “I didn't drink and my cousins drank up a storm. They'd have a dance and make mixed drinks. They used to drink a lot and I didn't. It was just something I didn't want to do...So my cousins started bugging me and

61 José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

62 Manuel Peña, “Class, Gender, and Machismo: The ‘Treacherous-Woman’ Folklore of Mexican Male Workers,” *Gender and Society* 5, no. 1 (March 1991): esp. 38.

63 Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty.* (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 161.

bugging me...they bugged me so much that I finally said, 'Fine give me a bottle.'"[64] Similarly Ramon López does not recall when he began drinking, but believes it was with his father and cousins: "It wasn't something we thought about or talked about. It was just what we did."[65] Many working class men socially consumed alcohol in pursuit of relaxation and pleasure, and in occasionally destructive manners.

Concerning literature on drinking, sociologist Jan Waterson notes, "It is usually the dangers we hear about...certainly there are many alcohol-related harms, but also time-honored pleasures" that are a "part of everyday life."[66] Though individuals did drink destructively, many ethnic Mexicans responsibly consumed alcohol with little fanfare, taking pleasure in a relaxing social moment. In his 1927 interview, Raul Dubois, a middle class migrant in the United States studying business, argued that, in the "majority of the places where one goes to have a good time, drink is one of the most common means of creating enthusiasm."[67] The enthusiasm that Dubois speaks of could serve as a pressure valve that released some of the tensions of a difficult daily experience. One ethnic Mexican informant in Peña's study explained: "We carry on like this to make light of things for a moment, to forget the problems of life for a moment—the toil, the struggle."[68] Economically and socially marginalized and often living in substandard housing, ethnic Mexicans faced an array of financial pressures and prejudices. Alcohol relaxed individual's social inhibitions, quieted their concerns, and for some, proved a welcome respite from the pressures of daily life during "the times when we want to make merry for a while."[69]

64 "Tommy Reyes", June 16, 2010.
65 "Ramón López", February 23, 2009.
66 Jan Waterson, *Women and Alcohol in Social Context: Mother's Ruin Revisited* (New York: Palgrave, 2000).
67 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Raul DuBois", 1927.
68 Peña, "Class, Gender, and Machismo," 43.
69 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Jesus Valle", May 18, 1927.

While the press and many informants emphasized the detrimental public drinking activities of Mexicans, most narrators' experiences with alcohol reveal that ethnic Mexicans consumed in private and semi private spaces, quietly and responsibly. The regularity and innocuousness of these activities lacked the violence and crime that drew attention and scorn from the police, press, and ethnic Mexican observers. The *Los Angeles Times* reported one such incident, in the context of a Prohibition violation, describing "thirty intoxicated Mexicans...calmly enjoying twenty quarts of whiskey."[70] The celebrants were not disturbing the peace, fighting, or in any way unruly, instead spending a relaxing evening on a river bank in their neighborhood among friends.

As a child in 1920s Pasadena, Tommy Reyes recalls his family's regular evening activity:

> In the evening, they had this tree, I think it was a fig tree, a nice big one, and they had a table underneath there with benches. In the evening the men and the women would sit there and discuss things about Mexico and where they came from. I'd sit behind my mom, come over, put my ear out there. They would talk, they'd have a bottle of wine...they'd be there talking, drinking, and smoking.[71]

Francisco Medrano also enjoyed unwinding with friends and "the liquor which we poor people drink." Medrano, who worked as a laborer in a Los Angeles printing press, "tired of printing" and "dreamed of giving up the trade." When not working, he took pleasure in the "many times friends come with guitars and then sing and have a good time," and hoped to return to Mexico to establish a saloon, so he could earn a living and enjoy his work.[72]

As a child, Ramon López observed similar low-key social activities in which his father, a

70 "Good Angel Supplies," *Los Angeles Times*, September 11, 1916.
71 "Tommy Reyes."
72 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Francisco Medrano", April 6, 1927, Bancroft Library.

Wilmington, California bootlegger during Prohibition, “sat out back with friends...drinking and telling stories.” According to López, “My father used to play the guitar and some of them would sing.” During the winter, these events moved indoors—because “those houses had no heating or insulation so it would get cold”—where, “the men would sit around the table in the kitchen with the oven open and drink coffee mixed with [his father's] whiskey.”[73] Ramon does not recall violence or even conflict during these evenings. Manuel Contreras also recalls similar gatherings throughout his youth in Pasadena, where “there was always drinking.” Some men in his community “were involved in making beer and hard liquor...and sometimes they'd get a party going...but nothing bad ever happened.”[74]

While often restricted to men, women also found private spaces in which they could drink. According to López, “Some of the women [including his mother] would drink too. They weren't getting wild or anything just having a good time.”[75] Insulated in a private space, some women found the liberty to drink. Indeed, in Contreras's early 1930s experience, while women did not drink at big parties, they nonetheless had their own social time to relax around a bottle.

> My mother used to have a group of ladies who would come over—I don't know if it was a club, but they'd have gossip chats or whatever. And they'd break out the bottle and start drinking beer or wine, and that was custom. My mother and her friends. It was custom to sit around and drink a beer. But in my opinion none of them got drunk where they were wobbly. Maybe they were high.[76]

Similarly, though Ester Mejia did not drink, she recalls a friend, Angie, who “never got drunk”

73 “Ramón López.”
74 “Manuel Contreras”, May 5, 2010.
75 “Ramón López.”
76 “Manuel Contreras.”

but "used to like to take a beer" when spending time with Ester and her sisters.[77]

In dominant Euro American and Mexican gender norms, intoxication corrupted women, making them dishonorable—in the words of historian Stephanie Reyes Bell, a lady drinker was seen as "an oxymoron."[78] Yet, as López and Contreras's narratives reveal, some ethnic Mexican women found a social space to drink with their friends and family, but this space usually remained in homes and other private settings.[79] This practice reflected social gender norms and actual laws: as we shall see, links between sex work and saloons meant that, almost invariably, a woman's public proximity to liquor marked her as morally corrupt, sexually available, and in violation of local ordinances.[80] Thus, in considering women drinking, it is important to understand the gendered divides between public and private space that often governed these activities. As one narrator from Chicago revealed in 1928, the connotations of a woman's intoxication came down to location.

> The Mexicans do their drinking inside; the Poles go out into the street hollering and cursing. In the house where I live there are some Poles who live on the first flat. They are five women and seven men; none of them married. They get drunk three times a week and raise cain till 3 or 4 in the morning. They bang the chairs on the wall and break dishes. In the winter if I chop some wood upstairs for kindling the women come upstairs cursing and yelling at me. You would never hear of our Mexican women acting that way or swearing.[81]

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77 "Ester Mejia", April 29, 2010.

78 Stephanie Lynn Reyes Bell, "Gendered and Racialized Constructions of Alcoholism in the Postwar Era" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2001); Katherine Bliss, *Compromised Positions: Prostitution, Public Health, and Gender Politics in Revolutionary Mexico City* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001).

79 Kenneth D Rose, "'Dry' Los Angeles and Its Liquor Problems in 1924," *Southern California Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (1987): 51-74; Ostrander, *The Prohibition Movement in California, 1848-1933*; Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity*.

80 Murdock, *Domesticating Drink*; Reyes Bell, "Gendered and Racialized Constructions of Alcoholism in the Postwar Era."; Mary Villarreal, "Cantantes Y Cantineras: Mexican American Communities and the Mapping of Public Space" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, 2003).

81 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 144.

For bootleggers like the López family already inclined to keep their drinking activities off police radar, women could quietly drink alongside men in their family and community. Similarly, bootlegger Miguel García threw "great parties" with friends in his home, where women and men regularly drank together.[82]

Entering public drinking spaces, even during Prohibition, was for the most part however, the provence of men. Examining crime reports from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) reveals the greatly disproportionate amount of men arrested for public intoxication. Indeed, between 1919 and 1924, 32,949 Los Angeles residents spent time in jail for drunk in public charges, only 993 (or three percent) were women.[83] According to an internal LAPD study, in 1924 alone, 942 ethnic Mexicans faced drunk in public charges.[84] That same year, only 313 women (of all ethnic backgrounds) faced similar charges, and ethnic Mexican women represented only ten percent of female offenders.[85]

In public drinking activities, Prohibition-era male narrators described "binges" or "sprees" in which they would join their friends for a wild night, or series of nights, drinking on the town, often until they ran out of money. Perhaps these men found drinking a temporary antidote to the financial pressures that dominated their time and energy, providing masculine fellowship in places women and children could not follow, with at times detrimental economic results.[86] Such was the case for Conrado Martínez, who, despite learning English, only found low wage manual

82 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Miguel García", April 8, 1927, Bancroft Library.
83 "Annual Report, Division of Jails", 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.
84 S.H. Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period", 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.
85 "Annual Report, Division of Jails."; "Statement of Cases Handled by The Women's Police Court, Los Angeles", 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.
86 Recinos, "Vida de Miguel García."

labor opportunities, and at the time of his interview did not "even have enough to eat because in these last two months...I have been without work." Married with three children, Martínez felt great pressure to provide for his family, and great anxiety about his inability to do so: "If I was alone I could sleep beneath a bridge, when I was alone I did it many times, but now that I am married it is different, and especially with children."

Believing that in Mexico, "taking a good sum of money can one go to establish a business or something which can produce enough to live on and in which one doesn't have to work as hard as here," Martínez saved $300, left his family in the United States, and went south to explore opportunities with his friends. There, "it turned out that all of my money was spent...in nothing but drinking and music. It didn't last me fifteen days and I had to come back."[87] Martínez, temporarily separated from his family, squandered his financial stake in just over two weeks of binge drinking with friends in similar circumstances. Other impoverished Mexicans described saving money only to see it evaporate in an extended binge with friends. Francisco Mares, an orphan who migrated to the United States without family or money, also saved $300—funds given to him over the years by sympathetic community members who cared for him as a child. Hoping to return to Mexico with this money and start a new life, Mares and his traveling companions only made it as far the border where "it was the Sixteenth of September and the boys went on a great drunk. They kept going with the music from one place to another, drinking all night." Ultimately, "instead of going to Mexico, all of them had to go back [to the United States] to find work."[88]

Other binge drinkers found ways to balance their heavy drinking with family responsibilities. Miguel Arce, who had lived in the United States for six years at the time of his

87 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Conrado Martínez", May 24, 1927.
88 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Francisco Mares", May 20, 1927.

1927 interview in Los Angeles, saw himself as a "bohemian," partying hard in the years before his migration and continuing in the United States, he nonetheless balanced this lifestyle with his economic limits and his family's needs. Describing binge drinking as "something I can't help" when his mother and sisters joined him in 1921 Philadelphia, "I kept on being the same hardened bohemian," going on "great sprees almost everyday."

But Arce believed his activities did not interfere with his obligation to provide for his family: "In spite of it all I have never failed my duty of keeping my home...the first thing I that I always do is to set apart the money which belongs to the house and give it to my mother, the rest I have thrown away." Arce attempted to balance his drinking with his masculine responsibility of supporting his family and shielding them from the dishonor associated with his activities. His mother and sisters, "didn't like that very much but they are now used to my way of being. I have always respected them so that I come home after taking every care so that they won't know that I have been dissipating." Out of work in Los Angeles at the time of his interview, claimed "I still take my little drinks, but not much, on account of my work, and because I need to cut down my expenses as much as possible."[89]

Individuals like Arce, who today would perhaps be labeled functional alcoholics, nonetheless managed to balance their binges with their need to work by drinking lightly on the weekdays and then binging on weekends. Manuel Contreras described an uncle who "had a certain routine...He'd sip a drink almost daily but not get drunk, but on weekends he'd over do it, and he did that for many years: drink a little on the weekdays because he wanted to get up and go to work the next day. On weekends, he figured he didn't have to go to work so he'd stay at home and get very drunk."[90] Ester Mejia recalls that her step father, who felt proud about "that he

89 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de la familia Arce en Los Estados Unidos", April 8, 1927.
90 "Manuel Contreras."

could take care of his family," only "drank heavily on the weekends...It would be Friday, Saturday and Sunday if he had a binge." During these binges "he was out drinking Friday after work through Monday morning. And then he'd go to work...he'd never miss...He'd come home on Monday night and be dead."[91] Both men proudly took care of their family's economic needs by situating social binge drinking around their work schedule. Able to balance nights of hard drinking among friends with their work schedule, these men took pride in rising Monday morning, hungover and exhausted, and working nonetheless.

Some, however, found this balance between labor and liquor difficult, and spent the majority of their time drinking in the streets. Though a public gathering space, drinking in the streets lacked even the pretense of sanctioned social behavior. In describing her "alcoholic" uncle Epifanio, Mary Caralejo drew distinctions between going out drinking and being out drunk. "When you say 'going out,' you're describing somebody who has friends who would go partying. No, he was a wino. He would hit the street. They were all winos out there, his friends, just drinking on the street. Drinking the cheapest wine they could get...no night clubbing or anything like that."[92] Raised in Wilmington, these men were a regular sight, "Growing up there were drunks all around." Mary and her sisters would walk to grammar school through a tunnel that went under train tracks, where the "street people" would go to get drunk. "They would pee in there and poop and whatever, and we were supposed to be safer under there than on top with the tracks."[93]

While public drinking occurred in predominately masculine spaces such as bars, streets, and, during Prohibition in blind pigs and other clandestine drinking locations, some women also

91 "Ester Mejia."
92 "Mary Caralejo", July 27, 2010.
93 Ibid.

gained admission. By entering public drinking spaces, women crossed lines drawn by dominant gender norms and ethnic Mexicans themselves. In one of the more complete narratives in Gamio's papers, Luis Felipe Recinos's description of and interview with Gloria Navas shows an admittedly exceptional woman who unabashedly drank with the boys. In 1927, Recinos accompanied Navas and her friends on a night of "riding and partying" that included three women and five men, Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans.

The spree began by going "to a place where one of the young men obtained several bottles of whiskey," before the group ventured to a cabaret called the Turkish Village, where they asked for ginger ale "and the young men began to serve the whiskey in the most shameless manner, without anyone saying a word to the contrary." Soon, one man had left to prepare for work as a waiter, and another became ill from consuming too much corn liquor, and the remainder of the party—now evenly men and women—left the cabaret at 3am to go "riding" for two hours. Alcohol, though illegal, figured prominently in the leisure activities of this eclectic group of laborers. All were welcome to come along, according to Navas, so long as they were willing to "go out on a spree with me and [were] not afraid of anything or scared by anything."[94] Yet for some women, there was much to fear in nights spent out drinking publicly among men, as the social connotations in their community, and in Los Angeles in general, marked them as disreputable and sexually available.

Navas supported herself as a dime dancer, a woman employed by nightclubs—which despite Prohibition continued as public drinking spaces—to dance with male customers for payment. Framing her life and labor in the context of early twentieth-century nightlife and social norms contextualizes her decision about employment and drinking, and reveals an array of dime

94 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución", April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library.

dancers engaged in the profession. Economic necessity dictated many women's entrances into public nightlife—dime dancing offered a viable wage—and while many danced in order to contribute to the family wage economy, others used the profits to finance independent lifestyles. Historian Robin D.G. Kelley describes how, when compelled by economic need to assume labor that coded them as dishonorable, women crafted their own gendered identities to be compatible with their labor and desires. Though focusing on sex workers, Kelley's theorization nonetheless rings true when considering dime dancers who, in interviews, still described themselves as decent, modern women.[95]

Dancing (in of itself, much less for profit in a public drinking space) conflicted with familial expectations, particularly those of Mexican-born parents. One mother, interviewed in 1930, complained about her daughter's desire to dance, saying, “Juanita has joined a club and now she wants to learn to dance. This is what comes of these clubs. It is wrong to dance and my Juanita wants to do it because the others do. Because everybody does it does not make it right. I know the things I was taught as a girl and right and wrong cannot change.”[96] Married, single, and divorced women all worked nights at dance clubs, and many displayed relatively liberal ideas about sexuality and gender. Whether the pursuit of labor or leisure guided them to public drinking spaces, these women necessarily recrafted gender ideologies to fit their life against a changing gendered landscape.

Before and during Prohibition, a woman's presence in a public space that served liquor tacitly linked her to the sex worker industry. Indeed, in interviewing Navas, Recinos considered her a prostitute (the complete title of the interview reveals this: “The life of Gloria Navas and

95 Robin D. G Kelley, *Yo' Mama's Disfunktional!: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1997), 71-74.
96 Mary Lanigan, “Second Generation Mexicans in Belvedere” (Master's Thesis, University of Southern California, 1932), 62.

some facts about prostitution").[97] Particularly in the years before Prohibition, both locally and nationally, women for the most part did not enter saloons except as sex workers. Indeed, "Any woman who drank in a saloon was assumed to be a prostitute at worst, loose at best."[98] These moralistic ideas about sexual purity coexisted with legally sanctioned vice zones and a thriving red light district, leading a diverse group of reformers and city officials to find ways to limit women's presence in saloons, and later to limit dancing and other heterosocial activities.

In 1903, a Los Angeles Committee on public safety investigated the inner workings of saloons, finding that sex workers operated with impunity. These women entered through "side doors to saloons," and proceeded to " boxes or side rooms in either saloons or restaurants, which are used for immoral or illegal purposes." Due to custom and law, the front door to saloons was, quite literally, closed to women, whatever their business inside.[99] Of course, the city did not criminalize prostitution until 1909, and the Committee's recommendations suggested that prostitution, though accepted by many as a necessary evil, should be restricted to brothels and kept out of public spaces, particularly those serving alcohol.[100]

Like the committee on public safety, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) saw intrinsic links between prostitution and saloon life. As mothers and "keepers of national culture," Progressive-era women reformers claimed a moral authority on behalf of all women; seeing a world in which women were vulnerable to the abuses of men, these reformers aggressively lobbied against vice industries. The WCTU targeted alcohol and prostitution in the early twentieth-century because, for the WCTU and other reformers, issues of women's purity

97 Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución."
98 Mary Murphy, "Bootlegging Mothers and Drinking Daughters: Gender and Prohibition in Butte, Montana," *American Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (June 1994): 175.
99 "Committee of Safety Makes Its Report," *Los Angeles Herald*, November 8, 1900.
100 Catherine Christensen, "Mujeres Públicas: Euro-American Prostitutes and Reformers at the California-Mexico Border, 1900-1929" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2009).

and alcohol appeared intertwined. Indeed, the WCTU helped push through the 1913 Red Light Abatement Act, and proved equally significant in Volstead's narrow victory in California seven years later. Historian Catherine Christensen argues that women reformers' collective concerns about alcohol and sex work related to morality, urban decay, and health, and thus "reflected the quintessentially Progressive impulse that characterized turn-of-the-century America."[101]

Through city ordinances, the Los Angeles City Council, under pressure from the WCTU and local Protestant churches, sought to exclude women from saloons in the name of "public decency" and to protect women from the dangers of these masculine spaces. In Los Angeles, the city council passed Ordinance No. 20640, which, beyond limiting "drinking establishments" to specified vice zones, declared women could not be present in licensed establishments "any longer than was necessary to eject them."[102] Significantly, the ordinance barred women from purchasing liquor and proprietors from serving them, but like the Volstead act that would follow, the ordinance said nothing about consumption: women were free to drink alcohol, in private, but not allowed to purchase or consume it in public. Beyond questions of enforceability, the connotations of women drinking changed significantly when it occurred in public, representing an affront to moral decency. These popular attitudes about women and public intoxication were attitudes shared by many ethnic Mexican narrators who drew similar distinctions between public and private alcohol consumption.

