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Dr. Elizabeth Gonzalez Cardenas, Committee Member

**AGAVE, TAMARINDO Y JAMAICA: TESTIMONIOS AND
MOVEMENTS OF JOTERÍA RURAL AND AFRO-JOTERÍA
RURAL FROM THE RANCHOS AND PUEBLOS OF RURAL
SOUTHERN MEXICO**

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Chicana and Chicano Studies**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July, 2024

DEDICATION

As I cross the finish line of this PhD, I reflect on my unique, adventurous, and fulfilling journey. I started this PhD right out of my master's program at CSUSB. As I nervously packed my belongings to move to Albuquerque in the summer of 2020, I went into a state of duality and *nepantla*. This is because this was to be the first time I would ever be on my own. I yearned for my independence, yet I also felt guilt for leaving my aging parents on their own as my brother and I were in transition to be the primary heads of household. Little did I expect that a global pandemic was on the horizon.

I entered this PhD program amidst the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. I came in as part of the “second cohort,” yet I was the only PhD student who came in that year. At first, I felt a bit isolated as I had never been to UNM physically, but I found every opportunity I could to create community within the confines of cyberspace. Thanks to this community (El Centro, UNM LGBTQIA+ Resource Center, CCS La Casita, etc.), I was able to thrive. In 2021, UNM returned to in-person learning, and I was finally ready to move to Albuquerque, so I packed my belongings in my small Honda Fit and I was off! There was nothing “normal” about returning to in-person courses, as my students and I felt that UNM just “threw us back in” without any transition process. It was also not prepared for the transition to living alone. However, building community has always been my method of healing, and I was able to heal the void through my pedagogy. In my master's program, I was taught Freirean pedagogic methods by my mentor, Dr. Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos. This allowed me to build organic long-life relationships with my first cohort of students at UNM (I had previously taught at CSUSB). The first group of folks I would like to thank are my students Diego Renteria, Shalom Soliz, Nadia, Victoria, and

Marajah. Ya'll were one of the reasons I stayed at UNM, and together we brought MEChA back to UNM. L@s quiero mucho!

My PhD journey was full of support, and in short, always full of surprises. One of the biggest surprises came last year as I was beginning to prepare for my comprehensive exams. I applied for a tenure-track position at California State University, Northridge in the Queer Studies program. After rigorous interviews, I found out that I got the position! The next step was to do the impossible: complete my comprehensive exams, dissertation proposal, dissertation, and dissertation defense in 6 months. Thanks to the support of my comité, I was able to accomplish all of the aforementioned in 6 months! This more than 400-page dissertation would also not have been possible without the support of those who supported me in this last stretch of my journey.

To La Jotería Rural and Afro Jotería Rural de Los Altos De Jalisco and Tamiauah, gracias por regalarme su conocimiento y sus testimonios poderosos. ¡Que viva Jototlán! I also want to thank Toto-Diverso for welcoming me to your comité with open arms. I have learned so much from you in the last couple of years, and I look forward to organizing more marchas alongside you in the future. Toto, Diverso, ¡estaremos de regreso! Para mí querido José "Pache King" Ramon, siempre estaré agradecido por la atención, dedicación, y enseñanzas que me has aportado. Ojalá que el destino nos siga uniendo para continuar creando puentes en muchos contextos. For my cousin Yailin/Lupillo. Desde el primer día that I told you about this project, you were always there to guide me. I love you! My sincerest gratitude to Travis for lending me your Native American Studies books. Without you, I would have never formulated my methodology. Gracias! To the folks at Flying Star Cafe and Little Bear Cafe off of Central Avenue, thank you for

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To my lifelong mentor and hermana, Dr. Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos. Thank you for changing my life! To Mrs. Cortez, my first-grade teacher, if it was not for you, I would have never learned English. Rest in power! To my first LGBTQIA+ mentor, Matie Manning Scully, thank you for helping me come out and be myself. Rest in power! Finally, to my familia, Mama Teresa Botello, Papa Chuy Botello, Mama Ignacia Esparza, Papa Pancho Esparza, Jose Luis Esparza, Martina Esparza Botello, Ivan Esparza, Jose Abraham Esparza, Monica Talavera, Claudia Botello, and my beautiful niece Maddy Esparza-Talavera. Without you, I would have never received these opportunities. Papá y mamá (José Luis Esparza and Martina Esparza Botello), gracias por todos los sacrificios que tuvieron que hacer for me to get to this point. ¡Los amo! Together, everyone in this dedication page and I made history! The first PhD in Chicana and Chicano Studies in UNM’s history! Standing on the shoulders of all these folks, I can now call myself, Dr.

Luis Oswaldo “El Jaguar Joto” Esparza! ¡También Los Jotos pueden cabrones! ¡Que viva la Jotería de Los Ranchos y Los Pueblos!

I wholeheartedly acknowledge my dissertation chair, Dr. Irene Vasquez. Thank you for mentoring me throughout my time in CCS. Thanks to your experience and *consejos*, I landed a position at CSUN. Gracias por todo el apoyo y dedicación. To my dear profe, friend and colega, Dr. Doris Careaga-Coleman, thank you for being so kind and nurturing. You instilled the confidence I needed to finish. Igual, gracias por invitarme a su bonito paraíso, Veracruz. En momentos cuando me sentía solo in Albuquerque, usted me invito a su casa y siempre me incluyo como parte de su familia. Thank you! Para mi querida mentora de vida, Dr. Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos, gracias por cambiarme la vida. As an undergraduate, I had no idea what I was doing or where I was going. Thank you for empowering me to be the best I can be. ¡Ya sabe que nuestra hermandad ya es por vida! Usted fue igual instrumental in my lifelong success. This is also for your *hijo*, baby bee! Finally, to my querida profe Dr. Elizabeth Gonzalez Cardenas. I learned so much from you through the classes que tome con usted. You helped me grow as a scholar tremendously! Thank you for saving the day! Together, along with my committee, we made CCS history and *Joto-historia*! The first PhD in Chicana and Chicano Studies in UNM’s history! Gracias!

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ABSTRACT

This project aims to celebrate and honor resistance strategies by *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*, who have originally inherited, implemented, and recreated life-affirming survival mechanisms of joy and survival. I accomplished this using a *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies that humanizes participants by treating their testimonials as legitimate community-based knowledge (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Together, my contributors and I constructed a list of resistance strategies as they tied their experiences in relation to and against repressive colonial rhetoric that continues to be re-articulated in the rural.

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**Chapter 1—*Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*: An Introduction to the *Jotería*
Studies Framework with De-colonial Roots**

Jotería studies as a field emerged as a decolonizing project with the aims of de-centering white, homogenous assumptions within Queer scholarship. In essence, prominent Queer scholars like Judith Butler, Eve Sedgwick, and Gail Rubin have ignored Queer of color scholarship within Queer genealogies. Queer of color experiences and scholarship, then, are treated as “add-ons” to “official” Queer genealogies. Hames-Garcia and Muñoz state that, many Queers of color represented in Queer readings are commonly represented as “the other:”

[White] Queer discourses have essentially turned into a metanarrative about domestic affairs between white homosexuals.... most of the cornerstones of Queer theory that are taught, cited, and canonized in Gay and Lesbian studies classrooms, publications, and conferences are decidedly directed toward the analyzing of white Lesbians and Gay men...Queer theorists fail to acknowledge sexuality and gender before the 18th century and situate the beginning of sexuality with the rise of capitalism during the 18th and 19th centuries. Hames-Garcia proclaims that for Queer, critical scholars of color studying sexuality and race, “sexuality arises during and alongside violence of European colonialism and Indigenous resistance in 16th century, transatlantic slave trade of the 17th century, the imperialist wars and expansion of Europe and its former settler colonies in the Americas, southern Africa, and the Pacific in the nineteenth century, and the waves of postcolonial independence in the twentieth century (Hames-Garcia, 2011, p. 40).

Jotería, thus, is guided by the decolonial framework. One of the key components of decolonial theory, according to Ramon Grosfoguel (2005), is to reconfigure and re-signify the oppressive interlockings of that which has been imposed on us. This tradition comes from a long lineage of Indigenous subjects who have resisted physical and symbolic annihilation through subversive complicity. That is, re-signifying what the West has imposed upon the world through developing an alternative modern/Eurocentric/colonial world system (Grosfoguel, 2005, p. 23). It is a way of survival through participation (e.g., the survival of *Tonantzin* through the *Virgin de Guadalupe*). In essence, *Jotería* carries on this tradition of subversive complicity. Therefore, one of the tenants of *Jotería* is “a dramatic gesture toward re-signifying the term and refuting the negative connotations that it has carried historically... a visceral level, the word *fag* did not offer the same possibilities that *Jotería* did. I wondered for a moment why this was so. Eventually I responded that although some individuals may indeed reclaim *fag*, whether casually or consciously, for their own purposes, a major difference is that *Jotería* is culturally and geographically specific to Queer MeXicano/as (although certainly not limited to them) and is an emerging political term that challenges Western thought” (Bañales, 2014). *Jotería* studies, then can be understood as one of the many fronts of contention against the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). Coloniality of power meaning “the constitution of a new structure of control of labor, resources, and products. This new structure was an articulation of all historically known previous structures of control of labor, slavery, serfdom, small independent commodity production” (Quijano, 2000).

One of the earliest incarnations of *Jotería* studies came from Gloria Anzaldua's call to "listen to what your *jotería* is saying" in her book *Borderlands* (Anzaldua, 1987). Subsequently, works by Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua such as *This Bridge Called My Back* sought to Queer Aztlan. The next major piece then came from Jose Esteban Muñoz's *Disidentifications* (1999) which added further discourse on intersections of Chicana and Latina sexuality and gender. One of the most articulate and influential pieces in *Jotería* studies came from Ernesto Martinez and Hames Gracia's book *Gay Latino Studies* (2011). This book brought together an array of *Jot@* scholars that sought to de-center white Queer scholarship and focus on the experiences, scholarship, and genealogies of *Jotería*. Therefore, *Jotería* studies also acknowledges that *Joto/a/@s* also have their own lineages and come from ancestors who have navigated homophobia, patriarchy, white supremacy in both the Global North and Global South (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014). Like decolonial, critical race theory (CRT), Chicana Feminisms, and Feminists of Color paradigms, *Jotería* studies aims to tell "counter-stories" to fill the void of the absence of Queer of color histories and testimonies within academia. This is done through "documenting our personal testimonies and experiences" (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014). The tenants of *Jotería* studies include:

1. Is rooted in fun, laughter, and radical Queer love.
2. Is embedded in a Mexican, Latin American, Indigenous, and African diasporic past and present.
3. Is derived from the terms Jota and Joto and has been reclaimed as an identity/consciousness of empowerment.
4. Is based on Queer Latina/o and Chicana/o and gender-nonconforming realities or lived experiences.
5. Is committed to multidimensional social justice and activism.
6. Values gender and sexual fluidity and expressions.

