

# Group Threat and Policy Change: The Spatial Dynamics of Prohibition Politics, 1890–1919<sup>1</sup>

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The authors argue that group threat is a key driver of the adoption of new and controversial policies. Conceptualizing threat in spatial terms, they argue that threat is activated through the joint occurrence of (1) proximity to threatening groups and (2) the population density of threatened groups. By analyzing the adoption of county and state “dry laws” banning alcohol from 1890 to 1919, they first show that prohibition victories were driven by the relative strength of supportive constituencies such as native whites and rural residents, vis-à-vis opponents such as Irish, Italian, or German immigrants or Catholics. Second, they show that threat contributed to prohibition victories: counties bordering large immigrant or urban populations, which did not themselves contain similar populations, were more likely to adopt dry laws. Because threat arises between interactions at the local (county) level, policy change at the higher (state) level is not reducible to the variables driving local policy.

## INTRODUCTION

How does group threat shape the adoption of new and controversial policies? Drawing on theories of collective action and racial/ethnic threat, we bring new empirical analyses to bear on this question. Using data that are

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unique in their extensive coverage of the spatial environment, multiple political scales, and long historical period, we make three claims about policy change. First, we show that policy change is driven by the strength of underlying demographic groups that oppose or favor the policy. Second, we argue that threat is a major component of policy change. Specifically, we contend that demographic changes that challenge the economic, political, and cultural standing of established groups encourage widespread mobilization and support for new policies to maintain or restore group status. Third, threat arises primarily from interactions between spatially proximate units at the local level (in our case counties), and therefore higher-level policy change (at the state level) is not reducible to the variables driving local policy. This work thus lays the ground for an understanding of policy change that results not only from the properties of individual political units but also through interaction with neighboring units.

We examine these claims through an analysis of the legislative victories (“dry” laws) of the U.S. prohibition movement. The prohibition movement emerged out of, and alongside, other progressive movements such as the abolition and women’s suffrage movements (Timberlake 1963; Paulson 1973; McCammon and Campbell 2002). Prohibition became increasingly distinct as it moved from a persuasion-based movement, based on mutual support groups and teetotal pledges, to an increasingly sophisticated political movement with specific policy goals (Rosenthal et al. 1985). Like many other social movements, prohibition had a complex history with multiple leaders, constituencies, organizations, and strategic approaches. For example, prohibitionists used moral suasion, the establishment of local reform associations, disruptive and confrontational protest, “single issue” endorsements of candidates, and third party politics. Although early waves of temperance mobilization emerged by the 1820s, we focus on 1890–1919 when the movement intensified its legislative efforts and saw most of its political successes. Often characterized as a failed experiment now, when national prohibition was passed in 1919 it was seen by many as the beginning of a new era of unprecedented morality and economic prosperity. Even after its repeal in 1933, prohibition’s impact on social and cultural practices was enduring; per capita alcohol consumption did not reach preprohibition levels until the 1970s (Kyvig 1979; Rochon 2000; Blocker 2006). While the prohibition movement is an important case in its own right, the long historical period, large geographic scope, and multiple political scales in which the movement operated make it ideal for advancing our understanding of policy change. Here, we examine the fun-

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damental demographic constituencies and conflicts underlying the movement and its opponents.

### THREAT IN MOBILIZATION AND POLICY CHANGE

Threat is a central driver of collective action and policy change. We understand threat broadly to encompass economic, political, and cultural threats to established groups. Race and ethnicity scholars have long held that threat is central to the formation and maintenance of group boundaries and individual attitudes and identities. Although threat has been downplayed in much of the dominant theorizing of collective action and political sociology, scholars have rediscovered threat in recent years to explain patterns of mobilization. We draw insights from these two major strands of theory and scholarship (race and ethnicity) to examine how threat drives policy change. Then, we show how a spatial conception of threat, combined with a novel analytic strategy employing spatial analysis, can improve our understanding of threat and policy change.

### Threat in Studies of Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity scholars have documented the ways that threat operates in the construction of group boundaries, the formation of collective identity and group solidarity, and mobilization to defend or advance group interests. Foundational insights can be traced to Blalock's (1967) focus on the relative size of ethnic and racial groups and Barth's (1969) attention to "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (p. 15). This focus on group size, composition, and boundaries challenged expectations that prejudice and ethnic conflict would decline with increasing intergroup contact and has found broad support across numerous settings (Quillian 1996; Semyonov, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006; King and Weiner 2007).

Key debates have focused on the extent to which threat is primarily economic, political, or cultural and whether threats are symbolic or linked to real individual or group interests (Olzak 1992; Bail 2008; Wimmer 2008; Fox and Guglielmo 2012). Although the dominant conception of ethnic competition theory focuses on economic resources, the core insight can be extended beyond labor market settings (Carroll and Hannan 1989; Pinard and Belanger 1991). For example, Koopmans and Olzak (2004) find that the immigrant groups in Germany that are least likely to compete with native Germans for jobs are targeted in right wing violence (see also Brader, Valentino, and Suhay 2008; Schneider 2008; Hopkins 2010). Thus, perceptions of threat respond not only to the size of threatening populations but also to culturally constructed understandings of ethnic distinctiveness.

Threat in Studies of Collective Action

Dominant theories of collective action have paid little attention to threat, focusing instead on preexisting organization and political institutions. In distancing themselves from earlier collective behavior theorists (Turner and Killian 1987), others conceptualized threats as either insufficient to explain mobilization (McCarthy and Zald 1977) or a constant (McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998). This is despite foundational work highlighting both opportunities and threat (Tilly 1978).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, scholars have begun to pay considerable attention to threat as a primary factor driving collective action.

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Van Dyke and Soule (2002), for example, identify a macro strand of collective behavior theory focusing on the way strain, grievances, and threats (both real and perceived) can mobilize solidaristic groups through preexisting organizations and identities (see also Opp 1988). They distinguish this approach from the microlevel tradition in which actors were characterized as psychologically distressed and socially isolated. Although the micro tradition has not held up under rigorous analysis (Snow and Oliver 1995; Klandermans 2004), the macrolevel approach has fared much better and finds empirical support in recent work (Useem 1980; Wood and Hughes 1984; Jenkins, Jacobs, and Agnone 2003; Snow, Soule, and Cress 2005; McVeigh 2006).

Snow and his colleagues conceptualize threat in terms of quotidian disruptions—threats to “the taken for granted routines and attitudes of everyday life” (1998, p. 1). This perspective identifies central mechanisms by which threat leads to collective action. For example, as social, economic, and political resources become, or are perceived as, more scarce, collective action is more likely. Further, Snow et al. argue that violations to one’s sense of privacy, safety, and control are crucial. The insight is borrowed from Goffman’s argument that humans operate with a “culturally elastic zone of privacy and control regarded as out of bounds to the uninvited, strangers, and corporate and governmental agents” (Snow et al. 1998, p. 8). Changes that are seen to violate this sphere often extend to family, neighborhood, and community, and these can facilitate the growth of collective action. Conflicts over siting decisions are clear illustrations, such as the placement of homeless shelters near schools and neighborhoods. Moreover, siting conflicts reveal the fundamentally spatial basis of threat-based mobilization.

Some of the most important efforts to examine debates about threat and collective action have focused on white supremacist movements (Andrews 2002; McVeigh 2006, 2009; Cunningham and Phillips 2007). However,

<sup>2</sup>Scholars have examined threat in the political process tradition, but this has been limited primarily to protest and repression dynamics (Brockett 1993; Koopmans 1993; Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Useem and Goldstone 2002; Almeida 2003; Karapin 2011).

threat is not limited to racist or right-wing movements. For example, in a study of protest by homeless advocates in U.S. cities, Snow et al. (2005) show that protest was more likely in cities with more expensive housing, higher unemployment, manufacturing decline, and greater poverty (see also Opp 1988; Gordon and Jasper 1996; Johnson and Frickel 2011). The implication is clear that we should salvage the macrostructural aspects of threat and incorporate these insights more fully into sociological theories of mobilization and its consequences.

