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“I KILLED HER BECAUSE I LOVED HER TOO MUCH”:  
GENDER AND VIOLENCE IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY  
SEPHARDI DIASPORA

**Abstract**

Thousands of Ottoman Jews emigrated in the early years of the twentieth century to Western Europe and the Americas, disrupting established social, economic, and familial structures. Drawing on an array of press sources, court cases, and correspondence from the expanding Sephardi world, this article argues that violence is a critical lens for understanding connections between gender and migration. For some male Sephardi migrants, gendered physical and verbal violence became a means of responding to the upheaval of migration, of reasserting control, and of reinscribing their masculinity. Meanwhile, some female migrants drew on transnational family networks and migration as a means of extricating themselves from abusive husbands. In doing so, male and female Sephardi migrants alike contributed to shaping conceptions of the relationship between gender and violence in their new geographical contexts while simultaneously creating lateral ties that bound together the transnational Sephardi diaspora.



INTRODUCTION

On 6 January 1925, the headline on the front page of the New York-based Ladino periodical *La Vara* dramatically announced “A Sephardi Woman Sacrifices Her Life for Her Honor, Esther Hattem’s Throat was Slit by Her Brother-in-Law.” Featuring photographs of Esther Hattem, her husband and three children, and the brother-in-law, Shelomo Hattem, who killed her, the article went on to describe in sensationalist detail how Shelomo had beaten Esther before slitting her throat in front of two of Esther’s children as they begged their uncle to stop. However, the article was quick to assert that this killing, the first of its kind in “our *kolonia*,” was not an honor killing or “a love story from the old world that found its tragic ending in the new,” as the broader press – and indeed its own headline – had painted it.<sup>2</sup> Rather, at its base, it was



Palestine, motivated by a shifting constellation of political, social, economic, and personal exigencies.<sup>7</sup> These migrations expanded the boundaries of the Sephardi *Kulturbereich* even as new national borders divided the once near-contiguous Sephardi homeland.<sup>8</sup> The scale of migration created demographic challenges for Jewish communities in post-Ottoman lands whose autonomy was increasingly challenged by growing nationalist campaigns. It also disrupted established social and familial hierarchies, both within Sephardi centers and throughout the expanding Sephardi diaspora. For certain Sephardi men, like Shelomo Hattem, resorting to gendered violence became of means of reinscribing their position of power in a world altered by new geographical locations, economic instability, and racialized hierarchies that often marked Sephardi migrants as undesirable – whether for their perceived Middle Eastern or Jewish origins, or both. Acts of embodied violence perpetrated by Sephardi migrants were therefore embedded within dynamics of class, race, and gender, as well as within cultural assumptions shaped both by their new locales and the places whence they migrated.

Gendered violence and power are intimately connected, embedded within the privatized domestic sphere and as processes of state control. When made legible, gendered violence illuminates gendered subjectivities while simultaneously enabling the production of sexed vulnerability.<sup>9</sup> Crimes of silence, gendered violence in the form of intimate partner violence and sexual violation become strategies of patriarchal power, typically meant to discourage women from challenging male authority or to rein in those who stray from established gender roles.<sup>10</sup> Scholars of contemporary migration focusing predominately on Latino immigrants in the United States have noted the connection between migrant men's perception that they are losing power within broader systems of oppression outside the home, and the use of intimate partner violence as a means of regaining a sense of control over their lives and of conforming to the masculine display of power expected of them.<sup>11</sup> Migration, in destabilizing rigid gender roles, engenders a series of complex negotiations through which women exercise increased power in certain circumstances, but also face new forms of control from men subjected to altered power dynamics.<sup>12</sup> Further, violence between male subjects sheds light on regimes of power and the ways in which gendered tropes are mobilized within masculine hierarchies. Gendered violence among migrants thus renders legible broader anxieties over social and cultural

transformation and integration, and notions of masculine privilege, power, and self-assertion.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars have emphasized the key role that gender has played in processes of (Ashkenazi) Jewish assimilation in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, whether in new locales as a result of migration or in long-established places of residence. However, instances of gendered violence and the ways in which such violence could be used as a tool of integration has been overlooked.<sup>14</sup> George Mosse and others have asserted that the European understanding of the ideal masculine, active, virile man was created against the foil of the Jewish man and the weak Jewish male body.<sup>15</sup> Todd Presner and others have elucidated the ways in which the "regeneration" of the male Jewish body, embedded within broader European discourses, was central to projects of Jewish integration.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Paula Hyman astutely argues that Jewish men, upon migration, sought to create a new male middle class Jewish identity that responded to anti-Semitic caricatures of the male Jewish body as effete by displacing their anxieties onto negatively characterizing Jewish women; she does not, however, address the ways in which masculine anxieties could be displaced through gendered violence against women and men alike.<sup>17</sup> In this article, then, I aim to explore instances in which Sephardi Jewish migrants resorted to gendered violence as a means of reasserting control and power in the face of the various destabilizations that accompanied migration, as well as the ways in which discourses surrounding these eruptions of gendered violence shed light on the travails of immigrant integration. Examining the relationship between migration and gendered violence renders visible the lateral ties that connected Sephardi Jews in Ottoman and post-Ottoman lands, Western Europe, the United States, Cuba, and Mexico, as well as the ways in which Sephardi Jews used gendered tropes in order to embed themselves in their new geographical contexts.<sup>18</sup> Migration, in its destabilization of marriage patterns and gender norms, exposes the ways in which gendered violence served as a means of redressing social and economic uncertainties inherent in relocation even as the discourses surrounding these events were imbedded within local concerns of race, class, and gender.

MIGRATION, DIASPORA, AND DOMESTIC DESTABILIZATION  
During the final decades of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of its successor states, Ottoman Sephardi gender norms were in flux. Despite initial opposition from traditionalist circles, the westernizing schools of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* [AIU] offered Sephardi boys

and girls access to ‘modern’ education and basic knowledge of the French language that was becoming increasingly central in transnational trade. Further, the AIU offered the most gifted students – both male and female – the opportunity of continuing their education in Paris and teaching at one of the AIU institutions that dotted the Mediterranean littoral, providing some Sephardi women with a socially prestigious career path outside of the home.<sup>19</sup> Sephardi men and women alike frequently migrated internally within the Ottoman Empire or within the wider Mediterranean world for economic or familial reasons, often relying on personal connections with other Sephardi Jews to facilitate their acclimation to new environments.<sup>20</sup> However, the Italo-Turkish war of 1911, the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, and the declaration of World War I propelled an increasing number of Sephardi men – conscriptable into the Ottoman military since 1909 – to seek new shores. For a number of Sephardi women whose male family members were under the flag, in hiding, had emigrated, or died, taking up work outside of the house became critical for supporting their families.<sup>21</sup> Such factors contributed to the increased visibility of women outside the domestic sphere, presaging transformations that would occur with greater frequency as external migration propelled a growing number of Sephardi women to search for employment outside of the home as seamstresses, factory workers, or even peddlers in spite of the “shame” that this could entail.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, in spite of growing emigration, particularly of draftable men under the age of forty-five, tales of physical violence propelled by social change rarely made their way into the Ottoman Ladino press, itself both a means and reflection of ideological reorientation and westernization.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the few articles in the Ottoman period that mentioned intimate partner violence did so in the context of inter-religious relationships involving non-Jewish parties, perhaps serving as cautionary tales against intermarriage; several prominent cases involving Jewish women killed by Muslim lovers or stalkers in the Turkish Republic served a similar purpose.<sup>24</sup> As psychologist Judith Herman has noted in regard to contemporary American women and domestic violence, to speak publicly of violence in sexual and domestic life was to invite public humiliation and ridicule. Given the imbrication of personal and familial reputation in the Sephardi world, exposing gendered violence broke a code of silence, bringing censure both on the survivor of violence and on her family.<sup>25</sup>