7. Values the exploration of identities individually and collectively, 8. Rejects homophobia, heteronormativity, racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, gender discrimination, classism, colonization, citizenism, and any other forms of subordination, 9. Claims and is aligned with feminist/muxerista pedagogy and praxis, 10. Claims an immigrant and working-class background/origin, 11. Claims a Queer Latina/o and Chicana/o ancestry, and 12. Supports community members and family in their efforts to avoid and heal from multidimensional battle fatigue. (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014)

At its core, *Jotería* is also influenced by women of color feminist theory and praxis such as Chela Sandoval, Cherrie Moraga, Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, and bell hooks. These scholars worked through the fields of Chicana/o studies, Chicana feminisms, Women of Color feminisms, or US Third World feminisms. These authors and their respective fields “have taught us that the ‘personal is political,’ that ‘poetry is not a luxury’ and that we must move beyond ‘dualistic thinking’ and develop a ‘tolerance for ambiguity’” (Alvarez, 2014). Though derived from women of color feminist paradigms, much of *Jotería* scholarship did not include many Trans* voices. In fact, most *Jotería* discourses centered cis-men. This has recently changed with the contributions of Chican@ scholar Francisco Galarte with works such as *Transgender Chican@ Poetics* (2014) and *Brown Trans Figurations: Rethinking Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Chicanx/Latinx Studies* (2021). In both works, Galarte questions whether transgender Chican@s are part of the imagined community of *Jotería* (Galarte, 2014). Galarte further notes that scholars in Trans* Chican@ studies must “resist the heteropatriarchal and heterosexist disciplining of the ethnonationalist ethos of Chicano Studies and to cultivate

a politicized Chicana@ Studies that bridges epistemological feminist platforms with renewed commitment to a heterogeneity of voices and embodiments we can recognize as Queer, trans-, or some other iteration not yet known. Invigorating the field with such a commitment to transformation galvanizes our intellectual and political aims to impart upon our students' new paradigms for conceptualizing community, identity, and subjectivity” (Galarte, 2021).

In discourse with Galarte, Linda Heidenreich writes in their book *Nepantla Squared: Transgender Mestiz@ Histories In Times of Global Shift* (2020) that “transgender can also move us beyond Western binaries and labels of containment” (Heidenreich, 2020, p. 20). In essence Heidenreich builds on the work of Gloria Anzaldúa by declaring that *nepantleras* have transitioned into *nepantla* squared. This entails a capitalist transition where gender is also in motion and “transgender mestiz@s, too, embodied that movement” (p. 22).

Recently, the answer to Galarte's previous question regarding the existence of Trans* subjects in the *Jotería* imaginary was answered by *Jotería* scholar Jack Caraves in their piece *Centering the “T”: Envisioning a Trans Jotería Pedagogy* (2020). In their work, Caraves states that Trans *Jotería* pedagogy entails intersectional and coalitional approaches that critically challenge gender binary and genderism and is grounded on the theoretical assumption that gender is a colonial construct defined by patriarchy and cis heteronormativity (Caraves, 2020; Lugones, 2007). Through an intersectional influence, Trans *Jotería* pedagogy also assumes that gender is a system of power that shapes one's socialization and life chances within the white supremacist, heteropatriarchal, sexist, and transphobic society; interlaced power structures that were introduced by the coloniality of

power (Grosfoguel, 2005; Caraves 2020). Some of the other tenants of Trans *Jotería* Pedagogy include:

[Understanding] that gender identity, gender performance, and gender presentation are also shaped by one's culture, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, dis/ability, nationality, and legal status among other things....A Trans *Jotería* pedagogy simultaneously centers trans women of color, trans migrants, and trans people of color's trans embodiment, experience, existence, and resistance. Trans *Jotería* pedagogy draws on trans of color feminisms, which "is a feminism that responds to the violence done to trans women of color, the historical absence of trans women in both white and women of color feminism." Trans *Jotería* pedagogy is uniquely situated to disrupt a cis-heteronormative, white supremacist, patriarchal system....*feminista* pedagogies, *Jotería* pedagogies, and trans pedagogies, in order for Trans *Jotería* pedagogy to move toward liberation of those systems, disruption and vulnerability are essential to the facilitation of this pedagogy. The unsettling of borders and binaries tied to such systems of power is necessary in a Trans *Jotería* approach. That disruption begins in the class with the student-teacher relationship and the emphasis on vulnerability for the pursuit of learning as well as healing. (Caraves, 2020)

Though Jack's work has contributed significantly towards adding Trans* folks to the *Jotería* studies, I question whether it has reached its full potential as a decolonizing project. Specifically, has *Jotería* studies been successful in creating a transnational dialogue? I ask this question because of the asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and the Global South (Dussel, 1993). In his book *Trans-nationalizing the*

Queer: Body Politics and Transnational Conversations (2016), Ruvalcaba argues that Queer theory is written in the language of the empire and within colonial centers and needs translation to local theoretical concepts of sexuality and gender in the parts of the world it is being disseminated to (p. 45). I postulate that the same concept applies to *Jotería* Studies. Bañales does, however, theorized that *Jotería* is a decolonial move:

Jotería as a decolonizing political project brings to light the multiple ways in which the coloniality of power is transformed. This includes rejecting the previous negative connotations of the term Jotería, which reflected a colonial legacy of violent rearrangement that altered historically marginalized peoples' cultural understandings of their bodies and desires in relation to egalitarian Indigenous and/or African-based cosmologies and practices...Jotería as a political project means to me: I consider it to be a decolonizing social movement that seeks to move away from normative colonizing relations of power and toward horizontal, personal/collective, transgenerational, and transdisciplinary forms of thinking, being, and acting that make dialogue, respect, love, spirituality, and healing central to both vision and praxis. Jotería as a political project—like other decolonizing moves—is an intervention from below that attempts to transform how we are, think, feel, and act in the world. Rather than understanding it as a distinct break with or separation from the Chicana/o movement and related studies, it may be more fruitful to see how we are part of a larger decolonizing continuum that has multiple expressions. Instead of focusing solely on divisions and differences, we can collectively imagine infinite possibilities for overturning

the oppressive colonizing entrenchments of modern/colonial thought and contribute to the unfinished project of decolonization. (Bañales, 2014)

Like Two-spirit, *Jotería* follows decolonial tenants further by not imposing identity.

Particularly, by honoring localized terms of identity:

as “the term” to represent and serve all the varying Queer experiences and identities of Latino/as and Latin Americans, the decolonizing project of *Jotería* could work alongside the resignification of other racialized Queer terms appropriate to different regions and communities. *Jotería* as a political project can provide a matrix by which Chicana/o studies and related fields and movements can further decolonize themselves by making central the ways in which the politics of gender and sexuality are deeply imbricated in the analysis of race and movements of liberation... (Bañales, 2014)

Though *Jotería* serves as a theorizing space for Latinx, Chicax, and Mexicanx folks. My intervention lies on the notion of whether current *Jotería* dialogues are sufficiently horizontal as Bañales claims they ought to be. I am specifically concerned with the exclusion of transnational and subaltern voices in theorizing about *Jotería* as their relation to coloniality of power differs from those marginal groups within colonial centers where theory continues to be articulated and exported to the peripheries (our complacency as scholars of color with U.S.-centrism). Robert Gutierrez-Perez agrees that “In the case of *Jotería*, these narratives of the subaltern disrupt the ‘habitual and habituation [colonial] patterns of behavior that are constrained by modern ‘situational and material conditions,’ which are ‘ordered by multiple and dispersed discursive practices and conventions’” (Gutierrez-Perez, 2021).

Recent Trans* scholars from the Global South have begun to center this discourse of asymmetry between Global centers and peripheries. Particularly, this ongoing asymmetry of dissemination of scholarship between the Global North and South. For instance, a group of academics and activists from the journal *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (TSQ) have attempted to build bridges between both Global spheres through their *Trans En Las Americas* (2019) and *The Transexual/Transvestite Issue* (2021) editions. Cole Rizki argues in the TSQ article *Trans-, Translation, Transnational* (2021) that American Studies has been Trans Studies' unspoken center and thus must be de-centered by including Latin American scholarship. They state, "while trans studies has indeed aimed to address questions of empire, racialization, and political economy, for example, it has repeatedly done so through critique that prioritizes the US nation-state and its transnational histories" (Riziki, 2021). Riziki goes on to critique the exclusion of the *Travesti* and *Travesti* theory. Instead, the *Travesti* is positioned as "backwards" in comparison to its Trans* counterpart. Thus, the US scholars unintentionally (and sometimes intentionally) replicate colonial gazes through their centrist and universalists theory building (Dussel, 1999). Rizki states:

'Do not we communicate and traffic in the particular colonial, capitalist, real abstract codes of social and subjective being that make up an American grammar?' (176). This is to put pressure on the commensurability of cultural, political, and social arrangements of knowledge. It is also a reminder, as Macarena Gmez-Barris (writes, to recognize when and how 'local vernaculars of struggle' might get 'run through the machine of North American theories, abstracting from local conditions of possibility and constraints' as a form of

extractivism. Such cautions are not a call to abandon the work of cultural translation or to abandon these categories but rather to recognize them as particular arrangements of knowledge and experience, as modes of perception and forms of reading that forge grids of intelligibility and regulate epistemological economies... Translation's refusal, as a critical mode of accompaniment and care, can signal a commitment to copresence as affiliation that does not collapse, meld, or erase ways of organizing experience. (Rizki, 2021)

Hill agrees that intersectionality goes deeper when applied to bodies of the Global South (Hill, 2019). In their piece *Latin/x American Trans Studies Toward a Travesti-Trans Analytic* (2019), Rizki offers more transitional possibilities between Global North and South dialogue:

Academics situated in Latin America, for example, do not currently have access to trans studies faculty or research positions within university settings.

Scholarship produced from the Global South on trans and travesti embodiment, subjectivity, cultural production, or activism has largely been produced by nontrans academics from both the Global North and Global South—a condition that trans and intersex activists such as Mauro Cabral have vocally critiqued. In the North, trans studies positions are only recently starting to emerge. Rarely do these positions emphasize the Global South, and they remain vulnerable to institutional proclivities within an increasingly volatile neoliberal landscape. Scholars migrating to the North to access these increased opportunities are confronted with new challenges, including shifting racial hierarchies, anti-immigrant sentiment, and discrimination based on accent, and are obligated to

produce scholarship in English. Academics across the hemisphere and elsewhere are impacted by the Global demands of the academic market and its valuation of English-language publication. While in English, transgender often needs to be modified in order to respond to local hierarchies of race, class, ability, and other forms of difference, travesti underscores instead the impossibility of such disarticulation in the first place. Nonetheless, travesti is not meant as a corrective to trans, and our authors do not expand the notion of trans to include travesti...Instead, many of the essays in this issue center travesti as an identification, a critical analytic, and an embodied mode of politics... Travesti,” writes Mal Machuca Rose in their contribution to this issue, is the refusal to be trans, the refusal to be woman, the refusal to be intelligible. Travesti theory and identification is a Latin/x American body of work and a body politics with an extensive transregional history. (Rizki, 2019)

The implications of these much-needed conversations of Global North/Global South dialogue, then is represented in the Trans/*Travesti* tensions and affinities highlighted by Rizki. I too experienced these tensions and affinities with a conversation I had with an LGBTQIA+ Center director at a university. They stated that *Travesti* is an “offensive term,” and *Transgénero* should be used instead. What they suggested was US-centric and dismissive of localized epistemologies of *Jotería* subjects in the Global South. There is also a privilege that comes with being within institutions in the Global North that do not always account for the realities, histories, and cosmologies from the streets of the Global South. For example, Rizki emphasizes these tensions and affinities in scholarship:

To quote Machuca Rose: Travesti is classed and raced: it means you do not present femininely all of the time because you cannot afford to. It means the use of body technologies to transform one's body does not come from a doctor's office but from resourcefulness in the face of precarization, the act by which the matrix of domination makes our bodies and our lives precarious. Mas clarito? It means you get creative, you use your pens for eyeliner, get your hormones and silicones from your friends underground, or use tinta instead of testosterona to transform your body... Indeed, travesti, writes Santana, is 'a negation of an imposed dominant expectation of womanhood that centers on people who are cisgender, heteronormative, able-bodied, elitist, and white.' Travesti identification thus subverts both normative expectations of femininity and trans politics structured around assimilation and respectability. Claiming 'travesti,' as our authors make clear, is a way of inhabiting these complex histories of survival and resistance. Neither is the term travesti equally distributed across the southern hemisphere; trans and travesti identifications are constantly shifting and should not be understood as mutually exclusive. The tensions between trans and travesti as identificatory categories are often untranslatable, leading us to ask what sorts of limitations and possibilities are embedded within the terms' distinctions and critical affinities. If trans men, for example, do not identify as travesti—at the time of writing, few would claim this term—what sorts of recourse do trans men have to localized identification if not trans?" (Rizki, 2019).