The Los Angeles City Council and electorate took this regulation one step further in 1917, with the passing of Ordinance No. 37699, which legally closed all saloons, and restricted the sale of malt and vinous alcohol to clubs, hotels, and restaurants within a specified portion of

101 Ibid., 16.
102 "Ordinance No. 20640", July 26, 1910, Section 7c, Box 1332, Folder 20626-20674, Los Angeles City Archives.

downtown. Again, this ordinance drew divides between public and private consumption, permitting, "the service of alcoholic liquors in a private home to members of the family or to guests."[103] One year earlier, organizations such as the WCTU, the Clean Government League, various churches, and private citizens all voiced their support for proposed city Ordinance No. 34869, which forbade dancing in establishments holding a liquor license.[104] To offer both alcohol and dancing, businesses would need a permit only granted after ensuring it will "comport with public welfare and decency."[105]

Yet when the Volstead and Wright Acts took affect in 1921 and 1922 respectively, questions of forbidding sex workers, women, and dancing near liquor became moot as its manufacture, sale, purchase, and possession became illegal. There were simply no legal public drinking spaces to regulate. In the era of bootlegging that followed, however such regulation appeared all the more necessary as seemingly any club, restaurant, or public place could become an intoxicated space when customers smuggled their own supplies. When Prohibition closed drinking establishments, it simultaneously opened public spaces to women by providing the veneer of legal protection against the indecency rampant in these "former" drinking locations.[106] Stated differently, Prohibition ostensibly removed the alcohol from public spaces that had previously sanctioned women's exclusion from them. Though no business could legally serve liquor, individuals inclined to drink nonetheless managed to find ways. This reality led to Prohibition era efforts to prohibit youth from entering "dry" dancing establishments where the possibility for indecency and corruption remained despite the pretense of sobriety.[107]

103 "Ordinance No. 37699", November 28, 1917, Box 1410, Folder 37699-37731, Los Angeles City Archives.
104 "Bar Minors from Dance Halls; Plan," *Santa Ana Register*, February 20, 1923.
105 "Ordinance No. 34869", October 16, 1916, Box 1402, Folder 34861-34869, Los Angeles City Archives.
106 Murphy, "Bootlegging Mothers and Drinking Daughters," 175.
107 "Ordinance No. 342", n.d., Orange County Archives.

In this gendered and shifting social terrain, dime dancing represented a viable wage for women unable to find appealing alternatives. According to Paul Taylor's 1928 study of employed ethnic Mexican women in Los Angeles, only twelve percent worked outside unskilled agricultural and industrial labor such as canneries and garment manufacturers. Additionally, thirty-three percent of employers surveyed acknowledged they preferred not to hire an ethnic Mexican woman because "she is not dependable, [an] irregular worker, slow, and not intelligent."[108] Chicana/o scholars have documented the ways a racialized and gendered labor market combined with patriarchy in the home, leaving women few opportunities to find independence and material gain.[109] Indeed, Mexican laborers earned twenty to fifty percent less than Euro Americans in the early twentieth century, and in California, ethnic Mexican women proved the lowest paid members of the workforce.[110] While dime dancers complained about the long hours on their feet, many preferred the work to other attainable occupations, and some found that their limited skill set qualified them for little else. Following the narratives of dime dancers in Los Angeles while also considering deportation case files, police records, and supplementary interviews shows how dime dancing provided a diversity of ethnic Mexican women an economic and social space in which they could reap profit and, if they so chose, participate in Los Angeles's social night life.

Gamio research assistant Luis Felipe Recinos provided a detailed description of one night

108 Paul Taylor, "A Study of the Mexican Women in Industry in Los Anglees, Calif.", 1928, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 28, Bancroft Library.

109 Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "Women, Work, and Community in the Mexican Colonias of the Southern California Citrus Belt," *California History* 74, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 58-67; Vicki Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Patricia Zavella, *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley*, 1982.

110 Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California,1848-1930* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979), 210; Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*, 25, 29-31.

club, El Latino, and the young women who danced there. An immigrant from El Salvador, Recinos worked as a reporter for *La Prensa* in San Antonio when he met Manuel Gamio, and while his observations and interviews prove invaluable for glimpsing this gendered landscape, his unprofessionalism goes a long way in compromising these descriptions. A chauvinist at the very least, Recinos openly admitted deceiving the women he interviewed, engaging in sexual relations with at least two of them, and "falling in love" with one. When he entered and observed the dancehall, he did so as a researcher, but quickly lost himself; Recinos became a client and companion, and bragged in boldly patriarchal terms about his sexual conquests. Relying heavily on his ethnographic work, it is important to keep in mind that his perceptions were filtered by his status as an educated Latin American immigrant, a male, a researcher, and a self-professed manipulator of his subjects.

Recinos's description of El Latino outlines its contours and mechanisms, and the ways women navigated and sometimes manipulated both.

> In the center of the salon there is a type of stage on which all the women sit, the individual that wishes to dance buys tickets and later he talks to whichever of the women sitting on the stage; sometimes the women themselves go to find the men to dance; the men turn in the ticket to the women and every time they take a turn around the hall they cut the stub off the ticket and throw it in a box placed there especially for this purpose, leaving the other half with the woman. The tickets represent [$].05 for each piece they dance, so that the more they dance the more they earn...all the women are required to show up to work at 7:30 at night and they cannot cash out until 12:30 in the morning.[111]

Sat on a stage, dime dancers were quite literally on display, inviting men to choose the one they found most attractive in a gendered spectacle driven by money—only half of which the women

111 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Los Salones de Baile", April 15, 1927, Manuel Gamio Papers, Bancroft Library.

actually received, the other half going to the proprietor.

While certainly exploitative, women found economic opportunity by following this gendered script. According to historian Joanne Goodwin's analysis of postwar women laborers in Las Vegas, "the sex-gender system that promoted sexualized portrayals of women and prevented gender equality for all women offered individual women great economic advantages."[112] To capitalize on these "great economic advantages," according to Recinos, dime dancers needed to "flirt and flatter the men so they will dance more with them"—a fact that gratified Recinos.[113] Flirtation and flattery became necessary exercises to secure a steady cash flow, and Goodwin observes the similar ways women in Las Vegas "accommodated themselves to the commercialization of the female body."[114] Yet the need to flirt left at least one dancer very uncomfortable, because, "Some men at times make propositions to me which enrage me."[115] Her work came with unwanted advances from men, whose goodwill determined how much money she could make each night.

According to Recinos, "Many of these women are under the influence of drinking" while working and "there are cases in which they get drunk there in the salon and they have fights amongst themselves because of jealousy or disgust with the other women." These fights, according to Recinos, were often between "women who are Mexican immigrants and those who are called pochas" and also between "Mexicans and Americans." For Recinos, women engaged in dime dancing necessarily drank and could be considered prostitutes, and while we cannot

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112 Joanne Goodwin, "'She Works Hard for Her Money', A Reassessment of Las Vegas Women Workers, 1940-1980.'," in *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas*, ed. Hal Rothman and Mike Davis (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 255.

113 Recinos, "Los Salones de Baile."

114 Goodwin, "'She Works Hard for Her Money', A Reassessment of Las Vegas Women Workers, 1940-1980.'," 255.

115 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Juana Martínez", April 6, 1927, Bancroft Library.

know to what extent these women drank, it is clear that their profession put them in situations where they had the opportunity to do so, and individuals assumed they did.[116]

Far from powerless objects seated on stage, several women manipulated and subverted the system to increase their pay and restrict their clientele. Oftentimes women collected dance tickets but did not rip them, then mimed placing them in the collection box, and sold them to other clients, thus earning a full ten cents per turn. Other women, when paid with multiple tickets at once for an uninterrupted dance cycle, told men their payment had expired well before it had, earning money for dances they did not complete. Certainly a client's intoxication could only help the dancers in this endeavor. Women performed these acts "with much caution" because "if they are caught by a supervisor they will not be allowed back in the salon."[117] Carefully avoiding detection, these women maximized their net pay by cheating both the club proprietors and the men themselves. While dancing on an uneven terrain, skewed by economic and social gender stratification, these women nonetheless learned the steps best suited to their needs.

Material necessity drove women into dime dancing. As Vicki L. Ruiz notes, early twentieth-century ethnic Mexican families often pooled their resources in the family wage economy, with parents and children working multiple jobs to meet collectively the challenges of a harsh labor market.[118] Paul Taylor's 1927 survey of employed Mexican women found that over sixty-two percent entered the workforce to contribute to the family wage economy, either as a wife or daughter.[119] Surveying dime dancers at El Latino, Recinos similarly found "many of these women are married and go to the salon to work to help their husband; others say they are

116 Recinos, "Los Salones de Baile."
117 Ibid.
118 Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*.
119 Taylor, "A Study of the Mexican Women in Industry in Los Anglees, Calif."

pure young ladies and go there only to work so they can help the home."[120]

Recinos could not find a married dime dancer willing to participate in his interview, but he acquired second-hand information from Elisa Morales, the sister of one such woman. Elisa's sister migrated to the United States grown and married, and though she and her husband "don't like the customs or anything here," they remained in Los Angeles "because they don't have a way to get out and they have many children." Her husband worked as a tailor but "doesn't earn enough money for them" and as a result, "she has to go out nights to the dance hall."[121] This vignette shows how married women, finding their husband's wages insufficient, entered El Latino to contribute to the wages of their family.

Juana Martínez participated in the family wage economy as a daughter. After the death of her father, Juana, her two sisters, and her mother came to Los Angeles from Mazatlan, Mexico because "we had been told there were good opportunities to make money in Los Angeles." With her mother tending to the home and family, her oldest sister working as a seamstress, and her youngest sister attending a costly trade school, Juana needed to find work but, "I didn't even know how to sew or anything and I don't know English, so I found it hard to find work as much as I looked." Because "we had to earn something," Juana followed a friend's advice and became a dime dancer—a decision she made with her mother's approval, and one that earned between $20 and $30 a week.[122] According to Vicki L. Ruiz, contemporary ethnic Mexican women who labored in California canneries stood to earn an average of $15 a week; the comparative advantages of dime dancing appear obvious.[123]

One of four women living in her home, Juana found that reports of available work in Los

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120 Recinos, "Los Salones de Baile."
121 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución", April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library.
122 Recinos, "Vida de Juana Martínez."
123 Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*, 15, 27.

Angeles had been vastly exaggerated—with her limited skills and few jobs available to migrant Mexican women, she believed dime dancing offered the best way to bring home regular pay the family needed for daily survival and to put its youngest member through school. According to Juana, “This is what suits me best because I don't know any English.” But the work proved very demanding: “It is true that sometimes I want to look for another job because I get very tired.” Expected to work from 7:30pm until 12:30am, Juana left work feeling “almost dead” most days, particularly Saturday.[124] Elisa Morales, similarly worked as a dime dancer at El Latino to contribute to the family wage economy, living with her mother, sister, and a friend in a Los Angeles apartment.[125]

By providing steady work, dime dancing afforded women like Juana, Elisa, and her sister a way to contribute to their family, and for Gloria Navas the work was preferable to the other jobs available to her.

> I have also worked as a waitress to earn a living, but I worked twelve hours daily and they paid me very little and I do not like that work. I prefer better to go to a discotec, there I pass the time merrily, dancing and joking with my friends, and many times we go out on a spree. There has been a time in which I have been out all night and all of the day and I have only taken a bath and I have gone the following night to the discotec and I have not stopped dancing, the young ladies and young men admiring my resistance.[126]

For Navas, the work represented not just an economic means to an end, but also a social space in which she and her friends congregated, danced, laughed, and made plans for the hours after work. Just as drinking fostered a working-class masculine identity, for Navas, her ability to drink and

124 Recinos, “Vida de Juana Martínez.”
125 Recinos, “Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución.”
126 Recinos, “Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución.”

carouse fit into her own modern, "bohemian" identity.

Taylor's 1928 survey of employed Mexican women found that 12.5 percent used their wages to remain single and live apart from parents. He interviewed one such woman, whose family, "did not think it is proper for a young girl to live alone as she does...however she does not like to be held down by the old ideas and customs of her parents." Taylor believed most women in this 12.5 percent were under twenty years old, born or educated in the United States, and desired to "break away from the old customs and traditions which bind them in their homes."[127] Gloria Navas fit much of this description. Twenty-five years old at the time of her interview, Navas came at a young age to the United States with her parents. After her parents died, she began working to escape an unhappy and abusive marriage, leaving her children with a woman in San Francisco while she worked and sent money for their care. In this way, Gloria also mirrored the five percent of women Taylor surveyed who began working to support children as the primary wage earner.[128]

Similarly, Recinos described a divorced mother of two who "worked in the dancehall out of necessity," and who accompanied and Navas on their "spree." This mother found a way to support her family in dime dancing, which allowed her to work while her children slept, and be at home when they left for and returned from school. Though not pleased by her occupation, this mother took pleasure in an occasional nighttime "spree." Like men who found release in a night on the town, she escaped from the pressures of work and family, but not entirely: although it was 6:00am when they dropped her off, she told Recinos that she would not sleep when she returned home because she must "prepare her little boys so they could go to school."[129] A wide spectrum

127 Taylor, "A Study of the Mexican Women in Industry in Los Anglees, Calif."
128 Ibid.
129 Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución."

of women found subsistence in dime dancing, to provide for their children, to contribute to their family, and, in Navas's case, also to finance an independent lifestyle.

Navas shared a two bedroom apartment with two men, whom she described as her "brothers"—together, the three shared financial and domestic responsibilities. One man, "Gustavito loves me a lot because I have taken care of him, when he has not had neither friends nor money. Then I have been there for him more than a sister, and he has been the same for me."[130] Just as Juana and Elisa became dime dancers as part of the family wage economy, Navas and her roommates pooled their resources in support of one another. As Ricky T. Rodriguez shows, ethnic Mexicans extended familial relationships beyond kinship blood relations, and in their living arrangement, Navas and her roommates created their own family wage economy.[131] Interestingly enough, Navas's employment simultaneously straddled all three categories Taylor constructed in his survey: she worked to support her children, to share in domestic financial responsibilities at home, and to live independently of gendered surveillance.

Indeed, people often misunderstood their living arrangement, frequently mistaking one roommate for her lover, but Navas ignored the gossip: "It [does not] matter that they talk about us." By bringing in her own income, she could spend her labor and leisure time as she saw fit: dancing at work, out on the town after work, and in quiet nights at home among her companions. Sometimes, "numerous young men" would come visit them for nights of "drinking, playing poker, and simply talking."[132] Like other women, Navas found (and indeed created) private spaces to heterosocially imbibe. Alcohol also figured prominently in the home space, where drinking, gambling, and conversing proved a desired leisure activity.

130 Ibid.
131 Richard Rodríguez, *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).
132 Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución."

Beyond the freedom to heterosocially drink, Gloria also found that her financial independence left her beyond the control of her family and a husband, leaving her at liberty to engage in illicit sexual encounters with whomever she chose: "I am absolutely free, if I want to come home to sleep, I do. If I do not want to then I don't. If I bring male friends over nobody tells me anything." Navas was not the only dime dancer out on these sprees as, according to Recinos, other women, "Go out to parties. After the dance they go riding with friends who invite them out, they go eat, and drink and after to their places of residence to cohabitate with their company."[133]

Recinos experienced this first hand when, returning to Gloria's apartment after their night out, "those who had female companions locked themselves up on one place or another and one couple remained in the automobile, everyone, as I understood it, satisfying their sexual desires." Left alone with Gloria, Recinos claims he excused himself, to which she replied,

> "No, you are not going to your house if you want to stay here to sleep with me in my bed. Unless, do you have a family that will punish you for not going home or do you have a woman?" I told her neither, but that I did not know what conditions she would place so that I could stay. She appeared very insulted and told me there were no conditions, that she paid her rent, that she was liberal and that she liked me, that I should stay to sleep with her, she took me to her room.[134]

Gloria did not monetize her sexual encounters, expecting nothing in return: "When I go with some young man it is not for a particular interest but instead for my own pleasure and I do not hide it from anybody, since I do not have anyone to command me nor do I want to, it is better to be free and to do what pleases you most."[135] Gloria utilized the money she earned as a dime

133 Recinos, "Los Salones de Baile."
134 Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución."
135 Ibid.

dancer to finance a lifestyle that, while sometimes difficult, brought her her the freedom to drink publicly, live with single men, and enjoy sex with whomever she chose.

Elisa Morales also proved frank and free with her favors. Recinos claims to have fallen in love with her and openly acknowledged his persistence in trying to get her alone to "know her." Elisa did her best to keep his advances at bay while he paid for several meals, cigarettes, and coffee for she, her friend, and her sister in several consecutive encounters. What he initially perceived as modesty appears more likely to have been manipulation as Elisa strung him along while receiving various gifts for herself, her friends, and family. Ultimately, they had sex in a "hot pillow" motel, which was not typical according to Elisa. "When a friend is nice to me, yes I go out with him like I have gone out with you honey, but don't believe that I do this always; it is very rare."[136] What Elisa meant by "nice to me" remains open for interpretation, but it would seem she spoke of financial consideration. Indeed, soon after their first sexual encounter, she confided that she could only purchase clothes on layaway: "Today I am almost done paying for a winter coat and I only have a little left, so, if you want, honey, help me finish paying it off."[137] Though she felt entitled to ask for a favor, she did not consider herself a prostitute, referring to men as friends not clients, and payment as kindness not remuneration.