While self-censorship and social stigma against being a divorcée likely played a role in the lack of visibility of intimate partner

violence in Sephardi communities in the Ottoman Empire, the financial arrangements that undergirded many Sephardi marriages offered women some protection against spousal abuse. Even as companionate marriage grew in popularity, during the final years of the Ottoman Empire, most Jewish marriages were arranged according to criteria of class, sub-ethnicity, and beneficial familial alliances.<sup>26</sup> While the dowry required of brides' families could provide grooms with capital crucial to the small-scale trade that increasingly dominated the Jewish economic landscape, the *mesa franka* [European table] arrangement, whereby the bride's father provided his new son-in-law with a partnership in his business, offered women leverage against spousal abuse; a man could lose his livelihood should he displease his father-in-law. Sons-in-law resented the power dynamics of the *mesa franka*, leading to the Ladino proverb "Descend a rung to take a wife, ascend a rung to take a business partner" and appearances in popular Ladino literature of the period.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, some Sephardi men deliberately sought out this arrangement for the financial benefits it entailed, seemingly undisturbed by the uneven power dynamics, while for Sephardi women, the *mesa franka* system guaranteed a continuity in financial circumstances before and after marriage as well providing some protection against abuse.<sup>28</sup>

Emigration, however, posed a number of challenges to Sephardi familial structures. Ottoman authorities had an ambivalent attitude toward the emigration of Ottoman subjects. While welcoming remittances sent from subjects abroad and occasionally intervening in favor of those who wanted to emigrate for trade purposes, Ottoman officials were simultaneously wary of the negative light that indigent Ottoman émigrés could cast on the empire.<sup>29</sup> More concerning for Ottoman authorities, however, was the possibility of emigrants' fomenting of political opposition abroad and their subversion of Ottoman interests, leading to Ottoman observation of the political allegiances of émigrés.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the legacy of the *millet* system entailed that matters of personal status were under the purview of the respective religious authorities, and Ottoman officials displayed little interest in personal relationships of Ottoman subjects abroad beyond seeking input from relevant Ottoman religious authorities to ascertain the permissibility of inter-religious marriages.<sup>31</sup> In practice, Ottoman disinterest in matters of personal status that did not directly challenge Ottoman control created a dual system of authority abroad, whereby Ottoman Jewish emigrants turned to Ottoman diplomatic

representatives for political intervention, but to the Ottoman rabbinate for matters of familial conflict.

Indeed, male and female Ottoman Jewish émigrés throughout the world turned to the Ottoman Chief Rabbi, Haim Nahum, for assistance in questions of personal status. Personal and familial reputation undergirded Sephardi marital practices, and geographical distance and lack of extensive connections obstructed migrants' acquisition of relevant background information. Male and female Sephardi Jews in Paris, Lyon, and Geneva directed correspondence to Nahum seeking to explore the antecedents and reputations of potential marriage partners who had emigrated from other cities of the empire.<sup>32</sup> Such correspondence, cementing the central role of the Ottoman rabbinate in the expanding Sephardi diaspora, emphasized the primacy that some migrants still placed on knowing of a potential spouse's personal and familial reputation, thus perpetuating Sephardi patterns of marital alliance. Though Nahum's responses are not preserved, repeated follow-up letters from certain migrants suggest that he sought to secure information for those who queried. Such lateral ties between emigrants and their Ottoman coreligionists sustained the expanding Sephardi diasporic world.

Nahum, however, received far more letters from emigrants that reveal the ways in which migration challenged established marriages. While some men emigrated before their families with the intention of earning the capital necessary to bring their wives, children, and parents to new locales, other men saw migration as a means of earning money to send back to their families and maintained the intention of returning to their places of origin and their families there.<sup>33</sup> The lack of regular contact between spouses – exacerbated by World War I's obstruction of communication – created conflict between wives waiting for remittances and their husbands in places as distant from the Ottoman Empire as the Philippines.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, Sephardi communities in Cuba, Peru, and Argentina hurried to inform the Ottoman Chief Rabbinate of the deaths of married Sephardi men of Ottoman origins, requesting that the Ottoman rabbinate inform their widows and making arrangements to send what little money these men had left through the Ottoman rabbinate to these women.<sup>35</sup> Once again, destabilized family relations provided the impetus for maintaining transoceanic ties in the Sephardi world.

Additionally, some Sephardi Jewish women, like their Ashkenazi counterparts, found themselves abandoned by their husbands or unsure of whether their spouses were still living, marking

these women as *agunot* [chained women].<sup>36</sup> The American Ladino press occasionally featured lists of Sephardi men who had abandoned their wives, and expressed its displeasure that "the different troubles between the women of Turkey with their husbands here are in our hands."<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, the Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire sought assistance from Sephardi mutual aid societies in the United States to track down missing spouses throughout the Americas, while such societies sought to ascertain from the Ottoman rabbinate whether male Sephardi migrants had entered into engagements prior to emigrating before authorizing marriages in the United States.<sup>38</sup> Further, some women, realizing that their fiancés, upon emigration, had formed relationships with other women, sought the intervention of the Ottoman Chief Rabbinate to abrogate engagement contracts or to track down husbands.<sup>39</sup> By the late 1920s, the problem of *agunot* became so acute that both the Turkish and Bulgarian rabbinates sought to instate clauses in Jewish marriage contracts that a marriage would be nullified if a spouse disappeared for more than three years. In 1934, an editor of the Istanbul-based Ladino periodical *La Boz de Oriente* explained with vitriol that the decision of American, British, and French rabbinates not to ratify Turkish adaptations of Jewish marital laws alienated young people, particularly young women, from the Jewish religion.<sup>40</sup> This alienation was particularly concerning because emigration had resulted in the vast decrease of income to the rabbinate, and because the 1926 relinquishment of the minority rights guaranteed to Jews and other religious minorities in the Treaty of Lausanne entailed that personal status was now governed by Turkish civil, rather than *halakhic* codes. This further undermined the Turkish Jewish institutional structure, and created complications for both Jewish divorce petitioners and a Turkish civil court system that struggled to reconcile new civil codes, more familiar *şeriat* precepts, and Jewish individuals accustomed to *halakhic* rulings.<sup>41</sup>

#### FEMALE MIGRANTS AMIDST THE THREAT OF GENDERED VIOLENCE

For Sephardi women, the process of migration carried the threat of violence and sexual coercion. As Progressives in the United States and political activists in Europe and South America became increasingly preoccupied with anti-vice campaigns amid theories of the inherent criminality of immigrants, the perception of Jewish centrality to international sex trafficking supported nativist calls for Jewish exclusion.<sup>42</sup> Istanbul was a crucial hub in the Jewish sex trade that



extended from Eastern Europe to the Americas, and Sephardi Jews in the United States and elsewhere sought to cast Jewish prostitution as an Ashkenazi ill.<sup>43</sup> The presence of numerous Eastern European Jews in the Galata district of Istanbul engaged in pimping and prostitution, and especially the establishment of the so-called *Pezevenk Sinagogu*, or Pimps' Synagogue in Galata, outraged the Jewish communities in Istanbul enough that Sephardi, Italian, and Ashkenazi Jews moved past their differences to try to fight this corrupting force. Perceptions of Ashkenazi Jewish women as sexually promiscuous traveled with Sephardi émigrés as they settled in new locales, obstructing marriages between Ashkenazi and Sephardi migrants, and led to the incorporation of the word "lehli" into the Ladino linguistic repertoire as a play on words between the Ottoman *Lehli* [Polish] and the Hebrew *meluchlakh* [dirty].<sup>44</sup> Although comparatively few Sephardi girls were entrapped in the sex trade, the fear of their potential corruption permeated the Ladino press in Constantinople and was reflected in the forcible repatriation to the Ottoman Empire of young Ottoman Jewish women who had emigrated alone or in the company of disreputable characters.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, even young women traveling in the company of family members were not immune from sexual violence.<sup>46</sup>

For a few women, though, migration and recourse to transnational familial network provided the mechanisms to remove



Figure 2: Archivo General de la Nación, Depto. de Migración, Registro de Extranjeros, Turcos, caja 1, tarjeta 150.

themselves from the control of violent husbands.