Though various Trans and *Travesti* scholars have significantly contributed to building bridges between the Global North and South, my point of departure focuses on

rural, subaltern *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Because spaces were divided in the European gaze of centers and peripheries, this same philosophy has spatially, epistemically, and ontologically excluded subaltern *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* subjects from discourse and theorizing. In my region of focus, Mexico, this phenomenon is prevalent in much of Central and Latin America.

Most works centered around Mexican LGBTQIA+ identity such as Joseph Carrier's *De Los Otros: Intimacy and Homosexuality among Mexican Men* (1995), Ignacio Lozano-Verdusco's *Desire, Emotions, and Identity of Gay Men in Mexico City* (2015), Annick Prieur's *Memma's House* (1998) and Schuessler's et al.'s *Mexico Se Escribe Con J* (2018), we see the formation of LGBTQIA+ identity either anchored in cosmopolitan and urban spaces or through migration away from the rural and into cities. Prieur's work, for instance, consisted of the experience of participants in the urban areas of Neza, a town on the outskirts of Mexico. Carrier's work was also centralized around LGBTQIA+ in Guadalajara, Mexico, another major city in Mexico. Schulzer et al.'s work presented a breakdown of LGBTQIA+ culture by exploring anecdotal evidence, films, musicals, art, and literature. However, all of these aforementioned studies are centered on cosmopolitan experiences. After my experiences in the ranchos in rural Southern Mexico, I wondered, what about sexual minorities who stayed in rural areas? What about those who opted to move to the rural areas? These individuals are at the periphery of Queer discourses. Halberstam (2005) agrees that there has been little attention paid to the experiences of rural Queer lives (p. 34). Specifically, there have been few studies on rural Queer gender roles, sexualities, gender, etc. Most studies that have been done have been characterized as "non-western" or "non-traditional" (Halberstam, 2005). Urban areas, on

the other hand, have been where most scholars have centered most of their work. Apart from being ostracized, the rural has also been eroticized and characterized as “primitive” and “backwards” in the urban imagination (Halberstam, 2005, p. 27). The rural is also regarded as a marker of “tradition,” “pre-modern,” and “underdeveloped” (Halberstam, 2005). Bell (2000) also theorizes that the rural is represented as hostile and idyllic by those in urban spaces, where Queer folks occupying those spacing are mythologized as being sad, lonely, and confined by the rural spaces they occupy (p.36). In addition, these spaces are fantasized by urban centers as sites of horror and degradation (Halberstam, 2005, p.27).

Urban centers, on the other hand, are represented as the birthplaces for LGBTQIA+ identities. In essence, the urban needs the rural to justify its construction of LGBTQIA+ identities, yet it denies the rural as a possible center for the construction of LGBTQIA+ identities. LGBTQIA+ identities in the urban imaginary also require an urban location and symbolic space configuring LGBTQIA+ through the opposition between rural and urban. Like the U.S.-Mexican border, this split between urban and rural is another *da abierta* (Anzaldúa, 1987). In this context, the blood of that wound creates what Halberstam calls metro-normativity. Metro-normativity is a term used to describe the essentializing of metropolitan LGBTQIA+ experiences as universal (Halberstam, 2005, p.36).

Thus, I believe it is vital that we are inclusive of subaltern voices such as *Jotería ranchera* (rural *Jotería* from Mexico) and Latin American iconographies to create more fruitful, horizontal decolonial dialogue and praxis between the Global North and South. I propose the inclusion of a community of *Jotería Rural* from Southern Mexico to shed

light on the types of discourses that are escaping the Mainstream: Eurocentric, white, colonialist, capitalist, centralist, universalist, and Mainstream, t (MEWCCCUS). I utilized the umbrella terms *Rural Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* as umbrella terms and as theoretical tools (Cantu, 2009). What I coin as *Jotería Rural* is also an umbrella term and theorizing space that does not seek to replace localized terms but rather accounts for the multiplicity of *Jotería* lives, experiences, and localized histories. What is the difference between the signifiers *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*? *Jotería Rural* is broader and includes multiple rural sexualities, genders, and histories, whereas what I coin as *Afro-Jotería Rural* is more specific to and centers on the intersection of Afro-Mexicanos, Chicanos, Latinx folks, and *Jotería*. However, I will be explicit as to how contributors to these projects chose to identify and respectfully identify my contributors based on their labels of identification and pronouns to honor that the subaltern can speak (Spivak, 2010). My primary focus is a socio-historical analysis to identify resistance strategies *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have deployed for their own survival. Additionally, I attempted to understand the influence *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have in their respective communities. In essence, with these resistance strategies, I aimed to find plurality and co-existence in these rural spaces that are not visible from the settler-colonial perspective.

One of the communities I worked with is in *Los Altos de Jalisco*. I chose *Jalisco* because I have worked with this community in the past. In my 2023 project, I discussed an array of covert resistance strategies (Esparza, 2023). Since that project (which started in 2017), various overt resistance strategies that surfaced. For example, the first LGBTQIA+ Pride March that I helped organize in my hometown of *Tototlán, Jalisco*, in

2023. Therefore, I highlighted these unique, overt, and historic resistance strategies, which include transnational coalitions. However, I also theorized with my collaborators on covert strategies that continue to be utilized.

Another point of departure is the racialization of *Jotería Rural* in Mexico. Particularly, those who fall under the intersection of Afro-Mexican, Rural, and *Jotería*. As Riziki writes,

As a politics of refusal, Travesti disavows coherence and is an always already racialized and classed geopolitical identification that gestures toward the inseparability of indigeneity, blackness, material precarity, sex work, HIV status, and uneven relationships to diverse state formations (Guimaraes Garcia 2017).

To claim travesti identity is to embrace a form of opacity and fugitivity that resists necropolitical systems that pointedly rely on capture (see Santana's contribution to this issue). (Rizki, 2019)

Therefore, concurrently, I deem it necessary to account for Afro-Mexicans and their cosmologies. This also aligns with the tenants of *Jotería* as one goal is to account for colonized bodies, which include Afro-descendant bodies (Bañales, 2014). Thus, to be more explicit, my second point of departure was bridging *Jotería* Studies and Afro-Mexican studies to what I coin as *Afro-Jotería*. I accomplished this through a socio-historical analysis of *Afro-Jotería* colonized subjects. Specifically, how they have historically and contemporarily overtly and covertly navigated waves of coloniality in the pueblo of *Tamiauah, Veracruz*. I selected *Tamiauah* because I am also interested in how intersectional rural identities and subjectivities overlap with their *Afro-Jotería*.

My points of departure, then, address that Joto/a/@s have their own lineages and come from ancestors who have navigated homophobia, patriarchy, white supremacy in both the Global North and Global South and this project would document those unique histories situated in the rural. This would also align with *Jotería* studies which acknowledges that Joto/a/@s also have their own lineages and come from ancestors who have navigated homophobia, patriarchy, white supremacy in both the Global North and Global South (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014). Thus, “by documenting Jotería..., we can begin to uncover Queer-stories that have been systemically silenced and oppressed” (Tijerina Revilla; Santillana, 2014). To accomplish this, I conducted a Socio-historical analysis of *Jotería*. Waves of coloniality that inform repression, resistance, yet identity building of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Particularly, I analyzed key moments in Mexican history that have informed the repression and identity formation, yet resistance of the aforementioned.

In Chapter 2, I shed light on how Indigenous folks across Turtle Island (The Americas) tolerated and even celebrated sexual and gender subjectivities before European contact. Subsequently, I analyzed the repressive moments and resistance of *Jotería* to those moments during the colonial period (16th-17th centuries), 19th-century *Porfiriato*, and 20th-century revolution era and how these discourses are re-articulated in the rural.

In Chapter 3, my foci centered the unique histories of Afro-Mexicans, in particular, what I coin as *Afro-Jotería Rural*. This resulted in a sociohistorical analysis of *Afro-Jotería Rural* through the bridging *Jotería* and Afro-Mexican paradigms and histories. Similar to Chapter 2, I analyzed moments of repression and identity building of *Afro-Jotería Rural* that stem from waves of coloniality. Further, I expanded on the idea of

how *Afro-Jotería Rural* have historically and contemporarily navigate a “dangerous intersectionality.”

Further, in Chapter 4, I conceptualized how waves of coloniality have informed the spatialities and temporalities of the rural, what I conceptualize as the Coloniality of the Rural. That is, how rural spaces and temporalities are also conceptualized as “primitive” and “backwards” contemporarily. This Chapter informs how some of my collaborators in rural spaces are further subjugated by their cosmopolitan *Jotería* counterparts by being deemed as “backwards” through association of being from a peripheral zone.

Chapter 5 expanded on my research methods, research questions, methodology. Specifically, I incorporated Indigenous, third-world feminist, Chicana, and rural paradigms to inform the creation of a new methodology called *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. That is, a methodology that shifts to the needs and realities of the communities that I work with. This is congruence with Linda Heidenreich’s call for new methodologies that shift with our everyday lives (Heidenreich, 2020). This new methodology I proposed is necessary because the two rural regions that I will work with come from two different regions with distinct challenges. This methodology also attempts to debunk the myth of the Mexican nation-state as monolithic and homogenous.

In Chapter 6, through a narrative form, I introduced the contributors to this project. Concurrently, I reflected on my connection to the communities of southern Mexico. Further, I contextualized how I follow my own *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies through community building.

In Chapter 7, I discussed the specific hegemonic rhetoric my contributors and I found in southern rural Mexico including 16th-17th Century Colonial Period *Pecado Nefando*, Gendered, and *Castas* Influence; 19th-20th turn of the century imposition of virility through military punishment (The 41); 20th century virile rhetoric as justification for immense hate of male femininity (Nation building discourse); and 20th century pathologization of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* (Influence from medical discourse). I also identified forms of Internalization/Proxy perpetuations such as Father as masculinizer (family domestic violence & abuse); Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance; and Coloniality of the Rural in Praxis.