Elisa and Gloria both took measures to prevent unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Though the Catholic church forbade contraception, immigrants and their daughters nonetheless asserted control over their reproductivity in increasing numbers in the 1920s, and also took measures to prevent sexually transmitted infections.[138] Though limited in use in Mexican communities, Navas and Morales appeared knowledgeable about their options

136 Recinos, "Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución."
137 Ibid.
138 Pearl Ellis, *Americanization Through Homemaking* (Los Angeles, Calif.,: Wetzel Publication Company, 1929); For a further discussion of contraception in the 1920s, see Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.

and preferences. Unable to become pregnant after the birth of her second child, Gloria did not worry about unintended children resulting from sexual encounters, and because she believed she was discerning in selecting her male partners, she did not fear venereal disease. She understood, however, that other women faced unwanted pregnancy and thus sent several girlfriends to a doctor she found who sold them intrauteral devices.[139] Like Navas, Morales proved informed and proactive about birth control, avoiding condoms because, "It doesn't feel good that way," but she applied a spermicidal powder, given to her by a doctor, before intercourse.[140]

Juana Martínez also admitted an illicit sexual encounter, but characterized it with discomfort and regret. Her experience with her male clientele, whose incessant propositions greatly offended her, and her broken marriage to a man who "treated me very badly" led to her being "disillusioned" by men: "One man whom I liked a lot here in the hall deceived me once." While Juana remained reticent about the circumstances surrounding her deception, we can infer that some form of sexual interaction. "Since that time it hasn't happened to me again. My mother takes good care of me so that I will keep from taking a bad step."[141] Whereas Gloria removed herself from a family's gaze, and Elisa heard but did not heed her mother's concerns, Juana appreciated her mother's guidance, especially after her mother encouraged her to divorce her abusive husband. Furthermore, her diction provides a perfect metaphor for the choreography many dime dancers were forced to navigate, reaping economic benefit while avoiding a "bad step" that could lead to a maligned reputation, and feelings of shame and regret.

Like Gloria, Elisa believed herself to be a modern, American women. Elisa (or "Elsie" as she preferred to be called) knew her nighttime activities contradicted her mother's traditional

139 Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución."
140 Recinos, "Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución."
141 Recinos, "Vida de Juana Martínez."

ideas about ladyhood, pointing out, “My mother is very strict and does not want me to go out at night alone, since she is from Mexico. I mean, I am from there too, but I have been raised in the United States and we see things differently.” Seeing her perspective and experience as contrasting dated ideas from Mexico, Elisa was not a prudish or shy about sex and took some pleasure in it. She went out with her friends, danced, and, according to Recinos, “she tried to do things in the American style.” Juana also recognized that her occupation went against traditional ideas, and believed it proved far easier in the United States, because “In Mexico, this work might perhaps be dishonorable, but I don't lose anything here by doing it.”[142] While many may have disagreed with Juana's impression, for Juana relatively liberal American gender conventions in the United States provided the latitude for her to perform this work without feeling dishonorable. Indeed, so long as Juana took care to avoid the trappings of her profession—intoxication and illicit sex—she saw no contradiction between her labor and her status as an honorable woman.

According to Recinos, many dime dancers at El Latino engaged in sexual relations with men they met on the job. These encounters “were both paid and unpaid, with many women having regular lovers and others having 'pimps' who profited from their paid sexual relations.”[143] The presence of pimps in these women's lives signals the frequency of sex work which, according to state records and ethnographies, did often accompany dime dancing. For example, immigrants Adela Deloado and Severa Rocha separately admitted to immigration authorities during deportation proceedings that they worked simultaneously as dime dancers and prostitutes, sanctioning their deportation for moral turpitude. In her testimony, Rocha further claimed that “most girls where she works as a dancing girl are prostitutes.”[144]

142 Recinos, “Vida de Juana Martínez.”
143 Recinos, “Los Salones de Baile.”
144 Rocha’s charges included being “employed by, in, or in connection with a house of prostitution or music or dance hall or other place of resort habitually frequented by prostitutes or where prostitutes gather,” and

Though Recinos described a panoply of women working at El Latino, the three women who consented to extended interviews had all left unhappy marriages. As divorced women, all three already found themselves outside dominant moral ideologies in both the United States and Mexico that saw divorce as dishonorable and shameful. Already marked as deviant, these women likely felt more freedom to discuss their work which, while lucrative, also labeled them as immoral. Through dime dancing, ethnic Mexican women entered ostensibly dry recreational spaces during Prohibition, where they danced, some drank, some turned to sex work, and they all made money. They took their place with men on the town, but it was not an equitable place but rather one characterized by unequal labor and social opportunities.

The women Recinos interviewed were in their twenties, and though Recinos never surveyed the ages of the women in the club, it seems clear that the majority of dancers also fit this age range. Though some lived with their parents, it was only those who lived away from their families, such as Gloria and her single-mother friend, who acknowledged they drank recreationally. Particularly when residing with parents, individual's statements about and experiences with alcohol often reflected their families' prevailing attitudes about intoxication, especially as it related to gender. When adults made decisions about who could drink and under what circumstances, these decisions emerged from families' perceptions of their social and economic position, and shaped children's ideas about alcohol.

Mary Morales believes her parents emphasis on education and work kept she and her siblings temperate: "It was always work, work, work, and study, study, study. There wasn't any

in working in such a space, women opened themselves up to investigation. "Adela Deloado, No. 133", September 28, 1928, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 111, Folder 3, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park; "Severa Rocha, No. 345", April 12, 1929, Record Group 10, Analysis of Deportation Cases, Box 112, Folder 6, National Archive and Records Administration, College Park.

time for us to drink...we never saw anybody drinking except at church." When her uncle sent his children to live with them, her father told them, "'They're gonna work hard and then buy school clothes.' Because for him the number one thing was education."[145] In their emphasis on hard work, sobriety, and upward mobility, the lessons Morales learned from her parents appear consistent with the ideas advanced by MAM. While not emphasizing education, Mary Caralejo's grandmother raised her to believe women should not drink under any circumstances, and Caralejo came of age viewing women's intemperance as a sign of the lower class: "I looked down on anybody who would drink or smoke." Caralejo remembers seeing her sister take a drink one night with their cousins—"I told her, 'Oh you look so cheap!'"[146]

Many children in this era, both men and women, did not begin drinking until after World War II, when they had reached a legal drinking age, were outside their parent's home, and were free to experiment without supervision. Among the narrators considered, mothers provided the guidance and discipline that steered youth away from drinking, but fathers made the ultimate decisions and handled discipline. While often focused on daughters, sons also felt their mother profoundly influenced their drinking habits. Indeed, Manuel Contreras did not drink because, "I was afraid of my mother's wrath...my mother would probably scold and I didn't want to be scolded."[147] Luis Manzo, raised in Wilmington, California, had similar experiences, saying, "My mother was boss and I never felt encouraged to drink. She never said not to, but I know it wasn't the kind of thing I should do."[148]

A mother's watchful eye could supervise individual's conduct long after they left the home. Interviewed at age fifty-three in 1979, her mother's values still guided Catalina Vásquez

145 "Mary Morales", June 9, 2010.
146 "Mary Caralejo."
147 "Manuel Contreras."
148 "Luis Manzo", May 16, 2010.

and, she believed, would continue to do so. “Even if I live to eighty, I'm not the kind that will go out...I can always hear my mother saying these are good things to do these are bad things. I'm not an angel, but I have morals with certain things.”[149] Though taught to avoid liquor through her childhood, Mary Caralejo ultimately began going out drinking with her husband and their friends, and to this day experiences nightmares about her grandmother's reaction. “Some of my nightmares now are that I'm coming home late and my grandmother is going to be waiting. What am I going to tell her? I'm making up excuses...I see the path.”[150] For children, and daughters in particular, a temperate mother policed their activities, steering them away from alcohol in ways that continued to resonate well into adulthood.

Many adults turned a blind eye to a child's intoxication, especially with sons. Ester López recalls the “double standard” that governed her household, where her father did not permit alcohol consumption but willfully ignored signs his sons were coming home drunk. “None of us were allowed to drink when we were kids. But my brothers, they could go around with their friends and my sisters and I couldn't. When they came home drunk, my father noticed but he didn't say anything. If one of us [she or her sisters] had done that though, wow, I don't know what—that's probably why none of us ever did.” Ester recalls one specific incident in which her brother Joaquín, at the age of fifteen, went out drinking with his friends, who fought with another group of local boys. They were all arrested and Ester's father quickly retrieved Joaquin from jail so that he could play in a local baseball game that evening. “He was a very good baseball player, maybe that's a reason he didn't get in trouble.”[151]

149 “Vásquez, Catalina”, May 18, 1979, Interview 1a Segment 6 (21:38-23:12), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

150 “Mary Caralejo.”

151 “Ester López”, February 10, 2009.

Vicki L. Ruiz argues that through "familial oligarchy" ethnic Mexican families focused more energy policing the activities of daughters than sons, "for the sake of family honor."[152] From Mary Caralejo's perspective, "It was night and day, black and white. The girls didn't do anything. The boys could do what they wanted."[153] Alcohol consumption represented a tangible threat to a daughter's, and by extension her family's, reputation by marking her as sexually available and dishonorable. According to Ruiz, "A family's standing in the community depended, in part, on women's purity. Loss of virginity not only tainted the reputation of an individual, but of her kin as well."[154] Thus, to police a young woman's public behavior, a chaperone regularly accompanied them at social events. According to Elizabeth Hymer's observations at one Los Angeles dance in 1924, "The very careful chaperonage of Mexican daughters by their parents is obvious on these occasions...The supervision of the Mexican parent is so strict and so [repressive] in nature as to be obnoxious to the early maturing adolescent daughter."[155] In electing to drink and flirt with young men, daughters balanced their desire for experimentation and expression with familial expectations, and did so under the watchful eye of a chaperone.[156]

In her 1932 study of second generation Mexicans in Belvedere, Mary Lanigan noted that generational differences led to conflicts surrounding appropriate public female behavior. She observed,

> On Christmas even in Old Mexico it is customary among the families to hold a tamalada after the midnight mass. One family will make great preparation for

152 Vicki L. Ruiz, "'Star Struck': Acculturation, Adolescence, and Mexican American Women, 1920-1950," in *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History*, ed. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 363-378.

153 "Mary Caralejo."

154 Ruíz, *From Out of the Shadows*, 51-52.

155 Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity*, 32.

156 Ruiz, "'Star Struck': Acculturation, Adolescence, and Mexican American Women, 1920-1950."

> such an occasion and will invite all its relations and perhaps one other family to be present at the festivities...the tamaladas here are not of that type. Instead of a private home, they are held in a rented dance hall. Everyone goes. There is not much order and a great deal of confusion. The girls sometimes smoke and drink, which would never be tolerated in Mexico. The older people consider this a desecration of a sacred custom.[157]

While "dry," upwardly-mobile ethnic Mexicans saw temperance as modern and American, others saw temperance as distinctly Mexican and traditional, particularly as it related to their daughters. Indeed, Gloria Navas's drinking nightlife seems a sharp contrast to ideas about the "old ways" for women in Mexico. While alcohol's meaning shifted depending on gendered context and class experience, it marked the boundaries of the archaic/modern dichotomy espoused by upwardly mobile teetotalers, and those of traditional/corrupt binaries seen among families policing their daughters.

According to Ruiz, daughters found opportunities to socialize in religious events, and "Whether gathering for a Baptist picnic or a Catholic dance, teenagers seemed more attracted to the social rather than the spiritual side of their religion."[158] In such settings, contact with young men, drinking, and any other activity that could threaten a family's honor required subterfuge, and sometimes, the chaperone could become an accomplice. Alicia Mendeola Shelit recalls how her oldest brother set up dates for her at dances where he ostensibly served as her chaperone.[159] Maggie González similarly remembers her sister Lupe drinking at a dance in Wilmington, California with the help of her eldest sister María, and her husband, who "would sneak [liquor] into the dances and when nobody was looking he poured some into Lupe's cup." María, who acted as a chaperone for her younger sisters, was aware her husband helped her sister drink, and

157 Lanigan, "Second Generation Mexicans in Belvedere," 30.
158 Ruiz, "'Star Struck': Acculturation, Adolescence, and Mexican American Women, 1920-1950," 368.
159 Ibid., 371.

Maggie knew of it as well. Then one night, her mother found out, "None of us knew how," and forbade Lupe from going out with María again.[160] Though she herself did not drink, Isabel Serano recalls some young women sneaking away to drink "on the outskirts" of outdoor parties sponsored by a local settlement house.[161]

Yet these women proved the exception, particularly outside the home. Since male children enjoyed greater mobility, less supervision, and relatively little social stigma when drinking, they found opportunities to consume alcohol with their friends, coworkers, and even family without the need for secrecy. Jesús (Jess) Campos followed his father and brothers to work from a very early age, and by the time he reached twelve years of age, they began to include him in an after work ritual. "After work we'd all [laborers] drink together. We weren't drinking to get drunk, at least me and Bobby [his brother] weren't...one time, I think I was thirteen maybe, I did get pretty drunk. My mother was not too happy when she saw me but my father told her it was fine and sent me to bed." Though his mother disapproved, she deferred to her husband. Though his sisters did work with them on occasion, "If the guys were drinking after, they'd have to walk home."[162] Recalling Ramon López's interview, he began drinking under similar circumstances—consuming liquor with his father served as an unspoken but understood marker of his coming of age.[163]

Within the home, however, some families permitted women to drink. Born in 1915 and interviewed at age sixty-six, Beatrice Clifton Morales, declared, "Oh I knew how to drink. My father used to always drink...So I always used to tell him, 'Give me little a nip.' I always liked it.

160 "Maggie González", June 22, 2010.
161 "Isabel Serrano", December 8, 2010.
162 "Jess Campos", December 2, 2010.
163 "Ramón López."

Not to excess but I liked it. I got drunk a few times."[164] Similarly, Sofia Zamora found the opportunity to imbibe and did not face punishment, drinking several glasses of wine without parental discipline. "I don't know how many glasses of wine I drank...It tasted so good...so I kept drinking." Regarding the absence of parental concern, Sofia responded, "I don't know why they let me."[165]

Gloria Ahumada recalls that both her uncle and grandfather would allow she and her teenage cousins to drink when they came to visit. "I don't know if it was wine or hard liquor or what it was, but when my cousins would come over, he would let [us] drink it. Their mother would be furious, but they thought it was neat."[166] In each of these cases, men determined the rules as it related to drinking, and also decided when they could be broken, even within the domestic space of the home. In 1990, sociologist Norma Williams conducted a historical survey of Mexican American families in the 1920s and 1930s by interviewing individuals who came of age during the era to gain insight into "traditional" Mexican American family values. According to Williams, though the role of machismo has been exaggerated by previous scholars, and women exert "considerable influence" in the private sphere, men remained "the head of the household and the authority figure in the family."[167] Though mindful of ways women in families asserted themselves and shaped decision making processes, Williams dismisses the idea of "egalitarian" Mexican American families through history and into the present day, noting, "husbands continue

164 "Clifton, Beatrice Morales", January 30, 1981, Interview 2c Segment 2 (1:13-6:04), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

165 "Zamora, Sofia", n.d., Interview 1b Segment 8 (21:24-25:33), Women's History: Women's Lives, Women's Work 1900-1960. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha/.

166 "Gloria Ahumada", January 4, 2010.

167 Norma Williams, *The Mexican American Family: Tradition and Change* (Dix Hills, N.Y: General Hall, 1990), 28-29.

to wield greater power than their wives."[168]

As a child, Anita Castro first tasted alcohol among several of her fathers friends, which proved the first and only time her father beat her. Though she fails to recall her exact age at the time of the incident, she knows it happened before she reached her teenage years.

> My father was sitting at the table and there were maybe ten or twelve men with him and they were all drinking wine...my mother was in the next room...And one man says, "Come over here, taste my wine."...So I tasted his wine. So the next men kept asking me and it went all around the table. This is kinda silly but this is the only time I got a beating from my father. That's why I remember it. By the time I got to the end of the table I was completely drunk. So when I got to my father he grabbed me and took me in the house and took of his belt, and boy did he give it to me. Actually, it wasn't my fault, I didn't know any better. So that was the only time my father hit me.[169]

The next chapter considers alcohol's role in family violence, but of interest here is the ways in which this private setting became public with the presence of her father's companions. As a young child, perhaps her drinking may have been less severely disciplined had it not occurred in front of multiple male observers. While women such as Zamora, Clifton Morales, and Ahumada found opportunities to drink under the supervision of their father or grandfather, not a single female narrator described obtaining parental permission, tacit or explicit, to drink publicly like their brothers. Gendered divides between public and private predominately determined both children's and adults' relationships to alcohol, though some transgressed these boundaries.

When ethnic Mexicans made decisions about whether to drink—and where—it spoke to

168 Ibid., 138.
169 "Castro, Anita", December 22, 1975, Interview 1a Segment 3 (2:59-4:01, Labor History: Garment Workers. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

classed and gendered ideas about respectability, masculinity, and ladyhood. In their attitudes about drinking, ethnic Mexicans observed a profound distinction between between public and private intoxication. Some men drank publicly to belong, and alcohol fit into a working class, masculine culture. In the eyes of some temperate individuals, the public drinking activities of these working class men maligned all Mexicans and fostered discrimination. Their public alcohol avoidance, they believed, showed them to be modern and upwardly-mobile, and some utilized temperance as a strategy for economic and social advancement. For some, Protestantism and Prohibition both provided American alternatives to a backwards Mexican nation, and for late 1930s youth, temperance appeared central to Mexican Americans' collective advancement.

Yet temperate individuals had no monopoly on modernity. While women similarly encountered firm boundaries between public and private alcohol consumption, with many finding private and semi-private spaces the only acceptable option, others inserted drinking into a modern, American identity. In a shifting United States gendered landscape that saw Euro American women going out unsupervised and drinking on the silver screen, ethnic Mexicans' attempts to enforce a daughter's public temperance and virtue appeared dated. More generally, children's access to and attitudes about alcohol reflected those of their parents, and while women had voices in such decisions, men for the most part set the rules. And, sometimes, their children broke them. Though ethnic Mexicans often disagreed about the meaning of drinking, they all agreed upon its significance: while some eschewed it and others drank from it, everybody understood there was more in the bottle than just liquor.

Indeed, there could also be trouble. The following chapter considers alcohol in familial conflict, particularly domestic abuse, abandonment, and neglect. While scientists and social

scientists continue to debate the neurological affects of alcohol and its influence over this behavior, ethnic Mexicans clearly believed it shaped and exacerbated conflict in their daily lives. Though many, if not most, families never turned violent or neglectful, cases in which they did remain etched in narrators' minds and in state records. These cases demonstrate both the nature of conflict within ethnic Mexican homes and the unique ways family members adapted to ameliorate their situation. In some cases, children hid or destroyed their father's liquor and wives attacked their abusive husbands, but more regularly families found less extreme ways to assert some control over a disempowering situation. Extended family members could offer support and help pick up the slack of an intoxicated head of household, while other families turned to charitable relief. Alcohol appeared in contexts already disposed to clashing such as parties and discussions over money. Whether a cause, symptom, or mere presence in familial conflict, examining intoxicated incidents within the household illuminates the daily workings and survival strategies of individuals under economic and emotional strain.

CHAPTER FOUR

BLAMING IT ON THE BOTTLE: INTOXCIATION AND VIOLENCE IN PROHIBITION ERA ETHNIC MEXICAN FAMILIES

On July 6, 1913, *The Los Angeles Times* chronicled the events surrounding Luis Alvarez's assault on his partner and murder of her son.