In 1913, a Sephardi immigrant in Cuba contacted the Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire to inform him that his wife had abandoned him in communication with her family in

the Ottoman Empire and France, taking their young son with her. This immigrant requested that the Chief Rabbi alert him as to his wife's movements and prevent her from remarrying anyone else.<sup>47</sup> Under the guise of following *halakhic* precepts, his letter exhibited the

preoccupation with control that often accompanies relationships characterized by intimate partner violence. Networks of familial support also proved crucial to Belina Cadranel de Eskenazi, a Turkish national married to a fellow Sephardi Jew who had naturalized as an American. Upon her arrival in Mexico from the United States in 1922, she stayed with a sister and brother-in-law who had previously immigrated, and wrote a successful claim for divorce and custody of her three children on the grounds that her husband had been beating her since the early months of their marriage a decade earlier, in spite of the intervention of American authorities.<sup>48</sup> In doing so, she, like contemporary Mexican-born women, used divorce as a means of distancing herself from an abusive spouse, drawing on the permissive attitudes toward divorce and the lack of required spousal consent during the presidency of Felipe Carrillo Puerto (1922–1924).<sup>49</sup> While her husband, a tailor, returned to the United States to settle in Atlanta, Belina remained in Puebla, Mexico where she worked as a dressmaker, traveling once to New York to acquire merchandise through a brother there.<sup>50</sup> In Mexico's 1930 census, Belina maintained custody of two of her children – the third having reached the age of majority – and called herself a widow, likely as a means of deflecting social stigma against being a divorcée.<sup>51</sup> Relocating from the United States to Mexico provided Cadranel with the family support and legal circumstances necessary to separate from her abusive husband and to establish herself financially. As a divorced woman responsible for the wellbeing of her children, she, like many male Sephardi migrants, made use of transnational familial ties between the United States and Mexico in order to acquire merchandise and financial security. Cadranel's divorce petition, like many other court records, rendered gendered violence visible as a product of everyday sociality and highlighted the extent and duration of physical abuse.<sup>52</sup>

ADJUDICATING MIGRANT MASCULINITY, INSCRIBING STATUS  
During the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup>, a growing number of Sephardi Jews, like their fellow Ottomans from regions that would become Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, set their sights on destinations throughout Latin America.<sup>53</sup> Although the number of individuals of Ottoman provenance arriving in Mexico was smaller than in the United States, Argentina, or Brazil – countries that attracted far greater numbers of immigrants of all origins – American quotas imposed through the 1921 Emergency Quota Act and the 1924 Johnson-Reed Act diverted migration south.

Nonetheless, Ottoman migrants had begun to arrive in Mexico during the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1877–1880, 1884–1911), who, emboldened by positivist ideologies of racial determinism, sought the immigration of white, European foreigners as a means of propelling commercial and industrial development and as a general *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>54</sup> Although the postrevolutionary prominence of the ideology of *mestizaje* ostensibly encouraged the entrance of white and European immigrants who would assimilate into the Mexican *raza*, the challenge of employing a growing number of Mexican workers repatriated from the United States in the late 1920s heightened the economic tensions around immigration.<sup>55</sup> In 1927, Mexican officials banned the entrance of Syrians, Arabs, Turks, Lebanese, Palestinians, and Armenians on the grounds that their activities in peddling and petty commerce damaged the Mexican petite bourgeoisie, and in 1933, sent out a numerically encoded memo to consulates abroad prohibiting the entrance of Jews regardless of nationality.<sup>56</sup>

Individuals of Ottoman provenance, lumped together throughout Latin America under the appellation *turco*, did not fit easily into prevalent racial classifications.<sup>57</sup> In Mexico, as in Brazil, Ottoman migrants often benefited from physiognomic racial categorization as white and the associated privilege, although this whiteness was imbricated with class status.<sup>58</sup> Poverty evoked racialization; migrants who could successfully present themselves as European simultaneously ensured greater possibility for social ascent and inscribed their whiteness vis-à-vis the majority of the Mexican population and other migrants who could not. While some individuals from the areas that became Syria and Lebanon could invoke their Europeanness through their status as French protégés, many Sephardi migrants drew on their French-language education in AIU schools and commercial ties with fellow Sephardim in France in order to market both the merchandise they sold, and themselves, as cultured, European, and a desirable presence in Mexico.<sup>59</sup> Further, while Yiddish- and Arabic-speaking Jewish immigrants in Mexico's mother tongue and surnames simultaneously marked their foreignness and hinted at geographical or religious origins, Ladino-speaking migrants transitioned more smoothly into Spanish, and Sephardi surnames were less obviously foreign, their ambiguous origins facilitating their performance of Europeanness.<sup>60</sup>

During the Porfiriato, the Mexican Revolution, and after, authorities employed positivist criminology in order to lend scientific legitimacy to class and racial stratifications.<sup>61</sup> Porfirian policymakers

[*científicos*], consumed with positivism and the ideology of progress, stressed the inherent biological nature of gender and class hierarchies.<sup>62</sup> The enactment and adjudication of cases of Sephardi gendered violence in Mexico, then, were embedded within a broader ideological system that asserted correlations between race, class, gender, criminality, and deviance. Acts of gendered violence became means of inscribing one's place in social and economic hierarchies and of rejecting imputations of sexual deviance that implied lower class and racial status.

In her comparison of male-on-male and male-on-female violence in New York City in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, historian Pamela Haag asserts that acts of male violence against men often occurred in the public sphere as a means of negotiating status through performance of physical prowess, while violence against women took place in the private sphere as a means of underscoring an unnegotiable right over wives.<sup>63</sup> While adjudicated instances of male-on-male violence among Sephardi Jews in Mexico similarly occurred in the public sphere, physical altercations resulted from a combination of economic conflict and imputations of sexual behavior deemed deviant. In such instances, the courtroom offered a public exoneration for a public slight. In 1907, for example, two Sephardi men from Turkey brought slander cases against each other, each alleging that the other had, in front of friends and colleagues in the *Portal de Mercaderes* commercial complex in central Mexico City, called the other "disgraceful pimp," "cuckold," and "puto" [male prostitute, slang for homosexual]. Further, one complainant alleged that the other had threatened to write back to his family in the Ottoman Empire that he was a "young man of very bad conduct," attesting to the persistence of transatlantic familial ties. In referring to each other as *putos*, they imputed to each other behavior that in both their Ottoman Jewish background and new Mexican context was marked as unsuitable for a man.<sup>64</sup> In Porfirian Mexico, still reeling from the "Dance of the 41" scandal of 1901 that had seen the arrest of forty-one men of Mexico's elite attending a dance dressed in women's clothing, homosexual behavior, accepted if left unspoken, was seen as immoral and a sign of potential criminality by liberal reformers.<sup>65</sup> In this context, accusations of male passive homosexuality were particularly insulting in their upending of gendered social hierarchies and their imputations of physiological inferiority.<sup>66</sup> Male-on-male gendered violence and vindication through the court system thus offered these men a means of publicly reasserting their masculinity in response to public denigration, and of denying imputations of homosexuality that bore implicit assumptions of

lowered class and racial status.<sup>67</sup> Wherein during the Porfiriato, honor was deemed to be a quality that only elite men possessed, Sephardi immigrant men, in turning to the courts after using violence to vindicate impugned honor, marked themselves as deserving of elite status, an endeavor facilitated by the privilege that their whiteness enabled.<sup>68</sup>