### Space, Scale, and Threat

Although there is a crucial interpretive process (Gerteis 2007), we argue that spatial-demographic patterns can reveal the social forces that trigger threat-based mobilization and broader political changes.<sup>3</sup> Threat as understood by scholars of race and collective action implies a spatial analysis with attention to boundaries and territorial conflict. However, scholars have paid little attention to the social organization of space, which is integral to the construction of group boundaries, mobilization strategies, and policy change (Sewell 2001). By incorporating an analysis of space, we argue that threat is activated through the joint occurrence of (1) proximity (or exposure) to threatening groups and (2) the population density of threatened groups.

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Collective action flows through spatially organized patterns of interaction (Tilly 2000; Sewell 2001). Spatial density (or isolation) may facilitate mobilization by providing relatively safe areas in which to develop a critical mass of activists (Zhao 1998), reducing the costs of communication and coordination (Walker 1969) and contributing to the development of space-based cultures of solidarity (Fantasia 1989). Actors seeking to promote reforms maneuver to leverage spatially constituted opportunities and compensate for weaknesses elsewhere (Gould 1991; Mintrom 1997; Dochartaigh and Bosi 2010).

Because threats are often constituted by disruptions to everyday life (Snow et al. 1998), spatial proximity (or exposure) may increase threat (Dixon 2006) and therefore threat-based mobilization (Barth 1969; Cunningham and Phillips 2007). Figure 1 illustrates this key insight by representing different spatial configurations of threatening and threatened groups in relation to one another. The figure contains four hypothetical spatial arrangements of threatening and threatened groups. Shaded squares represent units with a greater share of threatening groups. Considering the center square as the focal unit, we expect the likelihood of successful policy change within

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<sup>3</sup> Snow et al. identify two other ways that threat leads to collective action—major accidents and “dramatic changes in structures of social control.” We suspect that these are less relevant to sustained mass movements like prohibition than the two factors we discuss in the text.

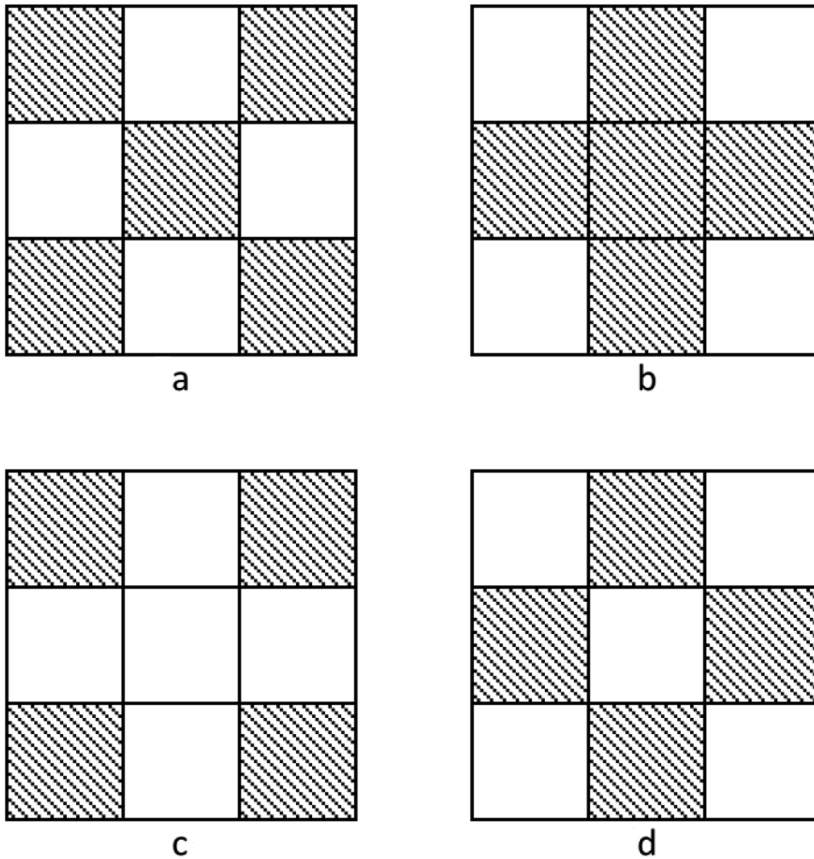


FIG. 1.—Spatial threat and antagonistic groups. Four hypothetical spatial arrangements (*a-d*) of threatening and threatened groups. Shaded squares represent units with a greater share of threatening groups.

the focal unit to be greater as we move from one panel to the next. The focal units in *a* and *b* contain threatening groups that should resist restrictive policy changes. We expect policy change to be more likely in *b* because the proximity of threatening groups will encourage stronger mobilization by native groups in the focal unit. For panels *c* and *d*, the focal unit should be more likely to adopt policy than in *a* or *b* because it has a smaller share of threatening groups. We expect that the focal units in panel *d* should be more likely to adopt the policy than in *c* because *c* combines a large constituency surrounded by neighboring units with greater threatening groups.

Contemporary and historical examples provide support for this expectation regarding proximity. In her study of late 19th-century anti-vice cam-

paigns, Beisel argues that potent movements emerged where elites faced “pressure from a large and politically powerful immigrant working class” (1990, p. 58). However, threat was articulated culturally as concerns about the safety of children’s social environment. Beisel points to several strategies including efforts to close skating rinks that promoted the “promiscuous mingling of all classes” and sending children away to elite boarding schools (p. 58). More recently, Tepper examined protest about art and culture in U.S. cities between 1995 and 1998, finding that recent increases in the foreign-born population had the strongest influence on protest activity. Tepper argues that “protests over art and culture typically originate from local concerns and grievances, target works that are produced and/or disseminated locally, and play out in local venues” (2011, p. 260).

We argue that density and proximity interact to shape the likelihood of threat, mobilization, and policy change. Thus, we expect that political units with homogenous threatened groups and high levels of exposure to threatening groups in neighboring units will be the most likely to adopt policies. This insight has received initial support in studies of racial and ethnic mobilization. For example, in an analysis of white antibusing protest, Olzak, Shanahan, and West (1994) show that cities with higher levels of racial isolation before desegregation began and greater exposure to minority groups after had more extensive protest (see also Biggs and Knauss 2012). At the same time, because contact is necessary for quotidian disruption, it follows that threat operates most powerfully at the local level and is less central as a direct mechanism of change at spatially larger (e.g., state and national) levels.

### Synthesis

Threat is an important catalyst for the mobilization of groups. Our synthesis of prior theory and empirical results indicates that threat is often actuated at the local level, even when it spurs national or state-level politics. Threat therefore becomes a mechanism driving local mobilization and policy change. Yet scholarship on the policy implications of threat has been lacking. We now turn to an empirical analysis of the prohibition movement, which provides an excellent case in which to examine these dynamics because similar laws banning alcohol were passed at county, state, and national levels.

### TEMPERANCE AND PROHIBITION IN U.S. HISTORY

Prohibition is one of the largest, longest running, complex, and influential movements in U.S. history. With its emergence in the 1820s, the temperance movement formed one of the “first national social movements in the United States” (Young 2002, p. 660). Skocpol, Ganz, and Munson’s (2000) study

of civic associations shows that temperance organizations were among the first movement organizations to mobilize a large national membership base. Temperance mobilization unfolded in several distinct “waves.” The movement’s earliest phase began in the northeast, was led by the American Temperance Society, and had strong religious foundations. Temperance advocates relied on a diverse set of strategies and targets including tracts to affect moral suasion, but the central organizing device became the “teetotal” pledge through which individuals abstained from drinking wine, beer, and liquor. The second upsurge of temperance mobilization peaked in the 1850s, enjoyed much greater mass support, and was led by organizations that emphasized mutual benefit and solidarity. The early movement also directed most of its energy toward churches and the conversion of individuals rather than directing action toward state-orientated goals (Young 2002).

The Civil War stalled temperance reform, which did not begin to recover until the 1870s. During the 1870s and 1880s the largest and most important temperance organization was the Good Templars, similar to the fraternal orders of the time (Fahey 1996). In the 1870s, women took a more central role in the leadership and direction of the movement. This turn was set in motion during the Women’s Crusades of 1873 and 1874, when women in 911 communities in 31 states used marches and direct action to close down saloons (Blocker 1989, p. 77; Pegram 1998, p. 58). Founded in 1874, the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) became the driving force in the movement until the 1890s (Blocker 1989). The WCTU pursued many issues alongside prohibition, including women’s suffrage, but this expansive agenda diluted its temperance message. McCammon and Campbell (2002), for instance, note that the WCTU often partnered with the women’s suffrage organizations but almost always to work on suffrage, rather than prohibition. Throughout this period temperance advocates were constrained by the efforts of the national political parties to contain prohibition as a local issue and prevent its divisiveness from undercutting party loyalty. The WCTU attempted to work around this problem by forging alliances with the Prohibition Party, but this strategy dissolved in the mid-1890s and was never very effective (Blocker 1989).

