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"Because I Was Drunk and the Devil Had Tricked Me": Pulque, *Pulquerías*, and Violence in the Mexico City Uprising of 1692

WILLIAM F. CONNELL

For several hours during the afternoon and early evening on Corpus Christi in 1692, a crowd of residents burned much of the urban core of Mexico City. During the summer that followed, viceregal and ecclesiastical authorities consciously constructed a political response to the disastrous uprising that systematically exploited commonly held stereotypes about native peoples and their alleged lack of control when under the influence of alcohol. The existing evidence produced by witnesses in their testimonies before the viceregal courts, however, contradicts the official narrative. Yet, the story generated by viceregal and ecclesiastical officials remains far more influential, and shaped both contemporary and modern attempts to understand the uprising. Crafting an official story enabled those who stood to absorb blame to strip away any implicit criticism of governmental policy the uprising may have suggested and to cast it instead as an aberrant event concocted by irrational natives who craved disorder when they drank heavily.

If the plausible story used by officials was correct, however, the trials should contain regular discussions of pulque (a mildly alcoholic drink made from the maguey)—and they do not. Interested officials in Mexico City, nevertheless, found that by blaming the uprising on pulque, they could affirm for the Crown and Council of the Indies that the kingdom and city were ably administered by capable representatives. What follows will demonstrate how natives understood the use of pulque and reveal how collusion among officials in response to the emergency of the uprising led them to invent an explanatory narrative that the evidence from the trials does not support.

Between 5 and 6 o'clock in the afternoon, well after the Corpus Christi processions on 8 June 1692, the main plaza of Mexico City erupted in violence. "Indigenous [men and women] and other peoples rose up together in tumult," wielding stones, torches, and perhaps

knives. The riotous mob, composed of thousands of people, filled the plaza and attacked the viceregal palace "pelting it with stones and smashing the windows." When they met resistance from the palace guard, the crowd "set fire to the wooden front door and second-story balconies," which opened into "the vicereine's private chamber."[1] The guards made futile efforts to settle the crowd but, even armed and ready to defend the palace, they could do nothing to stop what had begun. The emboldened crowd ruled the plaza once the guards barricaded themselves inside the palace. They attacked and destroyed the major civic symbols of power and commerce—the royal jail, *audiencia* and gallows, the viceregal palace, the *ayuntamiento* (city council building), and the flimsy wooden *cajones*, or stalls of the city's principal market. According to the testimony of a Spanish *alcalde de corte* (first-instance ordinary judge) caught up in the midst of the mob, the crowd also looted the market, taking clothing, silver, and cash. One official reflected fatalistically on the cataclysm two days later, stating that "the damage is irreparable, and even this morning the fire is still burning."[2]

The uprising ended, but not with a heroic defense of the city by the militia or any act of leadership on the part of urban officials. Chaos reigned as municipal officials shrank away from the danger, leaving the citizens of the city to fend for themselves while some among them vented their rage, controlling the plaza for as long as they chose. Some looted, lit fires, and committed acts of grave violence—usually against other participants or bystanders—from 5:30 to 10:00 in the evening. The viceregal government could muster no force to restore order once the fires began. Rather than risk their lives, city, judicial, ecclesiastical, and viceregal officials, as well as most of the noble residents of the city—daring not to challenge the crowd—hid together in the solid stone buildings at the core of the city to wait out the disorder. On their own, participants eventually returned to their homes, hiding the goods with which they had absconded. The wounded made their way to hospitals or presumably to the care of those who might help them.

The first organized attempt to restore order came well after the plaza had cleared and continued through the early morning hours the next day. Though in the opening moments of the conflict individual

[1] Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the king, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereinafter cited as AGI), Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1, fols. 1-1v. The quotations preceding all come from this document.

[2] Testimony of doctor don Jerónimo Chacón Albarca before the *audiencia*, Mexico City, 10 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 2, exp. 1, fols. 2-2v.

palace guards had apparently attempted to maintain order by drawing their swords and lashing out against a sea of angry, stone-wielding residents, these vain efforts seemed only to have made matters worse.[3] A small number of city leaders saw and apparently attempted to stop the violence—including notably don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, don Juan de Velasco (the conde de Santiago), and don Antonio de Deza y Ulloa—but to no effect.[4] Despite what these witnesses claimed to have done, they mostly moved carefully through an earsplitting din to find safety. The danger posed by the uprising was real for everyone in its midst. Deza y Ulloa, a treasury official (*Contador Oficial de la Real Hacienda*), sustained a serious wound when a large rock struck him in the back as he made his way through the plaza.[5]

The conde de Santiago organized the main defensive force of the city—the militia—hours after the uprising had subsided naturally. In his testimony, militia captain don Domingo Montaño described the uprising as though it was still in progress as he ventured out with fifty-three armed horsemen just before midnight. He claimed that his efforts, and those of the conde de Santiago, prevented further outbreaks of violence and stifled a second wave of attacks,[6] although no evidence indicates that anyone in the city had plans for a new assault. Indeed, though city officials seemed to think that a full-scale revolution was underway, they were mistaken. What they did find, however, were solemn ceremonies, like the one at the church of San Francisco on the plaza of Santiago Tlatelolco at four in the morning on 9 June, described

[3] Testimony of don Francisco de Sigüenza, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 28-37v; and Testimony of Bartolomé del Castillo, Alcaide (constable) de la Real Carcel, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 2, exp. 1, fols. 3-4v.

[4] Testimony of Mateo Cortés, former Alcaide de Corte, Mexico City, 21 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 2, exp. 1, fols. 9-10v; Confession of Pedro Juan, Mexico City, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 10, fols. 15-15v; Testimony of Bartolomé del Castillo, Alcaide de la Real Carcel, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 2, fols. 2v-4; Testimony of don Antonio de Deza y Ulloa, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 12-16v; and Testimony of don Francisco de Sigüenza, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 28v-30v.

[5] Testimony of don Antonio de Deza y Ulloa, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 12-12v.

[6] Testimony of don Domingo Montaño, Mexico City, 16 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 3v-4. See also the commentary in Viceroy to the king, Mexico City, 20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num.1, ramo 1, exp. 5; and Viceroy to the king concerning the uprising, Mexico City, 22 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 1, exp. 6.

in the testimony of Deza y Ulloa, who rode with the militia despite his injury. The clergymen, presiding over an early funerary mass for some of those who had been killed during the tumult, rebuked the horsemen for charging into the massive church on horseback in the middle of the service.[7]

The 1692 uprising has received only modest attention from scholars considering the scale of destruction and size of the viceregal response.[8] This profound, tragic, and terrible event has left behind a large corpus of materials that provide insight into the political, social, and cultural worlds of Mexico City from multiple points of view. The uprising itself, "the most important in the history of the [Spanish]

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[7] Testimony of don Antonio de Deza y Ulloa, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 15-15v. See also Natalia Silva Prada, *La política de una rebelión: los indígenas frente al tumulto de 1692 en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2007), 525. Silva Prada retraces Deza y Ulloa's career. He went on to considerable success in the Americas after the riot and was celebrated by the Crown as a valued servant upon his death in 1729.

[8] Natalia Silva Prada has worked on the uprising most recently and has published a book-length study, *La política*, and two articles, "Impacto de la migración urbana en el proceso de 'separación de repúblicas': el caso de dos parroquias indígenas de la parcialidad de San Juan Tenochtitlán, 1688-1692," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 24:1 (2001):77-109, and "Estrategias culturales en el tumulto de 1692 en la Ciudad de Mexico: aportes para la reconstrucción de la historia de la cultura política antigua," *Historia Mexicana* 53:1 (2003):5-63. See also Rosa Feijoo, "El tumulto de 1692," *Historia Mexicana* 14 (1964-1965):656-79; and Chester L. Guthrie, "Riots in Seventeenth Century Mexico City: A Study in Social History with Emphasis on the Lower Classes" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1937). Some works comment on the riot as significant parts of larger arguments: R. Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 125-60; and Alejandro Cañeque, *The King's Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 225-36. Many others consider it in passing: William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), 113-53; and Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964), 384 and 577 n. 81. Most accounts rely heavily on the partisan contemporary Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, "Letter of Don Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora to Admiral Pez Recounting the Incidents of the Corn Riot in Mexico City, June 8, 1692," in *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, a Mexican Savant of the Seventeenth Century*, by Irving Albert Leonard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1929), 210-77, which is also published as *Alboroto y motín de México del 8 de Junio de 1692; relación de don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora en una carta dirigida al almirante don Andrés de Pez*, ed. Irving Leonard (Mexico: Talleres Gráficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, 1932).

American kingdoms," destroyed wealth, buildings, and city records, and left more than two hundred casualties (by conservative estimates) in its aftermath. More than a dozen suspected participants and looters received capital sentences in one of the largest displays of judicial violence in the history of Spanish America.[9] In their responses, viceregal officials laid the groundwork for modern understandings of the uprising by offering solutions that focused on three problems: indigenous people allegedly abusing pulque, which impelled them to behave inappropriately, an insufficient corn supply, and the uprooting of indigenous groups from their communities who had thus lost their "natural pacifism."[10] Officials, ostensibly to correct these problems, banned pulque and banished indigenous peoples to their pueblos of origin, suggesting the riot was an indigenous uprising. The viceroy and his ministers worked diligently to provide an adequate corn supply after the uprising, which suggests that they believed a lack of corn must have motivated the urban poor.[11]

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[9] Quotation from Silva Prada, "Estrategias culturales," 16. Casualty figures are found in Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the king, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1.