Indeed, within the early-twentieth century Mexican social order, interpretations of acts of violence linked to honor were imbricated with questions of gender, race, and class. Domestic violence, while frequent, drew little attention from authorities unless resulting in bloodshed. While marital homicides among the urban poor were seen as demonstrations of *machismo* and criminality, similar cases by upper-class perpetrators were viewed as glamorized crimes of passion resembling famous European cases.<sup>69</sup> Prevalent positivist thought held that the latter passion criminals were not truly criminal, possessing fair facial features and acting in response to legitimate causes.<sup>70</sup> Judges possessed latitude in rendering verdicts and sentences, which were often predicated on the nature of the crime and on perceptions of the potential criminality of suspects according to positivist norms.<sup>71</sup>

It is within this context that David Montekio, a Salonikan-born migrant who was the son of one of the most prominent members of Mexico City's Sephardi community, went to trial for the 1934 murder of his wife, an Ashkenazi woman by the name of Lea. "I killed her because I loved her too much," quoted a *New York Times* special cable from Mexico, offering David Montekio's justification for an action that precipitated a complicated legal process that would traverse the Mexican legal system and eventually involve Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas.<sup>72</sup> After initial exoneration, then conviction, then appeal, Montekio would serve eighteen months in prison for killing his wife.<sup>73</sup>

At the heart of the Montekio murder case lay the relationship between honor and public image, and physical violence as a means of protecting gendered notions of honor. Unlike the case involving Esther



Figure 3: Archivo General de la Nación, Depto. de Migración, Registro de Extranjeros, Griegos, caja 3, tarjeta 128.

Hattem's murder by her brother-in-law where the appellation of "honor killing" was disavowed, both Montekio and his mother-in-law, Ana de Verlinsky – who fashioned herself as her daughter's defender – squarely sought to mark this case as a contest over honor. In doing so, they participated in a broader Mexican discourse over the relationship between honor,

social and economic capital, and the centrality of the courts in adjudicating such boundaries.<sup>74</sup> Both parties adopted performative roles.<sup>75</sup> Montekio cast his killing of his wife as "a legitimate defense" because she had allegedly threatened to leave him for another man; in killing her, he defended his personal reputation against public malign.<sup>76</sup> This justification satisfied the Sixth Penal Court, which exonerated him. Verlinsky, meanwhile, appealed to notions of Mexico as a modern society, reflecting broader societal changes refracting around social mores ascribed to women in the postrevolutionary figure of the *chica moderna* [modern girl].<sup>77</sup> Indeed, Lea de Montekio's bobbed, marcelled hair and cupid's bow lips marked her as a modern woman, making her dead body an opportune site of contesting socio-cultural transformation.<sup>78</sup> After successfully appealing to Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas to intervene in the wake Montekio's initial exoneration, Verlinsky elaborated at Montekio's retrial that her daughter had never been unfaithful. Further, the claim that honor could be saved through the blood of the offender was nothing but "a medieval belief conserved by tradition." Finally, she drew comparisons between her daughter's murder and the Shakespearean tragedy *Othello*, noting that, like Desdemona, her daughter was innocent. However, while Othello had killed himself out of grief upon realizing his mistake, Montekio, "as is public and notorious. . . has not only not demonstrated his remorse, but rather, has made passes through his moral undoing in centers of vice and lechery." She thus sought to

capitalize on Mexican self-conceptualizations as a modern state that had abandoned antiquated practices of shedding blood to regain honor. She simultaneously confirmed, however, the importance of female fidelity in marital relations, while alluding to Montekio's frequenting of houses of ill repute as a means of indicating the damage that this individual had himself done to his reputation. In doing so, she sought recourse to the legal stipulation that men deemed to lack honor were disqualified from claiming legitimate defense of their honor.<sup>79</sup>

But while Verlinsky referenced the strictly legal definition of justifiable homicide, Montekio justified his uxoricide by appealing to an extra-legal definition of honor in Mexican society. Indeed, the Mexican legal code marked his action as illegal since he had not caught his wife *in flagrante delicto*. However, the court's opinion was based on a definition of honor that did not coincide with current popular understandings of honor:

If by an attitude, a word, or any other means, one tries to fill me with self-deprecation and with filth, I have to retrieve that in the form that the society in which I live deems effective in order to impede the filth in which the disparagement of others coats me. . . . Society accepts that the act of another could affect my honor, I only adopt the attitude that society requires of me to stop [the act of another].<sup>80</sup>

By focusing on the ways in which his wife's threats to leave him would have brought social contempt on Montekio, he successfully appealed to notions of honor and marital relations prevalent in Mexican society, though not overtly expressed within Mexican law. In casting himself as a man who killed out of passion in defense of his honor, he marked his racial privilege and elite status, reaffirmed by his wealth. As is often the case in situations of intimate partner violence, killing his wife provided Montekio with a means of asserting his primacy over his wife, through



Figure 4: Archivo General de la Nación, Depto. de Migración, Registro de Extranjeros, Griegos, caja 3, tarjeta 127.

which he performed his masculinity in a socially-acceptable, though not necessarily legally acceptable, form. Indeed, the figure of *la chica moderna* that his wife had enacted through her sartorial choices provided him a perfect foil for articulating his defense of 'traditional' masculine virtues in a society where many perceived such traditional gender roles to be under attack by women whose appearance was similar to that of Lea de Montekio. Both Montekio and Verlinsky appealed to divergent notions of what constituted honor in Mexican society, demonstrating their familiarity with competing notions of honor and gender roles within contemporary Mexican society. In forcing the Mexican court system to decide on which of these divergent definitions ultimately mattered, these Jewish migrants not only expressed familiarity with Mexican understandings of gender and honor, but contributed to their shaping.

#### CONCLUSION

To return to the murder of Esther Hattem, her death cannot simplistically be understood as an "honor killing." Rather, it reveals the trials of migration, economic uncertainty, and the challenges of creating new lives in new countries. While Sephardi Jewish migrants in Mexico, like others of Ottoman provenance, could capitalize on the possibility for social and economic ascent that presenting as European provided, Sephardi migrants in the United States found themselves disadvantaged within American and American Jewish social and economic hierarchies. Suffering from what historian Aviva Ben-Ur has deemed "co-ethnic recognition failure," Sephardi Jews were excluded from paths of economic mobility predicated on patronage networks within the Ashkenazi American world, while Jews of Sephardi descent whose ancestors had arrived in the colonial era decried the use of the descriptor "Sephardi" by new migrants, instead terming them "oriental."<sup>81</sup> Unrecognized or Orientalized by their coreligionists, such individuals also struggled to distinguish themselves from the Spanish-speaking populations of East Harlem, encouraging the public policing of female Sephardi behavior and discouraging miscegenation with the predominately Puerto Rican residents of the neighborhood.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, the economically disadvantaged status of the Hattems and their milieu becomes apparent through the occupations of them and their immediate peers—coat men, confectioners, waiters, door men, shoe shiners—and through the aftereffects of Esther's murder, which saw the Hattems' two sons placed in the Pleasantville orphanage until they reached the age of majority.<sup>83</sup>



In this light, *La Vara's* impassioned denial that Shelomo Hattem's murder was an honor killing or the result of "a love story from the old world," and its claim that it was responding to false allegations of such in other papers reveals the ways in which this murder threatened to further besmirch Sephardi Jews. During the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, immigrant criminality became a rallying point for exclusion. Even as many Jews perceived of violence and crime as gentile activities, instances of Jewish criminal activity were bandied about as an indication of Jewish undesirability, and garnered Jewish responses of shame, disbelief, and communal action.<sup>84</sup> By rejecting the designation of an honor killing, a practice perceived to be tied to the Mediterranean world, and indeed by declaiming all ties with the "Old World," the newspaper denied representations of Sephardi Jews as oriental, violent, or backward.<sup>85</sup> Emphasizing that this murder was the first of such kind and mentioning Shelomo Hattem's psychological state thus served to mark this murder as an aberration within the Sephardi community, not indicative of Sephardi broader views and practices.