> Apparently crazed with drink and drugs, Luis Alvarez, 35 years old plunged a knife early yesterday morning into the breast of his common law wife, Mrs. Nicoloz Larosa. Joe Navarro, eighteen year old son of the woman, interposed his body between the infuriated man and his victim and was stabbed perhaps fatally, the blade penetrating his lung. Francisco Florez, a friend of the boy, tried to wrest away the weapon but was stabbed in the right breast...Apparently satisfied with his murderous work, the Mexican ran from the house and has not been captured...
>
> Navarro was the most seriously wounded, the attending surgeons saying that the wound in his shoulder and lung will probably prove fatal. The woman and Florez will recover.
>
> According to...police...Alvarez and a group of friends passed the afternoon of the fourth celebrating. The guests lingered and...decided to make a night of it. Wine and other liquor flowed freely...Quarreling became frequent and finally most of those present went away.
>
> After words said to have arisen over the attentions bestowed by Mrs. Larosa on another man, Alvarez became frenzied and seizing a knife...plunged it into the woman. The stabbing of the woman's son and the other man quickly followed. The police believe that Alvarez is still in hiding somewhere with friends in the city and expect to bring about his capture.[1]

Prohibition-era *Times* articles dealing with domestic abuse in ethnic Mexican households often simplified incidents, relying on popular stereotypes about ethnic Mexicans' vicious intoxicated passions. Yet the story also suggests that some ethnic Mexican families were violent in Prohibition era Los Angeles, observers frequently blamed this violence on alcohol, and that some people fought back.

1 "Seeking Second Savage Slasher," *Los Angeles Times*, July 6, 1913.

In the early twentieth century, as Mexican migration to the United States boomed, individuals found that alcohol figured into family conflicts against a shifting social backdrop in which understandings about gender, family, and the nature of alcohol all underwent significant changes.[2] Family members, state authorities, and drinkers themselves frequently blamed family violence and destructive behavior on the bottle. Experiences with physical violence, neglect, and abandonment shaped the lives of individuals who regularly articulated these experiences in terms of alcohol. Homes erupted in conflict for a various reasons but, for individuals living in homes with an excessive drinker, intoxication had everything to do with the destructive behavior family members witnessed and experienced.

In her study of nineteenth-century family violence in Boston, historian Linda Gordon argues that wife-beating is not merely a personal dispute but rather a social problem because its basis lies in male dominance—an inordinate balance of social, economic, political, and psychological power based on patriarchal gender norms. Thus, "wife-beating is the chronic battering of a person of inferior power who for that reason cannot effectively resist."[3] In seeking to explain the causes of domestic violence, systems theorists attempt to integrate economic and gender variants with other contingencies such as cultural expectations to explain family violence, arguing that there exist at least six main causes: economic stress, intrafamily conflict, male dominance in family and society, cultural norms permitting family violence, family socialization for violence, and the pervasiveness of violence in a society.[4] According to Richard J. Gelles,

2 Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Gilbert G. González and Raúl Fernandez, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (February 2002): 19-57.

3 Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 251.

4 Jacquelyn Campbell, "Sanctions and Sanctuary: Wife Battering within Cultural Contexts," in *To Have and to Hit: Cultural Perspectives on Wife Beating*, ed. Dorothy Ayers Counts, Judith K Brown, and Jacquelyn Campbell, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 274; Murray A Straus and Christine Smith,

family members will be violent toward each other if the benefits within this system outweigh the cost; the 'benefits' of wife beating, according to Gelles, include increased power and control and an enhanced 'tough guy' image.[5] Violence for systems theorists erupts in families from a constellation of social, cultural, and personal factors, and for ethnic Mexicans, the stars in this constellation shifted significantly.

Family violence actually lacks a fixed definition because it remains contextual and contingent on specific political moments and cultural understandings.[6] While the meaning of domestic violence appears timeless today, historical gender relations, cultural values, and social norms have always shaped societies' understandings of and responses to violence against women and children.[7] In the late nineteenth century, discussions about family violence had only begun to appear in US public settings as temperance campaigns brought the topic, formerly deemed unfit for conversation, into political debate. Under the auspices of protecting women from the drunken abuses of men, Prohibition advocates railed against alcohol as an economic drain on families, as fostering male absenteeism and violence against women and children.[8] Discussions about alcohol encapsulated multiple concerns for early women reformers who, through prohibition agitation, launched challenges against what they saw as vestiges of male privilege. Frances E. Willard, president of the WCTU from 1879-1898, repeatedly reminded audiences that prohibition was “Everybody's War,” and painted a graphic portrait of liquor's consequences to the

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“Violence in Hispanic Families in the United States: Incidence Rates and Structural Interpretations,” in *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors And Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families*, ed. Murray A Straus and Richard J Gelles (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 341-367.

5 Richard J. Gelles, “An Exchange/Social Theory,” in *The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research*, ed. David Finkelhor et al. (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1983), 151-165.

6 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 3 and 26.

7 Dawn Keetley, “From Anger to Jealousy: Explaining Domestic Homicide in Antebellum America,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 2 (2008): 269-297.

8 Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America*, 1st ed. (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1981).

family.

> Behind the counter stands avarice, before the counter appetite, and between the two a transaction that puts a few dimes into the till of the proprietor and drives voluntary insanity into the brain of the patron. The man goes out to the primary meeting and election, he loiters away his time, he fritters away his earnings. He goes to the house where he is best beloved, the best friends he has in the world where they love him better than they do anybody else. Yet upon that wife that loves him so well and little children clinging about his neck, he inflicts atrocities which imagination cannot picture and no tongue dare describe. Now I am not telling you anything that does not happen...a hundred times a day.[9]

Roughly forty years later, the Methodist operated Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals similarly observed, "The price of a drink ranges from a dime to damnation. The man pays the dime when he gets the drink and his family pays the damnation when the drink gets him."[10] With pamphlets asking questions like, "Which gets your Vote, Mother or Saloon?" violence in families became a rhetorical device that underscored the need for temperance. As historians have noted, Prohibition agitation represented a respectable forum in which women could politicize issues central to their daily life; temperance advocates brought family violence into popular discussions in ways heretofore unseen through the one platform available to them.[11] Though the rise and fall of Prohibition, alcohol emerged as a universally recognized source of and explanation for abusive family relationships.

Even as Prohibition fell into disfavor, supporters continued to note alcohol's affect on

9 Frances E. WIllard, "Everybody's War," ca 1874.

10 "Fillers" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, May 3, 1919), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History; See also, "Fillers" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, December 14, 1918), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

11 Ruth Birgitta Anderson Bordin, *Woman and Temperance: The Quest for Power and Liberty, 1873-1900* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981); Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity*.

domestic relations. In a 1930 federal government survey of social workers, respondents in Los Angeles and across the nation reported significantly less "cruelty and neglect" toward wives who, protected by the shield of Prohibition, "won't sand for mistreatment and for constant drinking and abuse."[12] Social workers noted that abused wives found refuge in Prohibition laws, a notion that, while no doubt true in many cases, also affirmed the maternalistic and paternalistic attitude middle class and elite reformers displayed toward the impoverished. When Prohibition failed to reduce family violence, social workers in the report still blamed the alcohol, citing the harsher brands of bootleg liquor Prohibition made popular: "The effects of the liquor now drunk are more serious, on both domestic and economic relations, because it makes a man 'disagreeable' and 'takes longer to get over a spree'...Wives are quoted as saying, 'It never made him crazy as it does now.'"[13]

Prohibition advocacy itself became "a symbolic crusade," through which temperance advocates distinguished themselves from maligned ethnic groups, and observed wife beating as behavior that marked this lower class. [14] Indeed, according to historian Dawn Keetley, a man's ability to control "vicious passion" became "a class-bound ability where the failures of self control seemed confined to certain classes—to the laboring poor and immigrant classes."[15] In her 1924 survey of social attitudes among ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles, Elizabeth Hymer operated with this class distinction in mind, noting that, "Fifteen percent of the select group even admit a husband's right to indulge in wife-beating if he so desires. The individuals of the highest

12 Homer Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families," May 29, 1930, Record Group 10, Box 54, Folder 227, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

13 Ibid.

14 Joseph Gusfield, *Symbolic Crusade: Status Politics and the American Temperance Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); Kitty Calavita, "Immigration, Social Control, and Punishment in the Industrial Era," in *Race, Gender, and Punishment: From Colonialism to the War on Terror* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 117-134; Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*.

15 Keetley, "From Anger to Jealousy," 275.

type and broadest education deny this, however, and the voice of women is against it almost unanimously."[16] Drawing her sample from predominately temperate, upwardly-mobile immigrants enrolled in nighttime English classes, Hymer believed, "In the peon home the husband and father is the unquestioned master of the household. Wife and children stand in equal awe of his displeasure."[17]

For both contemporary activists and scholars, alcohol frequently lit the fuse within ethnic families that made them explode into violence. The image of the impoverished, intoxicated man battering his woman enjoyed great currency throughout the twentieth century, remaining salient in such works as *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Termed the "drunken bum" by sociologist Murray Straus, this stereotype emerged in the late nineteenth century and often went unquestioned. It propagated the idea that alcohol depresses inhibitions in men already inclined to aggression by their economic and ethnic character, brewing a recipe for physical violence.[18]

Examining contemporary discussions of violent ethnic Mexican families reveals that the media often operated with this frame. In her study of ethnic Mexicans and the early 1920s film industry in Los Angeles, Laura Isabel Serna found that movies such as *Her Husband's Trademark*, *North of the Rio Grande*, and *Quicksands* regularly portrayed ethnic Mexicans, "hitting women, getting drunk, and dedicating themselves solely to vice and prostitution."[19] Contemporary newspaper coverage of ethnic Mexican men battering (and sometimes killing) women also relied on this stereotype, requiring no explanation for family violence beyond the

16 Elizabeth Hymer, *A Study of the Social Attitudes of Adult Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles and Vicinity* (Masters Thesis, University of Southern California, 1924), 62.
17 Ibid., 61.
18 Murray A Straus and Glenda Kaufman Kantor, "The 'Drunken Bum' Theory of Wife Beating," in *Physical Violence in American Families: Risk Factors And Adaptations to Violence in 8,145 Families*, ed. Murray A Straus and Richard J Gelles (New Brunswick, N.J., U.S.A: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 203-224.
19 Laura Isabel Serna, ""As a Mexican I Feel It's My Duty:" Citizenship, Censorship, and the Campaign against Derogatory Films in Mexico, 1922-1930," *The Americas* 63, no. 2 (October 2006): 234-235.

intoxication of the working-class male.[20] In academic circles within the last fifty years, however, the drunken bum stereotype has come into disrepute. While scholars still observe that impoverished families evince higher incidences of intoxicated domestic violence, they no longer view ethnicity and class as the sole determinants.[21]

More significantly, the idea that alcohol, through its pharmacological affect on the central nervous system, induces violent behavior has also fallen into disfavor.[22] While not dismissing alcohol's narcotic properties, social theorists now see these effects as moderated by the context in which drinking takes place.[23] In seeking to explain intoxicated family violence, Linda Gordon poses a rather provocative question, asking, "Does drunkenness cause wife-beating or do batterers drink in order to assault?"[24] For sociologists Diane M. Coleman and Murray H. Strauss, individuals learn a script for violence by observing that individuals are excused and forgiven for

20 "Pomona," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 1897; "Crushed Wife's Skull with Ax," *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1904; "So Drunk, Now Insanity Charge," *Los Angeles Herald*, May 2, 1905; "Young Wife Accuses Spouse," *Los Angeles Herald*, October 12, 1905; "Drunken Mexican Held for Abusing His Family," *Los Angeles Herald*, February 6, 1908.

21 Structuralists argue that families under economic strain and without the resources to seek help prove most violent. See, Campbell, "Sanctions and Sanctuary: Wife Battering within Cultural Contexts," 270-271; Structuralists argue that families under economic strain and without the resources to seek help prove most violent. See, GT Hotaling, "An Analysis of Risk Markers in Husband to Wife Violence: The Current State of Knowledge," *Violence and Victims* 1, no. 2 (1986): 270-271; Chicano/a historians have well documented that ethnic Mexicans most frequently migrated to the United States as manual labors struggling for economic solvency in the years following the Mexican Revolution. The often-stigmatized resources available to them in Los Angeles proved limited at best, most often orientated towards surveillance and policing the boundaries of "social membership." See Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 270-271; George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

22 Richard H. Blum, "Drugs, Behavior, and Crime," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 374 (November 1, 1967): 135-146; Diane H. Coleman and Murray A Straus, "Alcohol Abuse and Family Violence," in *Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Aggression*, ed. E Gottheil et al. (Springfield, Ill: C.C. Thomas, 1983), 104-124.

23 J Fagan, "Intoxication and Aggression in Drugs and Crime," in *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, ed. M Tonry and JQ Wilson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 203-204; Straus and Kaufman Kantor, "The 'Drunken Bum' Theory of Wife Beating."

24 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 265.

violent behavior which occurs while drinking.[25] The idea that one can "blame it on the alcohol" or that "the booze made me do it" pardons individuals from culpability, meaning "individuals who wish to carry out a violent act may become intoxicated in order to [do so]."[26]

Not claiming that alcohol alone begets violence, scholars now look to a nexus of economic and social factors to explain the preponderance of drinking among abusers, emphasizing the cultural expectation that intoxication constitutes a "time out" in which an individual can be absolved of responsibility for actions.[27] In court cases, defendants claimed and judges accepted intoxication as a mitigating circumstance in crime, leading to a reduction or even dismissal of charges. According to Gordon, "Associating wife-beating with drinking...kept it defined in trivial and fatalistic terms. It was a male foible, not a crime against women...liquor provides the evidence of loss of self control."[28]

Of course, not all heavy drinking men lost control and became violent during their intoxicated time out. Family members recall Prohibition-era husbands and fathers who proved intractable but not to the point of physical altercation. While drunk, Ester Mejia's husband "would get stubborn but he never hit me...he would get mean and stubborn, you know, harping on things. He wanted attention and was not pleasant." Mejia says she learned to avoid him during his binges in order to sidestep pointless conflict, but was never afraid for herself or her children.[29] Gloría Ahumada remembers her father would get "mean" and "sad" when drinking. "He would

25 Coleman and Straus, "Alcohol Abuse and Family Violence."
26 Richard J Gelles, *The Violent Home: A Study of Physical Aggression Between Husbands and Wives* (Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage Publications, 1974), 174.
27 Hotaling, "An Analysis of Risk Markers in Husband to Wife Violence"; Fagan, "Intoxication and Aggression in Drugs and Crime"; Robert Nash Parker and Kathleen Auerhahn, "Alcohol, Drugs, and Violence," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (January 1, 1998): 291-311; Robert Nash Parker, *Alcohol and Homicide: A Deadly Combination of Two American Traditions* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Craig MacAndrew, *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co, 1969).
28 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 264.
29 "Ester Mejia," interview by Nick Bravo, April 29, 2010.

complain about the food or his job or us (his children). He wasn't trying to be cruel but he was unhappy and...he wanted to make us unhappy too."[30] Similarly, Ramon López described his father as "hardheaded but not dangerous" when intoxicated. Perhaps the cultural "time out" of alcohol gave these men a forum to air their grievances and argue with their family, perhaps their drinking made them less mindful of their behavior, but either way these narrators traced this behavior to intoxicated moments.

Violent disputes in homes could revolve around alcohol, not necessarily because of drunkenness, but because of the conflicts it highlighted. Disagreements between partners over expenditures on liquor brought conflicts over money to light. A social worker working with ethnic Mexicans made this point in a 1928 interview with Paul Taylor, saying,

> The first type of complaint is that of the wife who claims her 'rights' from her husband. The husband spends the money on wine, or gambles, and does not take his wife and children out to theaters, etc. Some husbands do beat them with their hands or fists and try to shut them up. They say, 'if you don't like to have me control you, you can go to the street.'[31]

Rosa Guerrero witnessed the (non violent) conflicts that expenditures on alcohol created between her parents in 1930s and 1940s El Paso: "There were arguments in the family—financial, especially when my father drank...My mother would get mad with him because he would spend the whole check."[32]

In 1910 Los Angeles, Jesús Quiros struck and choked his wife Mary, according to court

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30 "Gloria Ahumada," interview by Nick Bravo, January 4, 2010.

31 Paul Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1928), 195-196.

32 Vicki L. Ruiz, "Oral History and La Mujer: The Rosa Guerrero Story," in *Women on the U.S.-Mexico Border: Responses to Change*, ed. Susan Tiano and Vicki L. Ruiz (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 233.

records, after she found fault with his coming home under the influence. The couple operated a restaurant in Los Angeles together, and the argument started when Mary berated her husband for squandering their earnings on alcohol.[33] In his letter to the Governor asking for pardon from his fifty day sentence, Jesús claimed—in the third person format commonly used in such letters—"the lesson taught him by his incarceration has been a very severe one, and he is willing to promise your excellency to refrain from the use of intoxicating liquors." The violent episode in their home emerged from conflict about money, and Jesús's letter clearly blames his behavior on intoxication. A letter of support from attorney Frank E. Domínguez also blamed alcohol for Jesús's violence, noting, "I cannot and do not deny the fact that he drinks to excess at times and when under the influence of liquor is violent and abusive, but...this man has been chastised to such an extent by his incarceration that he has been cured of the drink habit."[34]

Violence also began at heterosocial gatherings such as parties and dances where alcohol contributed to feelings of jealousy and slighted masculinity. Many sources explained physical violence through jealousy, a concept that had only emerged as a rationale for wife battery in the nineteenth century. Jealousy, according to Dawn Keetley, became a recognized form of insanity for men hitting their wives, and emerged as "an inherent masculine trait" that explained the loss of control men claimed to experience in such violent episodes.[35] Battery against women could be explained not by strength and rage but rather by vulnerability. Luís Álvarez, whose grizzly assault on Nicoloza Larosa and the murder of her son allegedly stemmed from jealousy over glances she gave another man.[36] Similarly, under the influence of "spirits," Pascual Rosas

33 "Wife Beater Sent to Jail for Thirty Days," *Los Angeles Herald*, May 25, 1910.
34 "Application for Pardon, Jesus Quiros," August 19, 1910, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 7777, California State Archives.
35 Keetley, "From Anger to Jealousy," 271.
36 "Seeking Second Savage Slasher."

stabbed María Ramírez at a 1926 christening in Oxnard. According to witnesses, Ramírez laughed during the festivities and Rosa, believing the laughter was derisive, plunged a knife into her chest.[37]

Though not occurring at a party, intoxicated jealousy also played prominently in Fred Valenzuela's 1904 battery and attempted murder of his wife. According to newspaper accounts, Fred, "inspired by jealousy and drink, viciously assaulted his wife with an ax at their home." According to witnesses, "he had been taunting his wife about her first husband, which she resented. He then seized an ax [and] felled her to the floor by a blow across the forehead," killing her.[38]

Legal protection for women in the United States offered women and families some recourse from violence, but also inspired hostility. In his study of ethnic Mexicans in interwar Los Angeles, Historian George J. Sánchez observes that relatively liberal divorce practices and gender norms in the United States, "provided alternatives generally unavailable in Mexico for women caught in bad marriages."[39] According to a Chicago social worker, "In Mexico under such [violent] circumstances the wives would say they made a mistake and would carry their cross; here they want their rights."[40] In an interview with Paul Taylor, Don Carlos Perez López also observed, "The Mexican woman here feels more conscious of her rights and makes demands from her husband. The husbands no longer beat their wives."[41]

Some ethnic Mexican men believed Americanization corrupted women, making them undesirable partners, particularly because divorce offered an escape. These men expressed a

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37 "Laughter Cause of Assault," *Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1926.
38 "Crushed Wife's Skull with Ax."
39 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 148.
40 Taylor, *Mexican Labor in the United States. vol. I-III, no. 1-10*, 195-196.
41 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Don Carlos Perez López," 1926.

patriarchal vision of an demure, modest, and obedient Mexican mate. In her 1993 study of domestic violence against Latinas, psychologist Yvette Flores-Ortiz observes that violence over "cultural value conflicts" occurs "particularly with regards to the role of women. If the man believes that women should be controlled and if she resists, he may respond with violence to 'get her in line.'"[42] In 1927, Raul Dubois expressed his displeasure with American women, noting, "In the first place the American woman is a libertine...In the second place she always has the possibility of divorce...as a means of overcoming real or imagined difficulties."[43]

Twenty-one year old Ramón Fernández enjoyed dating American women in 1920s Los Angeles because he perceived them as more sexually aggressive and available, but this was not a trait he wanted in a marriage partner.