In Chapter 8, I highlighted the overt and covert resistance strategies of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* deployed in rural spaces. For example, in the communities of *Jalisco* I documented unique LGBTQIA+ movements that are contemporarily shaking the social fabric. For example, my work with the Toto-Diverso collective. Further, I also demonstrated how we, the Toto-Diverso collective, have built trans-municipal and transnational collectives to raise funds and support one another. In the case of *Tamiauah, Veracruz*, I analyzed testimonies of the *carnavales* which have been one of the main outlets for *Afro-Jotería Rural* to openly express themselves.

In sum, *Jotería* Studies has created a space for *Jotería* colonized subjects to theorize about their own bodies, histories, and legacies. However, though *Jotería* studies claims to account for Latinx histories, I believe there is room to fulfill its decolonial ethos of shifting transcultural dialogue from Global North to Global South from vertical to horizontal (Dussel, 1999). Therefore, my first departure includes the inclusion of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* to bridge and transcend the imagined, Eurocentric,

hemispherical, and spatial borders of the Global North and Global South (Anzaldúa, 1989). My second point of departure is the deep-decolonial-Global- intersectional analysis of racialized *Afro-Jotería Rural* bodies as they contend with a “dangerous intersectionality.” These two points will lead into a fruitful dialogue that can account for what Salas-Santa Cruz coined as a *Jotería* diaspora (Salas-Santa Cruz, 2023).

Chapter 2—Socio-Historicizing *Jotería-Historía*: Locating *Jotería* in the Archives

Distinctive Aspects of My Rural Study

Though there has been little representation of rural *Jotería*, Noriega (2014) and Carrillo (2017) have laid the groundwork for research on *Jotería* in the rural parts of Mexico. What makes my research different is my decolonial theoretical perspective and the interdisciplinary methodologies I implement in my analyses (see Chapter 5). One of the components of my *Nagualing Jotería* Methodologies is research conceptualization. This project entailed conducting a decolonial reading of two localized histories in Mexico.

Carrillo's theory of glocality (which I cover in the subsequent section) provided visibility to the experiences of *Jotería* in the rural through the interviews. However, glocality does not consider the complex power difference between *Jotería* folks abroad, in major cities, and in the rural. Noriega's work, however, was more reflective of rural *Jotería* voices because he used an autoethnographic approach. Also, he related the experiences and themes he collected to the existence of plurality, virility, and negotiation. Though Noriega alluded to the hegemonic power structures in place that ultimately govern relationships between men in the rural, he did not historicize where those ideologies stem from. My work also differs from theirs because I analyzed the history of the rhetoric, ideologies, and parallel historic occurrences that led to the stigmatization of femininity in men and the valorization of virility in the rural. For example, at the end of this Chapter, I begin highlighting the religious justifications of homophobia that stem from the colonial period in Mexican culture(s). Not only did I historicize the foundations

of this repressive rhetoric, but I also conducted a decolonial reading of the history behind the rhetoric. Moreover, I also drew parallels between these hegemonic ideologies and Noriega's fieldwork with *Jotería* participants in rural Northern Mexico. My contributors, however, were *Jotería* from rural southern Mexico; some of their experiences are similar but different from those in the north.

My last Chapter will demonstrate the overt and covert *Jotería* resistance themes that rose from my research in rural southern Mexico. In the next section, I will discuss and critique Carrillo's theory of glocality and expand on it using a decolonial lens.

Carrillo's Glocality and Europe's Modernity

Carrillo suggests that in the context of Mexico, there is a type of "glocalized" sexual hybridity happening in terms of the relationship between the rural and the cosmopolitan (Carrillo, 2017, p. 40). According to Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), hybridity is a third space where cultural identity is articulated despite existing cultural differences and contradictions in a person's identity. It is the in-between space that carries the multiple meanings of culture. Following Bhabha's understanding, Carrillo defines Glocality as a cultural exchange model in which local understandings of sexuality are intermixed with global conversations. In the case of Mexico, Carrillo defines it as the process in which cosmopolitan ways of knowing regarding sexuality are exchanged with local, rural epistemologies. This happens when cosmopolitan *Jotería* visit the rural and vice versa. This sexual hybridity is affected by both geographical location and social class. Parrini & Amuchasteg (2012) also concluded that globalization is instrumental in bringing forth sexual plurality in rural areas by stating that "The globalization of certain imaginaries that bring to the most distant places in the country a

plural and diverse world in terms of identities, sexuality, and subjectivity” (Parrini & Amuchasteg, 2012, p. 60). For instance, this occurred when *Jotería* visited bars in *Guadalajara, Jalisco*. Eventually, interactions between those in the rural and those in *Guadalajara* served as a method for global understandings of Gayness to be intermixed with local (rural) understandings (Carrillo, 2017).

Another example is the migration of middle-class families into the rural, creating contrasting tensions within the same space. The first being the rural and the second being the urban transplanted into the rural. The presence of these middle-class families, who are supportive of their Gay and lesbian children, created a space for tolerance in these rural spaces. For example, one of Carrillo’s informants noted that in his town, many middle-class families migrated from a cosmopolitan city to his town and brought with them global understandings of Queerness that they learned at their universities. These families were so accepting of LGBTQIA+, that they allowed their children to host parties so they could meet other LGBTQIA+ friends. Thus, creating a small accepting community within the rural.

Nonetheless, through his research, Carrillo suggested that there is a local sense of Gay culture emerging in small towns carrying implications of social class (Carrillo, 2017). For instance, Justo, one of Carrillo’s respondents, suggested that there are two Gay social networks in his town: “the well-known Gays” (which are the town’s “high class”) and *las electricas*. There is also a meta-oppression occurring simultaneously as the “well known Gays” look down upon *las electricas*.” Moreover, it is a myth that those who are economically privileged have greater exposure to so-called global understandings of Gayness and sexuality. This is because many other factors are

associated with glocality that add more complexity to this phenomenon, including contact between tourists and working-class locals (e.g., Cancun, Puerto Vallarta, etc.), presence of urban professionals who work for large companies in the rural; contact between Gay men in the city visiting the countryside (and vice-versa); inter-class solidarity between Gay men in the underground; locally produced representations of Gay modernity inspired and complimented by foreign, Queer TV shows, and availability of global Gay representations through internet access and social media apps such as Grindr (Carrillo, 2017, Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). A friend of mine from Cancun is an example of this phenomenon. He is originally from a rural area of Campeche but has access to “globalized Queerness” through his consumption of Queer media from U.S. shows such as RuPaul and Queer as Folk. Additionally, he has told me stories of his encounters with LGBTQIA+ tourists from the United States, Europe, and Australia that have molded his understanding of Queerness.

From my personal experiences in my family’s *rancho*¹, I can also say that transnational familial ties can also influence rural *Jotería* exposure to global understandings of sexuality. For instance, the folks who live in my family’s hometown have *Jotería* family members in Texas and California who often visit during the fiestas of June. Oftentimes, they end up hooking up and developing romantic relationships with the locals and, thus, exchanging global and local ideas of sexuality with the locals and thus, exchanging global and local ideas of sexuality. Contact between *Jotería* family members of those who have transnational or even multinational ties with those living in the rural can also be pivotal in this glocalizing process.

¹ Ranch community

Parrini & Amuchasteg also concluded that globalization has brought forth sexual plurality in rural areas by stating that “The globalization of certain imaginaries that bring to the most distant places in the country a plural and diverse world in terms of identities, sexuality, and subjectivity” (Parrini & Amuchasteg, 2012, p. 60). Small towns should not be considered as “isolated” from the changes taking place in the rest of Mexico. Moreover, the rise of this plurality shows that “no longer can investigators rest content with the antiquated portraits representing rural areas as hotbeds of little more than insular gossip, envy, and clan squabbling” (Gutmann, 2004). The rural operates within globalizing and glocalizing processes.

The irony of this glocality discourse is that the same arguments proposed regarding the process of “globalizing” follow the logic of modernity, the same logic that brought forth the perverse logic of coloniality (Mignolo, 2007). To reiterate, modernity and the logic of coloniality are linked because Europe’s vision of modernity, which continues to exist today, is informed by European colonial assumptions that the colonized exist “naturally” in places of inferiority. Racializing discourses seek to naturalize notions of inferiority. Modernity emerged from a legacy of exploitation, slavery, and dehumanization. Europe’s modernity is interlaced with many other hierarchies, including homophobia, repression, gender binaries, class distinctions, and racism (Grosfoguel, 2005). This European model of modernity disregards what was organic (Dussel, 2020), meaning that Europeans could not accept people for how they naturally were. Dussel states:

The 'European self' produced a scientific revolution in the 17th century, a technological revolution in the 18th, having inaugurated since the 16th century a

capitalist system with a modern Eurocentric, colonial ideology (because that Europe was the center of the world-system thanks to the conquering violence of his armies that justified his right of dominion over other peoples), patriarchal, and, as a culmination, the European positioned himself as unlimited exploiter of nature. However, the unmatched positive values of Modernity, which no one can deny, are corrupted and denied by a systematic blindness of the negative effects of his discoveries and his continuous interventions in nature. This is due, in part, to disregard for the qualitative value of nature, especially for its supreme constitutive note: being an organic 'living thing,' not merely mechanical; it is not just an extensive, quantifiable thing.² (Dussel, 2020, p.1)

In the context of sexuality, Europeans could not accept the beingness of homosexuality or Queerness, so they decided to subjugate natural phenomena like homosexuality to fit their vision of normalized sexuality (between a cis-man and a cis-woman). They did this by pathologizing and taxonomizing anyone who did not fit their vision of a “natural” order. Thus, Europe positioned its culture and epistemologies as normal and superior to others, who were defined and held to as qualitatively and negatively different. Non-European societies and cultures as described by terms such as primitive, premodern, traditional, inferior, and underdeveloped. European scholars and

² El 'yo europeo' produjo una revolución científica en el siglo XVII, una revolución tecnológica en el XVIII, habiendo desde el siglo XVI inaugurado un sistema capitalista con una ideología moderna eurocéntrica, colonial (porque esa Europa era el centro del sistema-mundo gracias a la violencia conquistadora de sus ejércitos que justificaban su derecho de dominio sobre otros pueblos), patriarcal, y, como culminación, el europeo se situó como explotador sin límite de la naturaleza. Sin embargo, los valores positivos inigualables de la Modernidad, que nadie puede negar, se encuentran corrompidos y negados por una sistemática ceguera de los efectos negativos de sus descubrimientos y sus continuas intervenciones en la naturaleza. Esto se debe, en parte, al desprecio por el valor cualitativo de la naturaleza, en especial por su nota constitutiva suprema: el ser una 'cosa viva,' orgánica, no meramente maquina; no es sólo una cosa extensa, cuantificable. (Dussel, 2020, p. 1)

thinkers positioned the West as the “most developed” continent in the world (the U.S. also is guilty of this) (Dussel, 1993). Powell (2014) agrees that “Globalization has a rich history associated with the emergence of modernity” with the establishment of Euro/American cultural hegemony throughout the world (p. 3).