In contrast to affluent Sephardi migrants in Mexico like David Montekio, whose enactment of gendered violence was an attempt to reassert his supremacy within Mexican social and economic hierarchies, Shelomo Hattem's murder of his sister-in-law instead exposes the actions of an economically and socially marginal man who occupied a peripheral position even within the Hattem household. Hattem's actions, nonetheless, cast light on the ways in which gendered violence became a means of reinscribing masculine supremacy in the face of economic and social instability. Esther's murder, alongside these other cases, shows both the possibilities and



Figure 2: Shelomo Hattem. *La Vara*, 10 April 1925, 1.

difficulties created by migration between the Ottoman and post-Ottoman world, Europe, the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Gendered violence is thus a particular lens for analyzing shifting social and institutional networks. Migration both fragmented and expanded the Sephardi world, complicating the continuance of social and familial regulation that had undergirded marriage practices. Marriage, in turn, served as the rationale for maintaining networks with the Ottoman

world. For some male Sephardi migrants, the economic instability, frustration, and insecurity that often accompanied establishing new lives and livelihoods boiled over into violence as a means of reasserting control and masculine prowess. For other migrants, like David Montekio, the potential dishonor from society that he would have received had his wife left him justified his murder of her, and his adept navigation of the Mexican court system both reaffirmed his masculine honor and his deep knowledge of Mexican social norms. Meanwhile, for female migrants, migration raised the fear and real possibility of sexual exploitation, or finding themselves without key social and familial support networks that could ameliorate violence. Nonetheless, some women, in migrating to a new place or returning to an old place, were able to draw on these support networks and legal backing in order to extricate themselves from violent marriages. Thus, looking at family and the problem of gendered violence within the context of a migrating and transforming Sephardi world complicates a historiographical narrative that has overlooked the ways in which Jewish men, like other men, employed violence as a corrective to impugned honor and masculinity. Likewise, exploring migration through the lens of gender and violence offers us a lens into the complex layering of personal, familial, and communal concerns among Sephardi Jews that were simultaneously embedded within transnational networks and local contexts.

## NOTES

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<sup>2</sup> "Mujer sefaradit sakrifika su vida por su onor," *La Vara*, 6 January 1925, 1-2.

<sup>3</sup> New York Marriage Indexes, 1866-1936, Marriage of Yedidia Hattem and Esther Pessa, 4 May 1915.

<sup>4</sup> National Archives and Record Administration, Washington, D.C., Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, NY, 1820-1897 (henceforth NARA, PL), Microfilm Serial T715, 1897-1957, Roll 1561, Page 144, Line 18, Gedidia Hattem, 24 September 1910; NARA, Petitions for Naturalizations

from the US District Court for the Southern District of New York (henceforth NARA, PNNY), 1897–1944, Series M1972, Roll 192, Jedidia Hattem, 22 April 1920.

<sup>5</sup> Engin Deniz Akarli, “Ottoman Attitudes Towards Lebanese Emigratin, 1885–1910,” in Hourani and Shehadi eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1992), 134.

<sup>6</sup> “Shelomo Hattem, el matador de su kuniada, komite suisidio,” 10 April 1925, *La Vara*, 1; “Murderer is Suicide in His Cell in Tombs,” *New York Times*, 7 April 1925, 5; Municipal Archives of New York City, District Attorney Record of Cases, People vs. Solomon Hattem, complaint: 158452, 1925.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmet İçduygu, Sule Toktas, B. Ali Soner, “The Politics of Population in a Nation-Building Process: Emigration of non-Muslims from Turkey,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31 (2008): 363; Annie Benveniste, *Le Bosphore à la Roquette: La Communauté Judéo-Espagnol à Paris (1914–1940)* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1989); Rifat Bali, *Anadolu’dan Yeni Dünya’ya: Amerika’ya Göç Eden İlk Türklerin Yaşam Öyküleri* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2004); Devin E. Naar, “Between ‘New Greece’ and the ‘New World’: Salonican Jews en route to New York,” *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora* 35 (2009): 45–89; Aviva Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America: A Diasporic History* (New York: New York University Press, 2009); Corry Guttstadt, *Turkey, Jews, and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Marc David Baer, “Turk and Jew in Berlin: The First Turkish Migration to Germany and the Shoah,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 55 (2013): 330–55; Margalit Bejarano, “De Turquía a Latinoamérica: Inmigración de Judíos Sefaradés a la Argentina,” *Sefárdica* 11 (1996): 113–25.

<sup>8</sup> Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, *Sephardi Jewry: A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), xix.

<sup>9</sup> Shani D’Cruze and Anupama Rao, “Violence and the Vulnerabilities of Gender,” in D’Cruze and Rao eds., *Violence, Vulnerability, and Embodiment* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 4–5, 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 5–6; Jeffrey S. Adler, “‘We’ve Got a Right to Fight; We’re Married’: Domestic Homicide in Chicago, 1875–1920,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 34, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 28; Noel A. Cazenave and Margaret A. Zahn, “Women, Murder, and Male Domination,” in Viano, ed. *Intimate Violence: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Washington: Hemisphere, 1992), 83–97.

<sup>11</sup> M. Cristina Alcalde, “Masculinities in Motion: Latino Men and Violence in Kentucky,” *Men and Masculinities* 14 (2011): 451–52; Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Michael Messner, “Gender Displays and Men’s Power: The ‘New Man’ and the Mexican Immigrant Man,” in Borad and Kaufmen, eds., *Theorizing Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994); Kristin Anderson and Debra Umberson, “Gendering Violence: Masculinity and Power in Men’s Accounts of Domestic Violence,” *Gender and Society* 15 (2001): 358–80.

<sup>12</sup> Deborah A. Boehm, "'Now I Am a Man And a Woman!': Gendered Moves and Migrations in a Transnational Mexican Community," *Latin American Perspectives* 35, no 1. (January 2008): 18.

<sup>13</sup> Pamela Haag, "The 'Ill-Use of a Wife:' Patterns of Working-Class Violence in Domestic and Public New York City, 1860–1880," *Journal of Social History* 25, no. 3 (Spring 1992): 448.