[10] Report by the viceroy on the importation of corn and wheat, Mexico City, 21 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 18, fols. 7-9; Testimony of don Antonio Fernández de Jubera, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fols. 7v-9v; Report on the availability of corn and wheat, Mexico City, 21 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 2, ramo 14; Corn imported into Mexico City by order of the viceroy, Mexico City, 20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 20; Viceregal Order reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1693, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 27; "Sobre los inconvenientes de vivir los indios en el centro de la ciudad," *Boletín del Archivo General de la Nación* 9:1 (1938):1-34; Viceregal Decree requiring all natives to wear traditional dress, Mexico City, 7 August 1692, Archivo General de la Nación, México (hereinafter cited as AGN), Indios, vol. 32, exp. 62, fol. 64v; Viceregal decree that permits clergy to assist in the resettlement of natives in the barrio of Santa María Cuepopan, Mexico City, 18 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 56, fols. 60-60v; Viceregal Order to indigenous residents to return to barrios and parishes of origin, Mexico City, 30 June 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 44, fols. 47-47v; and Viceregal Order clarifying the responsibilities of clergy in the administration of the resettlement of natives to their barrios of origin, Mexico City, 27 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 65, fols. 66v-69.

[11] Uprisings, in general, provide useful clues regarding how power structures function and are therefore quite worthy of intense study. Silvia Arrom observed in her study of the 1828 Parían Riot in Mexico City that "moment[s] of crisis," like an urban uprising, reveal the strengths, weaknesses, and motivations of governments and can also provide insight into the "values and beliefs" of the "lower classes." Silvia Marina Arrom, "Popular Politics in Mexico City: The Parían Riot of 1828," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:2 (1988):245-46; and Silva Prada, "Estrategias culturales," 14.

To follow the official explanation proffered by viceregal officials, however, assumes that the viceroy and his able investigators understood what motivated these particular people on this particular day to rise up and burn the plaza. Problematically, many observers offered partisan explanations in the summer of 1692 that either ignored the question of what motivated participants or looked past such motivations for political reasons. The uprising likely spiraled out of control mostly because of an incompetent early response, threatening the political futures of office holders. Investigators therefore sought to identify problems for which they could provide solutions. As a result, seventeenth-century observers and officials could not credibly identify a leader, a direct cause, or provide a proper account that implicated those responsible for the escalation of violence with any degree of disinterest or reliability. The lack of a credible "smoking gun" in the documentary evidence, therefore, made it possible for authorities to explain the uprising in multiple logical, and ultimately self-interested, ways.

Much of the early writing on the uprising insisted that this was a "corn riot," and, despite significant scholarly revision, some continue to identify it as such.[12] Recent scholarship has moved away from the reflexive and one-dimensional hunger-driven uprising and gravitated toward more substantial political issues. Current studies take advantage of trial testimony to explain the event as the visible manifestation of a larger political problem. The viceroy, don Gaspar de Sandoval Silva y Mendoza (ruled 1688-1696), the conde de Galve, and his ministers, failed politically by deliberately choosing not to control the price of corn and thus caused privation for which the urban poor sought redress. Violence broke out only after the elaborate, expensive, and ultimately imperfect, system of grain distribution "faltered" in the days immediately preceding the uprising. Rioters, however, lost their cohesion and focus and became looters, destroying the promise of social revolution.[13]

Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, is an important recent work that takes on the issue of political culture in Mexico.

[12] Guthrie, "Riots in Seventeenth Century Mexico City," 50-69, provides the classic corn riot explanation that has been so influential.

[13] Cope, *The Limits*, 41-44, 49, 128-60, 164-65. This political act crystallized, if only for a moment, the common cause and "consciousness" shared by the urban poor, briefly allowing them to challenge the existing patron-client based system of social control that he argues made stability possible in Mexico City. For a discussion of the system of grain distribution before and after the uprising, see Report by the viceroy on the

Natalia Silva Prada offers an even more direct political interpretation, proposing that the riot really was an indigenous uprising. She even rejects the implication that it was a "riot" carried out by either the "plebeian" class or a multiracial coalition. To make this case, she analyzes the actions and rhetoric of native participants. Indigenous government enabled "an indigenous subculture that survived" under colonial rule to maintain a powerful base of authority. This group, taking advantage of its position, attempted to restore traditional, precontact rule through insurrection.[14] The destruction of specific symbolic structures (the gallows, *audiencia* jail, *ayuntamiento*, and viceregal palace) provides evidence, she argues, that this was no random uprising but an event directed by natives and designed to challenge Spanish rule in Mexico City.[15]

Such studies rely heavily on the trials to raise questions about the viceregal and ecclesiastical understanding of the uprising. The evidence from the trials, however, also provides a series of challenges. Carried out within a climate in which the viceregal government failed to respond to a serious challenge, the trials were hastily constituted and rushed through under tremendous political pressure to find villains to punish rather than to determine accurately the causes of the violence.[16]

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importation of corn and wheat, Mexico City, 21 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 18, fols. 7-9; Report on the availability of corn and wheat, Mexico City, 21 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 2, ramo 14; and Corn imported into Mexico City by order of the viceroy, Mexico City, 20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 20.

[14] Silva Prada, *La política*, 71. William F. Connell, "Emerging Ladino Spaces in the Parcialidades of Mexico City: Race, Identity, and Indigenous Self-Government, 1564-1700" (Ph.D. diss., Tulane University, 2003), discusses indigenous self-government.

[15] Silva Prada, La *política*, 250-56; and "Estrategias culturales," 52-53. Silva Prada is, in effect, making a "moral economy" argument, suggesting that native peoples wished to restore a more traditional order after having endured the erosion of their ways of living (culture) and the loss of economic and political security. Ward Stavig, "Ethnic Conflict, Moral Economy, and Population in Rural Cuzco on the Eve of the Thupa Amaro II Rebellion," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68:4 (1988):739, explains the concept within the Latin American context well. Stavig, of course, relies heavily on the classic work, E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century, " *Past and Present* 50 (1971):78-79, 131-36.

[16] Criminal trial of Melchior de León Felipe y Nicolás de la Cruz y Francisco Gregorio, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15. The first trial also suggests passion and vengeance on the part of officials. The military court issued and carried out just three days after the uprising the execution of four indigenous men with gruesome violence. Cope, *The Limits*, 138-39, points out some of the problems with the trial evidence as well.

When examined in light of the trials, arguments in the official discourse about indigenous abuse of pulque do not find significant support. The trials also reveal how viceregal officials and the clergy came together, coordinating their responses with only a hint of dissent from a small group that did not cooperate. Collectively disguising their identities under the title, "the most loyal vassals of your majesty," dissenters were conspicuous because they stood alone, separate from, and perhaps drowned out by, the many other official voices. The very act of seeking anonymity, furthermore, suggests a climate hostile to what might be called "whistle-blowing" and indicates that this group feared retribution for expressing opinions contrary to the official line.[17]

Viceregal and ecclesiastical officials understood that the very legitimacy of secular Spanish rule in the Americas rested upon the notion that the Crown represented justice and "good government."[18] The ministers of the city, the viceregal government, the judiciary, and regional administration, therefore, all had a vested interest in controlling the story as it made its way across the Atlantic. Their testimony was generally self-interested. At best, such discourse represented a counter narrative and, at worst, the willful abuse of power and position to satisfy personal ends. Viceregal officials rejected the possibility that a massive governmental failure had precipitated a violent, politically motivated attack by the urban poor.[19] Such an

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[17] Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the king, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, and 31 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, cartas 1, 3. This group was probably composed of a faction of the municipal or the viceregal government, as indicated by their extensive knowledge of the trials and the governmental response; this group complained in a series of anonymous letters. Silva Prada argues this group was likely composed of *audiencia* ministers. Silva Prada, "Estrategias culturales," 45.

[18] Colin M. MacLachlan, *Spain's Empire in the New World: The Role of Ideas in Institutional and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 58-66; Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*, 185-212; and Michael C. Scardaville, "(Habsburg) Law and (Bourbon) Order: State Authority, Popular Unrest, and the Criminal Justice system in Bourbon Mexico City," *The Americas* 50:4 (1994):514-21.

[19] Viceregal orders to bolster wheat supply, Mexico City, 15 January 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 16, fols. 4-5; Summary of viceregal responses to the uprising, Mexico City, 7 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 17; Corn imported into Mexico City by order of the viceroy, Mexico City, 20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 20; and Letter from captains don Luis Sánchez de Tagle, don Juan Diaz de Posada, and don Juan de Urrutia y Lezama, the *consulado* (merchant guild) of Mexico to the king, Mexico City, 25 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 24. Louisa Schell Hoberman, "Merchants in Seventeenth-

admission would have made them culpable. Identifying pulque as a scapegoat, a convenient vice regularly employed by colonial officials, helped them to shift responsibility for the uprising to native peoples and away from themselves.

Rebellions in New Spain usually sought redress for local problems and often lacked a coherent plan, ideology, or group of leaders.[20] Yet, paradoxically, they also constituted a form of political discourse that germinated in communities in response to specific stimuli, usually to "restore a customary equilibrium."[21] The uprising of 1692 in Mexico City seems to resonate well with this theoretical generalization. The communities of Mexico City perceived a failure in their government and responded through violent protest. The alternate explanatory discourse generated by viceregal and ecclesiastical officials served to remove any rational or legitimizing basis from the actions of the urban poor. Stereotypes about natives and pulque thus served officials who could not find leaders to interrogate.