This logic of modernity is being presented in contemporary times in the context of sexuality. Specifically, Mexican sexual cultures are perceived as being “traditional, macho, religious and unchanging” (Carrillo, 2017). Additionally, these notions position Mexico’s sexual cultures as “premodern, static, and backward in comparison with more enlightened, modern, dynamic, and global sexual cultures imagined to characterize the U.S. and other rich countries of the North” (including European countries) (Carrillo, 2017). Coloniality and modernity take on and appropriate Queer experience as a discourse of power. Although Carrillo’s “glocalizing” theory of U.S. and European scholars influence Gay understandings of identity in urban and rural spaces in Mexico as valid, it does not consider colonial impositions of hierarchies, which included homophobia, repression, gender binaries, class distinctions, and racism (Grosfoguel, 2005). Again, his argument perpetuates the problematic misconception that Europeans are at the epicenter or ultimate holders of knowledge and enlightenment eager to share it with the non-European countries which are positioned as subordinate, “savage,” and “uncultured” (Dussel, 1993, p.12). His argument also erases the histories and epistemologies of Queerness already present in the rural. It is problematic to assume that globalization (aka modernity) brings “sexual enlightenment” to Mexico. Ruvalcaba (2016) also agrees that globalism and global LGBTQIA+ communities who travel to

Mexico and those cosmopolitan folks in Mexico who travel to the rural replicate these colonial gazes when they visit:

Queer tourism is attracted to an exotic product that promises a rare sexual-cultural experience...the macho or Latin lover's sexuality as portrayed in the colonialist archives, which assign primitiveness and some natural force to the perceived premodern bodies, is re-signified neoliberal version of colonialism as a commodity...Gay globalized culture subsumes poor locals from the pre-modern, pre-Gay, macho sexuality and then performs a colonialist cultural practice...Globalization not only homogenizes cultures but also redefines the roles of cultures in a new, unequal distribution of material and symbolic goods Globalized Gays consume the premodern expression of a perceived premodern, non-globalized culture. These 'pre-modern sexualities' are imagined from a metropolitan perspective that misrepresent non-Gay homoeroticism as machista and homophobic. This perception understands that metropolitan Western categories are more liberating than those of the postcolonial countries.

(Ruvalcaba, 2016, p. 89)

Finally, Glocality falls under the assumption that cultural exchanges are horizontal.

Grosfoguel argues that we cannot discuss north/south dialogue without mentioning global power. Specifically, the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). Coloniality of power involves colonization under a different name. He states that many intercultural conversations imply a horizontal exchange, but relations are vertical between colonizers and colonized and dominators and dominated (Grosfoguel, 2005). Dussel (1993) agrees by stating that liberal multicultural communication is superficial because it implies a

symmetry that does not exist. Grosfoguel urges the reader to recognize how northern privilege (won by exploitation and domination by global coloniality) affects intercultural exchange between North and South, specifically, the recognition of power and the North's complicity in the exploitation of the South (Grosfoguel, 2005).

To dismantle these misconceptions, we must employ a decolonial reading to historicize how Europe's vision of modernity dehumanized *Jotería* and how *Jotería* have incorporated methods of resistance in the face of this colonial power (Esparza, 2023; Perez, 1999).

Sexuality and Gender Pre-Conquest: On 2-Spirit Identities on Turtle Island Pre-LGBTQIA+ Identities

White Queer and Trans scholars claim newness in their scholarship and often argue that LGBTQIA+ identities arose with the rise of global capitalism and anonymity. "Queerness has been associated with modernity in most twentieth-century debates on gender and sexuality" (Ruvalcaba, 2016, p. 8). These discourses replicate the logics of hegemonic knowledge production: "Latin American Queer theory, like many other aspects of cultural and knowledge production, is articulated inside coloniality; many of its concepts and arguments have even been articulated within the centers of power and written in the language of the empire" (Ruvalcaba, 2016, p. 10). Kimberley Williams Crenshaw, in *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color* (1995), argues that mainstream liberal discourses treat race, gender, and other identity categories as "vestiges of bias" and "intrinsically negative frameworks." The experiences of white males are also elevated to the level of generality, while the experiences of People of Color are reduced to "individual experiences"

(Halberstam, 2005, p. 4). Mainstream, eurocentric, white, colonialist, capitalist, centralist, universalist, and separatist (MEWCCCUS) are no strangers to these meta-oppressive tactics that seek to silence these conversations about the intersections of race, sexuality, and gender. Instead, many mainstream Queer theorists, such as MEWCCCUS, see race and sexuality as separate from gender (Esparza, 2023; Hames-Garcia, 2011). Frantz Fanon (1963) calls this the compartmentalizing logic of the West in his book *Wretched of the Earth*. Though many Queer theorists of color, such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Jose Esteban Muñoz, and Cherrie Moraga, have contributed to the building of Queer theory through their Queer-of-color knowledge production, they have ultimately been excluded from Queer genealogies. Instead of validating the contributions of Queer theorists of color, MEWCCCUS have proclaimed that they did the groundwork and Queer theorists of color just “added on” to existing central discourses (Hames-Garcia, 2011). Many Queers of color represented in Queer readings are commonly represented as “the other.” This replicates the colonial ego where the west has nothing to learn from scholars and activists of color whilst also positioning themselves as the enlightened (Dussel, 1993).

MEWCCCUS discourses have essentially turned into a metanarrative about domestic affairs between white homosexuals (Hames-Garcia, 2011). Jose Esteban Muñoz (1999) also stated that “most of the cornerstones of Queer theory that are taught, cited, and canonized in Gay and Lesbian studies classrooms, publications, and conferences are decidedly directed toward the analyzing of white Lesbians and Gay men” (p.10).

MEWCCCUS theorists fail to acknowledge sexuality and gender before the 18th century and situate the beginning of sexuality with the rise of capitalism during the 18th and 19th centuries. This is evidenced by the most canonized and cited piece, Foucault’s (1926) *The*

History of Sexuality, which is Eurocentric by centering only Roman, Greek, and 19th-century white bodies as sites of theoretical production and assumptions of sexuality and gender. Hames-Garcia proclaims that for Queer, critical scholars of color studying sexuality and race, “sexuality arises during and alongside violence of European colonialism and Indigenous resistance in 16th century, transatlantic slave trade of the 17th century, the imperialist wars and expansion of Europe and its former settler colonies in the Americas, southern Africa, and the Pacific in the nineteenth century, and the waves of postcolonial independence in the twentieth century” (Hames-Garcia, 2011, p. 40).

Situating Queer theory’s complacency with the coloniality of power, various scholars like Teresa de Lauretis, Judith Butler, and Gayle Rubin align their work with John D’melio’s theories of glorifying capitalism as the birthplace of LGBTQIA+ identities. According to D’melio, big cities provide flexibility through anonymity (Quijano, 2000; D’melio, 1987). Cantu (2009) interrogated these privileged assumptions by arguing that the “capitalism/LGBTQIA+ identity” fails to capture the complex power relations beyond arguments of class (p. 28). In addition, he notes that racial/ethnic dimensions are missing from the capitalist/Gay identity body of literature (Cantu, 2009). Gan agrees when they stated:

The myth of equal transgender oppression left capitalism and white supremacy unchallenged, often foreclosing coalitional alignments unmoored from gender analysis, while enabling transgender people to avoid considering their complicity in the maintenance of simultaneous and interlocking systems of oppression. (Gan, 2007)

This is limiting because these discourses fail to capture the fluidity of sexual construction and international political and economic contexts (Cantu, 2009). MEWCCCUS have “systematically sought to define the newness and uniqueness of their scholarship through a denial of past” (Hames-Garcia, 2011), particularly the legacies of coloniality of power. In alignment with the coloniality of power, these white Queer scholars have skewed and rewritten history where they are the center. However, LGBTQIA+ peoples, as we come to know them now utilizing modern terms, existed on Turtle Island before the invention of the Americas by the Europeans (Dussel, 1995). In this Chapter, I aim to uncover the unique histories of *Jotería* on Turtle Island. Coloniality cannot fully encompass the complex gender identities that existed before its imposition. Some ancestors of *Jotería* are native 2-spirit. Therefore, only in this Chapter will I use the term *Jotería/2-spirit* as a signifier to identify those native ancestors of *Jotería*. In the next Chapter, however, I will unpack the histories of the black ancestors of *Jotería*.

As Sanchez (2019) states, “The plurality of Indigenous perspectives on Queerness may never be completely known but I argue that the invasion of what is now Mexico by Spanish colonizers did much to limit the plurality of Indigenous perspectives on Queerness” (Sanchez, 2019). This is because most of the codexes and by proxy, knowledge systems that directly addressed sexuality and gender pre-European contact were largely destroyed by European colonizers. Also, they did not have the knowledge to interpret the symbolic language with societally shared definitions and understandings, for example, found in the buildings that are present to this day. However, most of our own unique *Joto*-stories on Turtle Island, however, pre-date European contact and have survived through oral traditions. Some of the most explicit records of *Jotería/2-spirit*

Indigenous folks have been uncovered through diaries/journals, letters, etc. of European explorers, ethnographers, and conquistadors. Though these diaries are limited in scope because they were grounded in a Catholic and Eurocentric framework, they shed light on the visibility of Indigenous *Jotería*/2-spirit people. Further, if we read between the lines of colonial records and against coloniality (e.g., Spanish Diaries), we can identify Indigenous sexual and gender plurality within archives. In my work, I attempt to find sequins in the rubble as coined by Dr. Eddy Alvarez (Alvarez, 2016). A field mainstream Queer Studies and CCS can learn from is Queer Indigenous Studies. This field has conceptualized an umbrella term that serves as a space for Indigenous sexuality and gender without the imposition known as 2-spirit.

First, what is 2-spirit? Driskill, in the book *Queer Indigenous Studies* (2011), defines 2-spirit as “to be inclusive of Indigenous people who identify as glbtqor through nationally specific terms from Indigenous languages” (Driskill, 2011). The former term is berdache. European, French anthropologists, through their Eurocentric binary thinking, developed this term to describe natives who did not neatly fit male/female roles. Again, terms like berdache in European records, however, can be useful for finding Indigenous voices within the European archives that were not destroyed. 2-spirit is often used as an umbrella term for Indigenous people from North America who experience gender and sexual orientation variants. The term also applies to Indigenous people who experience gender and sexual orientation fluidity, and who also perform traditional roles in their native communities. Further, it is “not meant as a replacement for Indigenous languages which already have the word to describe 2-spirit people. 2-spirit was derived from the northern Algonquin. Word *niizhmanitoag*, meaning ‘two spirits,’ it is meant to signify the

masculine and feminine spirits within one person” (Simpson, 2017). In essence, 2-Spirit is a theorizing space for Indigenous folk to theorize about their bodies and their unique histories of resistance (like *Jotería*). From the Global North to the Global South of Turtle Island, there have been multiple accounts of *Jotería*/2-s I will begin with the Global North and go to my area of focus, the Global South.

***Jotería*/2-Spirit in the Global North and 4th World**

In Simpson’s book, *As We Have Always Done* (2017), they articulate various oral histories of *Joeria*/2-Spirit Visibility through oral histories in present-day Canada. For example, in Cree Culture, the concept of NishNishnabeg. That is a celebration of self-determination and diversity. Nishnabeg is associated with Wijjidaamaagan which “means s/he co-habits with a person; Wiipemaagan means s/he sleeps with a person and Wijiwaaganmenasa anmenasor companion, according to roger’s uncle...a gay person is described as Wijiwemaaganis a woman with a female partner-the word has no judgment in it” (Simpson, 2017).