> Just to go out with I like the American girls better. They aren't as particular as the Mexicans. The Americans go out with women and give one some kisses...while the Mexicans don't even want to allow themselves to be kissed. But if I were to marry I would marry a Mexican girl because they are obedient and are grateful for everything...They have a different way about them. The American girls do everything they want to and they don't pay attention to their husband.[44]

An unmarried resident of Los Angeles at the time of his 1927 interview, Luís Aguinaga also did not believe women in the United States, whether American or Mexican, made good companions.

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42 Yvette Flores-Ortiz, "La Mujer Y La Violencia: A Culturally Based Model for the Understanding and Treatment of Domestic Violence in Chicana/Latina Communities," in *Chicana Critical Issues*, ed. Norma Alarcón (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1993), 175-176; Rosemary Gartner more broadly notes that in locations in which a woman's status is most in flux battery will be higher as men physically reinforce patriarchy. See Rosemary Gartner, "Gender Stratification and the Gender Gap in Homicide Victimization," *Social Problems* 37, no. 4 (1990): 593.

43 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Raul DuBois," 1927.

44 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Ramon Fernandez," n.d., Bancroft Library.

> I have not wanted to get married because the truth is that I do not like the system of women here. They are very unrestrained. They are the ones who control their husband and I nor any other Mexican would stand for that. We are rebels and our blood is very hot, and here he who opposes his wife loses her and his money if he isn't careful because the laws and the authorities are on the women's side. Now the Mexican women who come here also take advantage of the laws and want to be like the American women. That is why I have not married, and if one day I do, it will be in Mexico.[45]

Aguinaga felt that legal protections emboldened Mexican women to claim power in their relationship, a power he did not wish to share.

Leova López González credited these United States legal protections with keeping her household conflicts from turning violent. Through the 1920s, arguments with her husband Vicente—who "drinks a lot of moonshine" and "is cruel, overbearing, bossy"—related to Leova's decision to support her differently-abled brother and nephew in Mexico, and whom she would bring to the United States. Arguments further emerged around Leova's choice to not have children, for which Vicente "curses her." She believed these arguments would have turned physical were they in Mexico: "In Mexico women are not as protected by the law as they are there; here he does not hit...because he is afraid of going to jail, but there...he would."[46]

While United States laws may have shielded Leova from corporal violence, the economic realties facing Leova in the United States and Mexico left her little opportunity to leave. Chicana/o historians have observed that the gendered wage economy left many ethnic Mexican women dependent on a husband's earnings, as patriarchy in the labor market reinforced patriarchy in the home.[47] According to Paul Taylor's 1928 report on Mexican women in Los

45 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Sr. Luis Aguinaga," April 6, 1927.
46 M Robles, "Vida de Leova Gonzalez de López," April 19, 1927, Bancroft Library.
47 Patricia Zavella, *Women, Work, and Family in the Chicano Community: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley*, 1982; Vicki Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the*

Angeles industries, most worked in packing houses and canneries, clothing and needle piece work, and laundries.[48] For women employed in canneries, wages averaged around fifteen dollars per week, not enough to serve as the sole source of home income.[49] Recalling the three dime dancers discussed in chapter three—Gloría Navas, Elisa Morales, and Juana Martínez—each of them left unhappy marriages, and both Gloría and Juana acknowledged abusive spouses.[50] After divorcing their husbands, each of these three women became dime dancers because it provided them sustainable wages. Earning twenty-five to thirty dollars per week, Navas supported her children with these earnings without assistance from her family, while Morales and Martínez returned to live with their parents.[51]

Few options existed for women who wanted to live independently, and in exercising their legal right to divorce in the United States, women entered a stratified job market. Indeed, Leova acknowledged in her 1927 interview with M. Robles that she married Vicente "without loving him" because she was lonely and found her salary as a factory seamstress not enough to support herself and her family. First as a nighttime office cleaner for a bank in downtown Los Angeles, and then as a seamstress, Leova's income could not sustain her, much less her aunt with whom she lived, and her family in Mexico. Thus, her marriage to Vicente proved one of financial prudence because, "Together their salaries go much farther." Partnered, they ultimately saved

California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "Women, Work, and Community in the Mexican Colonias of the Southern California Citrus Belt," *California History* 74, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 58-67.

48 Paul Taylor, "A Study of the Mexican Women in Industry in Los Anglees, Calif.," 1928, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, Carton 10, Folder 28, Bancroft Library.

49 Ruíz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives*, 45.

50 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Juana Martínez," April 6, 1927, Bancroft Library; Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Gloria Navas y datos sobre prostitución," April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library; Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Elisa Morales y datos sobre prostitución," April 16, 1927, Bancroft Library.

51 Beyond the legal wage market, women could also earn more competitive wages from illicit enterprises such as sex work and Prohibition era bootlegging. See, Catherine Christensen, "Mujeres Públicas: Euro-American Prostitutes and Reformers at the California-Mexico Border, 1900-1929" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 2009).

enough money to bring her brother and nephew to the United States and, through "much sacrifice," managed to stay afloat. Nonetheless, Vicente controlled the purse strings, and when they spent a year migrating across California to pick fruit, he did not share their collective earnings with her.[52]

Belén Martínez Mason chose to divorce a chronically drunk husband but faced similar financial pressures. She described how her husband Sam began drinking in the mid 1930s, "As soon as everything went open that they started having liquor stores and saloons and night clubs." He never proved unfaithful or had difficulty maintaining a job: "It was just his drinking, but I couldn't cope with it at all." Married life for Belén proved untenable under these circumstances:

> It was hard to work and stay home with the children and keeping the house clean, cook[ing]. But I managed to do it and I didn't mind it at that time. I was young and full of energy...Then my husband and I were having...problems on account of his drinking. And I figure I wasn't going to put up with it because I didn't want my children to live under that atmosphere, I wasn't going to do it. So I thought I'd get out and start getting used to it.

Belén left Sam but quickly found that the absence of his income made rearing her children difficult. Thus, "As soon as my divorce was final I married again because I knew I couldn't do it with the wages I was earning. I couldn't support my children and I couldn't live the way I was accustomed to so I married right away."[53] While she remained reticent about the effects alcohol had on her husband, Belén could not countenance his behavior, and found a way out for herself

52 Though invited to join a union, Leova and many of the Mexican women workers remained suspicious of unionization for fear of losing their jobs. Zaragosa Vargas, *Labor Rights are Civil Rights: Mexican American Workers in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

53 "Mason, Belen Martinez," interview by Sherna Berger Gluck, February 12, 1981, Interview 2c Segment 2 (3:35-8:04), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

and her children through divorce and remarriage.

Mary Quiros, whose husband and business partner Jesús beat and choked her in 1910, left her marriage. Though Jesús, "pledged his word of honor...to his wife that he will forever forgo the use of intoxicating liquor," and the Governor granted the pardon, the couple divorced and Mary remained single according to the 1920 census. Her English proficiency and business experience perhaps alleviated her of the financial pressures to remain in the marriage, and while we cannot know if Jesús made good on his pledges of sobriety, Mary chose to leave him soon after his release from prison.[54]

Legal protection, even in the absence of economic concerns, did not make the decision to separate from an abusive partner easy as women faced a "confrontation with deeply held beliefs concerning proper family relations."[55] Leova initially came to the United States to escape speculation surrounding her honor. Reared in a Catholic orphanage in Mazatlán, when she began to care for her brother's son members of her congregation suspected the boy was her own illegitimate child and "began to talk about her." This gossip, economic strain, and the Mexican Revolution propelled her north. Years later, in the United States, Leova began to fear a similar episode would come to pass if she left Vicente. Sensitive to the impressions of community members, Leova did not wish to once again become the object of gossip about her ladyhood, worrying what her "friends would say," if she sought a divorce.[56] The gendered realities of the labor market, as well as ideas about honor and ladyhood prompted her to stay in an unhappy marriage that, while not physically violent, regularly subjected her to emotional abuse.[57] Minnie

54 "Application for Pardon, Jesus Quiros"; "Wife Beater Sent to Jail for Thirty Days."
55 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 143.
56 Robles, "Vida de Leova Gonzalez de López."
57 Nan Enstad describes the intersections of ladyhood and labor in early twentieth-century New York City. See, Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

Ortiz also felt this pressure but it did not prevent her from leaving a violent relationship. Ortiz tolerated her husband's philandering and spendthrift ways in the mid 1930s until, one evening, he drunkenly struck her. Advised by friends to speak to a lawyer, the lawyer recommended divorce, which Ortiz sought promptly, but only after "crying my eyes out, thinking of my shattered home life and my fatherless girls."[58]

Early Chicano literature articulated cultural pressures to remain in abusive relationships and sometimes valorized domestic violence as a masculine prerogative and an expression of love. In Mario Suárez's 1969 short story,"Las Comadres," Anastacia Elizondo's husband Lazarillo regularly beat her for her "poor housekeeping," until, after a particularly severe assault, she left him. Presented as a traitor to her community—she boasts,"How good it feels to live away from El Hoyo, away from so many low class people"—Anastacia soon succumbed to the advice of her comadre, who told her, "'It would be best if you moved back to your house...all you can do is cook his food, prepare his clothes, and clean the house.'" Back with Lazarillo, Anastacia proved an attentive housewife, yet while Lazarillo no longer beat her, she found him indifferent. Fearing she "lost his love," Anastacia sabotaged domestic peace by purposely failing to keep a clean house, and Lazarillo again beat her. That night, "Lying in bed with a pair of black eyes and her hair disheveled, [Anastacia] bubbled on her pillow...and sighed dreamily. Then she gently scratched...Lazarillo's shoulder and asked, 'Are you awake, my love?'[59]"

While communities and cultural norms could pressure women to remain in abusive relationships, communities often enforced their own prohibition of domestic violence,

58 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 144-145.

59 Mario Suárez, "Las Comadres," in *Chicano Sketches: Short Stories*, ed. Francisco A Lomelí, Cecilia Felicia Cota-Robles Suárez, and Juan José Casillas-Núñez (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 57.

intervening when they believed men had beat their wife beyond the accepted level.[60] The presence of a support system could sometimes save a woman from a particularly violent episode. Gloría Ahumada's father intervened the first time his brother-in-law beat his sister. "He told him if it happened again there could be trouble...I don't think he hit her again after that."[61] Men protecting their female relations upheld a gendered vision of strength and honor, but also protected women around them. When, in 1912, "Mrs. Seradel's" intoxicated husband Vincent began to beat her, she fled to a neighbors house, where he chased her with an axe. The public nature of this dispute and the introduction of a weapon led to Vicent being "taken by a party of Mexicans who had gathered," and held until law enforcement arrived.[62]

Of course, even if inclined to intervene, family and neighbors did not necessarily succeed in protecting women. In 1908, twenty-seven year old Robert Gonzales stabbed his wife eight times after returning home drunk, angered when his wife spilled water on him. Gonzales previously assaulted her, and though she "had been importuned by her friends to leave him or have him arrested," he threatened to kill her if she left or reported him. When Gonzales stabbed her, "Almost the entire population of the little settlement responded to her cries, and after a few moments fifty men were gathered at the scene....the crowd rushed him and he was borne down by weight of numbers and disarmed." The crowd then tied him up and sent for Constable R.B. Way.[63] Ester López recalls her mother's comadre coming to stay at their home when her husband became violent in 1930s Wilmington. Though Ester's mother offered the woman comfort and her father tried to intervene, they ultimately could not protect her from her husband.

60 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 256.
61 "Gloria Ahumada."
62 "Mexican Runs Amuck," *Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1912.
63 "Wife's Assailant Fights with Mob," *Los Angeles Herald*, June 1, 1908.

> She had to come stay with us for a few months. She was in her forties and he was seventy something and she was afraid he was really going to hurt her, more than he had the other times when she'd come over crying. My mother used to stay up with her and my father would go talk to him, try to settle him down. She would always go back home [but] then one day he killed her. That was the first funeral I remember going to.[64]

While the police occasionally intervened at the prompting of a community member or the woman herself, available accounts suggest that more commonly violence in the home remained a private affair with women often reluctant to seek police intervention. As Yvette Flores-Ortiz notes, this trend continues today, with Latinas often remaining in abusive relationships because of cultural, social, and financial pressures.[65] Indeed, "Latinas victimized by family violence must negotiate cultural scripts that mandate family loyalty, which can result in a culture of silence that protects the men at the expense of the women's mental and physical health."[66] Linda Gordon cautions against value judgments about these decisions, arguing that patriarchal systems are marked by "custom and bargaining." Thus, that "women did not conduct a head on challenge to their husband's prerogatives does not mean that they liked being hit or believed that their virtue required accepting it."[67] Women such as Mrs. Ávila actively resisted legal intervention. In 1905, patrolman Cooper happened upon her husband, Eugene "brutally beating his wife" while "in a drunken fit." According to newspaper coverage, "Avila's wife appeared in the court room and begged that the court deal leniently with Avila. She absolutely refused to prosecute her husband for his brutal attack on her, so the only charge that could be lodged against the man was

64 "Ester López," interview by Nick Bravo, February 10, 2009.

65 Flores-Ortiz, "La Mujer Y La Violencia: A Culturally Based Model for the Understanding and Treatment of Domestic Violence in Chicana/Latina Communities," 176.

66 Yvette Flores-Ortiz, "Re/Membering the Body: Latina Testimonies of Social and Family Violence," in *Violence and the Body: Race, Gender, and the State*, ed. Arturo Aldama (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 356.

67 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 256.

drunkenness."[68]

Yet the image of the long suffering, silent Mexican wife cannot withstand historical scrutiny.[69] Many women did seek police intervention, while others fled, and others still took matters into their own hands. On a drunken binge in 1905, José Rodríguez began tearing pictures off the walls and incomprehensibly rambling in prayer. Fearing for her safety and that of her children, his wife alerted the police; when police arrived, Rodríguez became enraged with her for summoning them and attempted to kill her with a hatchet before police seized him.[70] Similarly, when, in 1909, Frank Ortega came home drunk and began "raining blows on his wife's head," Mrs. Ortega called the police and had him arrested. Frank went to court and ultimately faced no jail time—instead the court ordered him to pay a thirty dollar fine.[71] Other women chose to disappear with the children. Francisco Bayardo began drinking heavily after an injury to his skull, and became increasingly violent. His wife and children felt "compelled to leave" in 1915 because he "often attacks them [and] abuses those about him."[72] Yolanda Andrade similarly remembers a neighbor who left her husband, taking their children "up north" where she had family. "People knew what he did to her so nobody felt bad for him...he was very harsh."[73]

Women also favored dealing with abusive husbands privately rather than summoning familial or legal intervention. Some violently fought back with physical force—sometimes in immediate self defense, but also in premeditated strikes. Women's violence against an abusive partner should not be read romantically but rather as part of a constant power struggle within the

68 "Wife Beater is Sentenced," *Los Angeles Herald*, November 18, 1905.
69 For a discussion of the gendered stereotype of Mexican women as long suffering, "self sacrificing, self-effacing, long-suffering martyrs," see Flores-Ortiz, "La Mujer Y La Violencia: A Culturally Based Model for the Understanding and Treatment of Domestic Violence in Chicana/Latina Communities," 173.
70 "So Drunk, Now Insanity Charge."
71 "Fined for Wife Beating," *Los Angeles Herald*, October 31, 1909.
72 "Francisco Bayardo, No. 21923," August 19, 1915, California State Archives.
73 "Yolanda Andrade," interview by Nick Bravo, December 9, 2010.

home. During the early 1930s, Mary Caralejo's aunt waited for a particular moment to assault her long abusive husband, taking advantage of his intoxicated state. “My aunt broke my uncle [her husband's] arm while he was passed out. He was out in his chair and she just bent it backwards until it broke. When he woke up, she told him he had been on such a drunk that he fell and didn't remember it.”[74]

Jess Campos grew up in the late 1920s and 1930s watching his father beat his mother, and while he proved reticent about describing particular incidents, he told of one specific episode in which his mother drew the line. “Oh she got her licks in too. She whacked him over the head with a frying pan once because he was drunk and coming at her. He was so drunk...stumbling so it wasn't even a fair fight. It probably knocked him out...it could have killed him.”[75] In soliciting police protection, fleeing, and fighting back, women sought to assert control in a desperate living situation.

Drinking patriarchs also profoundly shaped the experiences of children raised with them, such as Jess Campos who witnessed his parents' violent altercation. These narrators believe intoxication influenced the decisions their parents made, and poignantly describe daily life in their household. Like women, children took a variety of measures to intervene and protect themselves. Disempowered in the household, children found strategies to assert some control over their tumultuous daily lives.