The viceroy turned to pulque in his first attempt to explain the events of 8 June to the Council of the Indies. In a letter written just three weeks after the event, he emphasized the horrendous damage. Commenting further, he discussed the lack of corn and the general malaise caused by shortages.[22] The uprising itself, however, according to Viceroy Galve, occurred on this particular day because of a strange mixture of circumstances. The festival of Corpus Christi brought many people from small towns and villages who came to celebrate in the festival atmosphere.[23] The distribution and heavy consumption of pulque occasioned by the holiday, however, made the real difference. Galve argued that "men of letters and experience conclude that general drunkenness among the common people that resulted from the

Century Mexico City: A Preliminary Portrait," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 57:3 (1977): 480-81, also discusses the *consulado*.

[20] Taylor, *Drinking*, 114-17. Taylor's insights point rightly to the conclusion that Spanish officials had difficulty conceiving of an uprising that had no leader, despite the often collective nature of colonial rural revolts.

[21] Taylor, *Drinking*, 97-98.

[22] Problematically, shortages of corn and other supplies had been constant features of urban life for months and thus, did not suddenly trigger the uprising. Cope, *The Limits*, 129-33.

[23] Surprisingly few indigenous peoples from outside of Mexico City appear in the trials. One major case can be found in Criminal trial of Juan Diego, Pedro Juan, and associates, Mexico City and Coyoacan, 9 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 10.

abundance of the drink pulque" enabled a few disaffected individuals to sway the inebriated crowd. Thus, even after discussing the shortage of corn and the possibility that the upcoming crop in December would fail to alleviate the crisis, he reduced the complexity of this event to the simple, straightforward, and direct explanation that natives, deprived of their reason by pulque, caused the outbreak of violence.[24]

Explanations generated by viceregal officials supported the statements made by Viceroy Galve. Testimony given on 15 July 1692 by one *ayuntamiento* officer explained how the abuse of pulque by indigenous peoples caused the riot:

> Even though the land has not experienced the customary abundance of other years [of the corn and wheat crops] there is little doubt that the drink pulque gives rise in them [indigenous peoples] drunkenness which precipitates violence and public sin of grave measure against our divine majesty for which they [natives] merit punishment.[25]

This statement reflects yet another attempt to simplify the cause of the riot. It also downplays a potentially significant cause, privation among the abjectly poor whose suffering increased as the corn supply dwindled. The testimony consciously dismisses the possibility that drought and famine provided cause for the disturbance. Rather, ungrateful and irresponsible indigenous peoples rioted because of their vices, weakness, and inability to resist pulque.

Other observers, while suggesting more complexity, also attempted to remove any basis for the stories told by those who gave testimony in the trials. Seventeenth-century intellectual and great critic of indigenous abuse of pulque, don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora sought to systematically undermine any possible rationale suggested by the urban poor in his description of the event.[26] He questioned the

[24] Viceroy to the king explaining the uprising, Mexico City, 30 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 1, exp. 1, fols. 6-7v; quotation from fol. 7.

[25] *Ayuntamiento* of Mexico City to the Council of the Indies, Mexico City, 15 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 26, fol. 1v. The divine majesty evoked here is not the king (who is referenced later) but a direct appeal to the divine.

[26] The classic biography in English is Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora.* In addition to the commentary in the letter, see also the prologue of Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, *Parayso Occidental: plantado y cultivado por la liberal benefica mano de los muy...*, facsimile edition, ed. Manuel Ramos (Mexico City: Facultad de Filosofía y

veracity of the story that emerged in trial testimony that just before the violence erupted an indigenous woman had been killed in the public granary by the *corregidor*. Furthermore, he cynically argued that indigenous women who sold tortillas benefited from the conditions that ostensibly provoked the riot, earning more because of the high price of corn.[27] Don Antonio Fernández de Jubera, an attendant of the viceroy who passed the evening of 8 June, hunkered down in a well-fortified building with the viceroy and described his experiences in a friendly interview with the court. Purposefully, he also stripped away potential motivation from those who rioted. He witnessed the early moments of the uprising and remarked that when he entered the plaza he found "wickedness committed by natives without motive or cause of any kind."[28]

In the months following the uprising, ecclesiastical officials of the city also made clear arguments that native abuse of pulque caused them to riot. On 30 June, Viceroy Galve amplified the power of ecclesiastical authorities to enforce moral order in the city. They oversaw the prohibition of pulque and monitored the movement of natives who had been ordered to return to their pueblos of origin. This *reducción* attempted also to relocate indigenous peoples living in the center of the city to the peripheral barrios.[29] Clergy who commented on

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Letras, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Estudios de Historia de México, CONDUMEX, 1995 [1684]). He apparently did not object to using the tax revenue generated by pulque for public works projects: Corregidor and viceroy on using pulque revenue (*asiento del pulque*) for public works, Mexico City, February and March 1692, Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de México, Mexico City (hereinafter cited as AHCM), Obras Públicas en General, vol. 1509a, exp. 2, fols. 11-20.

[27] Cope, *The Limits*, 127, 134-36, provides an admirable discussion of Sigüenza y Góngora's account of the beginning of the riot. According to Sigüenza y Góngora, the crowd that carried this allegedly "dead" indigenous woman soon realized that she was quite alive and appeared to make a miraculous recovery in the few minutes it took to carry her to the archbishop's residence to complain about the abuses committed by the *corregidor*. Sigüenza y Góngora, "Letter of Don Carlos," 251-53.

[28] Testimony of don Antonio Fernández de Jubera, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fol. 8v (the spelling of Fernández has been modernized); and Silva Prada, *La política*, 311, 314. Sigüenza y Góngora, in this and other writings, does have a great deal to say about pulque. Sigüenza y Góngora laments the evils of "detestable pulque" in *Parayso Occidental*, prologue, and "Letter of Don Carlos," 259.

[29] Viceregal order to indigenous residents to return to barrios and parishes of origin, Mexico City, 30 June 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 44, fols. 47-47v; Viceregal order clarifying the responsibilities of clergy in the administration of the resettlement of

the riot agreed with the viceroy and identified *pulquerías*—the taverns that served cheap drinks to the working urban poor—as the principal culprit in the outbreak of the riot.[30]

Church officials argued in the wake of the riot that the abuse of pulque had a detrimental effect on the health of indigenous peoples and those of mixed racial heritage (*castas*), causing them to behave in socially inappropriate ways. To make this case, they drew on themes developed over the course of nearly two centuries. Indigenous peoples, according to the accounts of the clergy, often walked the streets naked because they had pawned their clothing in the *pulquerías*.[31] The jeers and laughter from bystanders did not affect them in their inebriated state. Indigenous men under the influence of pulque allegedly exhibited criminal behavior more often. Echoing civic paternalism that classified indigenous peoples as children in the eyes of the law, ecclesiastical elites also perceived indigenous peoples as placid, peace-loving people who, under the influence of alcohol, became unruly and uncontrollable.[32]

Pulquerías allegedly became places where small-time thieves could "fence" stolen goods in exchange for cash or credit at the bar, providing both an incentive to steal and a ready market for stolen goods.[33] Robberies, assaults, and homicides, the clergy argued, increased as a result of the abuse of pulque. Natives who frequented

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natives to their barrios of origin, Mexico City, 27 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 65, fols. 66v-69; and "Sobre los inconvenientes," 1-34.

[30] Collection of documents concerning the prohibition and permitted use of pulque, Mexico City, 1671-1788, Biblioteca Nacional de México (hereinafter cited as BNM), Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358.

[31] Criminal trial against Antonio de Acosta, Mexico City, 1641, AGN, Criminal, vol. 165, exp. 15, provides an example of an indigenous man pawning his clothing to purchase pulque. Criminal trial against Toribio Súarez, Mexico City, 17 April 1676, AGI, Escribanía de Camara, leg. 177a, exp. 6, discusses pawned clothing in a general store (*estanco*). For a recent work on pawning in Mexico City, see Marie Francois, "Cloth and Silver: Pawning and Material Life in Mexico City at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *The Americas* 60:3 (2004):325-29.

[32] Report of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo, Mexico City, 1 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms., 1358, fols. 96-98; and Report of Padre Fray Francisco Sánchez, Mexico City, 26 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fols. 163-64v.

[33] Michael C. Scardaville, "Alcohol Abuse and Tavern Reform in Late Colonial Mexico City," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 60:4 (1980):647; Solange Alberro, "Bebidas alcohólicas y sociedad colonial en México: un intento de interpretación," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 51:2 (1989):354-56; and José Jesús Hernández Palomo, *La renta del pulque en Nueva España, 1663-1810* (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1979), 55-79.

pulquerías regularly committed sins of the flesh, including mortal sins like sodomy and incest. Visitors to *pulquerías* sought out illicit affairs with women, sometimes even committing rapes in their drunken rampages.[34] The indigenous peoples and others among the urban poor, according to these clerical accounts, felt no shame because alcohol numbed their senses and removed their sense of dignity.[35]

Church officials who wrote tracts regarding native drunkenness imagined a simpler time when indigenous peoples had self-respect, behaved, did not abuse pulque, dressed in fine clothing, and used their money to express their faith through good works for the church. They contrasted this imaginary past with contemporary indigenous peoples who "walked naked and scorned in this city, neglected to care for their children and wives and had lost their desire to work."[36] Even when indigenous peoples did work, their wages went straight to pulque and not to support their families, the critics argued. Pulque made indigenous peoples less productive.[37] Pulque ruined families, they contended, suggesting that beyond denying women and children monetary support, it also caused women to flee their drunken husbands who were prone to beat them.[38]

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[34] Taylor, *Drinking*, 65, 92-97. Taylor largely disputes the notion that a direct connection existed between drinking and criminal activity.