To re-iterate what Ruvalacaba stated, Queerness is situated within the empire, therefore, if we use words like Queer to attempt to use Queer in Indigenous contexts, we will have a harder time identifying our stories as terms like Queer or *Jotería* might be interpreted differently in Indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies. Simpson highlights how utilizing Western, modern terms can skew what we are looking for in oral histories and archives:

Alex Wilson Opaskwayak Cree, ‘traditionally, two spirit people were simply a part of the entire community; as we reclaim our identity with this name, we are returning to our communities....’ Over the years, when I have asked different

Nishnaabed elders about Queerness, they often say that we didn't have that. Then when I ask if two women ever lived together intimately, without men, they will remember stories of Queer couples, not as Queer people, but just people lived like that, as something that wasn't a big deal, as if it were normal inconsequential part of life. What these elders and Alex are describing is a gender variance that existed in many Indigenous communities prior to the strategic implanting of the colonial gender binary. (Simpson, 2017)

Cree wording for 2-spirit is diverse, as well as the roles they adopted. What they have in common, though, is their gender, sexuality, and role autonomy in their societies. Their autonomy is mainly what threatened the colonial imposition of the gender binary, as detailed by Simpson:

Two spirit elder Ma-Ne Chacaby's Grandma said she had two spirits as a child. She used the term Niizhinojijaak to describe male and female spirit living inside a girl. She explains niizhinojijaak girls were often drawn to activities that boys like, and she said that Niizhin Ojijjaak could choose not to marry, could marry someone of the opposite sex, or could marry someone of the same sex... Nizhiin Ojijjaak couples would adopt children who had lost their parents, that the sometimes had special healing or ceremonial responsibilities, and that it was her responsibility to figure out how to live her own life. (Simpson, 2017)

Also, in the Global North in the contested space that is the Southwest United States, there are also accounts of Spanish diaries that depict sexual and gender plurality, tolerance, and acceptance. Particularly, in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and

California. Again, we must do a decolonial reading of these records by reading against the grain and looking in-between the lines of the gendered, Eurocentric language.

A few accounts were found in present-day New Mexico. One account by Hammond stated that a Laguna Pueblo chief told him that a native *Jotería/2*-spirit in his tribe was *mujerado*. Therefore, he was free to “do as he pleased with him” (Trexler, 1995). Another commonly cited *Jotería/2*-spirit person is the Zuni two-spirit named Whe’wa, who also transcended gender roles and remained Two-spirit until age 47 when they died. Also, like the Gay vernacular in the U.S. and other countries, Two-spirit natives had their own vernacular. One record showed that the Two-spirit natives in the Mohave used a particular vocabulary (Trexler, 1995).

Though there are many records in the Global North, some of the earliest records that were not destroyed by the Spanish came from the Global South where the Spanish asserted their project of coloniality over Indigenous and African-descent people.

***Jotería/2*-Spirit in the Global South**

One of the earliest entries of *Jotería/2*-spirit uncovered in Spanish accounts was written by Michele Di Cueno, one of Columbus’ shipmates, in 1495. Michele Di Cueno (1495) stated he witnessed “sodomite” behavior and argued that they were “unaware of this vice” (Trexler, 1995). Bernal Díaz del Castillo, a Spanish conquistador, also reported witnessing sodomy inside the temples themselves in the valley of Mexico (Trexler, 1995, p.104). Further, Cabeza de Vaca explicitly stated that he saw men get married in multiple accounts (in 1534 and 1542) (Trexler, 1995).

Social roles of Two-Spirits in Mexico (and the rest of the Americas) varied significantly. For instance, Pedro Castaneda reveals in his account that not all Two-spirit

Natives were warriors. He stated he encountered “men dressed like women who marry other men and serve as their wives” (Trexler, 1995). What Castaneda possibly meant by “as their wives” was domestic labor, considering the well-established gender roles of the time. Oviedo backed this claim by stating that “they do not bear arms or do “anything men do... Rather, they involve themselves in sweeping, mopping, and other customary tasks of a woman” (Trexler, 1995). The variation of roles of Indigenous *Jotería/2*-spirits can also be seen in other tribes across the Americas. For instance, the Timucua tribe (4th world) *Jotería/2*-spirits were in charge of carrying their dead to burial sites while also being tasked with transporting weapons (Trexler, 1995). Other *Jotería/2*-spirit natives either prostituted themselves as an enterprise or were prostituted by the chiefs.

Colonial records in the Aztec empire also indicate that *Jotería/2*-spirit natives in Mexico did not subscribe to that identity but were instead assigned their *Jotería/2*-spirit identity by either their parents or tribe. In Mexico, certain Aztecs gendered their children when they noticed certain characteristics (similar to the Muxes, which will be discussed in Chapter 8). Bernardino de Sahagun, a Franciscan missionary, interviewed an Aztec elder who emphasized that parents began to gender their sons as female if they revealed “feminine mannerisms” based on cultural interpretations (Trexler, 1995). In other parts of the Americas, becoming 2-spirit differed significantly. Trexler (1995) points out three possible life stages in which Indigenous folks can become *Jotería/2*-spirit. The first is before age 12. In this stage, they became *Jotería/2*-spirit because either they were destined to be sacrificed or because they were to become sexually passive in the future. At the age of 12, they were to transition and take on a sexual role. Older *Jotería/2*-spirit would transition because either they could no longer produce offspring or because they

were no longer capable of serving as warriors. Nonetheless, *Jotería/2*-spirit natives would remain *Jotería/2*-spirit their entire lives (Trexler, 1995).

Francisco Gomara, a historian and ethnographer, made claims that certain providences of the Aztec empire, including present-day Sinaloa, were so tolerant of *Jotería/2*-Spirit, that it allowed for the existence of male brothels (Trexler, 1995). Most of these brothels (and the Indigenous acceptance of *Jotería*) were primarily centered in providences away from contemporary Mexico City (Tenochtitlan as it was known then). Gamora stated that Tachus in Sinaloa were also highly tolerant of *Jotería/2*-spirit because many of the records also point to “sodomites” existing in these lands (Trexler, 1995). Most records do not go beyond “they dressed like women” regarding *Jotería/2*-spirit aesthetics in Mexico. In general, however, Gomara states that *Jotería/2*-spirit natives he encountered wore beads and bracelets among other ornaments “worn by women” (Trexler, 1995). Outside of contemporary Mexico, there exist more records of *Jotería/2*-spirit aesthetics. For instance, *Jotería/2*-spirit natives in South America (specifically near Lake Titicaca and the former Spanish colony of Tierra Firme) wore makeup and grew their hair (Trexler, 1995). In addition to colonial records, one can look to native deities such as the Aztec gods for traces of plurality with sexuality and gender. In particular, *Xochipilli* and *Xochiquetzal* embodied the gods of flowers and protectors of homosexuals and prostitutes, respectively. They also represent the duality of masculinity and femininity because one cannot exist without the other. As Évolet Aceves stated in her novel *Tapizado Corazón De Orquídeas Negras* (2023):

Perhaps it's because of its relation to the profane and the nefarious that the Spanish Catholic Church censured and destroyed the few testimonials related to

this Aztec deity. Xochipilli is a name composed of two Nahuatl words: *xóchitl*, flower; and *pilli*, infant of high birth. He is known as the Prince of Flowers, and, similar to his complementary dual *Xochiquétzal*, he is the god of flowers and plants, including prohibited vegetation, music, dance, and all noble arts; games, fertility, sacred drunkenness, and everything that brings happiness. Prostitutes in the Aztec empire, the *ahuianimes*, tattooed their legs and showed off their long hair; they carried a flower in their hands. On the other hand, the *xochihuas* were considered sinners with sexual desire and prostitutes who were nefarious; they were perceived as men dressed as women with feminine behavior; they were skilled at deceit and also carried a flower in their hands. The *xochihuas* in turn worshiped Xochipilli and entrusted themselves to him, also god of pleasures.³

(Aceves, 2023, p. 186-188)

³ La historia del arcano Xochipilli poco se conoce, he de decirte. Quizá por su relación con lo profano y lo nefando es que la iglesia católica Española censure y destruyó los pocos testimonios relacionados con esta deidad Azteca. Fue la dualidad de *Xochiquétzal*, diosa de la belleza, las flores y el amor carnal. Xochipilli es un nombre compuesto por dos palabras de náhuatl: *xóchitl*, flor; y *pilli*, infante de alta cuna. Se le conoce como el Príncipe de las Flores, y, semejante a su dualidad complementaria *Xochiquétzal*, es dios de las flores y las plantas, incluyendo la vegetación prohibida, de la música, la danza y de todas las artes nobles; de los juegos, fertilidad, los placeres, le ebriedad sagrada, y todo aquello que acerque a la felicidad. La belleza de Xochipilli posee una delicadeza y dramatismo sin precedentes entre los dioses aztecas, el infante Xochipilli yace posado sobre una luminosa plataforma de jade que recibe los rayos solares para hacerlo resplandecer. Está sentado, con las piernas en forma de aspa, en forma de X, con sus dos manos levemente por encima de sus rodillas. Entre los pocos registros se afirma que su piel está teñida de rojo y que porta desquiciantes plumajes del mismo tono en su cabeza, así como un bezote de piedras preciosas que adorna su labio inferior, y dos preciosas orejeras que cuelgan de sus lóbulos. Su rostro voltea hacia el firmemente en expresión íntima y expectante, en plena elevación hacia lo alto. El infante Xochipilli está sollozando, una lágrima escurre de sus ojos, pero no puede verse, se oculta porque su rostro está cubierto por una máscara; esa máscara es el rostro del éxtasis. En su rostro, querido, se encuentran los secretos del universo. El dios de las flores es también un sol niño, es el dios de la luz, un dios solar que tiene por ojos dos gigantescas oquedades, antes ocupadas por desaparecidas piedras preciosas. La ausencia de éstas muestra una expresión mística...Xochipilli, de cuerpo joven, humano y bien proporcionado, alberga adherencias de flores en sus muslos, rodillas y pantorrillas, entre ellas la flor del tabaco y también la *ololihqui*, enredadera alucinógena en forma de campana blanca; le dicen el manto de la virgen. Las prostitutas en el imperio Azteca, las *ahuianimes*, se tatuaban las piernas, presumían su largo Cabello suelto y en sus manos levaban una flor; las *xochihuas*, por otro lado eran consideradas las pecadoras con deseo sexual y prostitutas nefandas, se les percibía como hombres vestidos de mujer, con comportamientos de mujer; eran diestras del engaño, y también, entre sus manos portaban una flor. La estética de Xochipilli era un exceso parecido a la

Xochipilli and *Xochiquétzal* are some of the few sequins in the colonial rubble that *Jotería* reclaimed. Some of the most significant representations of *Jotería/2*-spirit natives come from the art they produced. Oviedo claimed that *Zemi* (idols) found in the Mayan-Aztec region of Tabasco depicted two knights riding one another with one holding a circumcised penis (Trexler, 1995). It is no coincidence that records from other parts of Mexico show similar findings. For instance, Bernal Diaz found clay figurines of “sodomy” in Yucatan. Shortly thereafter, Antonio de Herrera found records of paintings of both heterosexual and homosexual activity in *Sinaloa* (Trexler, 1995). Outside of Mexico, many archeologists have unearthed similar artifacts representative of same-sex, male sexual behavior.