Born in 1909, Petra Vásquez came to the United States with her family in 1913, and moved to Rancho Los Alamitos where her father worked for the affluent Bixby family. The majority of her father's family died a 1920 flu outbreak, “And from then on my father started drinking and drinking and drinking.” Petra believes this drinking led to tuberculosis, which

74 “Mary Caralejo,” interview by Nick Bravo, July 27, 2010.
75 “Jess Campos,” interview by Nick Bravo, December 2, 2010.

ultimately took his life: "He got it from drinking so much. He didn't sleep, he was always drinking." But the family also had to deal with his often violent behavior when he drank. Petra recalls, "We all were afraid of him" because of beatings he gave "if he could catch us." She, her siblings, and sometimes her mother took to hiding under wagons on the ranch to wait out his outbursts. In his life, Salvador terrorized his family, and in his death he left them in a difficult financial situation, relying on the Bixby family and their mother's work ethic.[76]

While corporal punishment proved common in early twentieth-century ethnic Mexican homes—Elizabeth Hymer reported its presence in fifty-seven percent of ethnic Mexican families in 1924—violence in Petra's household does not fit this mold. Many narrators described being hit or whipped by their parents, but only in cases of misbehavior and never to the point of severe injury. Like definitions of wife beating, ideas about the physical disciplining of children remain dependent on their cultural context. Yet individuals such as Petra's father, or George González, who "went home drunk...and whipped his wife, after which he ran her and their five children out of the house and chased them up and down the streets," appear aberrant in any era.[77]

While Petra ran and hid from her father, other daughters found a more permanent escape from violent patriarchs. George Sánchez observes that strict discipline and violence could backfire in ethnic Mexican households, leading some daughters to flee a conflicted home to a marriage of their own.[78] In 1933 at age sixteen, Angelita Reyes Sisneros Mariscal went out with her seventeen year old boyfriend without her father's permission. Her father locked the door before going to sleep, and, returning later that night, Angelita refused to wake him. She recalls,

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76 "Vásquez, Petra," interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 30, 1979, Interview 1a Segment 2 (1:42-5:01), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

77 "Drunken Mexican Held for Abusing His Family."

78 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 146.

“I was afraid, I knew I was going to get it when I got home. I was afraid to knock because I knew.” According to Angelita, her father only drank when he became “very upset” and rarely turned violent, but her sister-in-law claims, “She was afraid to go back to the house because her father beat her.”[79] Instead, when her boyfriend said, “'Let's go, we can get married. I'll take you over to my mom,'” Angelita accepted. Though her father never spoke to her after their elopement, and her husband eventually became a violent drunk, Angelita escaped a hostile, strict home through early marriage.[80] As Vicki L. Ruiz argues, in marrying early, young women escaped parental discipline, but in doing so often, “exchanged one form of supervision for another.”[81]

Alcohol did not just figure into violence; children also witnessed that it made men listless and irresponsible. Children tried to limit drinking and often assumed the task of getting their intoxicated fathers back home and into bed. Flores-Ortiz notes that “children in dysfunctional families are consciously or unconsciously picked by the parents to fulfill the role of assistant parents and to become responsible for meeting the previously unmet psychological needs of the adults.”[82] Describing her stepfather, Ester Mejia of Los Alamitos remembers,

> We used to hide the bottles from him. We had to go looking for him, in the street...the alleys. I'd go to try to find him in the alley in a stupor. He couldn't move. So we'd have to go as kids to try to see if we could find him...passed out in

79 “Vásquez, Petra,” interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 30, 1979, Interview 1b Segment 8 (20:45-23:08), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach, http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

80 “Mariscal, Angelita,” interview by Joan Hotchkis, May 15, 1979, Interview 1b Segment 9 (25:41-28:03), Mexican American/Chicano: Rancho Los Alamitos - Hotchkis Collection. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

81 Vicki L. Ruiz, “"Star Struck": Acculturation, Adolescence, and Mexican American Women, 1920-1950,” in *Unequal Sisters: An Inclusive Reader in U.S. Women's History*, ed. Vicki L. Ruiz and Ellen Carol DuBois, 4th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 370-371.

82 Flores-Ortiz, “La Mujer Y La Violencia: A Culturally Based Model for the Understanding and Treatment of Domestic Violence in Chicana/Latina Communities,” 174.

> the alley. Go home and tell my grandfather, 'He is over there.'...He'd go out and get him [or] the boys would go get him.[83]

Likewise, Mary Luna's brother would find their father's liquor and "pour it down the drain," and he also regularly put his drunken father to bed.[84] Some children sought control over a parents' drinking in one of the few ways they could, by hiding or destroying the bottle, and in both families children assumed responsibility for collecting an inebriated father. Ramón López similarly fetched his father at his mother's request, despite being the youngest child.[85] A father's drinking forced children into situations where they assumed responsibilities beyond their years.

Throughout her youth, Rosa Guerrero also tended to her intoxicated father after their parents fought over his drinking. "I used to take care of my father when he was drunk, pobrecito. I used to sing to him, take care of him, and I was the only one who could guide him...even though my dad drank a lot, I didn't judge him; I loved him. When you love somebody, you don't judge. You love and you forget and you forgive."[86] Guerrero's words are telling: Flores-Ortiz describes the "pobrecito syndrome" as one "cultural script" by which Latinas explain or excuse the destructive and abusive behavior of husbands and fathers. One narrator in Flores-Ortiz's study explains, "My mother would say, 'hay pobrecito, he works so hard, he needs to unwind.' This was the explanation for his drinking, his yelling, his womanizing, his coming in late, his beating her and me."[87] Called upon to rationalize destructive behavior in their families, women and children sought to "understand, anticipate, and absolve the behaviors of men," and feeling pity

83 "Ester Mejia."
84 "Luna, Mary," interview by Cindy Cleary, February 2, 1981, Interview 1b Segment 5 (4:58-9:36), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.
85 "Ramón López," interview by Nick Bravo, February 23, 2009.
86 Ruiz, "Oral History and La Mujer: The Rosa Guerrero Story," 223.
87 Flores-Ortiz, "Re/Membering the Body: Latina Testimonies of Social and Family Violence," 354-355.

for a man's economic and social position, and drunken condition, fit this need. [88]

Fathers often left families behind in search of the wages necessary to support them—as one narrator descried her laboring father as "just a visitor. We were glad to see him, he was glad to see us, he left, and that was it."[89] But alcohol also often led men to neglect or abandon their families. Linda Gordon argues that heavy drinking among parents further, "deepened poverty and paternal listlessness...[and] contributed to poor supervision of children."[90] The contemporary links between alcohol and paternal neglect became firmly established during the years leading to Prohibition. One 1916 Board of Temperance publication posited that "Alcohol may itself exert an influence on the offspring, by the poverty it entails, and more important still, the neglect of the child."[91] Corona resident Luisa Vásquez took her husband Natividad to court in 1928 for "his drinking and neglecting his work and family." A social worker testified that Natividad did not provide food, clothing, shelter, and medical attention for their five children, and Luisa told the judge, "When he is sober and not under the influence of liquor he is a good man, we are a happy family, but it seems to be the liquor. When he earns a check he often gives it to the family and then he will earn another and drink that one up, and then trouble begins." The judge ruled in favor of Luisa, ordering Natividad to get sober and provide for his children.[92]

Born in 1923, Mary Luna lost her mother to illness at the age of ten, and her father's subsequent drinking led her and her brother to adapt to and accommodate their father's de facto absence.

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88 Ibid., 354.

89 "Chávez, Flora," interview by Cindy Cleary, November 12, 1980, Interview 1b Segment 2 (0:45-5:50), Women's History: Rosie the Riveter Revisited. The Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, California State University, Long Beach., http://www.csulb.edu/voaha.

90 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 144.

91 "The Revolution in the Attitude of Medical Men Toward Alcohol" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, July 3, 1916), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

92 José Alamillo, *Making Lemonade out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 64.

> After my mother died, my dad took to drinking a lot. I guess he got to be an alcoholic... It just built up and just got worse and worse with my dad drinking so much he was hardly home. He would party with some women? I don't know, I never questioned him...I always remember, I always worried he was drinking. I'd worry because...I'd be in bed, we're all in bed and he'd finally be coming in at twelve or eleven or whatever and I'd always listen for his step…I could tell by the way he walked if he was drinking or not. You'd always have that stomach, you're scared, you're waiting, you're just waiting to see. If he was sober I'd say, "Oh he's all right," and if he was drinking I'd yell to my brother, "Put him to bed." And my brother would get up and put him to bed. And my dad…he wasn't mean or anything, in fact he was sweeter and nicer when he was drinking...Sometimes he would go for months because he would try not to drink…then he'd start to get crabby. Then I'd tell my brother, "I wish he'd get a drink because he's getting real crabby." He was real nice when he was drinking, I mean, not nice to see, but he was loveable with us. But yeah, you worry, what's going to become of him. And in fact it was, it did him in.[93]

Luna and her brother developed senses to adapt themselves to their father's drinking, reading the rhythm of footsteps to ascertain his intoxication and recognizing his irritability during withdrawals, but they were deeply wounded by what their father had become.

For Luna, her mother's death and father's neglect greatly shaped many aspects of her daily life that continued to influence her at the time of her 1981 interview. "Just lately I've eaten corn flakes, I couldn't stand cornflakes...We'd always have corn flakes. Sometimes that was all we'd have for dinner. Because it's easy to fix and so he could dash out to do what he had to do." With no parents to object, the kids in her neighborhood turned the home into a regular hangout, because "there was no discipline there...nobody to bug us." But there was somebody keeping an eye on them. Though he never married and had no children of his own, Mary Luna's uncle "was like a father to us," and chose to live on his brother's property "because he had to look out for

93 "Luna, Mary."

us." Luna credited her uncle for keeping her and her brother's lives together.

> I wonder back how we came out, my brother and I, without any, getting in trouble you know?...But my uncle was there. We ended up coming out alright...My uncle had the house in back, and what we would do, we shared a bathroom, there was a door from the outside, he could come in from the outside into the bathroom and what he would do is [ask] "Is everybody home in bed?" In other words he'd want to see if I was home, if my brother was home. And we'd say, "Yeah, we're here." We knew he was just checking, and we didn't mind. Because he didn't drink or anything. I think he just stayed there to keep an eye on my dad and all of us. What a weird childhood (laughs, pauses). Looking back on all that thinking about how normal my daughter had it, how easy, compared to what we had to go through.[94]

Her uncle's sense of duty and generosity toward his niece and nephew provided a modicum of stability in an otherwise chaotic life. Children like Luna believed their parent's drinking placed them in uncomfortable, frightening, and sometimes untenable positions. Like mothers, children necessarily adapted to this uneven life, asserting control when they could and relying on family support.

In many situations a child simply had no control, such as in the untimely death of a parent. Born in Pasadena in 1927, Manuel Contreras's discussion of his father's 1938 death reveals one such situation.

> In Mexico, he was a merchant. He didn't like it over here. But he used to say things are a lot better here than over here, but at the same time, he'd have lousy jobs...well, it turned out I guess that he got together with a lot of men or something like that and became friends with a lot of men. They used to go drink on Saturday night at some bar, some popular bar in Pasadena. What happened is he must have gotten into a fight with somebody in the bar and they beat him up. Well I guess he walked out of the bar beat up or something like that and the only thing he could do

94 Ibid.

> was sit down on the curb. Along comes a policeman and then the policeman arrested him for being drunk on the curb, took him to jail, and he died in jail. They didn't take him to the hospital so he died in jail. That's 1938...I was only eleven when he died. I think it was due to the drinking that night, two men just got drunk.[95]

As demonstrated in chapter three, a masculine drinking culture brought working-class men together socially, and Contreras believed that his father's nostalgia for Mexico and sadness about his economic plight led him into friendships that included binge drinking. While Contreras attributed prejudice and neglect on the part of police officers as sealing his father's fate, he clearly articulated this episode as stemming from his father's inebriation.

Contreras continued by describing the difficulty his family faced after his loss, and the decisions his mother made to keep the family afloat.

> If my father had continued living he would have done us a lot of good. There was...five of us that were underage still. Even though three of my brothers were older, there were 5 of us still underage that my mother had to take care of. It was hard on my mother... when my father died, that left [her] in a kind of bad situation. So the only thing she could do was go apply for welfare...She got on a family assistance with the city or state... [so her children could] continue going to school.[96]

Faced with rough financial times, many ethnic Mexicans turned to private and state assistance despite the nativist stigma attached to them.[97] In doing so, Contreras's mother kept her children out of the wage labor market and in school. Contreras found no way to curb his father's drinking but his mother found a way to ameliorate the effects of his death through government

95 "Manuel Contreras," interview by Nick Bravo, May 5, 2010.
96 Ibid.
97 Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?*

assistance. The same did not hold for John Álvarez, whose “alcoholic” father also died prematurely, and whose mother proved unable to financially support her children and lost them state custody in 1919.[98]

Several narrators describe their experiences as passengers in cars driven by an intoxicated father. While in most instances, men faced charges for driving under the influence alone or in the company of other men, these dangers also extended to children.[99] Though scholars continue to debate alcohol's pharmacological affects on aggression and violence, there exists almost universal consensus that alcohol chemically slows reaction time and concentration, directly impairing one's capacity to operate an automobile.[100] Verónica Casilles recalls how her father's heavy drinking and her mother's inability to drive placed her in frightening situations in the 1930s: “It was always an issue for us because my father would drink a lot at social functions. [My mother] didn't drive and when he was really too drunk to stand up—then to get in the car with him? Scary. I remember being afraid. Almost all of our friends had the same situations.”[101] Casilles believes drunk driving was “commonplace” and well tolerated.

> My dad had some fender benders and hit a couple fences down the street. So neighbors would come on over and say, 'Go and get him because he smashed into the fence.' They'd say, 'You mess up my fence, it might cost you...to fix it,' but would never call the police about it. My father would just say, 'Ok, I'll give you the money to fix it.'[102]

98 “John Alvarez, 3678,” November 15, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives.

99 “Wild Gun Play,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 28, 1925; “Auto Accidents Fatal to Four,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 8, 1928; Clifford James Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years* (Barstow, California: Backdoor Publishing, 1999), 290.

100 H. Laurence Ross, *Confronting Drunk Driving: Social Policy for Saving Lives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); *Drunk Driving* (Detroit: Greenhaven Press, 2008); James B Jacobs, *Drunk Driving: An American Dilemma* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

101 “Veronica Casilles,” interview by Nick Bravo, December 7, 2010.

102 Ibid.

Automobiles brought ethnic Mexicans new rewards and responsibilities, and police records concerning ethnic Mexican drunk driving reveal a steady increase in the years following Prohibition. In 1924, only two ethnic Mexicans faced charges of drunk driving in Los Angeles, constituting only .01 percent of the total number of ethnic Mexicans arrested in the city.[103] That same year, however, the LAPD only arrested three men for this charge—a miniscule fraction of the 2,880 classified arrests.[104] Three years later, in 1927, Mexicans represented four-fifths of drunk driving charges.[105] Apart from public intoxication, drunk driving arrests represented the second largest offense for which Mexicans encountered police by 1946.[106]

There are several reasons for this drastic increase in arrests, reflecting both a greater number of car owners and greater police attention. First, more ethnic Mexicans were driving. In the 1920s, ethnic Mexicans began purchasing automobiles, with up to one-quarter of families owning an automobile by the end of the decade.[107] Ethnic Mexicans followed a general trend among Angelinos as car ownership skyrocketed to one million registered automobiles by 1927.[108] They purchased cars—most often second hand for relatively small sums—for a variety of reasons, including work-related transportation, ease in visiting relatives along the border and in

103 S.H. Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

104 "Classified Arrests During FIscal Year Ending June, 1924," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

105 Fifty-nine ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles faced similar charges, a twenty-nine percent increase. Walker, *One Eye Closed, the Other Red: The California Bootlegging Years*, 458-459.

106 By 1946, the number of ethnic Mexicans arrested for drunk driving had climbed exponentially, with 1,877 cases. See Alejandro Morales, *Historical and Attitudinal Factors Related to Current Mexican American-Law Enforcement Concerns in Los Angeles* (Council of Mexican American Affairs, Police-Community Relations Committee, April 22, 1947), 23-24, Carey McWilliams Papers, Box 27, Folder 5, Charles E. Young Special Collections.

107 Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 205.

108 Ashleigh Ellwood Brilliant, *Social Effects of the Automobile in Southern California During the Nineteen-Twenties* (Berkeley, 1964), 46.

Mexico, and pride of ownership. Yet, for all its benefits, auto ownership also burdened ethnic Mexicans with additional expenses, which academic and activist Ernesto Galaraza observed in 1930: "The Mexican well knows...that far too much of his meager income is left in the tills of gasoline stations and tire shops."[109] Though some authors described Mexican districts as places where "automobiles seldom strayed," the sheer amount of ethnic Mexicans facing auto forfeitures related to bootlegging charges in this decade testifies to the ubiquity of car ownership.[110] This was not merely a luxury restricted to the wealthiest individuals.

Second, Prohibition drove a portion of formerly-public alcohol consumption into the relative privacy of the automobile, meaning that not only were more ethnic Mexicans driving at this time, but also more were drinking while doing so. A 1930 report on the effects of Prohibition pointed out this trend, noting there are "not so many intoxicated persons on the streets because they are in autos...the number of arrests for driving a car while intoxicated [is] an indication that intoxicated persons are more numerous than the appearance of public places would suggest."[111] Finally, police became more suspicious of ethnic Mexicans behind the wheel. The simultaneous emergence of bootlegging, immigration restriction, and automobile transportation associated Mexicans in cars with illicit liquor traffic, with officers more routinely stopping ethnic Mexicans

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109 Ernesto Galaraza, "Life in the United States for Mexican People: Out of the Experience of a Mexican," in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work : 56th annual session held in San Francisco, CA., June 26-July 3, 1929.* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1930), 401.

110 Don Ryan, *Angel's Flight* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927); Fifty-six ethnic Mexicans stood to lose their automobile when apprehended for liquor smuggling and/or transportation between 1921 and 1931. See, for example, "The USA vs. Ramon Cendejas," March 20, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 227, Folder 3869, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. R. Cuevas and Lucas M. Parra," March 24, 1922, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 228, Folder 3916, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region; "The USA vs. Francisco Acosta," February 5, 1921, United States District Court of Southern California Criminal Case Files, Box 172, Folder 2754, National Archives Records Administration, Pacific Region.

111 Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families," 12.

in search of contraband. During the 1920s and into the 1930s, "A close association generally existed in the minds of many critics between automobiles, movies, alcohol, and sexual misbehavior."[112] Indeed, one police report claimed, "Automobiles are unquestionably making our burden heavier...the prostitutes, bootleggers and drug peddlers now use automobiles to ply their vicious trade."[113] In this climate, bootlegger Ramón Moreno faced arrest when stopped for drunk driving charges in 1929. A subsequent search of his car led to a possession and transportation charges, and further investigation revealed a still in his home, for which he spent a year in prison.[114]

As authorities policed ethnic Mexican drivers, contemporary gender norms ensured the vast majority of these drivers were male. In the 1920s, the car proved "one of the most clearly gendered aspects of American urban life," with women seen as incompatible with mechanized technology, limiting their mobility.[115] Historian Virginia Scharff observes, "The auto was born in a masculine manger, and when women sought to claim its power, they invaded a male domain. As women stepped up to take the wheel, they had to overcome their own lack of confidence and combat subtle and overt resistance." Yet the women taking the wheel in the early years of auto transportation came almost exclusively from Euro American communities and proved most frequently middle class or wealthy.[116] As Verónica Casilles noted, her mother's inability to drive meant that her intoxicated father proved the lone family member able to transport the family

112 Brilliant, *Social Effects of the Automobile in Southern California During the Nineteen-Twenties*, 46.

113 Summary of Division Commanders Meeting, "Crime and its Prevention," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.