[35] Report of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo, Mexico City, 1 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fols. 93v-97v, and BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fols. 119-24. Clergy also reported that pulque led natives to relapse into idolatry, which echoes observations from sixteenth-century sources like Fray Juan de Zumárraga. Sonia Corcuera de Mancera also addresses the topic in *El fraile, el indio y el pulque: evangelización y embriaguez en la Nueva España, 1523-1548* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991), 57, 111.

[36] Report of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo, Mexico City, 1 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms, 1358, fols. 95-95v. Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*," 226, discusses this "discursive strategy" used by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora that lauds and exalts indigenous peoples for their glorious past achievements, yet at the same time decries the miserable condition of natives in the present. This was a common motif used by seventeenth-century creoles.

[37] Indigenous peoples allegedly regularly missed work on Monday, or "San Lunes" in popular parlance, because of excessive drinking. Indeed, Fray Agustín de Vetancurt mentions San Lunes in Ecclesiastical report on the abuse of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms., 1358, fol. 148. See also Leonard, *Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora*, 117-18; Sigüenza y Góngora, "Letter of Don Carlos," 245-47; and Sigüenza y Góngora, *Parayso Occidental*, prologue.

[38] Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men and Power in Late Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 70-111.

The clergy argued that the social environment of *pulquerías* broke down perceived "natural" animosities among ethnicities, or, as they called them, "*naciones*." Afro-Mexicans, *chinos*, mestizos, and indigenous peoples—traditionally natural enemies in the eyes of Spaniards—came together in solidarity in *pulquerías*.[39] In the words of one cleric, in the *pulquerías* those of different ethnicities "come together to drink, and in so doing become friends and brothers."[40] Following this line of reasoning, *pulquerías* enabled "unnatural" relationships to form. Group identity was forged among those who had little in common, making *pulquerías* dangerous places where those so inclined could foster sedition. Thus, the clergy concluded, these dangerous social spaces provided the ideal environment for the urban poor to hatch the plot of 8 June 1692.

Sigüenza y Góngora echoed this view, suggesting that even though indigenous peoples made up the bulk of the rioters, the non-indigenous involved were those who "frequent[ed] the *pulquerías*."[41] Others noted that *pulquerías* often harbored and even brought together all manner of vagabonds (*gente vagabunda*) who "came together to conspire." Once united, these groups then allegedly prowled the streets with their newfound friends "to commit robberies and other crimes, even to plot to riot."[42]

The bishop of Antequera, in his post-riot comments, took these arguments beyond the role of *pulquerías* and placed the blame squarely on native drunkenness. He drew on Saint Augustine to connect the riotous behavior of the indigenous peoples and the abuse of alcohol. His letter universally and clearly blamed riots, brawls, quarrels, assaults without cause, the breakup of homes, and the inability to reason, on those who "call the tavern their home and whose only desire and active

While Stern's comments relate to the late colonial period, his illustrations of domestic violence tend to support the assertions made here.

[39] Report of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo, Mexico City, 1 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms., 1358, fols. 94v, 114, 122-23, 136v, 146-46v, and 148. These sections include the arguments of six ecclesiastical authorities, including the well-known author of *Teatro Mexicano*, Fray Agustín de Vetancurt.

[40] Report of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo, Mexico City, 1 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fol. 94v.

[41] Sigüenza y Góngora, "Letter of Don Carlos," 259.

[42] Ecclesiastical Report on the Problem of Pulque and Pulquerías, Mexico City, July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fols. 121v-22.

pursuit is to toss back a drink."[43] Others followed his lead, suggesting that pulque facilitated the corruption of the soul, and thus made it easier for the devil to make pacts with indigenous peoples.[44] These arguments, which reemerged in the weeks following the riot during the summer of 1692, guided the thinking of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. They suggested a conclusion reached also by the viceregal government that *pulquerías* provided the space and pulque the bravado that caused the indigenous peoples and urban poor to rise up on 8 June 1692.

After the smoldering flames had been extinguished and the rioters had spent their fury, city leaders must have been thankful to have survived the uprising that many in Mexico City had feared for more than a century.[45] Initially, it seemed, judicial officials cared most about finding those responsible. The *audiencia* and a military tribunal (the *Auditor General de la Guerra*) initiated criminal prosecutions following the riot. The *audiencia* handled twelve cases, and the *auditor general*, under the guidance of the *audiencia*, adjudicated the first trial. In all, courts prosecuted eighty-nine suspected rioters (a small figure, given that it was reported that thousands filled the plaza during the height of the violence).[46] The summer dragged on, and the unfortunate few apprehended by authorities (most often for possessing stolen property) paid dearly for their misfortune; yet, despite having interviewed hundreds of suspects and witnesses, judicial and ecclesiastical authorities could not answer even their own most basic questions about why the uprising occurred.

The official discourse articulated by viceregal and ecclesiastical officials on native abuse of pulque as a major cause of the riot does not fare well when examined in light of the criminal trials. Of

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[43] Report by the bishop of Antequera, Mexico City, 14 July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fols. 105-06v.

[44] Ecclesiastical report on the problem of pulque and *pulquerías*, Mexico City, July 1692, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358, fol. 126v.

[45] Gonzalo Gómez de Cervantes, *La vida económica y social de Nueva España al finalizar del siglo XVI*, ed. Alberto María Carreño (Mexico: José Porrúa y Hijos, 1944 [1599]), 98.

[46] Guthrie, "Riots in Seventeenth Century Mexico City," 104, provides an estimate of 30,000, but probably overstates this as he does the population of the whole city. The documents rarely discuss the size of the crowd or quantify specifically its size but do contain qualitative and vague expressions to indicate an uncountable mass of large size like "muchedumbre." Testimony of Bartolomé del Castillo, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 2, exp. 1, fol. 3; and Viceroy to the king explaining the uprising, Mexico City, 30 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 1, exp. 1, fols. 2v and 7v.

the eighty-nine defendants who faced criminal charges in the summer of 1692, only ten mentioned pulque or *pulquerías* in their statements.[47] This is particularly striking because inebriation could serve as a mitigating circumstance in the Spanish judicial system by making unclear the premeditation of a defendant's actions.[48] By this logic, defendants had an incentive to claim that drunkenness had caused them to participate. In addition, as the viceroy pointed out, the festival of Corpus Christi brought great revelry to the city and presumably more than the normal supply of pulque as well.[49] These two factors made it likely that many witnesses would have mentioned pulque in their testimonies and all the more striking that few did.

The first trial involved Melchor de León, an indigenous choir singer in the chapel of Monserrate, who mentioned pulque in his deposition before a court scribe. He claimed that he arrived in the plaza highly intoxicated the afternoon of the uprising. Wandering towards his home, he claimed the noise (a howling roar few failed to notice) drew him to the plaza. He explained that he did not understand the commotion he found. In his disoriented state, he unwittingly became involved in the riot. He stated:

> I was drunk and I saw that many natives were climbing up to the balconies [of the royal palace] and because I was drunk and the devil had tricked me, I climbed up

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[47] Pulque is mentioned in the following trials: Criminal trial of Josef de los Santos, Mexico City, 30 June-20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 4; Criminal Trial of Melchor de la Cruz, and others found wounded in the hospitals, Mexico City, 13 June-26 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num.1, ramo 5; Criminal trial of Antonio de la Cruz and others apprehended in the uprising, Mexico City and Xochimilco, 12 June-20 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8; and Criminal trial of Melchior de León Felipe, Nicolás de la Cruz, and Francisco Gregorio, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15. Though only four documents are mentioned here, multiple individuals were prosecuted in each case, except in the trial of Josef de los Santos.

[48] Taylor, *Drinking*, 65, 92-95, 104-05. The use of the defense that indigenous litigants were not trustworthy because of their drinking habits was an old and common feature in court cases. Cristóbal Pérez, *procurador*, to the *audiencia*, Mexico City, 13 May 1596, AGN, Tierras, vol. 58, exp. 7, fols. 452-53v; and Juan Caro, *procurador*, to the *audiencia*, Mexico City, 16 June 1562, AGN, Tierras, vol. 2729, exp. 20, fols. 299-300.

[49] Linda Ann Curcio, *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 112-15.

too and they [the palace guards] apprehended me.[50]

While León may indeed have stated quite accurately the events as they unfolded, he also, with this statement, tried to lessen his criminal responsibility by implying that his drunkenness affected his judgment. He chose to climb the balconies because he was intoxicated, not because he had malicious intentions. His story suggests that he did not even have sufficient command of his judgment to understand the circumstances that surrounded him in the minutes before his arrest.

A co-defendant in the same case, Francisco Gregorio, an indigenous muleteer, similarly mentioned pulque in his testimony. Gregorio claimed that he too had simply been walking through the plaza on the afternoon of 8 June. Despite the noise and chaos, his senses deadened by inebriation, Gregorio barely noticed the uprising at all. Confused and stumbling, Gregorio claimed in his testimony that he did not understand why the palace guards arrested him.[51] He freely admitted spending the day in a *pulquería* and stated that when he was seized he was already very intoxicated. To him, this Sunday afternoon was like any other. Like his co-defendant León, Gregorio must have presented an easy target for the overwhelmed palace guard. He probably did not have, in his inebriated state, the coordination or strength to put up much resistance when the guards seized him.[52]

These two defendants perhaps hoped to use their state of mind as a mitigating circumstance. The court, however, ignored their inebriation. Gregorio and León, among the first four convicted rioters, were both found guilty of participating in the uprising. A firing squad dispatched León on 11 June, just three days after the palace guards had taken him into custody. Gregorio died in prison of unspecified wounds sustained either during his apprehension or interrogation. The court sentenced his corpse to be hanged with the three others executed on 11

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[50] Declaration of Melchior de León, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fol. 3v. Cope also mentions the noise of the plaza. Cope, *The Limits*, 142.