Fluid sexuality was also documented in South America. In *Peru*, for example, *Moche* pottery that dates to 700-750 AD depicts anal sex between two people (See Figure 1). Additionally, Incan pottery depicts similar anal intercourse behaviors (Trexler, 1995). Many scholars disagree on how to interpret these art pieces. Sonna and Larco suggest we should identify the genitalia of these art pieces before making assumptions about the attire of the figurines (Trexler, 1995). This is mainly because these scholars assume that the figurines are biological males and females practicing anal intercourse under the justification that they are dressed in “traditional male and female attire.” However, their arguments are from a Western, binary lens of understanding of sexuality and gender. Though there are many areas one can look at to identify *Jotería/2*-spirit visibility, but I worked with folks in *Veracruz* and *Jalisco*. Therefore, it is essential to center the records

de la ahuianimes y las xochihuas. Las xochihuas, a su vez, veneraban a Xochipilli, se encomendaban al también dios de los placeres. (Aceves, 2023, p. 186-188)

of these two regions. In the next section, I will trans-localize records in *Jalisco* and *Veracruz*.

Figure 1

Pottery of the Global South



Translocalizing *Jotería*/2-Spirit Visibility

One record that I found regarding *Jotería*/2-spirit folks in *Veracruz* was from the same text by Francisco Gomara. Gomara states that he also found male brothels in one of these providences of the Aztec empire. In fact, he stated that he found them more to be common in *Panuco* in *Veracruz* (Trexler, 1995).

In *Jalisco*, I came across a record analyzed by Dr. Danny Santana (Dr. Nerdo Saurio Rex) of a *Chichimeca* man with women mannerisms who fought bravely against the armies of Nuño De Guzman in his campaign to conquer *Jalisco* in the battle of *Cuitzeo* (near lake *Chapala*) (Santana, 2020). After conducting some more research, I found that this *Chichimeca* warrior was a *Tememe*. Trexler reports that *Tememes* were incredibly brave warriors (Trexler, 1995). Nuño de Guzmán, in his 1530 diary, stated that the “*Chichimeca Tememe* he encountered was so brave, he was the last one captured by the Spaniards during a battle” (Trexler, 1995). Ninedo, another conquistador, in that same battle, stated, “Everyone was so amazed to see such heart and force in a woman, since we thought he was a [a woman] because of the clothes he wore” (Trexler, 1995).

Subsequently, the Spanish killed the *Chichimeca Tememe* upon learning that this person was biologically male, committing gendered and sexed violence that I feel is fueled by the first wave of the project of coloniality, as detailed in the following sections.

I do, however, acknowledge that though there was much plurality in most Indigenous cultures regarding sexuality and gender, certain groups did not view this plurality favorably. This is complex because some believe that the last Aztec ruling empire shifted in a more heteropatriarchal direction (Hassig, 1998). However, views of this have changed, beginning with works by Clendinnen, Kellogg, and Klein.

Special Cases

Gloria Anzaldua paints an idea of how Aztec cultures embraced plurality, yet modified their own cultural, religious, and social cosmologies and epistemologies to justify male supremacy. However, I want to preface that the heteropatriarchy that the last Aztec ruling class imposed was not the same colonial-heteropatriarchal one the Spanish imposed (Driskill, 2011). Woman-identifying folks had considerable agency compared to those under the colonial-hetero-patriarchal order. Still, according to Spanish texts, the last Aztec empire did impose hetero-patriarchal assumed legislation:

Before the Aztecs became a militaristic, bureaucratic state here male predatory warfare and conquest were based patrilineal nobility., the principle of balanced opposition between the sexes existed. The people worshipped the Lord and Lady of Duality, Ometecuhtli and Omecihuatl. Before the change to male dominance, Coatlicue, Lady of the Serpent Skirt, contained and balanced the dualities of male and female, light and dark, life and death... The Aztec ruler, Itzcoatl, destroyed all the painted documents (books called codices) and rewrote a mythology that

validated the wars of conquest and thus continued the shift from a tribe based on clans to one based on classes. From 1429-1440, the Aztecs emerged as a militaristic state that preyed on neighboring tribes for tribute and captives.

(Anzaldua, 1987)

Enriqueta Vasquez (2016) agrees that the last Aztec empire did much to re-write their own history to justify a heteropatriarchy with the elimination of *Coyolxauhqui* and embracing of *Huitzilopochtli*:

There were changes when Itzcoatl became ruler and put his cold-blooded military genius nephew Tlaxcelotl as supreme head of the army. Tlaxcelotl transformed the judicial system, restructuring the army and reorganized the network of merchants who traveled throughout the country. Instituting and glorifying a new philosophy, he ordered the burning of books and had Mexica history rewritten. As a religious fanatic, Tlaxcelotl wrote hymns glorifying the state and ordering worship of Huitzilopochtli, the God of War, the sun god would be maintained by human blood. (Vasquez, 2016)

This shift that Anzaldua and Vasquez refer to is reflected in the case of King *Nezahualcoyotzin* (also known as *Nezahualcōyotl*) and his son. This king had a son who, although he was considered brave and courageous, was accused of the “nefarious crime,” and executed. His father, *Nezahualcoyotzin*, ratified his punishment. He was so repulsed that he declared that those who committed such a deed deserved to die (Schuessler, 2018). *Nezahualcoyotzin* passed laws where actives (penetrating tops) would be buried alive, and passives (penetrated bottoms) had their entrails removed from their buttocks (Schuessler, 2018). Another case was cited by Juan de Torquemada, who wrote about the

treatment of Anas and Gamboa, Aztec priests caught having had illicit sex. Colonial laws imposed harsher sanctions on homosexual acts. For example, if a priest was caught with a woman, his ‘property would be taken away and he would be exiled’... However, if the priest were having sex with a man, he would be ‘burned and hung’” (Trexler, 1995). Still, colonization played a major role in dichotomizing gender and gender roles as well as the punishment of sexual practices considered “nefarious” by the Spanish. As Grosfoguel stated, the hierarchies the Spanish imposed are interlaced (Grosfoguel, 2005), meaning that they stem from the same concept of coloniality and justification of white, cis-male, and heterosexual supremacy.

The Waves of Coloniality and *Jotería* Resistance

There are various assumptions that colonization ended after the postcolonial wars of independence and the establishment of nation-states. However, as we see in contemporary times, the perverse logics of coloniality and its interlaced hierarchies remain intact through dependency theory, eurocentrism, and heteropatriarchy (Fanon, 1969; Cesaire, 2000; Grosfoguel, 2005; Mignolo, 2007; Dussel, 1993). Clearly, coloniality continues to be operational under different guises and names but guided by the same colonial rhetoric (Quijano, 2000). The project of coloniality of power impacted *Jotería* in various waves that continue to be operational today. In the next few sections, I will discuss the various moments and waves of coloniality that have led to the marginalization, yet identity formation and continuous resistance continued among *Jotería*. This includes the Colonial Period of Mexico (16th & 17th Centuries) and the 19th turn of the 20th Century Mexico. These next sections also address Anita Revilla’s call to acknowledge the unique histories and legacies of *Jotería* (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014).

Colonial Contact and the First Wave of Coloniality (16th-17th Centuries)

When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, they began a long process of colonization accompanied by violence, rape, and imposition of hierarchies. Some of these systems of power included racially divided systems of labor, class hierarchies, ethnic-racial hierarchies (based on racist taxonomies), a gender hierarchy, sexual hierarchies, a spiritual hierarchy, and an epistemic hierarchy, all were interconnected (Grosfoguel, 2005). Sodomy, however, was one of the biggest justifications for conquest (Grosfoguel, 2005). In essence, the Europeans justified the “inferiority” of the natives by demonizing homosexual practices (Grosfoguel, 2005; Trexler, 1995). In the process, Indigenous ways of knowing of gender and sexuality were eradicated and reconfigured along with their bodies through a long process of direct and symbolic slaughter (Sigal, 2003; Sigal, 2007). The Spaniards essentially imposed a colonial, homophobic discourse that introduced the category of sodomy. The Spaniards referred to sodomy as *El Pecado Nefando* (Tortorici, 2010). This was a sin so horrendous and barbaric that it was not to be mentioned by name. Spanish understanding of sodomy stems from early medieval times. Renowned theologian Thomas Aquinas argued that the nefarious sin could happen in several ways:

First by procuring pollution, without any copulation, for the sake of venereal pleasure: this pertains to the sin of uncleanness which some call effeminacy.

Secondly, by copulation with a thing of undue species, and this is called bestiality.

Thirdly, by copulation with an undue sex, male with male, or female with female, as the Apostle states (Rom.i.27): and this is called the vice of sodomy. (De los

Reyes-Heredia, 2004, p. 234)

These burgeoning homophobic frameworks in the Americas based on Spanish legal codes provided a justification to prosecute those who engaged in these “notorious sins.” The Spaniards essentially imposed a colonial, homophobic discourse that introduced the category of Sodomy. The Spaniards referred to sodomy as *El Pecado Nefando* (Tortorici, 2010). The discourse on *El Pecado Nefando* has been the religious justification for homophobia in Mexico and most of Latin America since colonial times, especially in rural areas where Catholicism has a major influence in societal norms.

Xenophobic discourse became part and parcel of colonialism alongside the *Pecado Nefando* discourse of the perfect Spanish man, “The *Vir*” (Figure 2). Because sodomy opposed the ideal of “*Vir*” and Spanish centralism with which it was intimately associated, the prosecution of sodomy justified Spain's domination of foreigners (many of whom were represented as sodomites) in the peninsula and of “*Indios*” in Mexico. Colonial discourse depicted subject people as effeminate and prone to sodomitical acts, cannibalism, and inebriation (Garza-Carvajal, 2003). The ideal Spanish man had to be white, hyper-masculine, and free of the vices. Ultimately, the *Vir* discourse complemented the *Pecado Nefando* discourse and was used in conjunction to justify conquest in both Spain and Turtle Island.

Figure 2

The Spanish Vir Blueprint of the Perfect Spanish Man



The *Pecado Nefando* and *Vir* discourses ultimately influenced secular laws imposed onto the original inhabitants of Turtle Island. To understand this, however, we must contextualize what happened in Spain in the late 1400s. During this time, the Moorish culture had great plurality in terms of sexuality in the peninsula:

...Moorish culture in the peninsula had cultivated religious tolerance, great metropolises with intense networks of commerce, and agriculturally advanced countryside, its inhabitants cosmopolitan, some whom possessed grand sexual, homophile tendencies. In some regions of the peninsula, the initiation of young Moorish men into adult involved sexual relations with patriarchs. Consequently, many sectors of Moorish culture, both young and old, adhered to the practice of sodomy with some sense of liberty. The infidels simply had to be civilized. (Garza-Carvajal, 2003).