While there were minor political victories in the early temperance movement, the bulk of the movement’s policy successes occurred between 1890 and 1919—culminating with the establishment of national prohibition. These years saw a great increase in the number of states and counties adopting prohibition legislation. This success is often credited to the sophisticated political tactics of the Anti-saloon League (ASL). Founded in 1893, the ASL was organized as a professional interest group relying on paid staff with minimal representative democracy. Abandoning the expansive and more radical agenda of the WCTU and the third-party strategy of the Prohibition Party, the ASL focused narrowly on the issue of prohibition and pri-



oritized the concerns that motivated the relatively cautious middle-class constituency for temperance (Kerr 1985; Szymanski 2003*b*). The ASL developed their organizational model and strategy in Ohio during the 1890s, countering the more diffuse and radical strategies of the WCTU and Prohibition Party (Kerr 1985). By engaging supporters with moderate tactics and goals, the ASL laid the foundation for the more radical goals of state and national prohibition.

The national strategy of the ASL was to focus first on the county level, then on the state level, and finally on the national level. The idea was that as the majority of a state's counties went dry, the state would then follow suit, until a quorum of states was reached, at which point the entire country would go dry. As one leaflet from the Michigan ASL put it, "No state has recently adopted state-wide prohibition until half its territory was 'dry' by 'local option.' . . . When enough counties in Michigan go 'dry' Michigan will have state-wide prohibition. . . . When nineteen more states go 'dry' we will have national prohibition. . . . Your votes, your money, your influence, count for a 'dry' county, a 'dry' state, a dry nation" (Boyer 1916, pp. 588–89). This strategy of "local gradualism" was distinct from earlier efforts to directly reform state-level laws and had its roots in the more organic Southern experiments with local laws (Szymanski 2003*b*). Through its publications, the ASL projected its territorial accomplishments by displaying the large numbers of dry counties and the spatially concentrated basis of the liquor industry (Boyer 1992, p. 205). Beginning in 1913, emboldened by local victories, the ASL made the move of pursuing a national constitutional amendment (Blocker 1989).

While organizations were important players in the development of the movement, the legislative successes of these organizations ultimately rested on the motivation and efficacy of their constituent populations. We now turn to a discussion of those groups, their motivations, and the social changes that gave rise to them.

### Immigration, Ethnicity, and Race

The most influential explanation of prohibition sees it as a reaction by native whites to new immigrant groups, particularly Germans but also the Irish (Gusfield 1963; Timberlake 1963; Lantzer 2009). The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed massive waves of immigration from central and southern Europe. Although the percentage foreign-born did not change dramatically between 1860 and 1920 (hovering around 14%), the settlement pattern of new immigrants was highly uneven and closely connected to many other changes occurring in society, including industrialization and urbanization (Daniels 2002, p. 125). Moreover, multiple decades of immigrant settlement produced rich communities with "a vibrant 'alternative

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culture' of work and leisure in which the saloon and the enjoyment of strong drink figured prominently as symbols of community and autonomy" (Pegram 1998, p. 88).

In his classic sociological account of the prohibition movement, Gusfield (1963) argued that the temperance movement was a reaction of native whites to a Weberian status threat represented by new immigrant groups. Gusfield notes that temperance supporters were often tied to the Nativist movement, arguing that native white Protestants "sensed the rising power of these strange, alien peoples and used temperance legislation as one means of impressing upon the immigrant the central power and dominance of native American Protestant Morality" (p. 7).

Conceptions of ethnic threat were fundamentally spatial and linked to potential sources of group contact. Prohibition advocates pressed for laws that would constrain saloons, including their proximity to schools and churches, thereby minimizing "quotidian disruptions." In many cases, proponents revealed the link between their support for prohibition and perceptions of immigrant groups. For example, the *Chicago Tribune* argued that "enforcement of a Sunday-closing law [was] necessary to prevent 'the German conquest' of the city" (Higham 1955). Similarly, prohibition supporters in Indiana targeted the "continental Sabbath" as part of immigrant's "beer garden civilization" (Lantzer 2009, p. 27). In Iowa, the *Des Moines Register* told German opponents of prohibition: "If you do not like this country and its people, the world is full of other countries to which you can go" (Gjerde 1999, pp. 292–93). Immigrant groups responded in turn, arguing that prohibition laws suppressed long-standing cultural traditions. As Pegram found, "many immigrants saw no reason to adopt the stern Puritan tradition of 'a dead Sunday, with the silence of a graveyard and bare of any joys of life'" (1998, p. 99). Figure 2 shows how this political division between immigrants and native whites in Michigan manifested itself in a strong negative spatial correlation between counties that had adopted dry laws and counties with a high proportion of Irish, Italian, and (especially) German immigrants.

Although this argument about ethnic threat and status conflict is highly influential in scholarship on prohibition, the hypothesis remains contested. Blocker (1989), for example, notes that some immigrants mobilized in support of temperance and prohibition (see also Rumbarger 1989). Unfortunately, most of the evidence comes from the statements of national prohibition leaders and organizations (Gusfield 1963; Clark 1976; Pegram 1998) rather than the state and county levels where prohibition was primarily fought over. What is lacking, then, is a systematic comparative analysis across states, counties, and time periods.

There is a parallel debate on whether prohibition was motivated by racial threat, especially in the U.S. South. Some scholars have argued that prohi-

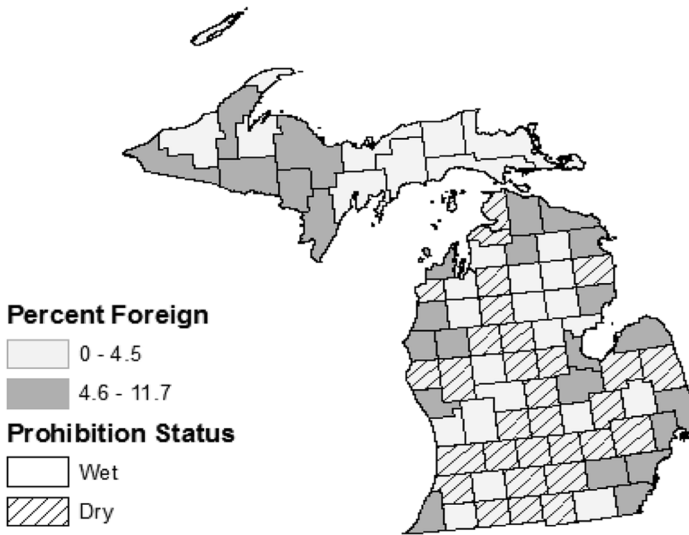


FIG. 2.—Immigrant populations and prohibition status in Michigan, 1910. Spatial arrangement of those foreign-born (Germans primarily, but also Irish and Italian populations) and the prohibition status by county. Percent foreign category is mapped according to counties that were above or below Michigan’s mean level of 4.5% in 1910. Notice that no county above the mean level of foreign-born residents has adopted a dry law.

bition advocates appealed to the racist view of white voters in the South to generate support for local-option laws, but the historical evidence is mixed (Szymanski 2003a). Southern counties did, in fact, adopt prohibition laws earlier than most other regions. Timberlake argues that the roots of Southern prohibition were in fear of race conflict (1963, p. 120). However, Gusfield (1963), among others, argues that this was not primarily rooted in efforts to control blacks. Blocker argues that while Southern dries used racist arguments, racism was just as central to Southern wet arguments, and he adds that whites in areas with large black populations were among the least likely to support prohibition (1989, p. 107).