[51] Declaration of Francisco Gregorio, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fols. 4v-5.

[52] Declaration of Francisco Gregorio, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fol. 4v. From the perspective of the palace guards, drunken men like León and Gregorio probably presented appealing targets. They certainly posed less of a danger than the sober members of the crowd who may have carried stones or knives and had full command of their senses.

June.[53]

It is difficult to discern whether others who were prosecuted in the summer of 1692 knew that the defense strategy adopted by these first litigants had failed. Possibly, rumors spread among the prisoners that others had attempted and failed to convince the courts that intoxication was a viable mitigating circumstance. The incarcerated, though sometimes isolated, did find ways to communicate with others who also awaited prosecution. Court scribes may also have been in a position to ignore, deemphasize, or advise defendants of the ineffectiveness of this legal strategy.[54] There was some skepticism and cynicism about this particular excuse as well among judicial officials in Mexico City. As stated in one letter, "there have always been natives and others who drank pulque, but there has never been an indigenous riot."[55] Native abuse of pulque was not new. This riot, however, was unlike anything anyone could remember having ever seen before. Neither in the initial depositions nor confessions by Gregorio or León did scribes press them to explain the role of *pulquerías* in the planning of the uprising. Officials did not even question these two indigenous men about the possibility of a *pulquería* plot, even though they admitted freely that they had been in *pulquerías* just prior to the outbreak of violence and had been apprehended intoxicated in the midst of the affair.

Mention of pulque and *pulquerías* appears in a separate series of prosecutions that involved those who had sought medical treatment following the riot. Francisco Miguel, a manual laborer, claimed that he had been in a *pulquería* in the hours before the uprising.[56] Miguel had passed the afternoon in one of these drinking establishments in the indigenous barrio of San Pablo (located to the southeast of the main plaza). When he heard the noise of the riot, he claimed to have dutifully

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[53] Sentence of Melchor de León, Felipe de la Cruz, and Nicolás de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fols. 8-8v.

[54] Michael C. Scardaville discusses the legal expertise of *escribanos* in "Justice by Paperwork: A Day in the Life of a Court Scribe in Bourbon Mexico City," *Journal of Social History* 36:4 (2003):981-82. The inquisitors accused their prisoners of signaling others incarcerated with them by knocking audibly on their cells. Criminal accusation against Antonio Caravallo, Mexico City, 1648, AGN, Inquisición, v. 409, exp. 2, fols. 338v-39.

[55] Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the King, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1.

[56] Criminal trial of Melchor de la Cruz, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 5.

gone straight to the plaza to protect the merchandise of his employer, a market vendor with a stall in the plaza. He claimed to have been exceptionally intoxicated (*sumamente embriagado*) when he arrived. As he guarded his employer's merchandise, he was struck by a bullet and subsequently made his way to the hospital in search of treatment.

In no way does Miguel's story indicate that he participated in a larger plot. Though he stood accused of participating in the riot, Miguel forcefully maintained his innocence. In this case, however, unlike that discussed above, the court ignored much of what Miguel had said and focused on his claim that he had been in a *pulquería* immediately prior to the riot. Officials asked him directly how he had planned, with the aid of others in the *pulquería*, the burning of the plaza and looting of the market. He responded that he did not know anything about any such plan and that he did not participate in the uprising.[57] Miguel died of his wounds in the hospital on 18 June before he made his final confession. Even though he maintained his innocence, on 19 June the court decreed that his body be hanged on the gallows and his head put on a pike in the main plaza of the city.[58]

Josef de los Santos, a shoemaker and the alleged leader of the uprising, also mentioned pulque in his confession. De los Santos described his activities of that afternoon. He left the procession of Corpus Christi around one o'clock and walked to the barrio of San Juan Moyotlan with the ultimate aim of visiting a chapel in that part of the city.[59] On the way, he ran into some friends, other shoemakers, and he had his afternoon meal with them. In describing the situation, de los Santos mentioned that they ate pork and drank pulque. His mention of pulque seems no more significant than the mention of what he ate. There is nothing to suggest that he attempted, as León and Gregorio had, to use his consumption of pulque as a mitigating circumstance. He made no mention of inebriation, or that pulque impaired his judgment or clouded his thinking—he simply drank pulque as part of the afternoon meal.[60] While the justices in charge of the de los Santos case

[57] Declaration of Francisco Miguel, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 5, fol. 12.

[58] Sentence of Francisco Miguel, Mexico City, 13 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 5, fol. 44.

[59] 8 June 1692 was the Sunday of Corpus Christi, one of the more dramatic ritual occasions on the festival calendar. Curcio, *The Great Festivals*, 113-15, 146-47, discusses its significance.

[60] Declaration of Josef de los Santos, Mexico City, 30 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, núm 1, ramo 4, fols. 3v-5.

suspected him of leading the revolt, calling him a "caudillo" in the denunciation, they did not follow up on his reference to pulque nor did they ask him about *pulquerías*. The court clearly wanted to know how the riot was organized and planned, but oddly they refrained from broaching the subject of *pulquerías* with de los Santos, whom they assumed had planned the entire affair.[61]

The possibility of a *pulquería* plot did, however, derive from actual testimony articulated by Felipe de la Cruz, a thirty-year-old indigenous shoemaker. Soldiers seized him during the height of the riot. He explained in his own defense that he had acted responsibly and loyally on the night of 8 June, arriving in the plaza for the noble purpose of defending his mother's market stall where she sold tomatoes. He arrived well after the violence began. When pressed by his interrogators to explain the wounds on his body and to elaborate upon the question concerning "who were the leaders and where did they plan [the uprising]," de la Cruz surprisingly gave them a straightforward and detailed answer.[62]

Natives, de la Cruz asserted, planned the riot, hatching an elaborate plot in the *pulquerías* of the city. A resident of the barrio of Tomatlan, de la Cruz initially heard about the plot months before from a group of unskilled indigenous sugar porters (*cargadores de azucar*). This group, from which de la Cruz tried to distance himself, met in the Pulquería de la China, located in his neighborhood. In an unusual turn, he named and provided detailed descriptions of the two leaders,

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[61] Criminal trial of Josef de los Santos, Mexico City, 30 June-20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 4. Sonia Corcuera de Mancera has observed that cultural factors contributed to the demand for pulque among the natives of Mexico. As a social, ritual, and festival drink, pulque, like wine or brandy in the Iberian world, played a cultural role in indigenous and Hispanic society in Mexico City. During a season of drought and a blighted corn crop, indigenous peoples may have turned to pulque for reasons of health for the essential nutrients it offered. Corcuera de Mancera, *El fraile*, 17-39, 43-68; Sonia Corcuera de Mancera, *Del amor al temor: borrachez, catequesis y control en la Nueva España, 1555-1771* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 7-11; and James Lockhart, *The Nahuas After the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth Through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 154, 168-69. See also Kevin Terraciano, *The Mixtecs of Colonial Oaxaca: Ñudzahui History, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 265-72; Alberro, "Bebidas alcohólicas," 352-53; Hernández Palomo, *Renta*, 1-21; and Taylor, *Drinking*, 57.

[62] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fols. 6-6v. The spelling of the name Felipe has been modernized from Phelippe, as it appears in the document.

Agustín Fiscal and Juan Chino, who allegedly masterminded the plot. De la Cruz testified that these two planned "with others to try to set fire to the palace beginning first with the students [of the university]."[63] A regular *pulquería* customer, de la Cruz stated that a month later in the Pulquería de Semomache he ran into the same group of natives who were drinking and again discussing the plan to burn the plaza. This second encounter with the alleged conspirators led him to look for any sign of these men as he defended his mother's tomato stand. He claimed in his testimony that on the night of 8 June, he saw Juan Chino setting fire to the palace door and the market stalls in the plaza.[64]

Despite the summer-long manhunt, judicial officials found no Juan Chino or Agustín Fiscal. It also appears that judicial officials did not believe the exonerating details in de la Cruz's story. Instead, they took his knowledge of the conspiracy to suggest he had a hand in the plot. They asked skeptically:

> how could you say that you were not one of the rioters [*tumultuarios*] if you attended these meetings referred to in the testimony and how could you be a loyal vassal and not notify the authorities [of such meetings]?[65]

De la Cruz provided a series of responses that did not satisfy the court. At the end of the testimony, the scribe wrote, "He was questioned, and re-questioned and re-questioned and re-questioned," but added nothing germane.[66] De la Cruz did include a bit of nonsense, perhaps sensing the frustration of his questioners, stating that during the height of the uprising "he passed near the balcony of the royal palace carrying a staff and dancing the *tocotín*."[67] The court, without further investigation,

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[63] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fols. 6-6v.

[64] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fols. 6-6v. Silva Prada, *La política*, 271-72, makes reference to this testimony as well, providing a complementary interpretation of the events.

[65] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fol. 6v.

[66] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fol. 6v. The original text reads: "otras preguntas y repreguntas y repreguntas y repreguntas."