<sup>14</sup> Paula Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Presentations of Women* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995); ChaeRan Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2002); Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2004); Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

<sup>15</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Sander Gilman, *The Jew's Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004); Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation*, chapter 4; Todd Presner, *Muscular Judaism: The Jewish Body and the Politics of Regeneration* (London: Routledge Press, 2007); Sharon Gillerman, *Germans into Jews: Remaking the Jewish Social Body in the Weimar Republic* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009); Derek Penslar, *Jews and the Military: A History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013); Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman, and Paul Lerner, eds., *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012); Erin M. Corber, "L'esprit du corps: Bodies, Communities, and the Reconstruction of Jewish Life in France, 1914–1940" (Ph.D. thesis., Indiana University, 2013); Murat Yildiz, "Société Juive de Gymnastique, 'Maccabi': An Ottoman Jewish Civic Association," (unpublished paper given at the Association for Jewish Studies annual conference, Dec. 2013).

<sup>17</sup> Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation*, 134–41.

<sup>18</sup> Two important caveats: first, I want to emphasize that though I am focusing on Sephardi Jews, occurrences of gendered violence within Jewish communities should not be misconstrued as a solely Sephardi phenomenon. Secondly, while some Jewish men – Sephardi and otherwise – resorted to violence, certainly not all did so.

<sup>19</sup> Aron Rodrigue, *French Jews, Turkish Jews: The Alliance Israélite Universelle and the Politics of Jewish Schooling in Turkey, 1860–1925* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 82–83.

<sup>20</sup> Elia Karmona, *Komo nasio Elia Karmona: Komo se engrandisio i komo se izo direktor del 'Jugeton'* (Istanbul: Impremaria El Jugeton, 1930s); Archive du l'Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris, Turquie (henceforth AIU, TU), TU-04/Turquie I C 1.5s, Alberto Confino, "Report on the Jews of Silivri," Constantinople, 7 August 1907; AIU TU-04/Turquie I C 1.5u, Haim Nahum, "Report on the Jews of Silivri," Constantinople, 7 August 1910; Archivo de los Amigos de la Universidad Hebrea de Jerusalén, Mexico City, Proyecto de Historia Oral "Judíos en México" (hereafter AAUHJ), Sálomon Levy, interview by Monika Unikel, 4 January 1989; Aron Rodrigue, "Jewish Society and Schooling in a Thracian Town: The Alliance Israélite Universelle in Demotica, 1897–1924," *Jewish Social Studies* 45 (1983): 268.

<sup>21</sup> Nissim M. Benezra, *Une enfance juive à Istanbul (1911–1929)* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1996), 44–45; Yavuz Köze, "Vertical Bazaars of Modernity: Western Department Stores and Their Staff in Istanbul (1889–1921)," *International Review of Social History* 54 (2009): 101–2.

<sup>22</sup> AAUHJ, Fortuna Saul Bejar de Camacho, interview by Monika Unikel, 3 January 1989; Aviva Ben-Ur, "When Diasporas Met: Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews in the City," (Ph.D. thesis, Brandeis University, 1998), 196, 206.

<sup>23</sup> Olga Borovaya, *Modern Ladino Culture: Press, Belles Lettres, and Theater in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2012), 43–47.

<sup>24</sup> "El asasinato de Beshik Tash," *El Tiempo*, 16 October 1908, 1; "Un drama pasional," *El Tiempo*, 22 October 1908, 2–3. Avner Levi, "Yaḥas ha-Shiltonot veba-Ḥevrah ha-Turkiim klapei ha-Yehudim agav Prashat Eliza Niego," in Hayim, ed., *Ḥevrah va-Kehilah mi-Divrei ha-Kongress ha-beinleumi ha-sheni le-Ḥeker Moreshet Yahadut Sefarad ve-ha-Mizrah* (Jerusalem: 1991), 237–46; Cemil Koçak, "Ayın Karanlık Yüzü: Tek-Parti Döneminde Gayri Müslim Azınlıklar Aleyhinde Açılan Türklüğü Tahkir Davaları," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 1 (2005): 152–62; Rıfat Bali, *Cumhuriyet Yıllarında Türkiye Yahudileri: Bir Türkleştirme Serüveni* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), 109–31, 525–28.

<sup>25</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 28; Paméla J. Dorn, "Gender and Personhood: Turkish Jewish Proverbs and the Politics of Reputation," *Women's Studies International Forum* 9, no. 3 (1986): 300.

<sup>26</sup> Paméla Dorn Sezgin, "Jewish Women in the Ottoman Empire," in Zohar ed., *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 224; Mark Glazer, "The Dowry as Capital Accumulation among the Sephardic Jews of Istanbul, Turkey," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 373–80.

<sup>27</sup> Sezgin, "Jewish Women"; Elia Karmona, *La novia aguna: Romanso nasional judio* (Istanbul: Jugeton Press, 1922), 62.

<sup>28</sup> "Propozision de kazamiento," *El Tiempo*, 26 March 1920, 5.

<sup>29</sup>Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, İstanbul, Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemî (henceforth BOA, DH.MKT), dosya 2031, gömlek 30; Nedim Ipek and K. Tuncer Çağlayan, "The Emigration from the Ottoman Empire to America," in Balgamış and Karpat, eds., *Turkish Migration to the United States: From Ottoman Times to the Present*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 29-45; Kemal H. Karpat "The Ottoman Emigration to America, 1860-1914," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 2 (May 1985): 186-8.

<sup>30</sup> BOA, DH.MKT, dosya: 2031, gömlek 30; BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Siyasî, dosya 77, gömlek 9; Akarlı, "Ottoman Attitudes," 110, 116; Karpat "Ottoman Emigration," 187.

<sup>31</sup> BOA, Hariciye Nezareti Hukuk Müşavirliği İstişare Odası Evrakı, dosya: 18, gömlek: 40, Sublime Porte to the Ambassador of Germany, 3 December 1914.

<sup>32</sup> Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem, Correspondence to Hahambaşı Haim Nahum (hereafter CAHJP, C), HM2 9070.3, David and Simantov Pizanti to Haim Nahum, Geneva, 14 September 1913, 28 September 1913, and 25 October 1913; CAHJP, C, HM2 9070.1, Gran Rabbin of Lyon to Haim Nahum regarding Isaac Nischli, Lyon, 30 April 1912.

<sup>33</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2 9073.1, Marcos Adoni and Leon Josua to Haim Nahum via the Federation of Oriental Jews of America, Pernambuco, 2 January 1916; Interview with Sálomon Levy.

<sup>34</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.2, Simon Lahana to the American Consulate, Ambos Camarines, 30 November 1914.

<sup>35</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.4, Unión Israelita Chevet-Achim to Haim Nahum re: death of Abraham Farach, Havana, 31 December 1915; CAHJP, C, HM2 9073.1, Victoria Farachi to Haim Nahum, Constantinople, 6 April 1916; CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.4, Unión Israelita Chevet-Achim to Haim Nahum re: death of Isaac Passy, Havana, 4 March 1917; CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.4, Unión Israelita Chevet-Achim to Haim Nahum re: widow Victoria Farach, Havana, 22 August 1919; CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.4, David Hasson to Haim Nahum re: death of Nissim Arditti, Lima, 24 December 1918.

<sup>36</sup> According to Jewish law, once a Jewish woman has been married or formally betrothed, if her spouse or fiancé dies under circumstances where his death is not verified, disappears, or does not grant her a *get* [religious bill of divorce], she is unable to remarry. In Ladino literature, see Karmona, *La novia aguna; La punta de la yod* (Jerusalem: S.I. Cherezli, 1907), a Ladino translation of Y. L. Gordon's 1878 *Kotzo shel Yod*.

<sup>37</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9072, *La Amerika* to Haim Nahum, New York, 10 August 1910.

<sup>38</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.1, Haim Nahum to Joseph Gedalecia, Constantinople, 6 March 1916; CAHJP, C, HM2 9070.3, Oriental Jewish Federation of America to Haim Nahum, New York, 3 December 1913.