### Religion

Prohibition is often portrayed as a clash between different religious traditions. That religion should have played a significant role is unsurprising, given that the 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed major changes in the religious ecology of American communities (Christiano 1987; Land, Deane, and Blau 1991; Finke and Stark 1993; Finke, Guest, and Stark 1996; Kocak and Carroll 2008). The most striking of these changes is the simultaneous

growth in church membership alongside increasing diversity in religious organizations and identities (Kocak and Carroll 2008). The prohibition movement was one of a cluster of movements motivated by evangelical Protestantism—especially rooted in growing Methodist and Baptist congregations (Timberlake 1963). The early temperance movement emerged from Protestant churches, and its structure, development, and strategy was shaped by its religious foundation (Young 2002). Many of its leaders were themselves Protestant ministers, and Protestant churches played a key role in the organization of the movement (Gusfield 1963). Catholics, however, were largely resistant to prohibition, given the direct challenge to it posed to their religious practices (Panunzio 1932; Lewis 2007).

Organizationally, congregations comprised the local support base for temperance throughout its history, and this was critical for women's mass participation and leadership in the movement (Skocpol 1992; Clemens 1997). The ASL, for example, defined itself as "the Church in Action Against the Saloon," developing strong ties to local congregations and especially to the Methodist Church (Gusfield 1963; Kerr 1985; Blocker 1989, p. 109). Szymanski (2003*b*) argues that it was the single-issue, moderate focus of the ASL that allowed churches to become mobilized. ASL leaders traveled to churches to make speeches to generate financial and electoral support (Lantzer 2009). By contrast, religious leaders and organizations were deeply divided in whether or how to support the WCTU or Prohibition Party (Kerr 1985). But, Boyer (1992) argues that ASL leadership adopted a secular approach. As it has in many movements, religion played a dual role: shaping identities and orientations toward drinking and alcohol, while religious organizations facilitated mobilization and provided strategic and organizational templates (Kniss and Burns 2004).

There are three distinct arguments about the religious basis of prohibition support, although they lead to similar empirical expectations. First, much like ethnicity, religious traditions constituted collective identities that shaped understandings of group status and perceived threats to that status. As such, the rise of competing religious traditions, and especially the growth of Catholicism during this period, motivated Protestants to support prohibition as a way of resisting cultural changes (Gusfield 1963). Second, congregations constituted the primary site for mobilization and included established leadership, communication networks, and preexisting solidarities. Third, religious traditions were associated with distinct ideological bases for temperance support and opposition. The focus on self-discipline, individualism, and personal transformation was central to temperance discourse. In contrast, Catholicism and what have been called ritualistic traditions were more likely to resist prohibition as a threat to cultural tradition and religious practices (Lewis 2008). At the aggregate level, religious ecologies, like ethnicity and immigration, may have played a direct role, with

Protestant or pietistic religious adherents supporting the movement and Catholic, or ritualistic, adherents opposed. Simultaneously, ritualistic adherents may have been perceived as a threat by pietistic groups and thus motivated prohibition legislation indirectly.

### Urbanization

Scholars have linked the development of prohibition to underlying social and economic changes—most importantly to increasing urbanization. Approximately one-quarter of the U.S. population lived in places of 2,500 or greater in 1870, and by 1920 urban residents had risen to over half the population. The change was especially dramatic in the major cities; between 1900 and 1920 New York gained 2.2 million in population (Boyer 1992).

Urbanization may have aided the development of the temperance movement, as it has for many others, by concentrating organizational resources and facilitating group coordination. However, most historical accounts highlight the adoption of prohibition in small towns and rural areas and resistance to it in urban areas. Some prohibition measures were passed at the state or county level that contained an exemption for the cities in those areas (Cherrington 1920). Urbanization may have played a more pivotal role as a source of threat. Boyer (1992) and Monroe (2004) argue that prohibition and antiprostitution, as the two significant moral reform movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, were motivated by efforts to control the perceived vices of the city. Boyer notes that the ASL “directed its propaganda less against alcohol per se than against that quintessentially urban institution: the saloon” (1992, p. 205). Just as ethnic and cultural (religious) threat was spatial, prohibition’s advocates were motivated by perceived threats in nearby cities. For example, in 1905 the *South Bend Tribune* worried that “drinkers and ‘lewd women’ were migrating to South Bend” because of stricter alcohol enforcement in nearby Elkhart, Indiana (Lantzer 2005, p. 57).

The expected impact of urbanization is unclear. One reason is because urbanization was bound up with other demographic characteristics—immigration in particular was concentrated in cities. In fact, the ASL highlighted the connections between immigration, urbanization, and saloons in its communication to supporters. Gusfield argues that temperance was one way that rural elements sought to deal with the loss of prestige they experienced as a result of greater urbanization and notes that “major urban and industrial areas like Illinois, New York and Pennsylvania were the last to ratify the 18th Amendment” (1963, p. 103). Blocker (1989), however, found no support for the hypothesis of an urban-rural dynamic motivating temperance legislation. Accordingly, we examine whether urbaniza-

tion shaped patterns of prohibition adoption in our analyses below. The arguments around urbanization would lead us to expect that, similar to immigration and religion, urbanization played a dual role. First urban dwellers may have directly resisted prohibition efforts, while they may have motivated prohibition legislation through threat in nearby rural areas.

### Diffusion

Prohibition legislation may have also followed a diffusion process. Scholars have long studied the diffusion of policies (Walker 1969; Knoke 1982) and movement tactics (Tarrow 1998; Soule 2004). Legislative success may have diffused spatially, particularly across counties. As neighboring counties went dry, it may have increased activists' confidence that success was possible under local conditions, leading supporters to imitate their neighbors by pushing for prohibition. Prohibition could also have diffused as the grievances associated with alcohol increasingly spilled over to remaining wet counties. Leaders in dry counties may have pressured their neighbors to go dry because it was more difficult to enforce prohibition when neighboring counties were wet. Of course, it is also possible that having a dry neighbor was good for the local liquor business, and thus neighboring dry counties would have an inhibiting effect on further prohibition legislation.

### Summary

Historical scholarship on prohibition provides a strong basis for expecting that threat was a central dynamic in the adoption of new laws. However, there is considerable debate regarding the sources of threat. Ethnicity, race, religion, and urbanization all find some support in the historical records. Complicating matters further, the history of the movement shows that both state- and local-level contention were central to the success of the movement. With rare exceptions (Szymanski 2003*b*; Lewis 2008), these ideas have not been tested systematically or in relation to theories of political change. Thus, our analyses help to resolve significant theoretical and historical debates.

## ANALYTIC PLAN: MEASUREMENTS AND METHODS

### Measuring Prohibition

We measure the adoption of new laws that made the consumption, production, and sale of alcohol illegal at the state and county level using a data set collected by Robert Sechrist (1999). Drawing on published histories,

reports, and archival materials, the data document the presence or absence of state or county prohibition laws for each year from 1800 through the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919. The state-level data have been used as an independent variable in organizational studies of the brewing industry (Carroll and Swaminathan 1991; Swaminathan 1996; Wade, Swaminathan, and Saxon 1998; Hiatt, Sine, and Tolbert 2009), but scholars have not made use of the rich county-level data or used the data to trace the adoption of prohibition laws. We took several steps to check the county-level data against other available sources, and these efforts provide additional confidence. First, we compared the Sechrist data for all counties to the prohibition data published in the ASL yearbooks for 1910, 1912, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, and 1918 (Cherrington 1908–33). We found that 3.6% of county-years differed in their prohibition status between the Sechrist and the ASL reports. To track these errors in more detail, we then analyzed Michigan, where we had more detailed historical data yearly from 1890 to 1916 (Michigan Department of State 1917). Here we found that Michigan's county-years, similar to national data, differed in 3.6% cases between the ASL and the Sechrist data. Most important, however, we found that for almost all discrepancies either the Sechrist data were correct or the discrepancy was due to a reasonable difference in coding decisions (e.g., coding a county as going dry when the law took effect or when the vote took place). Overall we found discrepancies in 7 out of 687 county-years, for a roughly 1% discrepancy rate. Of these remaining 1% of discrepancies, it was unclear to us whether the Sechrist data or the historical records were in error. It is clear, however, that the Sechrist data are superior to the ASL data within Michigan, and thus the 3.6% discrepancy rate we found in the national data likely significantly overestimates the errors in the Sechrist data. We checked the state-level data against historical and primary sources and made a few minor changes to Sechrist's coding (Blocker 1976; Friedrich and Bull 1976).