[67] Confession of Felipe de la Cruz, Mexico City, 11 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 15, fol. 6v. The *tocotín* was a native dance. A particular style of music associated with it emerged in the seventeenth century and spread to Europe.

apparently regarded the details provided by de la Cruz as a ruse designed to lead the investigation astray. While the justices generally remained silent about the nature of their deliberations, the sentence indicates that they did not find de la Cruz's explanations particularly convincing. Felipe de la Cruz received a capital sentence and was executed on 11 June.

As the investigation continued through June, those who mentioned *pulquerías* in their statements were sometimes asked to comment further on the allegation that the riot was part of a plot hatched inside these largely indigenous spaces. Antonio de la Cruz, his brother Francisco Nicolás, and others were arrested several days after the riot, 12 June, in the city of Xochimilco for possessing stolen property. Antonio de la Cruz and his brother were both natives born in Texcoco but residents of Mexico City in the barrio of Tlatilco, located near the *ermita* of San Salvador.[68] Witnesses described Antonio de la Cruz as an "*indio prieto*," presumably because of his dark complexion. Physically, others remarked on three features: his diminutive stature, slight build, and ominous-looking mole or skin blemish on his right cheek. He and his brother, Francisco Nicolás, both served as laborers in Mexico City, describing their employment as unskilled porters (*cargadores*).[69]

Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás initially mentioned that they had joined the crowd without knowing its purpose as it moved

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Serge Gruzinski and Nathan Wachtel, "Cultural Inbreeding: Constituting the Majority as a Minority," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39:2 (1997):235-36. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz mentioned the rise of a "Tocotín mestizo" as observed by Gruzinski and Wachtel, who further point out that by 1680 this dance and music had been exported to Iberia.

[68] Declaration of Antonio de la Cruz, Xochimilco, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 2v and 5v. The *escribano* misspelled a Nahuatl word, repeating multiple times "Tlasquac," which is not one of the barrio subdivisions of Mexico City. The *ermita* of San Salvador, however, is located in Moyotlan, one of the four barrios of San Juan Tenochtitlan, located in the southwestern corner of the city. While this could be Mixcoac (to conform with the general sound), it is more likely the *tlaxilacalli* (ward or sub-barrio) of Tepetitlan or Tlatilco or possibly Necatitlan, relative to the description. This reconstruction was aided by the excellent maps available in Alfonso Caso, *Los barrios antiguos de Tenochtitlan y Tlatelolco* (Mexico: Academia Mexicana de la Historia, 1956). Susan Schroeder discusses the term *tlaxilacalli* in *Chimalpahin and the Kingdoms of Chalco* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 144-57.

[69] Declaration of Antonio de la Cruz, Xochimilco, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 4-4v; and Cope, *The Limits*, 158-59, esp. tables 7.3 and 7.4.

toward the main plaza of the city from the barrio of San Juan Moyotlan.[70] In their confessions, given days later, both admitted having been in a *pulquería* immediately prior to joining the crowd, though they suspiciously omitted this detail in their first statements. They were asked directly, "on Sunday, the eighth of this present month, where did you eat and what did you hear said," to which Antonio de la Cruz responded that "he ate in the Pulquería de Bernal and that he had heard no one say anything [relevant to the question]."[71] His brother Francisco responded to the same question: "he ate and then remained in the *pulquería*."[72] Many in this group were asked, perhaps because they as unskilled porters matched the description provided by Felipe de la Cruz on 10 June, if they had heard anyone in the *pulquerías* discussing plans to burn the plaza.[73] Antonio de la Cruz remarked in response, "even though [I was] in some *pulquerías* where I went to drink, I did not hear anyone say anything [about burning the plaza]." His brother, in a separate confession, confirmed that he too had heard nothing about an alleged plot.[74]

These brothers had an incentive to reveal as little as possible but in reality gave the courts a great deal of information. In their confessions Antonio and Francisco apparently thought that they needed only to explain the stolen property the *corregidor* found in their possession. To that end, they related that on 9 June, the day after the uprising, it was common knowledge that investigators were searching for those who possessed stolen goods. They had buried clothing they had "saved" from the burning plaza in a pit and had left an accomplice, Pedro Antonio, to guard the loot. But it was not secure, and his cousin, Salvador de la Cruz, took possession of it and gave it to them as they

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[70] Declarations of Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás, Xochimilco, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 2-7v. Moyotlan was the central barrio of the *parcialidad* (municipal division) of San Juan Tenochtitlan and also the location of its principal market.

[71] Confession of Antonio de la Cruz, Mexico City, 17 June, 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 22-22v.

[72] Confession of Francisco Nicolás, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 24-24v.

[73] Confessions of Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 22, 24, 25, and 28.

[74] Confessions of Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 22v and 24v.

made their way to Xochimilco, where they were apprehended.[75] Though they provided great detail and appeared to reveal all that they knew, including the names and locations of people who helped them, the courts still felt they did not cooperate.

The prosecutors must have concluded that Antonio and Francisco told this story to cover a more sinister plot, but their statements suggest otherwise. When individuals did not cooperate, they usually said next to nothing. Unlike reluctant witnesses, Antonio and Francisco revealed many incriminating details concerning what they had done on the afternoon of the uprising, certainly enough to hold them accountable for participating. They confessed to possessing stolen property, hiding it from officials, and transporting it out of town. They also revealed the names of those who aided them, and provided physical descriptions and, in one instance, the neighborhood of residence for an accomplice. They also answered questions regarding their presence in the *pulquerías*. All of this detail seems to indicate that they cooperated willingly with viceregal officials. It seems unlikely that they would have revealed so many details if they had been seeking to deceive investigators. In the end it mattered little. Prosecutors did not believe their testimonies, and the court sentenced them to die on the gallows on 20 June 1692.[76]

Officials also asked others prosecuted with Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás about the possibility of a *pulquería* plot. Diego Dionisio, a free mulatto silk weaver from the barrio of San Juan, sat for questioning twice with a scribe, once on 16 June and again on 17 June. In his first interrogation, the court did not ask him about *pulquerías* directly. They simply tried to establish his location and activities during the riot. Unlike Antonio and Francisco, Diego Dionisio was evasive and curt with his answers, providing few details. The scribe did not believe he answered truthfully during the first interrogation and asked him the same questions multiple times, stressing, "speak the truth" each time. The scribe concluded what must have been an extensive and frustrating interview by stating that "more questions were directed at

[75] Confessions of Antonio de la Cruz and Francisco Nicolás, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 21v and 23v.

[76] Sentences of Cruz and Nicolás, Mexico City, 20 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fol. 38. Eric Van Young discusses confessions in *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 115-25.

the witness and to all he said only what he already said."[77] Effectively Dionisio parried all attempts by the scribe to challenge his original story that he had spent the afternoon at the "*comedias*" (secular theatrical performances), and ran home to check on his wife, Antonia de Sacramento, when he heard the noise from the plaza.[78] In his second deposition, the scribe asked the question, "who set the fire and had he heard anyone plotting in a *pulquería* or other place and if so, say who they were?" To this, Dionisio responded that he was not in the plaza or in a *pulquería* but instead had spent the afternoon working, thus contradicting his earlier story that he was at the *comedias*.[79] Though the court sometimes used torture or the threat of torture to pressure defendants like Dionisio who seemed to withhold information or who provided inconsistent testimony, it did not do so in this instance. Instead, the scribe declared his testimony the truth, sworn properly, and ratified. Perhaps the urgency of the moment saved Dionisio from further interrogation because in the end he escaped punishment.

Another declaration in this same case by Antonio de los Reyes, an indigenous laborer from the notorious neighborhood of Mexico City called San Andrés Tepito, mentioned pulque extensively.[80] Though apprehended on the road to Xochimilco with Francisco Nicolás, Antonio de la Cruz, and Diego Dionisio, he did not have any acknowledged association with the others in this group. Nevertheless, he and his wife, who was traveling with him, ended up in the jail of Xochimilco with the others apprehended by the *corregidor*. De los

[77] Declaration of Diego Dionisio, Mexico City, 16 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 14-15v.

[78] Declaration of Diego Dionisio, Mexico City, 16 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 14-15v.

[79] Confession of Diego Dionisio, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 25-25v. For the literature on *comedias* in New Spain, see the classic work by Hildburg Schilling, *Teatro profano en la Nueva España fines del siglo XVI a mediados del XVIII* (Mexico City: Imprenta Universitaria, 1958); and Giovanna Recchia, *Espacio teatral en la Ciudad de México, siglos XVI-XVIII* (Mexico: Centro Nacional de Investigación Teatral Rodolfo Usgli, 1993), 23-25, 35-37. See also Richard Boyer, "Honor among Plebeians: Mala Sangre and Social Reputation," in *The Faces of Honor: Sex, Shame and Violence in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Lyman L. Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 153-55.

[80] For more on San Andrés Tepito and its reputation, see Ernesto Aréchiga Córdoba, *Tepito: del antiguo barrio de indios al arrabal* (Mexico City: Sábado Distrito Federal, 2003); James Garza, *The Imagined Underworld: Sex, Crime, and Vice in Porfirian Mexico City* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Pablo Piccato, *City of Suspects: Crime in Mexico City, 1900-1931* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 35-38; and Cope, *The Limits*, 36-38.