<sup>39</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9073.1, Chief Rabbi of Sofia to Haim Nahum on behalf of Riketta Sion, Sofia, 28 October 1916; CAHJP, C, HM2 9073.1, Letter to Haim Nahum regarding the disappearance of Leon Alboukrek, Besançon, 21 January 1919; CAHJP, C, HM2 9070.3, Vida Celoni to Haim Nahum, Tours, 6 December 1913.

<sup>40</sup> Moiz dal Mediko, "La suerte alarmante de tres kategorias de mujeres por ser judias," *La Boz de Oriente* 1, no. 13 (March 1935): 5–6; Moiz dal Mediko, "La kuestion de la aguna en Amerika," *La Boz de Oriente* 5, no. 17 (July 1935): 5–6.

<sup>41</sup> *Mahkeme-yi Temyiz-i Hukuk Dairesi Riyaset-i Celilesine Salamon Elnekave-Madam Estrea davasina dair Temyiz-i Cevap Layihasıdır* (Istanbul: Cumhuriyet Matbaası, 1927).

<sup>42</sup> Egal Feldman, "Prostitution, the Alien Woman and the Progressive Imagination," *American Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1967): 192–206; Jenna Joselit, *Our Gang: Jewish Crime and the New York Jewish Community, 1900–1940* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 48; Gil Ribak, "'The Jew Usually Left Those Crimes to Esau': The Jewish Responses to Accusations about Jewish Criminality in New York, 1908–1913," *AJS Review* 38, no. 1 (April 2014): 12.

<sup>43</sup> Aviva Ben-Ur, "Where Diasporas Met," 206–08.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*; AAUHJ, Interview with Jaime Mitrani.

<sup>45</sup> For calls to action in *El Tiempo* against female trafficking, see "Drama de familia: A la atansion del Gran Rabinato de Turkia," *El Tiempo*, 17 April 1912, 8–9; "Un komersiante en blankas," *El Tiempo*, 21 April 1913, 7; "El kongreso internasional por la supresion del komersio de las blankas," *El Tiempo*, 16 July 1913, 6–7; "La Rusia i las mujeres judias," *El Tiempo*, 30 July 1913, 5–6; "Kontra el abominable komersio de las blankas," *El Tiempo*, 22 October 1913, 4; "El Gran Rabino Nahum salva dela perdisyon dos jovenes israelitas," *El Tiempo*, 1 August 1913, 4. Edward J. Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery 1870–1939* (London: Schocken Books, 1983); Isabel Vincent, *Bodies and Souls: The Tragic Plight of Three Jewish Women Forced into Prostitution in the Americas* (New York: Harper Perennial Press, 2006); Nora Glickman, *The Jewish White Slave Trade and the Untold Story of Raquel Liberman* (London: Routledge, 1999); Rifat Bali, *The Jews and Prostitution in Constantinople, 1854–1922* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2008); Mark David Wyers, "The New Republic's "Other" Daughters: Legislating National Sex and Regulating Prostitution in Istanbul, 1880–1933" (M.A. thesis, University of Arizona, 2008); Müge Özbek, "The Regulation of Prostitution in Beyoğlu (1875–1915)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46, no. 4 (2010): 555–68.

<sup>46</sup> AAUHJ, Interview with Jaime Mitrani; AAUHJ, Interview with Sálomon Levy.

<sup>47</sup> CAHJP, C, HM2/9070.1, Marco Bonomo to Haim Nahum, Havana, 6 December 1913; Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 74.

<sup>48</sup>Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Tribunal Superior Judicial del Distrito Federal (henceforth AGN, TSJDF), caja 1740, folio 312231, Belina Cadranel de Eskenazi, 15 March 1922.

<sup>49</sup>Stephanie Smith, "'If Love Enslaves. . . Love Be Damned!': Divorce and Revolutionary State Formation in Yucatán," in Olcott, Vaughan, and Cano, eds., *Sex in Revolution: Gender, Politics, and Power in Modern Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 57–80, 103, 104–6.

<sup>50</sup>NARA, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Manifests of Statistical Alien Arrivals at Laredo Texas, May 1903–April 1955, Record Group: 85 (hereafter NARA, INS, LRD, 85), Microfilm Serial: A3437, Roll: 79, Max Eskenazi, 24 May 1923; NARA, INS, LRD, 85, Microfilm Serial: A3431, Microfilm Roll: 91, Balina Eskinaze, 17 July 1924.

<sup>51</sup>1930 Mexican Census, Place: Puebla, Puebla, Puebla, Page: 132, Belina, José, and Victoria Eskenazi.

<sup>52</sup>Shani D'Cruze, "Negotiating Metropolitan Spaces and Identities: A Historian's Reading of Tactics in 1920's New York Homicide Trials," *Social Justice* 32, no. 1 (2005): 62.

<sup>53</sup>See, among others, Theresa Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah, So Close to Mexico: Middle Eastern Immigrants in Modern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007); Ignacio Klich and Jeffrey Lesser, eds., *Arab and Jewish Immigrants in Latin America: Images and Realities* (London: Routledge, 1998).

<sup>54</sup>Ana María Alonso, "Conforming Disconformity: 'Mestizaje,' Hybridity, and the Aesthetics of Mexican Nationalism," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (November 2004): 461–62; Richard Weiner, "Battle for Survival: Porfirian Views of the International Marketplace," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 32, no. 3 (October 2000): 660–62; Jürgen Buchenau, "Small Numbers, Great Impact: Mexico and Its Immigrants, 1821–1973," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 20, no. 3 (Spring 2001): 31–32; Martin S. Stabb, "Indigenism and Racism in Mexican Thought: 1857–1911," *Journal of Inter-American Studies* 1, no. 4 (October 1959): 405–23; T. G. Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question, 1876–1911," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (February 1968): 19–36.

<sup>55</sup>Pablo Yankelevich, "Mexico for the Mexicans: Immigration, National Sovereignty, and the Promotion of Mestizaje," *The Americas* 68, no. 3 (January 2012): 419–8, 431.

<sup>56</sup>Alfaro-Velcamp, *So Far from Allah*, 102–103; AGN, DGG, caja 11, exp. 15, 2/360(29)8144, Circular confidencial, num. 250, 17 October 1933.

<sup>57</sup>Jeffrey Lesser, "(Re)Creating Ethnicity: Middle Eastern Immigration to Brazil," *The Americas* 53, no. 1 (July 1996): 46; Ignacio Klich and Jeffrey Lesser, "Introduction: 'Turco' Immigrants in Latin America," *The Americas*, 53, no. 1 (July 1996): 1–6. For the United States, see Sarah Gualtieri, *Between Arab and White: Race and Ethnicity in the Early Syrian American Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press), *passim*.



<sup>58</sup> José D. Najar, "The Privileges of Positivist Whiteness: The Syrian-Lebanese of São Paulo, Brazil (1888–1939)," (Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 2012); Camila Pastor de María y Campos, "The Mashreq in Mexico: Patronage, Property and Class in the Postcolonial Global," (Ph.D. thesis, UCLA 2009), 287–88.

<sup>59</sup> Camila Pastor de María y Campos, "Inscribing Difference: Maronites, Jews and Arabs in Mexican Public Culture and French Imperial Practice," *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 6, no. 2 (2011): 174–75.

<sup>60</sup> Indeed, the similarity between Ladino and Mexican Spanish was a factor that Sephardic Jews stressed in advocating for immigration to Mexico rather than the United States. See Albert Avigdor, "Porke los sefaradim deven pensen en Meksiko," *La Luz*, 2 February 1922, 1.