We analyze the passage of prohibition at two different levels: county and state. At the county level our outcome is an indicator of whether a county was wet or had a local prohibition law. County laws were enacted after local elections; typically citizens would have to collect a set number of petition signatures to place prohibition on the ballot (Wooddy and Stouffer 1930).<sup>4</sup> Counties constrained by a state prohibition law were considered right censored in our models. At the state level, our outcome is the presence or absence of a state prohibition law. Certainly, case studies reveal more complexity and nuance than is captured by our measure. For example, enforcement mechanisms attached to the law varied across localities, and a

<sup>4</sup>Two states, Massachusetts and Arkansas, required localities to hold elections on an annual basis.

small number of wet counties had dry municipalities within them. However, the key advantage of our measure is that it allows for systematic comparison across a large number of states and counties over a long time period. Thus, we avoid the risk of selecting on dramatic, well-documented, or unusual cases. Moreover, the establishment of prohibition laws was a central and politically important goal of the movement.

During 1890–1919, 1,717 counties adopted dry legislation at least once, while 28 states were already or became dry. The maps in figures 3, 4, and 5 show the legal status of prohibition in 1890, 1900, and 1910, respectively. The overall proportion of counties covered by prohibition laws grows dramatically after 1903. Although the earliest temperance mobilization occurred in New England, the region lags behind all others in the establishment of legal restriction on alcohol. The maps reveal growing political victories in the Midwest through the 1890s and the strong support for prohibition in the South that is established in the first decade of the 20th century. The establishment of county prohibition experiences the longest period of sustained growth between 1896 and 1911. After 1911, the proportion of counties covered by local laws is supplanted with gains in the establishment of state prohibition laws.

#### Analytic Strategy and Model Selection

Modeling the onset of prohibition at the state and county level presents a number of methodological challenges. First, data are hierarchical—coun-

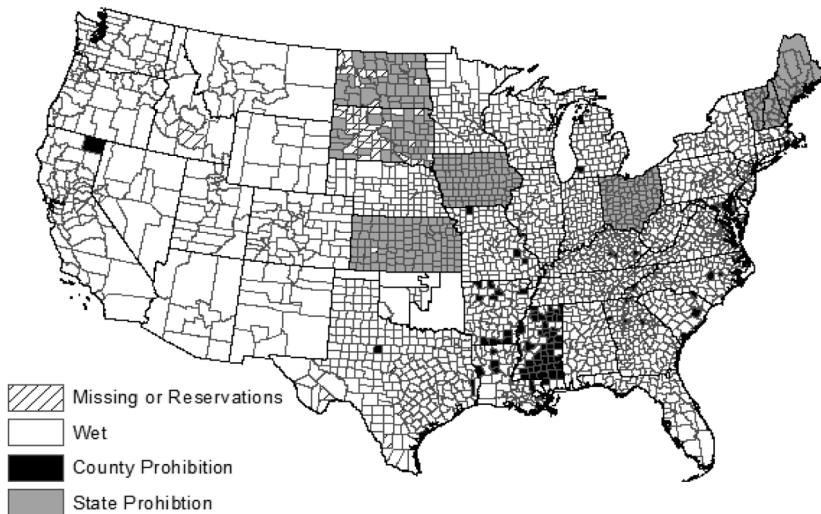


FIG. 3.—U.S. prohibition status, 1890



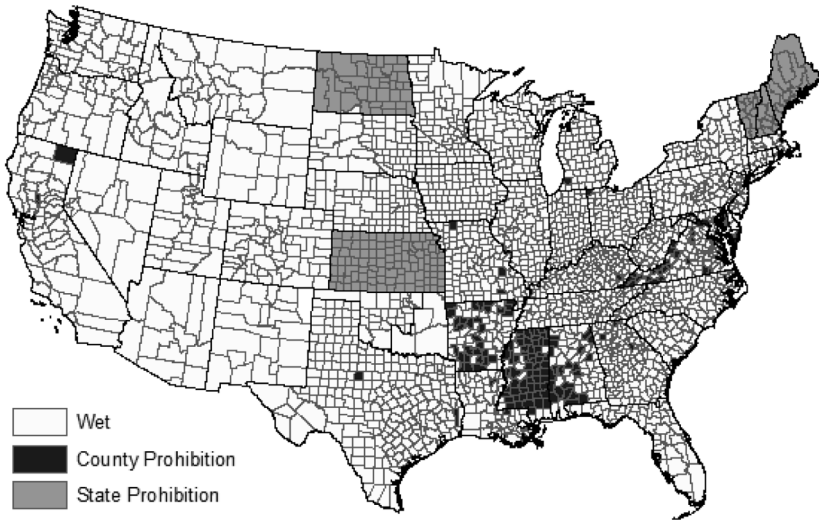


FIG. 4.—U.S. prohibition status, 1900

ties are nested within states. Nesting is important because counties could not vote on local dry legislation until their state had enacted “local-option” legislation. Furthermore, in states with local-option counties that could vote dry on their own, some counties became dry because the state went

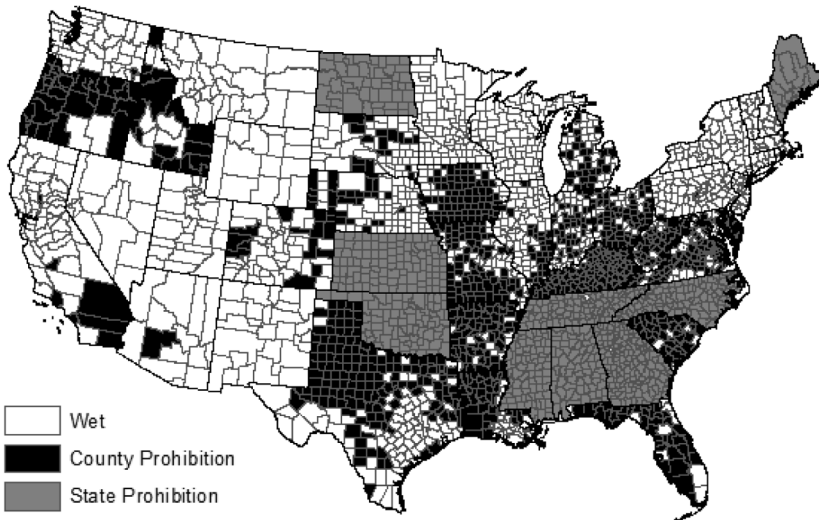


FIG. 5.—U.S. prohibition status, 1910

dry. While the dry outcome was the same, the determinants of these processes were at different levels. Second, data are also arrayed spatially, as figures 2–5 demonstrate. The “first law of geography” states that places that are close to one another are similar to one another, often in unmeasured ways, giving rise to spatially correlated errors (Tobler 1970). In addition, spatial diffusion processes may directly influence values of the dependent variable. These two considerations imply that standard errors in conventional regression models will be biased (Anselin 2007). Temporal aspects of dry legislation adoption are also important. The enactment of dry legislation is an event that generally only happens once—subsequent dry periods are of less interest than the initial policy transition since they generally follow automatically.<sup>5</sup>

Event history diffusion models are well suited to modeling processes such as these (Strang and Tuma 1993). Event history diffusion models are variants of survival models that also include weighted neighboring values of the dependent variable as a regressor (Allison 1984). Since we are interested in factors that may increase the risk of a state or county going dry, we are interested in the hazard rate,  $h_i(t)$ , for county or state  $i$  at time  $t$ —the probability that the county or state will go dry in the next year, conditional on not being dry already. We estimate the hazard via a discrete time logit model, and we estimate separate models for states and counties.<sup>6</sup> The state and county models can both be written as follows:

q5

$$\log\left(\frac{h_i(t)}{1 - h_i(t)}\right) = \alpha_i T_i + \beta X_{it} + \theta Z_t + \delta D_{it},$$

where  $i$  indexes counties or states respectively,  $t$  indexes time,  $X$  is a matrix of time-varying covariates,  $D$  is a matrix of weighted neighboring unit covariates,  $T$  is a vector of dummies for the number of years the unit is at risk,  $Z$  is a vector of time-invariant covariates, and  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\theta$ , and  $\delta$  are vectors

<sup>5</sup> Occasionally states and counties did revert to being wet after experimenting with dry laws; however, dry laws did tend to be self-reinforcing in that they removed bases of wet support and increased the morale of dry movement activists (Szymanski 2003a; Lewis 2008), making the onset of a dry law of primary importance. Specifically, 610 counties repealed their dry legislation. Of these, 352 reenacted dry legislation, 92 of these counties then repealed their dry legislation a second time, and 64 of those enacted dry legislation for a third time. We took two measures to ensure that the choice to model the first prohibition adoption was not driving our results. First, we include a dummy variable in our analyses for counties that eventually repealed prohibition. Second, we tried modeling the final, never repealed, prohibition transition with similar results.