Reyes had in his possession woolen cloth that the *corregidor* presumed he had stolen from the plaza during the riot. Reyes claimed that his child's godfather had purchased this cloth for his daughter María and that he had possessed it for more than a month. The scribe, apparently setting aside the issue of the stolen property, asked him about the role of *pulquerías* in the riot of 8 June. Though he admitted having been in a *pulquería* on that day, Reyes denied that he had heard about a conspiracy or plot. His credibility was augmented by his choice to reveal an embarrassing situation. Though married to Micaela de Jesús, he admitted to the scribe that he had spent the evening of 8 June in the pueblo of Coyoacan, a town then several leagues south of Mexico City, "in the company of a mestiza *pulquera*."[81] In his final confessions, when he was asked at whose house he had been in Coyoacan, he replied, that of "María Viuda," an indigenous woman, presumably the same woman classified as a "mestiza" in his earlier testimony.[82]

Antonio de los Reyes denied repeatedly that he had participated in the riot, but like others who gave testimony, many questions remained unanswered. The scribe, referring to the obvious wound he had on his nose, asked him "where and who punched or clubbed him [*golpe o palo*]." Reyes responded that he "fell on the floor [in the *pulquería*] where 'they' [other patrons] mistreated him."[83] A convenient excuse but strangely the court did not investigate the story further. The mysterious indigenous woman, María Viuda (literally "Widow Mary"), was never tracked down and asked to testify to corroborate Antonio's testimony. Indeed, the court did not bother to interview *pulqueras* at all to determine if they had heard rumors of a plot. The prosecution preferred speed above all else.[84] In the end, the court absolved Reyes and released him on 19 June 1692, despite his possession of allegedly stolen property.[85]

The massive retribution against those apprehended in the riot

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[81] Declaration of Antonio de los Reyes, Xochimilco, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 9-9v.

[82] Confession of Antonio de los Reyes, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 28v-29v.

[83] Declaration of Antonio de los Reyes, Xochimilco, 12 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 9-9v, and 28v-29v.

[84] Charles R. Cutter addresses the nature of evidence in *The Legal Culture of Northern New Spain, 1700-1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 121-24.

[85] Confession of Antonio de los Reyes, Mexico City, 17 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 8, fols. 38-40v.

complicated the position of the viceroy and *audiencia*.[86] The 1692 uprising inspired a rare outburst of judicial violence. Such a response, though not unprecedented, illustrates the gravity of the uprising in the minds of viceregal officials.[87] The *audiencia* ordered and then carried out fifteen executions, fourteen of which took place between 11 June and 27 June 1692; the last trial, concluded on 21 August, brought to "justice" the alleged "caudillo" or ringleader, Josef de los Santos. The paucity of evidence upon which the courts convicted these men made the harsh sentences all the more troublesome.[88] Five of those issued capital sentences died of wounds sustained during the riot. Eleven natives, two mestizos, one free mulatto, and one Spaniard were hanged or shot. Their ages ranged from seventeen to sixty, and all were men. The court ordered the public display of all those executed. Most had their heads removed by the executioner (*verdugo*), an indigenous man named Juan Josef, after they had died "naturally" on the gallows.[89] The executioner then placed the heads on tall pikes in the main plaza (the site of the riot), the plaza of San Juan (in the *parcialidad*, or district, of

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[86] William Ian Miller, *Humiliation: And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 74-79. Miller argues that state violence is violence all the same, though "clothing violence in legitimacy [of state sanction] makes it hard to recognize. The presumption of legitimacy given to the state, for example, makes state violence almost invisible." Quotation drawn from page 74.

[87] Criminal trials of all apprehended in the uprising, Mexico City, 9 June-20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramos 3-15; and *Audiencia* review of the criminal trial of Bartolomé de Amesquita, Mexico City, 5 July 1692 (trial), 1721 (judicial review, Madrid), AGN, Criminal, vol. 75, exp. 1, fols. 67v-68. Several other trials from 1692 and 1693 are reviewed in this inquiry. See also Cope, *The Limits*, 154-55, especially Table 7.1. For the other major riot that resulted in multiple capital offenses in Mexico City, see María Elena Martínez, "The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61:3 (2004):479-81.

[88] Royal Order criticizing the free use of torture by the *audiencia*, Madrid, 30 December 1694, AGN, Criminal, vol. 72, exp. 3, fols. 13-20; and General Inspection (*visita general* and review of criminal trials,) Madrid, 1721, AGN, Criminal, vol. 75, exp. 1-2, fols. 1-340. Both cases, the first from 1694 and the second from 1721, address the issue of judicial process and punishment and both consider cases from 1692 associated with the riot.

[89] The "boiler-plate" in the sentences states that the prisoner "be hanged until he dies naturally." See, for example, Sentence of Antonio del Castillo and accomplices, Mexico City, 18 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 11, fols. 13v-14. Those who died of their wounds and were sentenced post mortem were Francisco Gregorio, who died in prison, Bernardo Domínguez de Esparragoza, Francisco Miguel, Domingo Josef, and Gaspar de los Reyes who died of their wounds in either the Hospital Real de los Indios or the Hospital de San Juan de Dios.

San Juan), or the plaza of Santiago Tlatelolco (in the *parcialidad* of Tlatelolco). The first three executed, Melchor de León, Felipe de la Cruz, and Nicolás de la Cruz, were hanged on the gallows by their arms because they had already been shot at point-blank range in the head. In addition to the first gruesome executions, the *audiencia* courts also ordered other extreme exemplary sentences like that of Manuel de la Cruz, who was hanged and then had his body burned to ash in an open fire next to the gallows because he refused to admit his culpability even after the court had tortured him.[90]

In addition to the executions, the *audiencia* carried out most of the sentences in two large public processions held on 18 and 27 June. Reminiscent of the inquisitorial "Auto de Fe," those found guilty and sentenced to corporal punishment and public shame were marched through the streets of Mexico City. Designed as public events supposedly to demonstrate the authority of the viceroy and the institutions of the Crown, officials paraded the majority of those sentenced through the main thoroughfares of the city. Thirty-eight of the convicted rioters and looters received between one hundred and two hundred lashes as their sentence. Of those whipped, twenty also received sentences to labor terms in the city's workshops (*obrajes*) or bakeries (*panaderías*), or were sent to work in the mines or sugar mills (*ingenios*) in its environs. Those exclusively sentenced to be shamed publicly (*vergüenza pública*) also marched in these processions. Those to be whipped, men and women alike, were stripped of their shirts as they paraded through the streets. All of the convicted had their crimes and sentences read by a public announcer (*pregonero*).[91]

In human and economic terms, the riot had calamitous consequences. Some observers in the city estimated the total physical damage, taking into account the cost of repairs, at $4,000,000 pesos.[92] The city also lost major sources of revenue. The municipal government drew around $15,000 pesos annually from renting retail space in the main plaza.[93] The flimsy wooden *cajones* that the city rented out all

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[90] Sentence of Manuel de la Cruz, Mexico City, 25 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 5, fols. 53v-54.

[91] Criminal Trials of all apprehended in the uprising, Mexico City, 9 June-20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramos 3-15.

[92] Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the King, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1.

[93] Viceroy to Regidor don Pedro Jiménez, Mexico City, 17 August 1695, AHCM, Alcaicería, vol. 343, exp. 1, fols. 1-5v; and Feijoo, "El Tumulto de 1692," 666.

burned in the fire. In addition, the city lost the revenue generated from its monopoly on the pulque trade.[94] The human casualties amounted to more than two hundred dead or wounded.[95]

Viceregal officials and the clerical elite harbored prejudices about indigenous abuse of pulque and enacted laws to restrict the pulque trade just six weeks after the uprising on 24 July 1692. The conde de Galve's decree stated that "no person of any ethnicity, condition or disposition has permission to import, sell, have in their house under any pretense...the said beverage [pulque]."[96] Such clear language was augmented by the threat of the stiff penalty of two-hundred lashes and the possibility of seizure of property. One year later Galve reconfirmed the original order, despite protests from well-to-do Spaniards who had purchased the right to import pulque.[97] Such legislation by decree had a profound effect on how officials and others remembered the riot. Pulque, by late 1693, appeared in official discourse as the principal reason why indigenous groups had caused the riot. In conjunction with the legislation that ordered indigenous groups to relocate to the towns where they had originated, these narratives reduced the complexity of the riot to simple problems with which

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[94] Viceregal Order prohibiting pulque, Mexico City, 24 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 63, fols. 65v-66; Viceregal Order reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1693, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, ramo 27, fols. 1-3v; Regal Order on the pulque tax, Madrid, 23 September 1670, AGN, Reales Cédulas, vol. 11, exp. 106, fols. 303-04v; *Ayuntamiento* reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 20 January 1694, AHCM, Rastros y Mercados, vol. 3728, exp. 2, fols. 24-26; Viceregal Order on the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 7 July 1693, AHCM, Pulquerías, vol. 3719, exp. 2; and Hernández Palomo, *La Renta*, 67-85.

[95] Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the king, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1. There are a number of reports of the dead. One official stated that thirty-six bodies were buried in the cathedral cemetery. Testimony of don Luis Sánchez de Tagle, Mexico City, 20 June 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 19, fol. 39, reported that officials found twelve bodies in the otherwise empty plaza the next morning.

[96] Viceregal Order prohibiting pulque, Mexico City, 24 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 63, fol. 66.