114 "Application for Pardon, Ramon Moreno," January 3, 1932, Governor's Records, Applications for Pardon, File 10421, California State Archives.

115 Martin Wachs, "Men, Women, and Urban Travel: The Persistence of Separate Spheres," in *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life*, ed. Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 86.

116 Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York: Free Press, 1991), 12.

home from social gatherings at which he drank. While today women drivers are commonplace, a 1983 survey of licensed drivers in the United States found that seventy percent of men born before 1923 held licenses to drive, but only thirty percent of women in the same age group had licenses.[117] No women faced drunk driving charges in 1924, and drunk driving does not even appear as an offense in a categorization of women arrests.[118] Mary Caralejo, who today at age eighty-three still has never driven a car, remembers similar circumstances in her family. "None of the women in my family knew how to drive. Where were we going?...Some of my sisters do now but only after they got married."[119]

In cases of drunk driving, abandonment, neglect, and abuse, alcohol shaped ethnic Mexican's experiences in the United States, and fit into circumstances from which children wished to escape. The same appears to hold for individuals in Mexico who migrated to the United States; while economic necessity often guided migration, situations in Mexican households related to alcohol also contributed to these decisions. Individuals chose to migrate during the violence and poverty of the Mexican Revolution, which claimed over two million lives, closed factories, and often-times halted agricultural production.[120] With mass violence and property destruction fostering economic instability across urban and rural Mexico, people migrated north in journeys often described by historians as primarily geared to escape these conditions. Yet four interviews reveal that some migrants chose to leave Mexico after violent episodes in their families and communities, with some individuals departing in shame and exile,

117 Wachs, "Men, Women, and Urban Travel: The Persistence of Separate Spheres," 86.
118 "Statement of Cases Handled by The Women's Police Court, Los Angeles," 1924, Box 1061, Folder 1924b, Los Angeles City Archives.
119 "Mary Caralejo."
120 Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton,and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 57-58.

and others escaping hostile environments.[121] Each of these conflicts related to alcohol—some immigrants left Mexico to avoid a violently intoxicated patriarch, others to avoid punishment for acts committed while drunk, and others fled bad reputations.

Francisco Mares ran away from his home in Michiocán at age twelve after his intoxicated father beat him. "He beat me on a street corner and then I went home and robbed him of some money and took a train without knowing where I was going."[122] Santiago Rivera also left home after his father beat him, but it was he, not his father, who drank: his father smelled liquor on the fourteen year-old's breath and beat him in punishment. Rivera also stole money for his departure, taking one-hundred and fifty pesos before heading north. In both cases, the decision to come to the United States followed the initial severing of familial ties: once leaving the home in conflict, the decision to migrate north became easier.

According to his daughter, Dimetrio Hernández came north primarily to escape his mother's reputation. "They said she was a loose woman and drank a lot...He didn't know who his father was...I think he wanted a fresh start."[123] Luciano Herrera also came north not chasing economic opportunity as much as fleeing a complicated situation set against the backdrop of the Mexican Revolution, leaving behind his wife and children. While living with his family in Mexico, a friend came to visit him to recruit him for service in Pancho Villa's army. Herrera refused but, "We began to eat and got two bottles of tequila, good tequila, that perked us up and we drank more and more...With the enthusiasm of the drinks...I told him that I would go with him." But, the next morning, "I had already reflected on it and I did not want to go anymore, but since I had given him my word, I had to keep it, so my mother and wife said goodbye to me and I

121 Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*; González and Fernandez, "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States."
122 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Francisco Mares," May 20, 1927.
123 "Ester López."

left with him." According to Herrera, a masculine sense of honor compelled him to uphold his (drunken) word until, one week later, he found the opportunity to flee. Marked as a deserter, he quickly caught a train to Juárez and soon thereafter crossed into the United States. Two years later, in Los Angeles at the time of his interview with a Gamio research assistant, Herrera had sent for his wife and children to join him.[124] Though economic opportunity certainly contributed to each of these men's decisions, the geographic and cultural distance between Mexico and the United States appears the primary motivation. They were as much running from Mexico as they were toward the United States.

Escaping to the United States did not insulate individuals from conflicts related to alcohol, and life there brought new challenges, particularly heightened surveillance and policing. Considering families' experiences with alcohol in southern California, the records from the California Youth Authority in Whittier (CYAW) provide a unique opportunity to derive statistical and anecdotal information about drinking in ethnic Mexican households and the relationship this drinking had to criminalization. They further shed light on the ways state authorities sought to police these families. Originally established in 1889 as the State Reform School for Juvenile Offenders, the Youth Authority in Whittier opened in 1891 and became California's leading reform school.[125] The California State Archives maintains CYAW's records on microfilm, spanning the years 1910-1921, which includes intake forms, reports to the court, and summaries of home visits. These institutional records present several challenges. Of primary concern, the documents only represent small fraction of ethnic Mexican youth—those whose actions drew the attention of state authorities.

124 Luis Felipe Recinos, "Vida de Luciano Herrera," April 18, 1927, Bancroft Library.
125 Miroslava Chávez-García, "Intelligence Testing at Whittier School, 1890-1920," *The Pacific Historical Review* 76, no. 2 (2007): 193.

The records carry the additional burden of being produced in an era marked by racialized ideas about intelligence, morality, and class.[126] Historian Miroslava Chávez-García's work on resistance within the Whittier establishment demonstrates that prevailing attitudes about the moral and cultural deficiency of Mexicans guided officers' and courts' interactions with families.[127] Indeed, ideas about Mexicans' predisposition to criminal activity, intoxication, low intelligence, and families' dysfunction percolate through these records.[128] Limited in scope and predisposed to find fault in ethnic Mexican families, these records nonetheless provide glimpses into daily life within these homes.

Of the 815 total inmates between 1910 and 1919, intake records denoted ninety-two, or 11.5 percent, as Mexican.[129] Paul Taylor estimates California's ethnic Mexican population in this era between nine and ten percent, meaning that ethnic Mexican youth seem somewhat over represented in these statistics.[130] This slight over representation, however, appears consistent

126 Developing Robert Wiebe's famous analysis, Historian George Sánchez describes the Progressive era in Los Angeles as an "extreme 'search for order,'" in which secular and state programs targeted Mexicans, particularly women, for indoctrination into an idealized, and ultimately unattainable, version of Americanization. Focusing their energies on single male migrants proved difficult for Americanization agents, who in the second decade of the twentieth century turned their focus squarely on the family. See Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 93.

127 Miroslava Chávez-García, "Youth, Evidence, and Agency: Mexican and Mexican American Youth at the Whittier State School, 1890-1920," *Aztlán.* 31, no. 2 (2006): esp 53.

128 Despite the intrusive impulse to excise the youth from the influences of their family, financial realities often limited the scope of this work; authorities viewed placement at Whittier as a last resort, with officials often preferring to keep children with their families. Indeed, according to Emory Bogardus, only a "small fraction" of youthful offenders entered state custody due to limited resources and an inefficient bureaucratic structure. Not only did this save the state money, it also allowed case workers and courts to supervise and impart moral instruction upon ethnic Mexican families by keeping them under surveillance but not forcefully removing the youth. Emory Bogardus, "A Study of Juvenile Delinquency and Dependency in Los Angeles County for the Year 1912," *Journal of the American Institute of Criminal Law and Criminology* 5, no. 3 (1914): 1.

129 This chapter considers records kept between 1910-1919 because, in the final two years, record quality deteriorated, leaving too many cases lacking sufficient information for statistical analysis. The first five reels of microfilm held at California State archives, spanning these years, are included in this and subsequent statistics."Youth Authority Whittier State School Inmate History Registers," 1910, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13)-MF8:10(17), California State Archives.

130 Paul Taylor, "Crime and the Foreign Born: The Problem of the Mexican," in *Report on Crime and the Foreign Born*, ed. National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement. (Washington D.C.: United

with similar statistics regarding adult ethnic Mexican's criminal activity, likely reflecting contemporary biases.[131] Authorities classified youth entering CYAW as either delinquents or dependents: delinquents had encountered police in their allegedly criminal activities—often joy riding and petty larceny—while dependents committed no crime but were removed from a home environment deemed unfit. Case files included an intake report with basic information about the youth and his family, including race and language spoken, as well as reports to the court from specific case workers.

In the years leading to local and national prohibition, ideas about temperance guided the surveillance of these ethnic Mexican youth and families. Beyond information about the number of residents in the home, the marital status of the youth's parents, and basic notes about the circumstances leading to placement in the Whittier school, each intake report also reported the family members' drinking habits. Thirty-nine of the ninety-two (43.8 percent) ethnic Mexican inmates came from families described as "intemperate." For those observing and adjudicating ethnic Mexican families, alcohol consumption among parents signaled degeneracy, and rationalized surveillance.

As Peggy Pascoe persuasively argued in her study of Progressive era women reformers, records emerging from individuals and organizations seeking to assist and shape marginalized populations speak more to the self-perceptions and prejudices of the reformers themselves than to the daily life and experiences of the individuals chronicled in such reports.[132] That more youth

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States Government Printing Office, 1931), 202.

131 Bowman, "A Brief Study of Arrests of Mexicans in Los Angeles for a Twelve-Month Period"; Constantine Panunzio, "The Foreign Born and Prohibition," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 163 (September 1932): 147-154; Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

132 Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

came from intemperate families in the years leading to the passing of Prohibition signals not that more Mexican families drank during these years but rather that authorities placed more scrutiny on those who did. Thus, while we can not infer that familial intemperance caused delinquent behavior or even the circumstances that led to a declaration of dependency, we nonetheless see that alcohol consumption played a significant role in the coding of youth and their families as societal dangers.

Of the thirty-nine intemperate families recorded, the father proved the lone drinker in twenty-nine cases, the mother in only two, and both parents in eight.[133] This disparity obviously reflected the gendered nature of alcohol consumption in this era, which, as shown in the previous chapter, came with different conventions for ethnic Mexican men and women. Intake information came from interviews with the youth and from investigations of the family, and this discrepancy signals the differences in visibility of men's and women's alcohol consumption. By drinking in public and without gendered stigma, men's alcohol consumption could be more likely noticed by authorities and more likely acknowledged by an inmate.

The intemperance of these parents served as a sign and symptom of the "heredity" and "bad environment" authorities believed fostered criminality and dependency. Concerns about heredity appear consistent with popular contemporary thinking about the biological origin of undesirable traits. As historian Alexander Stern demonstrates, early twentieth-century eugenicists believed alcoholism, feeblemindedness, aggression, and even immorality were genetically passed on from parents.[134] This current can be seen in a 1915 article, titled "The Role of Heredity," which sought to prove that excessive drinking derived from genetic material. The

133 "Youth Authority Whittier State School Inmate History Registers."

134 Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

article, published by the Board of Temperance, noted, "The drunkard is apt to excuse his failing on the grounds that his father, mother or other relatives were similarly affected; that therefore he 'has no chance,' 'has it in the blood,' 'can't help himself,' and so on." The article studied intake and discharge records from a British asylum to correlate familial drinking patterns with those of the patient, using statistics to support a biological determinist vision of alcohol abuse.[135] Utilizing similar logic, authorities at CYAW traced a child's supposed dysfunction to the family, even if he was not reared by this family. For example, though adopted as an infant by the Garcías, who "took excellent care of him," Johnny García could not escape the legacy of his mother's reputation as a "common prostitute and drunk." Indeed, according to a case worker summary, at age twelve, "He began to show all of the tendencies of his mother's family."[136]

Similarly, case workers' preoccupation with "conditions" and "environment" speak to a culturally determinist logic.[137] Cultural determinism rested on the premise that an individuals' environment profoundly influenced their criminal likelihood, and traits such as violence and intemperance, while not passed down through blood, nonetheless emerged from the family.[138] Alice Channing's 1927 study of drinking parents and juvenile delinquency made this argument rather explicitly.

> Alcoholism on the part of the parent or parents, however, may be presumed to be a demoralizing influence in the home, both from the point of view of what happens to the child before he comes to the attention of the court and from the point of view of the co-operation that maybe expected from the parent in treatment that the court decides the child needs to correct habits that are

135 "The Role of Heredity" (Board of Temperance, Prohibition and Public Morals, August 2, 1915), Collection 1175, Seaver Center, Los Angeles Museum of Natural History.

136 "Johnny García, No. 3741," May 19, 1920, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives.

137 Franz Boas, *Race, Language, and Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

138 Stern, *Eugenic Nation*.

> responsible for his delinquency. Alcoholism on the part of the parent would therefore make more difficult the substitution of right mental attitudes and habits for the antisocial ones which have developed in the child."[139]

Straddling both biological and cultural logic, authorities scrutinized the temperance of families as both genetic and conditional causes of delinquency.

Arrested at age thirteen for "petit larceny," Moreno Madero's case file deemed his home "poor" and "unfit," and his "parents not properly able to rear the children." His father, "is a man of bad habits as he drinks, smokes, is indolent, works but little...[and] was arrested about two months ago at the plaza, charged with being drunk and begging." The family's poverty—they lived in a "little shack"— and the perception that they "were not much interested in their children" led to Madero's incarceration. In the absence of supervision, Moreno allegedly began associating "with the worst companions he can find" who quickly brought him into criminal activity. Alcohol appeared part and parcel of the family's economic condition—a cause and symptom of his father's inability to support the family financially—as well as the parent's unwillingness to supervise Moreno. "Poor home conditions," "bad influences, and "vicious" and "immoral families" described youth who lived with parents who drank.

Of the thirty-nine cases involving an intemperate parent, only three case summaries did not conclude that the child emerged from a "bad environment" or "inferior stock." Families such as Henry García's, in which his father worked as a rancher and his brother in a packing house, obviated the stigma of intemperance in their evaluations. Indeed, "Henry's parents appeared to be Mexican people of the better class and were probably rather indulgent toward the boy"—thus explaining his truancy that brought him to the attention of the court. The regular employment of

139 Alice Channing, "Alcoholism among Parents of Juvenile Delinquents," *The Social Service Review* 1, no. 3 (September 1927): 357-383.

the male members of the household, their lack of a criminal record, and the marital status of his parents all signaled a better class of Mexicans who, despite their intemperance, could still be counted as good people. Yet, like their indulgence in alcohol, the court concluded his parents indulged Henry, allowing him to spend time with "bad companions," leading to his truancy, and ultimately various thefts.[140] Similarly, the court concluded that, though both John Ayala and Pete Alvarado came from intemperate homes, their parents were "of good character and habits" and keep "a nice home."[141] Yet, in every other case of parental intemperance, authorities maligned families, considering alcohol a sign and symbol of the bad blood and environment.[142]

While children could not be removed from a home by virtue of parental intemperance alone, alcohol figured into situations, such as familial separation and parental incarceration, that further sanctioned intrusion by coding the family as likely to produce delinquency. Ben Obera's intemperate father abandoned the family with his "whereabouts unknown," and his intemperate mother "has lived with a number of different men since her reputation is bad...she has influenced the boy Ben to the bad." Indeed, this home environment, in which "the boy has been expose (sic) to lewd, thieving, [and] drinking Mexican men and women," supposedly made Ben a "habitual thief."[143] Surveying Ben's home conditions, authorities noted the separation of his parents, the

140 "Henry García, 3349," December 17, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives.

141 "John Ayala, No. 3752," June 15, 1920, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives; "John Ayala, 3752," January 7, 1920, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives; "Pete Alvarado, 3596," April 1, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(17), Roll 5, California State Archives.

142 "Gabriel Madero, 2862," August 9, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives; "Jesus García, No. 3283," April 2, 1917, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives; "Cristobal Martinez, 3302," July 16, 1917, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives.

143 "Ben Obera, No. 3166," December 22, 1915, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives.

promiscuity of his mother, and the unsuitable environment in which he lived.

As shown in Ben's case, parental separation and atypical family models did not sit well with case workers and the court. Within this sample, only fourteen of the thirty nine inmates, or thirty-five percent, lived in homes with married parents. Thirteen families (thirty-three percent) had separated and twelve families (thirty percent) lost one or both parents to death.[144] Historians have noted the ways in which social workers adhered to a strict Victorian notion of the family and, in their reform efforts, sought to keep families together, even in the presence of violence.[145] A 1929 government study on the causes of juvenile delinquency upheld the necessity of a united family, asserting that "many delinquent children [come] from homes broken by the death, desertion, divorce, or separation of the parents...estimates as to the prevalence of this condition in the histories of juvenile delinquents range from fifty to sixty percent."[146]

According to historian Mary E. Odem, during the early twentieth century, "Expressions of sexuality that did not conform to a marital, reproductive framework were increasingly subjected to government surveillance and control."[147] Case workers' preoccupation with "common law marriages," in which children's parents cohabited but were not legally married, and the living situation of the mother in a father's absence, reinforces this fixation on Victorian sexuality and traditional family models. For example, Manuel Vaca's case file noted that his parents "were never married" and his father remained in Mexico—implying his birth was illegitimate. At the time of his intake, his mother lived with a man also to whom she was not married, and the court

144 "Youth Authority Whittier State School Inmate History Registers."
145 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*.
146 Katharine F. Lenroot, "Juvenile Delinquency: A Summary Memorandum of Available Material on Extent, Causes, Treatment, and Prevention," October 1929, Record Group 10, Box 49, Folder 51, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.
147 Mary E Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

recorded the ages of Vaca's four “half siblings,” also born out of wedlock.[148] James López's case worker observed his parents had separated, though they never legally married, because his mother had an affair. After the separation, she again “live[d] with a man to whom she is not married,” and kept a home that was “filthy and unsanitary.” The court labeled these home conditions as “unfavorable surroundings sufficient to explain his delinquency.”[149]

Several youth offenders claimed in intake interviews that their parents separated because of their father's excessive drinking. For example, when Joe Mendoza faced larceny charges in 1919, his parents had separated because his intemperate father “is in jail for fighting his wife.”[150] Decisions about separation and divorce had significant financial implications for women, and courts declared the children of some single mothers dependent. In her 1927 study, Alice Channing explicitly related broken homes to a drinking parent and future delinquency, noting, “Alcoholism was undoubtedly one of the many causes that contributed to the break-up of the home and that deprived the children in this study of normal family relationships.”[151] Beyond concerns for the child's welfare, the state saw fit to remove these children from broken homes, intervening before they could pose a danger to society.

Brothers David and Ramon Ruiz, sixteen and thirteen years old respectively, entered Whittier on February 22, 1911 as dependents. Both intake files reveal their parents separated the

148 “Manuel Vaca, No. 2892,” October 22, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives.

149 “James López, No. 3238,” October 17, 1916, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(15), Roll 3, California State Archives; Henry Rodríguez's parents similarly separated though authorities could find “no record of marriage.” The case file claimed both parents were “iliterate and irresponsible.” See, “Henry Rodríguez, No. 3323,” October 10, 1917, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives; See also, “Mike Belarde, 3315,” September 24, 1917, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives; “Diego Ruiz, 3468,” April 9, 1913, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(16), Roll 4, California State Archives.