<sup>6</sup> The county-level model is complicated by the fact that counties exit the risk set through two distinct pathways, when their state adopts prohibition or when national prohibition is enacted. State and county prohibition might be considered to be competing risks. As a robustness check, we also experimented with a competing risks model (Fine and Gray 1999). Results are similar.

of parameters to be estimated. Matrix  $X$  and vector  $Z$  contain within-unit covariates such as the percentage German-born immigrants in the county or state, while  $D$  contains weighted values for covariates in neighboring units: calculated as the average value of all counties/states bordering the county/state (in our case also weighted by within-unit values, which we explain below). We estimate both of these models via maximum likelihood in Stata 11. Because counties are clustered within states, we employ robust standard errors in the county model.

Observations begin contributing to the likelihood when units enter the risk set. We consider states to have entered the risk set in 1890 when our observation period begins. Because many important religious covariates are not available before 1890, we focus on 1890–1919. While this choice of period is admittedly due to constraints on available data, post-Civil War prohibition victories before 1890 were few and sporadic. Counties enter the risk set when their state adopts a local-option law making it possible for counties to vote dry. Dates when states adopted a local option were found in Cherrington (1920). When we could not find local-option laws in historical records, we estimated the adoption of the local option as the year the first county in the state adopts local prohibition, since it is unlikely that states would adopt the local option without at least one county agitating for the law—indeed in some states the majority of counties went dry the year the local option was instated. Before turning to our analyses, we describe the logic of our measurement of threat and our independent variables.

### Logic of Threat Analyses

Measurement of the impact of threat on legislation or collective action entails a particular difficulty. When groups both directly oppose legislation as well as motivate that same legislation through threat, effects cut both ways. Blalock (1967) argued that the effect of minority threat would be curvilinear, and thus one could test for it using a squared term in a regression model. Yet, we generally lack strong theory to specify, a priori, the shape of such a curve. Another strategy to measure threat would be to focus on dramatic changes in minority populations. Here again, there are problems in disentangling threat from other dynamics. Groups may migrate to areas perceived to be less hostile, but the influx may itself lead to greater hostility from native populations, as when blacks left hostile areas in the south to move north, these population shifts led to heightened conflict in the northern cities (Olzak 1992; Muller 2012). In addition, we lack a detailed measure of rapid changes in population because census data are at 10-year intervals.

Sidestepping the measurement problems noted above, scholars have measured threat through the size of threatening populations in neighbor-

ing counties (see, e.g., Tolnay, Deane, and Beck 1996; Cunningham and Phillips 2007). We take a similar approach by measuring the percentage of *threatening* populations in neighboring counties (or states), weighted by the percentage of the population within a county (or state) that would have been *threatened*. This measure makes for a better match with our theory than would a simple spatial lag of the threatening population, since we would not expect, for instance, a largely German county to be threatened by German neighbors.<sup>7</sup> Thus, to construct our threat variables we measure the percentage urban in neighboring counties/states multiplied by the percentage rural within the county/state, the percentage native born within a county multiplied by the percentage immigrant populations in neighboring counties/states, the percentage native born white within a county/state multiplied by the percentage black in neighboring counties/states, and the percentage pietistic within a county/state multiplied by the percentage ritualistic in bordering counties/states. We then normalize the threat variables by dividing by 100 to put them on a scale similar to that of the percentage measures.

$$\text{Threat} = \frac{(\% \text{ threatened within unit}) \times (\% \text{ threatening in bordering units})}{100}.$$

### Independent Variables

Descriptively, the data tell a straightforward story. Table 1 includes the mean and standard deviation for our independent variables at 10-year intervals for U.S. counties: 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1920. These data show that the average proportion of blacks and German and Irish immigrants declines over our period of interest, while the proportion of Italian immigrants increases. Urbanization is on the rise over this period, as is the extent of ritualistic and pietistic religious adherents.

### Ethnicity and Race Variables

Theoretical expectations regarding ethnic and racial threat specify four major groups as possible threats to native whites (and bases of opposition to prohibition): blacks and Irish, Italian, and German immigrants. To capture the possible effects of these groups, we constructed variables representing the percentages of the population of these four groups at the state and county levels. Because the presence of these immigrants at both the county and the state level was highly correlated and hypothesized to work

<sup>7</sup>We are grateful to an *AJS* reviewer for pointing this out. Results for models with a simple spatial lag are similar to those presented here.

## Group Threat and Policy Change

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE COUNTY STATISTICS (for Selected Years)

	1890		1900		1910		1920	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Urbanization (%) . . .	11.2	20.2	13.1	21.1	16.7	23	18.5	24
Black (%) . . . . .	13.4	21.4	13.2	21.3	12.5	20.6	11.5	19.3
German (% born) . . .	2.7	4	2.1	3	1.7	2.4	1.2	1.5
Irish (% born) . . . . .	1.2	1.8	.8	1.2	.5	.8	.3	.6
Italy (% born) . . . . .	.2	.6	.3	.8	.5	1.3	.5	1.2
Ritualistic (%) . . . . .	7.9	13.3	9.6	14.5	9.6	13.9	10.4	14.2
Pietistic (%) . . . . .	21.6	13.2	23.8	12.8	24.9	13.1	27.7	14.5
<i>N</i> . . . . .	2,764		2,813		2,998		3,043	

in the same way, we aggregated these populations into a single variable describing the percentage of these foreign-born groups of the population. Note that this measure is different from the census “foreign-born” category that includes many other groups that we do not include, because they were not identified as central to prohibition politics in prior historical work. All data were derived from the U.S. population censuses from 1890, 1900, 1910, and 1920 (Haines 2005).

### Religious Composition

To measure religious composition, we follow Lewis (2008), who distinguished among pietistic and ritualistic religious traditions in his study of voting in statewide prohibition referenda.<sup>8</sup> Ritualistic and nonevangelical traditions include Catholics, Jews, Episcopalians, German Lutherans, and Missouri Synod Lutherans. Pietistic traditions include most other Protestant denominations, with the largest being Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. We use the number of members expressed as a proportion of the total population.<sup>9</sup> As table 1 indicates, membership in both ritualistic and pietistic religious organizations grows during this period.

Our measures were constructed using the Census of Religious Bodies collected in 1890, 1906, 1916, and 1926. These censuses were collected as organizational surveys, rather than individual ones, using informant reports from leaders to measure membership, finances, buildings, and other

<sup>8</sup>We also used simple Catholic and Protestant measures in separate models, and these yield similar results.

<sup>9</sup>We also experimented with a measure using the percentage of religious adherents, rather than as a percentage of the population. Results were similar. Percentage of population is a better measure because we would not want to treat a county with 10% ritualistic and 20% pietistic as equivalent to a county with 30% ritualistic and 60% pietistic adherents.

characteristics of local religious organizations. Although these surveys had once fallen out of favor among historians of religion, Finke and Stark have conducted extensive research using independent sources to establish the validity of the data (Finke and Stark 1986, 1993; Stark 1992).<sup>10</sup>

### Urbanization

We constructed variables for the percentage of urban dwellers in a county from the decennial U.S. population census from 1890 to 1920. The trend, as can be seen in table 1, is toward greater urbanization: urbanization in the average county (measured as residents in municipalities of 25,000 or greater) doubles during this period.