[97] The clerical perspective can be seen in Collection of documents concerning the prohibition and permitted use of pulque, Mexico City, 1671-1788, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1358. For the legislation prohibiting pulque after the riot, see Viceregal Order prohibiting pulque, Mexico City, 24 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 63, fols. 65v-66; Viceregal Order on the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 7 July 1693, AHCM, Pulquerías, vol. 3719, exp. 2; Viceregal Order reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1693, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 27; and also Scardaville, "Alcohol abuse," 657 n. 64.

officials had already dealt.[98]

Viceregal and ecclesiastical officials traditionally regarded *pulquerías* in Mexico City as dangerous and social places reserved exclusively for the urban poor. In the imaginations of colonial officials, *pulquerías* provided potential opportunities and space for those already inclined toward such behavior—the devising of criminal plots.[99] In the aftermath of the uprising in 1692, governmental and clerical elites skillfully used the commonly held belief that *pulquerías*, and indigenous drinking in general, contributed to the disorder by causing otherwise orderly groups to rise up. Such an explanation relieved officials from the burden of addressing potential links between the uprising and deeper social problems.

The courts and other viceregal inquests had difficulty determining what exactly had motivated the uprising on 8 June 1692. They failed to find many who admitted participating, and, despite the efforts of the militia, judicial officers, and palace guards, could not explain credibly the reason for the outburst of violence. Those who were apprehended either did not possess the information or carefully guarded the details that might have helped explain the breakdown of order, even under oath and likely aware that judicial officials liberally utilized torture to obtain confessions. Trial testimony does indicate that officials failed to act in a timely manner and made costly missteps (e.g. the *corregidor* allegedly striking and injuring or killing an indigenous woman in the granary and the palace guard firing indiscriminately into the crowd from the rooftops) during the late afternoon just before the fires began to consume the plaza. Suspects who appeared in the trials, not surprisingly, provided few satisfying or useful answers when interrogated.

Viceregal, ecclesiastical, and judicial officials created their own explanations that differed significantly from the testimonies of those interviewed during the investigations. Useful and self-interested rationale provided by officials cloaked their often embarrassing and generally incompetent responses that came out in the trials. The voices

[98] Viceregal Order reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1693, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 27. Cañeque, *The King's Living Image*," 230, observed that the trade was restored in 1697. The trade was restored several years later but only when officials realized they could not stop the contraband.

[99] Gibson, *The Aztecs*, 409, ends his work with the statement, generated following the prejudices of colonial officials that colonial indigenous peoples were "prone to drunkenness." Taylor effectively explains why such officials should not be taken at face value in *Drinking*, 28-45.

of the rioters, though potentially a powerful discourse, were buried deeply in trial testimony. Officials carefully crafted responses packaged in readable treatises to provide an accessible series of explanations for the uprising to counter and provide context for the voices of witnesses and defendants in the trials. This clarity contrasted sharply with the trials that included multiple testimonies and require careful reconstruction to understand.

The story that emerged from official narratives, in contrast to the details from the trials, suggests that those who came to the aid of the viceroy made competent decisions and decisive actions that restored order. For example, the militia was represented as bravely ending the threat of further violence while Sigüenza y Góngora saved the municipal archive. This discourse, using the common perception that indigenous peoples acted irrationally when they consumed pulque, provided a simple explanation that had a simple solution.[100] Thus, no deep social or political problems existed in Mexico City, and bad government did not cause the urban poor or indigenous communities to

[100] Taylor, *Drinking*, 28, 37-41; Ordinance prohibiting the fabrication and sale of *aguardiente de Maguey*, Mexico City, 7 January 1631, AGN, Ordenanzas, vol. 4, exp. 160, fol. 163v; Civil lawsuit, wine merchants against the *ayuntamiento* for the right to sell wine outside the *traza*, Mexico City, 5 November 1571-11 December 1571, AGN, Civil, vol. 921, exp. 7, fol. 30-32v; and Ordinance restricting Spaniards from selling pulque, Mexico City, 3 July 1620, AGN, Ordenanzas, vol. 4, exp. 16, fol. 17. More than a century of discourse against pulque supported such claims and ordinances repeatedly identified pulque as a cause of violence and disorder. By 1692, the discourse on pulque was practically a cliché. Corcuera de Mancera, *Del amor al temor*, 10-17, 203-08; Hernández Palomo, *La renta*; and Taylor, *Drinking*, 41-45, 97. For the broader literature on pulque and in colonial Mexico, see Scardaville, "Alcohol Abuse," 654-71; Corcuera de Mancera, *El fraile*; and Henry J. Bruman, *Alcohol in Ancient Mexico* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000). Thierry Saignes, ed., *Borrachera y memoria: la experiencia de lo sagrado en los Andes* (Lima: Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 1993), provides a discussion on general native drinking. The ordinances can be found in *Recopilación de leyes de los Reinos de las Indias* (Madrid: Consejo de la Hispanidad, 1943), 2:197-98, libro VI, titulo I, ley xxxvii, "Sobre la bebida del pulque." For the specific rulings and decrees, see Viceregal Order to enforce prohibitions against adulterated pulque, Mexico City, 13 September 1653, AGN, Indios, vol. 17, exp. 1, fols. 1-17; Reaffirmation of Viceregal Order prohibiting the importation of pulque into Mexico City, Mexico City, 3 July 1693, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 123, fols. 117-17v; and Viceregal Order prohibiting pulque, Mexico City, 24 July 1692, AGN, Indios, vol. 32, exp. 63, fols. 65v-66. Viceroy Galve was a zealous champion of moral reform and may have wished to extend the prohibition to unadulterated pulque blanco before the riot. Some of his moral reforms are addressed in Viceroy to the king, founding of Casas de Recogimientos for prostitutes, Mexico City, 18 August 1692, AGI, Audiencia de México, leg. 60, ramo 4, num. 18 (not foliated); and Silva Prada, *La política*, 22, 230-31.

reject the viceroy and his ministers. Even if they were mistaken, officials could count on the natural inclination of the urban poor to long for order and thus work to preserve the peace—especially after the machinery of justice and violence had dispatched a sufficient number of "rioters."[101]

Colonial officials identified areas where they could prevent future riots through legislation. They banned the import of pulque into the city and extended the ban even after those who controlled the pulque trade objected.[102] Officials forced natives living in the city center to return to the communities to which they owed tribute, or to matriculate into the tribute rolls of an indigenous community.[103] In addition, officials sought to bolster the importation of corn, taking extreme measures to ensure an adequate supply.[104] Perhaps this played well in Sevilla before the Council of the Indies—bold action designed to restore order—but it probably did nothing to salve the open wounds rent by the violence of 8 June or the judicial response that followed.[105]

Pulque served as the direct means used by viceregal officials in their campaign to explain the riot as an irrational outburst without deeper significance. Uncovering an actual conspiracy against the Crown or viceregal government could only have damaged those charged with explaining the uprising politically. Suggesting the uprising was a simple reaction by a crowd composed of those deprived of their senses by free-flowing pulque and influenced by a handful of malefactors, on the other hand, gave viceregal officials problems to solve and made it unnecessary for the Crown to hold officials with

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[101] Carlos Rubén Ruiz Medrano, "'Alevosos, ingratos y traidores, ¿queréis sacudir el yugo del monarca más católico?' El discurso de la contrainsurgencia en la Nueva España en el siglo XVIII," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 87:3 (2007), 485-89; and Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 118-24.

[102] Viceregal Order reaffirming the prohibition of pulque, Mexico City, 28 June 1693, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 27.

[103] "Sobre los inconvenientes," 1-34.

[104] Corn imported into Mexico City by order of the viceroy, Mexico City, 20 August 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 20.

[105] *Ayuntamiento* report addressing disorder in the City, Mexico City, 28 March 1696, AHCM, Rastros y Mercados, vol. 3728, exp. 4, fols. 79-82; and Cope *The Limits*, 44. Fear inspired by exemplary punishment, officials likely hoped, in conjunction with the natural condition of order that characterized the city, would keep the peace. Not surprisingly, urban groups in Mexico City rose up again, on a much smaller scale, in 1696.

authority responsible for allowing the uprising to occur.[106] Well-established anecdotal principles already existed in New Spain that complemented this explanation, which made clear connections between indigenous behavior and the abuse of pulque. The courts therefore only infrequently inquired about the possibility of a *pulquería* plot. The trial records make clear that officials who promoted the notion that *pulquerías* served as meeting places for the plotting of an elaborate conspiracy made allegations drawn not from the experiences of those apprehended in the summer of 1692, but from a priori assumptions about the nature of indigenous behavior. Ecclesiastical and political officials in Mexico City, therefore, turned to pulque as a convenient social ill which they could use to absolve themselves of accountability. There was much to explain in the aftermath of this destructive uprising. These particular explanations emerged from the flames of the plaza, because the viceregal and ecclesiastical bureaucracies were far more interested in providing a plausible explanation than an accurate one.[107]

[106] Connell, "Emerging Ladino Spaces," 248-71; and Feijoo, "El Tumulto de 1624," 65-70. Letter from "The Most Loyal Vassals of Your Majesty" to the king, Mexico City, 6 July 1692, AGI, Patronato, leg. 226, num. 1, ramo 25, carta 1, mentions the fate of those involved in the major uprising of 1624. For document-based accounts of the riot and its consequences, see Marqués de Gélves, account of the uprising of 1624, Mexico City, 16 February 1624, BNM, Fondo Reservado, ms. 1037, fol. 310; and Marqués de Gélves, account of the uprising, 14 January 1625 (copy), AGI, Patronato, leg. 223, ramo 1, exp. 7, fols. 1-9v.

[107] Ruiz Medrano, "'Alevosos, ingratos y traidores...'" 488-89, and Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, 118-24, address the reestablishment of order following a disturbance.