<sup>61</sup> Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900–1931* (Duke University Press, 2001), 58.

<sup>62</sup> William French, "Prostitutes and Guardian Angels: Women, Work and the Family in Porfirian Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (1992): 529–52; Carmen Ramos Escandón, "Señoritas porfirianas: Mujer e ideología en el México progresista," in *Presencia y transparencia: La Mujer en la historia de México* (Mexico: El Colegio de México, 1987), 143–62; Martin Nesvig, "The Lure of the Perverse: Moral Negotiation of Pederasty in Porfirian Mexico," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 9–10.

<sup>63</sup> Haag, "Ill-Use," 464.

<sup>64</sup> For a discussion of male same-sex sexual encounters and views of such in the Ottoman world prior to the mid-nineteenth century, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Moshko the Jew and His Gay Friends: Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Ottoman Jewish Society," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005): 79–108; Khaled El-Rouayheb, *Before Homosexuality in the Arab-Islamic World, 1500–1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Dror Ze'evi, *Producing Desire: Changing Sexual Discourse in the Ottoman Middle East, 1500–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Joseph A. Massad, *Desiring Arabs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

<sup>65</sup> Robert McKee Irwin, "The Famous 41: The Scandalous Birth of Modern Mexican Homosexuality," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6 (2000): 353–76; Nesvig, "Perverse," *passim*.

<sup>66</sup> Nesvig, "Perverse," 25–26, 31; Daniel Bao, "Invertidos, tortilleras and maricas machos: The Construction of Homosexuality in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 1900–1950," *Journal of Homosexuality* 24, no. 3–4 (1993): 183–219.

<sup>67</sup> For similar cases of male-on-male Jewish émigré violence linked to imputations of sexual impropriety and masculine honor tinged by economic competition, see AGN, TSJDF, caja: 1461, folio: 258707, Nissim Cohen vs. Gad Abady, Querrela, 1918; AGN, TSJDF, caja: 2770, folio: 584480, Henry Halfon Fitz vs. Roberto Nagmias, Lesiones, 1933; "Sefaradi matado kon

grande crueldad," *La Vara* 20 March 1925, 1; "El matador de Moshe Alfassa," *La Vara* 27 March 1925, 1-2.

<sup>68</sup> Picatto, *City of Suspects*, 80-84.

<sup>69</sup> Current studies of intimate partner violence have shown that spousal murders are often the culmination of repeated and escalating abuse, indicative of broader social patterns of intimate partner abuse that may never be brought to the attention of juridical authorities. See Cynthia Grant Bowman and Ben Altman, "Wife Murder in Chicago: 1910-1930," *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 92, no. 3-4 (Spring 2002): 741-42; Laura Dugan, et al., "Explaining the Decline in Intimate Partner Homicide: The Effects of Changing Domesticity, Women's Status, and Domestic Violence Resources," *Homicide Studies* (1999): 187, 189; Enrique Gracia, "Unreported Cases of Domestic Violence against Women: Towards an Epidemiology of Social Silence, Tolerance, and Inhibition," *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* 58, no. 7 (July 2004): 536.

<sup>70</sup> Picatto, *City of Suspects*, 105-7. For contemporary analysis on domestic violence and masculinity in Mexico, see Matthew C. Gutmann, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 206-10.

<sup>71</sup> Elisa Speckman Guerra, "Los jueces, el honor y la muerte: Un análisis de la justicia (ciudad de México, 1871-1931)," *Historia Mexicana* 55, no. 4 (April-June 2006): 1421-22.

<sup>72</sup> "American Woman Slain in Mexico," *The New York Times*, 25 February 1934, 3; AGN, Collection: Cárdenas, 541/57, Ana de Verlinsky to Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico City, 18 December 1934.

<sup>73</sup> AGN, TSJDF, caja: 1297, folio: 226298, David Montekio, Homicidio.

<sup>74</sup> Pablo Picatto, *The Tyranny of Opinion: Honor in the Construction of the Mexican Public Sphere* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), esp. chapter 5.

<sup>75</sup> Shani D'Cruze, *Crimes of Outrage: Sex, Violence, and Victorian Working Women* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1998), 137; D'Cruze and Rao, *Violence*, 6.

<sup>76</sup> For a detailed explanation of "legitimate defense" in cases of homicide, see Speckman Guerra, "Los jueces," 1431-33.

<sup>77</sup> Anne Rubenstein, *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 46-49, 84-85; Katherine E. Bliss, "For the Health of the Nation: Gender and the Cultural Politics of Hygiene in Revolutionary Mexico," in Vaughan and Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 196-220; Anne Rubenstein, "The War on *Las Pelonas*: Modern Women and their Enemies, Mexico City, 1924," in *Sex in Revolution*, 57-80; Ageeth Sluis, "Bataclanismo! Or, How Female Deco Bodies Transformed Postrevolutionary Mexico City," *The Americas* 66, no. 4 (April

2010): 469–99; Joanne Hershfield, *Imagining the Chica Moderna: Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917–1936* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>78</sup> AGN, Secretaría de Gobernación, Departamento de Migración, Registro de Extranjeros (henceforth AGN, DM, RE), serie: Griegos, caja: 3, tarjeta: 128.

<sup>79</sup> Speckman Guerra, “Los jueces,” 1438–39; Piccato, *City of Suspects*, 88–99.

<sup>80</sup> AGN, TSJDF, David Montekio Menache, homicidio; AGN, DM, RE, serie: Griegos, caja 3, tarjeta 127, David Montekio; AGN, DM, RE, serie: Griegos, caja 3, tarjeta 126, Daniel Montekio; “Menache y Montekio” advertisement; *Excelsior*, 15 May 1921, 8; American Jewish Archive, Cincinnati, Mexico-Near Print, *Directorio Comercial, Industrial, y Profesional, Cámara Israelita de Industria y Comercio de México*, 1932.

<sup>81</sup> Ben-Ur, *Sephardic Jews in America*, passim; Naar, “New Greece,” 65–66.

<sup>82</sup> Aviva Ben-Ur, “‘We Speak and Write This Language Against Our Will’: Jews, Hispanics, and the Dilemma of Ladino-Speaking Sephardim in Early-Twentieth Century New York,” *American Jewish Archives* 50, no. 1 (January 1998): 131–42.

<sup>83</sup> NARA, PNNY, 1897–1944, Series M1972, Roll 246, Solomon Hattem, 8 April 1923; NARA, PNNY, 1897–1944, Series M1972, Roll 192, Jedidia Hattem, 22 April 1920; America Jewish Historical Society, Center for Jewish History, New York City, Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society Records, 1884–1925, Pleasantville Admissions and Discharges, AJHS microfilm I-43, Charles Hattem and Meyer Hattem.

<sup>84</sup> Ribak, “Jewish Criminality,” passim.

<sup>85</sup> Studies of concurrent cases of domestic homicide in Chicago reveal that the majority of those arrested for spousal abuse were immigrants. Further, violence was conditioned by differing expectations of masculinity, German immigrants more likely to commit suicide after murdering their female victims and citing inability to provide for their families as motive, while Italian men predominately murdered other men who were perceived to have besmirched the reputation of female relatives. See Bowman, “Wife Murder,” 764–67; Elizabeth A. Pleck, “Challenges to Traditional Authority in Immigrant Families,” in Michael Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1973), 504–12; Jeffrey S. Adler, “‘If We Can’t Live in Peace, We Might As Well Die’: Homicide-Suicide in Chicago, 1875–1910,” *Journal of Urban History* 3, no. 6 (1999): 26; Adler, “Domestic Homicide,” passim.