### Missing Data and Control Variables

Many of our census measures are only available at 10-year increments; following standard practice, those variables were linearly interpolated (see, e.g., McCammon et al. 2001). Remaining missing data were imputed using the transform, then impute, method (Von Hippel 2009). We created 15 imputation data sets using the iterated chained equations command in Stata 11. As control variables, we include an indicator variable for the Southern states, which historians argue had different propensities to adopt state-level prohibition. In our state-level models, we include a control for the percentage of counties that had previously voted dry, as local dry victories were argued to hasten the passage of state-level prohibition (Szymanski 2003*b*; Lewis 2008). In county-level models, we include a dummy variable for counties that eventually repealed their local dry law.

## RESULTS

### State-Level Models

State-level models take the first adoption of state prohibition as the outcome of interest, and state-years are the unit of observation. We estimate and report nested models with demographic, race, ethnicity/immigration, and religion variables as well as a full model including all effects (see table 2).

Results from the state-level models suggest that the three immigrant groups, Irish, Italian, and German, jointly affected prohibition legislation

<sup>10</sup> Before 1890, the census did not include direct estimates of membership. Finke and Stark (1986) pioneered an innovative strategy of estimating membership from other organizational characteristics such as the number of pews. However, this method is likely to be less reliable at the county level; thus, we restrict our analyses to 1890 and after.

TABLE 2  
DISCRETE TIME SURVIVAL ANALYSIS OF STATE-LEVEL PROHIBITION ADOPTION

	DEMOGRAPHIC		RACE		RELIGION		IMMIGRATION		FULL	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Urban (%)		.01								
Urban threat	-.04***	.03								
Black (%)			.02	.02						
Black threat			.09	.06						
Pietistic (%)					.01	.02				
Ritualistic (%)					-.12**	.04				
Ritualistic threat					-.24	.23				
Foreign-born (%)							-.38***	.09	-.38***	.09
Foreign threat							-.22	.18	-.37	.22
County prohibition (%)									-.26	.79
State prohibition (spatial lag)									-1.64	1.81
South									.19	.59
Constant	-1.498**	.536	-1.808**	.595	-.88	.584	-1.502**	.551	-2.032*	.858

NOTE.—Robust standard errors in parentheses. States = 44; years = 29.

\*  $P < .05$ .

\*\*  $P < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $P < .001$ .

at the county level. The percentage immigrant population within a state negatively predicts prohibition legislation. These results hold for both the nested and full models. Urban and ritualistic populations within a state negatively predicted prohibition legislation in the nested model, although because of collinearity with immigrant populations we did not include these variables in the full model. Percentage black was not a significant predictor. Jointly these results suggest that the resistance of immigrant groups was most crucial in shaping the adoption of state-level prohibition, rather than the strength of supportive groups.

The percentage of neighboring states adopting prohibition legislation was not a predictor of prohibition legislation, failing to support the idea that state prohibition legislation may have diffused regionally from state to state. The percentage of dry counties within a state did not predict state prohibition.

None of our threat variables were significant in the state-level model. This could be for two reasons. The first possibility is that threat was simply not a factor in state prohibition politics. A second possibility, which we explore via the county-level models, is that because threat is a function of contact, measuring threat at the state level is too large a spatial unit. In other words, the ethnic or religious composition of neighboring states may not be as salient as the composition of neighboring counties, which are more spatially proximate and hence entail a greater likelihood of contact with threatening groups.

### County-Level Models

In table 3, we examine county prohibition legislation as the outcome of interest and the county-year as the unit of observation.<sup>11</sup> Covariates are similar to the state-level analysis, except that they are based on county-level measures. The results from the county-level models support a much richer story than the state level.<sup>12</sup>

*Constituencies.*—As expected, we find that the strength of local constituencies predicts the adoption of county dry legislation. All but one of the effects of our constituency variables were significant and in the predicted

<sup>11</sup> One problem with using counties as a unit of analysis over this period is that many change their borders. Some scholars address this by creating county clusters, but this method is not appropriate to our data since we have a binary outcome. We addressed this issue by dropping all counties that change size over 25% from the analysis and re-running the models. Results yield similar results and do not alter our interpretation.

<sup>12</sup> In separate analyses, we included additional controls for two important political factors: women's suffrage and voting restrictions based on citizenship and literacy. Including these state-level political variables does not alter our main findings or interpretation.



TABLE 3  
DISCRETE TIME SURVIVAL ANALYSIS OF COUNTY-LEVEL PROHIBITION ADOPTION

	DEMOGRAPHIC		RACE		RELIGION		IMMIGRATION		FULL	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Urban (%)	-.02***	.00							-.02***	.00
Urban threat	.01**	.01							.01*	.01
Black (%)			-.01***	.00					-.01***	.00
Black threat			.02**	.01					.01	.01
Pietistic (%)					-.05***	.01			-.02***	.00
Ritualistic (%)					.00	.00			.01**	.00
Ritualistic threat					.10***	.03			.03	.03
Foreign-born (%)							-.38***	.03	-.23***	.03
Foreign threat							.27***	.03	.17***	.03
County prohibition (spatial lag)	.05***	.00	.05***	.00	.05***	.00	.05***	.00	.05***	.00
South	.44***	.07	.58***	.10	.32***	.09	.35***	.09	.40***	.10
Repealed	1.54***	.08	1.42***	.08	1.44***	.08	1.43***	.08	1.55***	.08
Constant	-6.37***	.33	-6.49***	.33	-6.30***	.33	-6.24***	.34	-6.35***	.35

NOTE.—Counties = 2,085; years = 29.

\*  $P < .05$ .

\*\*  $P < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $P < .001$ .

direction in both nested and full models. The size of the immigrant, black, ritualistic religious adherent, and urban populations was negatively associated with the passage of prohibition, while the percentage of pietistic religious adherents was positively associated with prohibition legislation in the full model but not the nested model.

*Threat.*—In contrast to the state-level results, we found evidence for threat motivating prohibition adoption at the county level. We tested four threat hypotheses at the county level. All threat effects were significant and in the expected direction in the nested models. In the full model, we find that the effect of bordering immigrant and urban populations, weighting for the size of the threatened population within a county, are significantly predictive of prohibition legislation. The threat effect of ritualistic populations in the nested model is apparently due to those religious adherents being disproportionately drawn from these other populations. Threat from black populations was not significant in the full model.

*Diffusion.*—We found modest support for the hypothesis that prohibition legislation was the result of a diffusion process. While the percentage of neighboring dry counties is significant in all models, this could also be due to unobserved heterogeneity. Counties near one another will be similar in unmeasured ways, potentially leading to the significance of a spatially lagged dependent variable in the absence of real spatial effects. Thus, the significance of spatial diffusion variables must be interpreted with the understanding that models are biased toward finding diffusion effects (Braun and Koopmans 2010; Shalizi and Thomas 2011).

*Effect magnitudes.*—We conclude by discussing the magnitudes of the county-level effects, to give some sense of their relative importance. The magnitude of these effects must be interpreted with caution. For example, the extent of surrounding immigrant populations is not the same as the extent of threat felt from those populations. Further, the extent of foreign-born immigrants is not the same as the extent of culturally foreign populations—although these are likely highly correlated. Nevertheless, it is important to consider the relative magnitudes of these effects.

Uncertainty in the point estimates was sometimes large and sometimes small. When the bounds of the confidence interval were identical up to the second decimal point of the odds ratio, we simply report the effect size rounded to the second decimal place; when confidence intervals were wider, we report the 95% confidence interval of odds ratios. We interpret the odds ratios from the full model only, with reference to the independent variables' effects on the hazard rate. The hazard rate for discrete time event history models can be interpreted as the rate at which units experience the outcome. Thus, in our county models the hazard rate at  $t$  for a given county would be the probability that it enacts prohibition legislation in year  $t$ .

Our analysis of effect sizes suggests that the adoption of county prohibition was driven more by the direct and indirect effect of the strength of prohibition opponents than by the strength of its supporters. For instance, the size of the pietistic population is, by most historical accounts, the best measure of the pro-prohibition constituency, yet as we detail below, its positive effect is only a half to a third of the negative effect of the size of ritualistic populations. Likewise, immigrant populations seem to have large effects, both within counties as resisters of prohibition and in surrounding counties via threat.