150 “Joe Mendoza, 3660,” October 4, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives.

151 Channing, “Alcoholism among Parents of Juvenile Delinquents,” 370.

previous year due to their father's drinking, after which, their mother could not financially support them. Indeed, she received no assistance from their father, who was "habitually intemperate." That both boys entered on the same day as dependents signals the severity of the case worker's evaluation of the home, which included few details beyond the father's intoxication and abandonment, and the family's poverty.[152] Similarly, Stella Castro entered Whittier as a twelve-year-old dependent in April of the same year. Her parents had been separated for four years because of her father's "heavy drinking," after which time he disappeared. Her commitment, according to the records, proved necessary because her "mother is unable to care for this girl."[153]

Diego Ruiz (no relation to David and Ramon) entered Whittier in 1918 as a delinquent but had been supervised for years since complaints about the "depravity on the part of his mother" and his father's drinking led to visits from the court. "There had been considerable trouble in this family for a long time due primarily to the father drinking and the mother living with another man;" starting in 1913, he spent two years in a Watsonville orphanage after his parents separated. The case file described his unemployed father as an "inebriate," and when returned to his mother, Diego became "quite vicious" and "defiant," stabbing a classmate and "show[ing] tendencies similar to those of his father...who is a very familiar character to police authorities of this city." Case workers recommended "constant supervision" for Ruiz, and in 1938 he began a prison sentence for assault.[154]

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152 "David Ruiz, No. 2660," February 2, 1911, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives; "Ramon Ruiz, No. 2661," February 22, 1911, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives.

153 "Stella Castro, No. 2682," April 20, 1911, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives.

154 "David Ruiz, No. 2660."

Like parental separation, the arrest of a parent—particularly the mother—on alcohol related charges raised families' visibility, bringing their children to the attention of the court. In 1914, Jesús Rivas's mother Juliana could be found in the city jail, serving a six month sentence for "drunkenness and immorality." In the absence of his mother, "The father has not even inquired how his children were since being taken," Jesús went to the Guardian Angel Home, and two of his brothers faced incarceration on vagrancy and burglary charges. When his mother left jail, she also failed to inquire about her children; authorities located the parents two months later, and they both promised to care for Jesús (now their only child not incarcerated), whom they released to their custody. Yet, "Investigations were made and it was found that parents were not in a position to properly care for the boy," and the court returned him to the Guardian Angel Home until releasing him to his parents the following month.

To this point, Jesús committed no crime but had moved in and out of protective custody due to his mother's criminal charges, his parents' apparent lack of concern, and their drinking. While we cannot know the veracity of these neglect claims, current scholars and contemporary observers noted links between chronic intoxication and neglect. Linda Gordon argues that "drinking was an important contributor to the depression, apathy, unreliability, and ill health" that led mothers to abdicate parental responsibility[155] Two years later, Jesús faced burglary charges but the court permitted him to return home on probation with his mother, his father now absent. Again, two years later, Jesús faced grand larceny charges for stealing an automobile (which he denied), and he entered Whittier in 1919 as delinquent. After two further releases and thefts, the

155 Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives*, 144; A 1930 survey of social workers observed an "Increase in the number of intemperate women coming to the attention of the juvenile court and other agencies for gross neglect of their children... the problems of physical abuse in the family have been succeeded by problems of improper guardianship...from vicious degenerate practices in the home." See, Folks et al., "Report of Inquiry Among Social Welfare Executives of Effect of National Prohibition Law upon Workers and Their Families."

court concluded, “This boy is beyond the control of [his] mother,” and he remained in Whittier as a delinquent until turning eighteen in 1923.[156]

Natália Molina shows that state workers in 1920s Los Angeles focused their surveillance of Mexican families on mothers, whose alleged hyperfertility, ignorance, and negligence led them to produce poor home conditions.[157] Like Jesús, authorities similarly accused Johnny García's mother of chronic intoxication and sexual deviance, and further noted his father had abandoned the family. The report to the Juvenile Court judge emphasized his mother “has had a number of illegitimate children and at least fifty percent of them have been before the court...all except Johnny being illegitimate.” Hereditary explanations for Johnny's allegedly low intelligence (an IQ reported as 68) singled out the mother, whose reputation as a hyper-fertile prostitute and drinker sanctioned his confinement at Whittier.[158] These cases, and three similar cases involving Paulita García, Ernest Martínez, and Mike Belarde all show, in questions of family, authorities fixated far more prominently on the morality of the mother.[159]

CYAW records also chronicled drinking among the offenders themselves, labeling sixteen of the ninety-two (seventeen percent) ethnic Mexican youths entering Whittier as intemperate, with the majority admitting to drinking with their friends. Attempting to correlate drinking patterns of parents with those of their children risks falling into biological and cultural determinist traps. It is important to note that individuals such as Jesús Rivas, whose parents' drinking activities were well chronicled, never appeared in CYAW record as intemperate. While

156 “Jesus Rivas, No. 3884,” January 15, 1921, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives.

157 Molina, *Fit to Be Citizens?*

158 “Johnny García, No. 3741.”

159 “Paulita García, 2869,” August 30, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives; “Ernest Martinez, 3000,” October 14, 1913, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives; “Mike Belarde, 3315.”

drinking behavior cannot be transmitted by parents to their children, youth attitudes about intoxication often reflected those of their parents. Of the sixteen cases of intemperate offenders, two grew up as orphans and could offer no information on their parents' drinking. Eight came from families in which at least one member of the household was intemperate, and seven came from homes in which neither parent drank.[160]

Not a single inmate appeared to have procured or consumed alcohol with their parents. While these records end in the early days of Prohibition, and it remains impossible to gauge whether the legislation shaped children's access to alcohol, the records clearly demonstrate that youth inclined to drink had a panoply of sources. Sixteen years old when declared delinquent and placed in the California Youth Authority at Whittier, James Alverado began drinking at the age of ten. The child of two heavy drinkers, Alverado vacillated between orphanages and state custody between 1910 and 1913, particularly after his father's death when physical altercations with his step-father led to arrest and placement with the state. Asked about his drinking activities, Alverado indicated that he and his friends would "go on bums"—paying vagrants a modest amount of money represented one way for youth to secure liquor, one common enough that the phrase warranted no explanation in his case file.[161] Similarly, at age thirteen, Henry Rodríguez stole wine and whiskey several times, and admitted that, with his friends, "he drinks wine whenever he can get it."

Regarding Mexican American youth drinking, social scientist Shannon Cavanagh notes a dichotomy of benefit and consequence, arguing that while youth drinking can detrimentally affect

160 "Youth Authority Whittier State School Inmate History Registers."

161 "James Alverado, No. 2593," November 18, 1910, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives; "James Alverado, No. 2993," September 9, 1913, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives.

young peoples' physical and emotional well-being, it is a highly social behavior in the company of peers that offers enhanced social status.[162] Raewyn Coronell's study of “Men and Boys” also sees an enhanced masculine status coming from youth drinking, noting, “When a group of young men in a car drink, drive, and crash...They are acting that way in order to be masculine. The dangerous driving is a resource for their making of masculinity. Here the active construction of masculinity is a key to the risk-taking behavior.”[163] Just as men congregated in socially sanctioned drinking spaces, boys also seem inclined to share alcohol in gendered contexts with their peers. Regular allusions to “bad companions” influencing youth betray racialized assumptions about ethnic Mexicans and criminality, but also show that some ethnic Mexican children began drinking socially at a very early age, and found ways to procure alcohol for these activities.

The influence of “bad companions” often emerged as an environmental factor in tandem with poor parenting to explain a child's drinking habits, and in cases where the offending child lived with an exemplary family, peers were the only causative factors. Families described as temperate and well respected also found their children entering this youthful drinking culture. Valentine López—entered into the system in 1919 at age thirteen—began getting drunk at ten years-old. Though neither parent drank, probation officers bemoaned the lack of supervision in his home environment, particularly after Valentine and his friends broke into a local winery.[164] Similarly, Evansito Ramos's parents died early in his youth, and though raised for five years by an uncle of “good character,” he “grew up wild” among “bad companions,” smokes, and is

162 Shannon E. Cavanagh, “Peers, Drinking, and the Assimilation of Mexican American Youth,” *Sociological Perspectives* 50, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 393.
163 Raewyn Connell, *The Men and the Boys* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2000), 185.
164 “Valentine López, No. 3629,” June 26, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(17), Roll 5, California State Archives.

"frequently drunk."[165] And though Fred Leivas came from a "well respected" and temperate family, he nonetheless proved incorrigible, drinking regularly and committing acts of vandalism with his friends. Frank's older brother "has been trying to find out the party furnishing the boy with liquor," but proved unable before the state declared Frank delinquent.[166]

Clearly some family members sought to intervene in youth's drinking and delinquency. Though authorities frequently described these parents as "unfit" and "of bad character," some were genuinely concerned, and even supported incarceration in the hopes it would set their children on the right track. Thirteen year old Raymond García entered Whittier as a delinquent after he and his friends stole wine from a local wine salon. García's father had died years before, and officers described his mother as "habitually intoxicated," and using the home for "immoral purposes." Despite these pejorative descriptions and her alleged promiscuity, she nonetheless tried to control Raymond but he proved intractable, "disobeying his mother" and passing the time with "bad companions." She supported his placement at Whittier, hoping a controlled environment would curtail his behavior.[167]

After a one year term in Whittier, Willie Salazar left the institution on probation. Described in his case file as "a very bad intemperate," Salazar's confinement did not erode his drinking habits. Indeed, his parents acknowledged, "He has grown into almost a habitual drunkard," and, in 1912, reported his intemperance to the court as a violation of his probation.[168] Similarly, Harriet Díaz's father operated a saloon, and though officers believed her parents

165 "Evansito Ramos, 3065," November 12, 1914, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives.
166 "Fred Leivas, 2915," December 2, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(14), Roll 2, California State Archives.
167 "Raymond Garcia, No. 3697," January 19, 1920, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(18), Roll 6, California State Archives.
168 "Willie Salazar, No. 2547," September 26, 1910, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives.

offered a good influence, Harriet nonetheless drank to the point of intoxication. After committing several robberies, because “she wanted to buy pretty things,” her parents believed her to be beyond their control, and asked that she be declared a dependent of the state.[169]

These records also reveal that, for youth, the dangers of drinking extended beyond criminalization, sometimes directly deteriorating their quality of life. For example, three of the sixteen cases concerning intemperate children included information suggesting early sexual activity. Both Harriet Díaz and Valentine López had contracted sexually transmitted infections before their incarceration. A doctor's note included in his case file indicates that López had, by the age of thirteen, contracted syphilis. Díaz's case file also scrutinized her sexual activity, claiming that she “contaminated a number of young boys.”[170]

Other youth made costly decisions while intoxicated with consequences lasting much longer than a hangover. Though he was no longer under Whittier's jurisdiction and his case file does not record the outcome of the court proceeding, Manuel Vaca's file notes that, in 1912 at age eighteen, he faced charges for attempted murder and assault with a deadly weapon. Allegedly, “While drunk, [he] tried to kill a policeman with a knife.”[171] Similarly, fourteen year old Joe Flores, “engaged in a street fight while drunk and killed a man.” Though “both boys were drunk during the fight” and “it was difficult to ascertain the facts in the case and to just what degree the boy was to blame,” Flores nonetheless faced murder charges. Remanded to criminal court, the judge kicked the case back down to the Youth Authority, and while Flores escaped the full force of the judicial system, we cannot speculate how his actions shaped his life in later years.[172]

169 “Harriet Diaz, 2848,” June 28, 1912, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(13), Roll 1, California State Archives.
170 “Harriet Diaz, 2848”; “Valentine López, No. 3629.”
171 “Manuel Vaca, No. 2892.”
172 “Joe Flores, No. 3587,” March 27, 1919, Youth Authority Whittier State School, Inmate History Register, MF8:10(17), Roll 5, California State Archives; One cannot help but notice the similarities between this

CYAW records reveal that alcohol shaped the ways state authorities interacted with families, and the gendered assumptions about traditional family models that guided these interactions. Children raised in these homes found themselves in sometimes untenable situations marked by violence, poverty, and neglect, and often in need of genuine assistance. Yet, in their confinement at Whittier, they were forcefully entered an institution more concerned with rooting out the biological and environmental causes of crime and dependency than ameliorating their situation.[173]

Entering the United States in the early twentieth century, ethnic Mexicans found that family violence was not a private affair but had become politicized, with state authorities policing violent homes, and with legal protections such as divorce offering women some relief. As Mexicans found divergent gender relations in the United States that saw women assert greater control in their household, conflicts about power erupted. These conflicts carried tangible physical, emotional, and economic consequences for the abused. Psychologist Yvette Flores-Ortiz's study of domestic violence against Latinas documents the mental trauma that stems from these abuses with hypervigillence, dissociation, depression, and self-abuse.[174] Beyond psychological strain, women choosing to leave abusive relationships encountered economic hardship and cultural stigma, and many chose to remain with their husband while seeking the assistance of police, community, and family. Others became violent themselves, sometimes in

case and the 2009 murder of Luis Santos by Estevan Nuñez, the son of former California Assemblyman Fabian Nuñez's son. According to reports surrounding the murder near San Diego State University, Esteban was drunk at the time, and, in his final days in office, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger pardoned him. See, Christine Pelisek, "Esteban Nunez Case: Bad Little Suburban Boys," *LA Weekly*, May 27, 2009, http://www.laweekly.com/2009-05-28/news/esteban-nunez-case-bad-little-suburban-boys/; Elvin Harper and Tony Perry, "Schwarzenegger Commutes Prison Sentence of Fabian Nuñez's Son," *Los Angeles Times*, January 2, 2011, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/california-politics/2011/01/schwarzenegger-commutes-prison-sentence-of-fabian-nunez-son.html.

173 Chávez-García, "Intelligence Testing at Whittier School, 1890-1920"; Stern, *Eugenic Nation*.

174 Flores-Ortiz, "Re/Membering the Body: Latina Testimonies of Social and Family Violence."

self defense and sometimes in retribution. Whether hiding or dumping liquor, or fleeing, children also found ways to influence and sometimes escape a parents' destructive drinking, but also fell victim to the circumstances it fostered.

Tracing destructive episodes to alcohol proves difficult in both contemporary and current contexts as understandings about alcohol continue to shift. As academics debate the interaction between alcohol's neurological affects and its sociocultural function, ethnic Mexican narrators articulate often painful memories by framing them through the intoxication of a parent or spouse. Ethnic Mexicans believed that problem drinking shaped their daily life and family experiences. In an era in which popular discourses saw intoxication as a mitigating factor, violent ethnic Mexicans and their victims blamed it on the bottle. State authorities betrayed similar understandings about alcohol's power, but these assumptions brought heightened surveillance and intrusion. Operating under popular assumptions about heredity and environment, officials recognized intemperance as a sign of the degeneracy. Intoxicated episodes broke up many families, placed others under the jurisdiction of the state, and forced individuals to make life-shaping decisions.

Popular presses, state authorities, and scholars continued to emphasize ethnic Mexicans' alleged problem drinking throughout the remainder of the twentieth century, focusing on impacts to personal health and family well being, as well as social, cultural, and medical theories to explain it.[175] In 1999, *Los Angeles Times* staff writer Sonia Nazario's "Sobering Facts" graced the front page of the paper, where she argued that cultural sensitivity had silenced critics who rightly noted Mexicans drank more and committed more intoxicated crimes than Euro Americans and

175 For a particularly harsh example of this nativism, see Bill O'Reilly's 2007 column about two white women killed by an ethnic Mexican believed to be driving under the influence. Bill O'Reilly, "To Protect and Serve," *Billoreilly.com*, March 5, 2007, http://www.creators.com/opinion/bill-oreilly/to-protect-and-serve.html.

other ethnic groups.[176] According to the data from the Alcohol Research Group that Nazario cites, ethnic Mexicans in Los Angeles proved twice as likely to die from cirrhosis of the liver as blacks and whites in the city, and also twice as likely to demonstrate "heavy problem drink[ing]."

Nazario called for an honest evaluation of the data that hinged on cultural proclivities and social norms in ethnic Mexican communities, advancing her own version of environmental determinism to explain this data and decrying multicultural political correctness to explain the silence surrounding it. While important to place such articles in context, we must also remember that many of the narrators in this dissertation did, indeed, attribute the premature death of a family member to alcoholism. Narrators also felt that alcohol abuse, whether by themselves or a family member, deteriorated their quality of life.

When asked why people drink, many narrators described alcohol as a pain killer, a way to "drown their sorrows." In a 1931 poem, scholar and Américo Paredes made this point when he famously described the life of the "Mexico-Texan." Paredes wrote,

> Elections come 'round and the gringos are loud,
> They pat on hees back and maka heem proud.
> They give heem mezcal and they heem meet,
> They tell heem, "Amigo, we can't be defeat."
> But after election, he no gotta no fran
> The Mexico-Texan, he no gotta no lan'....
> He no gotta voice, all he gotta is da hand,
> To work like da burro--he no gotta no lan'
> Only one way hees sorrows all drown
> He'll get drunk as hell when next payday comes 'roun.
> For all he has one advantage over all other men,
> Though the Mexico-Texan he gotta no lan'
> He can getta so drunk that he thinks he can fly,

176 Sonia Nazario, "Sobering Facts; Heavy Drinking by Some Mexican American Men Is Taking a Severe Toll on Families. Cultural Sensitivity Has Held Back Discussion in the Community," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1999.

Both September da Sixteen and the Fourth of July.[177]

Encountering discrimination, economic marginalization, and cultural alienation, Paredes's protagonist sought comfort in the bottle. When narrators described drinking as a way to "take the edge off" or "unwind" and "relax," they seemingly speak to similar perceptions of alcohol's role in daily life. Yet describing alcohol consumption as purely or even primarily a coping mechanism obscures the intricate economic and social relationships ethnic Mexicans had with alcohol in the years leading to, during, and after Prohibition.

As a partner in pain and happiness, alcohol touched the highs and lows of life, and the everyday struggles and pleasures in between. Interrogating this spectrum of experiences reveals that from bootleggers to smugglers, dime dancers to housewives, and field laborers to upwardly mobile teetotalers, some ethnic Mexicans personally rejected alcohol but none could entirely avoid it. As anti-Mexican sentiment crystallized and Prohibition rose and fell, individuals made daily decisions about their economic, social, and cultural relationship to alcohol. Whether it was to sell it or spin it, drink from it or push it away, all ethnic Mexicans at some point found their hands on the bottle. Their hands joined in conflict and compromises, cooperation and contradiction. That some proved destructive under its influence and others illegally trafficked in it does not sully our understanding of ethnic Mexicans but rather more fully integrates it into early twentieth-century Los Angeles.

177 Ramón Saldívar, *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference* (Madison Wis. University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 10.

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