We first interpret effects for our within-county constituent population variables. Having a 1% greater urban population within a county was associated with a 1%–2% lower hazard rate. A 1% greater black population within a county was associated with a 1% lower hazard rate. A 1% greater ritualistic religious population within a county was associated with a 2%–3% lower hazard rate. Conversely a 1% greater pietistic population share was associated with a 1% higher hazard rate. By far the largest effect was that of the immigrant population: a 1% greater immigrant population share within a county was associated with an 18%–23% decrease in the hazard rate. While this effect size is large, it needs to be understood with reference to the scale of the variable, which ranges from 0% to 32% in our data, with a mean of 3.5%. The 90th percentile of the variable is 9%, so a county at the 90th percentile would have a 110%–115% lower hazard rate than a county at the mean level. Thus, for within-county measures the largest effect comes from the immigrant population.

The effect sizes of threat variables are less straightforward to interpret. We put them on a scale we think makes them roughly commensurate with the constituent populations. Specifically, threat variables were measured as the mean percentage of a threatening population in neighboring counties, multiplied by the percentage of threatened population within the county. Then to make comparison with other variables more meaningful, we divide the variable by 100. The threat variables thus theoretically vary from 0 to 100, which is the same scale as the constituent variables. Because the threat variable is an interaction, it is influenced by the size of the native population in a focal county and the threatening population in contiguous counties. For instance, in a hypothetical county with a 100% native population, a 1% greater immigrant population in all its bordering counties would correspond to a unit greater value for the immigrant threat variable, while in a county with 50% native population, a unit greater immigrant threat variable would require a 2% greater bordering immigrant population.

Two of our threat variables were significant in the full model: urban and immigrant threat. A one-unit-higher value for the urban threat variable was associated with a 1%–2% higher hazard rate. A one-unit-higher value

for the immigrant threat variable was associated with a 15%–22% higher hazard rate. This large effect must also be interpreted in terms of the scale of the variable: a county at the 90th percentile of the immigrant threat variable, a value of 7, would have a roughly 70%–78% greater hazard rate relative to a county at the mean value of 3. Thus immigrant threat was the larger of the two threat effects.

## CONCLUSION

Taking advantage of unique data spanning the entire continental United States and unfolding over 30 years, we have been able to test key hypotheses surrounding the role of threat in policy change. Theoretically, we introduce a spatial conception of threat that advances several lines of scholarship. Race and ethnicity scholars examine collective identities, group boundaries, and territorial conflict. We extend this insight, showing how these processes structure patterns of policy change. For scholars of collective action and political sociology, we go beyond the predominant focus on proximate causes of policy change to show that the spatial organization of demographic groups drives policy adoption. These innovations set the stage for additional work at the intersection of group identity, spatial organization, and policy change.

Prohibition was motivated by the strength of its key constituencies. German, Irish, and Italian immigrants were important wet constituencies, as were ritualistic religious adherents and urban dwellers; while pietistic adherents were important dry constituencies. We found that sociodemographic threat was critical for the adoption of prohibition policies. Specifically, proximity to German, Irish, and Italian immigrants and urban dwellers encouraged the adoption of dry legislation at the county level.

This finding contributes to research that stresses the catalyzing role of threat or grievances in mobilization (Van Dyke and Soule 2002; Snow et al. 2005; McVeigh 2009; Johnson and Frickel 2011). Grievances have long been assumed to be relatively constant and unable to explain differential mobilization, and scholars have employed analytic strategies that make it difficult to gauge whether or how grievances matter. The main strategies have considered temporal variation within a case or cross-sectional variation across geographic units (Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Olzak and Shanahan 1996). We introduce a strategy for examining grievances and, specifically, group threat that is theoretically and empirically more compelling. Exploiting spatial variation in proximity to groups perceived to be threatening, such as immigrants and urban dwellers, we show that grievances are a central component of policy change in this case. Local threats arising from the spatial organization of immigrant and urban populations

encouraged successes in establishing county-level prohibition. While we agree that to focus solely on threats would be a mistake, scholars have been too quick to set aside threats arising from the composition and spatial distribution of cultural groups.

Scholars have often used states or provinces to gain comparative leverage when studying federated political systems. In our case, we compare state and county political units, finding that the dynamics of policy change differed in fundamental ways. This is crucial because it means that theoretical insights derived from analyses at one political scale will not necessarily hold for higher- or lower-level units. For instance, we found that the demographic composition of neighboring units was important for motivating county prohibition but not for state-level prohibition. This is presumably because threat operates via contact, so neighboring states, generally less proximate than neighboring counties, were less salient. Reliance on only a state-level model would have led us to believe there were only direct effects of immigrant populations on legislation, but a county-level analysis reveals a richer political process driven also by the demographic contexts of neighboring units.

There are a number of limitations to our study. Analysis of organizations is lacking; many key organizations influenced the unfolding of prohibition legislation. Most important were the WCTU and the ASL. While the demographic foundations of group threat are critical in and of themselves, it remains an open question whether threat or key constituencies served to mobilize organizations or whether they had an independent effect net of their ability to organize formally. These organizational dynamics are important in their own right and merit further investigation. Finally, we have left open questions about economic motivations for and against prohibition such as tax revenue associated with alcohol sales and the market for beer, wine, liquor, and the agricultural products used in alcohol production.

While there were many other important forces shaping prohibition, we have shown that local prohibition policy was driven in large part by group threat. We suspect that group threat has shaped and continues to shape many other policy innovations. For example, the development of criminal justice policies and restrictive residential policies appear to have been linked to group threat (Jones-Correa 2000; Olzak and Shanahan 2014). Historical and contemporary conflict and policy change surrounding immigration may be driven by spatial threat as well (Steil and Vasi 2014). The importance of multiple scales of action and outcomes is likewise a pervasive feature of politics from the local to the transnational arenas. Future work focusing on group threat and policy change should build on the spatial conception of threat advanced here to examine fundamental political processes of mobilization and political change.

APPENDIX

TABLE A1  
CORRELATION MATRIX (County Level)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Urbanization (%) . . . . .	1.00												
2. Urbanization (spatial lag) . . . . .	.220***	1											
3. Black (%) . . . . .	-.0625***	-.153***	1										
4. Black (spatial lag) . . . . .	-.0732***	-.165***	.953***	1									
5. German born (%) . . . . .	.178***	.160***	-.336***	-.352***	1								
6. Irish born (%) . . . . .	.359***	.396***	-.280***	-.300***	.306***	1							
7. Italian born (%) . . . . .	.222***	.303***	-.138***	-.152***	.0433***	.358***	1						
8. German (spatial lag) . . . . .	.0984***	.193***	-.392***	-.413***	.847***	.313***	.0438***	1					
9. Italian (spatial lag) . . . . .	.221***	.385***	-.181***	-.191***	.0543***	.398***	.711***	.0557***	1				
10. Irish (spatial lag) . . . . .	.244***	.485***	-.324***	-.341***	.313***	.863***	.346***	.361***	.441***	1			
11. Pietistic (%) . . . . .	-.119***	-.101***	.536***	.537***	-.355***	-.370***	-.280***	-.356***	-.317***	-.371***	1		
12. Ritualistic (%) . . . . .	.243***	.206***	-.246***	-.260***	.400***	.378***	.294***	.356***	.315***	.328***	-.460***	1	
13. Ritualistic (spatial lag) . . . . .	.145***	.317***	-.305***	-.322***	.392***	.364***	.310***	.461***	.398***	.432***	-.466***	.768***	1

\*  $P < .05$ .  
 \*\*  $P < .01$ .  
 \*\*\*  $P < .001$ .

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## QUERIES TO THE AUTHOR

**q1.** AU: Italics omitted here and throughout when used for emphasis yet meaning seems clear without them or when not at first use of key terms.

**q2.** AU: Footnote 3: Please provide (1) page number and (2) source (is it Snow et al. 2005?) for quote (“dramatic changes in structures of social control”).

**q3.** AU: Figure legends/captions revised to journal style. Figures should be discussed in the text, not in the legend, and in particular in-text discussions should not be duplicated in legends. Legends are meant to be formulaic and consist of short phrases that explain the figure’s content (but not its analysis/implications).

**q4.** AU: Here and throughout, quotations were run into the text when they did not meet the minimum 100 word requirement for block quotations.

**q5.** AU: Footnote 6: Fine and Gray 1999 not in reference list; please add, or omit citation here.

**q6.** AU: Replaced “multiple years” with 1908–33, assuming (per a web search) that was the correct full range of years during which the periodical was published.