Clearly, this “civilizing mission” and sodomy as a justification for conquest also happened with the Moors in Spain. This culminated into the first official piece of legislation passed by King Manuel and Queen Isabella Medina of Spain. In 1497, they declared that those who commit the *Pecado Nefando* shall be burned at the stake (Trexler, 1995). This decree served as the first colonial-informed legislation to police

Jotería on Turtle Island (see Figure 3). Garza-Carvajal further details the complexity and implications of this new law as a key component to the project of coloniality of power:

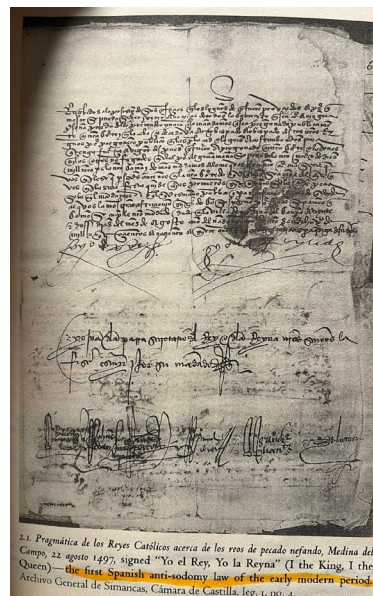
Fernando and Isabel christened a new political-religious era of repression...instructed both inquisitorial and secular tribunals to simultaneously combat heresy, treason, and sodomy beginning during the latter part of the 15th century...principal concern of the Spanish tribunals rested with heretics and the prosecution of the Moors, Jews, and sodomites. The nefarious sin became one of the most horrendous and scandalous crimes to preoccupy the monarchy in the sixteenth-and-seventeenth-century Spain. Not surprisingly, on occasions, King Fernando himself had authorized the investigation of suspected sodomites...the prosecution of sodomites and the codification of sodomy as nefarious a nefarious crime and sin against nature took a nasty turn in 1497, a marked rupture with the tolerance afforded such practices in earlier periods... On 22 July 1497 in Medina del Campo, Isabel and Fernando, their lips still smacking from the sweet taste of re-conquest and discovery, proclaimed the first celebrated sodomy pragmática of the early modern period. The 1497 Pragmática significantly aggravated the discourses and the sentences passed against suspected sodomites. The Pragmática concerned itself not so much with the hetero-fore-articulated social danger that marked the gravity of the sin; rather the document addressed the inner guilt or culpability of such an offence with respect to God. The discursive descriptions of sodomy as a crime and sin tactically recognized it as primarily an offense against God rather than conceiving it as a danger to the Spanish state. (Garza-Carvajal, 2003)

This same discourse further fueled the xenophobic, national imaginary of the “*Vir*.” This also led to the lines of secular and religious jurisdictions to be blurred as detailed by Garza-Carvajal:

Sodomy, in the hearts of Isabel and Fernando, led to the ‘loss of one’s virtuous and illustrious pedigree or man’s honour.’ Whoever perpetrated such a crime and sin not only consented to an ‘ignoble act’ but ‘ceased to be noble’- a process that culminated in a ‘weakened’ or ‘cowardly heart.’ Furthermore, they proposed that both ‘secular and ecclesiastical law should join forces to punish the nefarious crime, one not worthy of name, destroyer of the natural order, thus punishable by divine justice. (Garza-Carvajal, 2003)

Figure 3

The First Anti-Sodomy Law Imposed on Turtle Island



As cited by Garza-Carvajal, anti-sodomy laws were present before 1497, but were never implemented at the same scale as that of Fernando and Isabel. Spanish legal codes

informed the interlaced hierarchies of repression, control, and colonization previously proposed by Ramon Grosfoguel:

Isabel and Fernando resuscitated perceptions of sodomy that had festered in different parts of the peninsula during other epochs of repression by proposing that sodomy produced in man the fear of torments and punishments that God could inflict upon the place on Earth where these atrocities prevailed. In theory, sodomy laws had existed before 1497. However, in practice, authorities rarely put them to use, as did Fernando and Isabel later in the sixteenth century...Catholic Monarchs drew inspiration from Chapter 21 of the thirteenth-century *Setena Partida* titled 'De los que facen pecado de luxuria contra natura' which defined sodomitico as the 'sin against nature and natural custom committed by men with each other.' (Garza-Carvajal, 2003).

The punishments for the *Pecado Nefando* are unspeakable and unthinkable.

Though the Spanish Monarchs and authorities cited the *Setena Partida* (older rarely implemented laws) to justify their prosecution and policing of *Jotería*, they decided to modify and increase the severity of the punishments:

The 1497 Pragmatica occurred with the major points outlined in the *Setena Partida*. A 'Godly fear' had prompted the monarchs to make sodomy laws and sentences even more severe. The monarchs interspersed the penalties stipulated for sodomy in the *Setena Partida* as insufficient to 'extirpate the abominable error,' and thus they 'felt a greater need to be even more accountable to God.' Although the Pragmatica affirmed the death penalty for those condemned sodomites over the age of twenty-five promulgated by the *Partida*, it nonetheless found the

penalty insufficient and instituted a new penalty; death by fire. Only fire, as a natural purifier of the maligned, could provide remedy for sodomy, the unmentionable vice and the abominable crime against nature. At times, the threat of burning a sodomite so terrified the family of the accused, that instead, they themselves administered a paste-like poison to their own relative, an early modern euthanasia. (Garza-Carvajal, 2003)

These new laws also required *Jotería* to be tortured. In addition to burning, some of the other punishments inflicted upon *Jotería* included stoning and castration (Trexler, 1995). This resulted in a mass persecution of *Jotería* and culminated in the mass burning on the 16th of November in 1568 (see Figure 4 for official documentation of victims). Among the victims was La Cotita, an Afro-Mexican Trans or non-binary person (if we use today's signifiers). In the next Chapter, I will detail this case as it entails racial implications.

Figure 4

Official List of Those Killed in the Mass Burning of 1568



Again, the purpose of these measures was also to justify the coloniality of power, sexuality, race, and gender on Turtle Island as the sexual subjectivities and heterogeneity of Indigenous bodies were too autonomous for the colonizers' taste and had to be surveilled, controlled, and binarized as detailed by Lugones and Simpson in the next section.

Coloniality and the Order of Gender

Various decolonial scholars, including Simpson, Driskill, Lugones, Tixel, and Sigal, suggest that sexual and gender plurality was accepted and tolerated by most pre-conquest Indigenous societies. The Aztecs have been credited with having parallelism or gender complementarity as a framework for guiding social relations. In addition, societies with a degree of binary conceptualizations of gender attributed power to women or energies. Of course, I do not want to claim that patriarchy was non-existent. Some Chicana scholars suggest that women's power was limited in the last empire of the Aztecs as compared to their earlier counterparts, such as the Mayans (Vasquez, 2016; Anzaldúa, 1987). However, Kellogg, relying on archival records, argued that women had the right to serve in courts and own land (Kellogg, 1995). Patriarchal practices introduced by Europeans did much to limit women and 2-Spirit/*Jotería* autonomy as their existence and power were deemed a threat to the subjugation practices and rhetoric of coloniality of power. Lugones calls this the coloniality of gender. This same coloniality is what informs heterosexual and homophobic assumptions of the colonizers:

Though everyone in capitalist Eurocentered modernity is both raced and gendered, not everyone is dominated or victimized in terms of their race or gender. Intersexed individuals were recognized in many tribal societies prior to

colonization without assimilation to the sexual binary. It is important to consider the changes that colonization brought to understand the scope of the organization of sex and gender under colonialism and in Eurocentered global capitalism... This gender system congeals as Europe advances the colonial project(s). It begins to take shape during the Spanish and Portuguese colonial adventures and becomes full blown in late modernity...the gender system is heterosexualist, as heterosexuality permeates racialized patriarchal control over production, including knowledge production, and over collective authority...We have begun to see the deep reductions of anamales, anafemales, and 'third' genders from their ubiquitous participation in ritual, decision making, economics; their reduction to animality, to forced sex with white colonizers, to such deep labor exploitation that often people died working. (Quijano, 2007; Lugones, 2024)

Gender and sexual autonomy, particularly those of 2-Spirit/*Jotería* and women-identifying folks, were deemed too autonomous for the colonial social order and had to be eliminated by any means necessary. The introduction of the patriarchal, binary system led to immense violence amongst native communities across Turtle Island. As Simpson describes, this also applied to folks who practiced the autonomous nature of Nishnabeg and Nishnaabewin en Cree culture:

This imposed an artificial gender binary as a mechanism for controlling Indigenous bodies and identity and sets out two very clear genders: male and female. It lays out two sets of rigidly defined roles based on colonial conceptions of femininity and masculinity. It then places colonial concepts of maleness and masculinity as more important than female and femininity and erases any

variance. This is what heteropatriarchy needs to operate, and the more that heterosexual cisgendered Native men and women buy into the hierarchy and choose to reproduce and enforce violence, exclusion, and erasure, the better it works to divide and destroy the fabric of relationships that make up our nations, and the fundamental systems of ethics based on values of individual sovereignty and self-determination...the heteropatriarchy of settler colonialism has regulated the bodies of Indigenous women and 2SQ people, and trans people particularly, to death. We live in a vat of heteropatriarchal violence. In this reality, gendered practices that once existed in a different context no longer generate the same intimate relationships in a settler colonial context, at the very least, not for everyone. In our current practices of Nishnaabewin, we simple do not publicly regulate cisgendered heterosexual men's and boys' clothing or their bodies, particularly their reproductive body parts. (Simpson, 2017)

Ultimately, as Simpson alluded, the symbolic and physical violence coloniality produced upon 2-Sprit/*Jotería* through its instruments of domination (e.g., boarding schools) was enough for native folks to internalize these systems of power and reproduce them amongst their own people. This was in the form of re-structuring cosmologies and epistemologies like rituals and using discipline as a form of control. Of course, a form of subversive complicity existed to keep what they had as best they could (Grosfoguel, 2005). Still, coloniality did much to inflict internalized forms of violence amongst native communities in North and Middle America.

Internalization

Evidence of this internalization can be found in the social structures and rituals of native communities today. For example, in most native cultures cis-men are the only ones who are deemed to have authority:

whether or not there is documented evidence in Indian Affairs archives. I'm also unsure I see the difference between brute force and the extreme forms of genders, sexualized, physical, and emotional violence I can only imagine was amplified the more a child expressed variance from the strict colonial gender binary. No records on Queer native children in boarding schools residential school experience, committed suicide, or forced to live indivisible life...The gender Binary was also reinforce through the Indian Act: only men could run for chief and council until 1950, marriage was defined in a heterosexual, monogamous way, and the rules for status and property were gendered. (Simpson, 2017)

Oyéronké Oyewùní (1997) & Lugones (2007) agree that this introduction of colonial, patriarchal, binary thinking imposed hierarchical practices on Indigenous and subaltern populations.

As global, Eurocentered capitalism was constituted through colonization, gender differentials were introduced where there were none. Oyéronké Oyewùní (1997) has shown us that the oppressive gender system that was imposed on Yoruba society did a lot more than transform the organization of reproduction. Her argument shows us that the scope of the gender system colonialism imposed encompasses the subordination of females in every aspect of life...Among the features of the Indian society targeted for destruction were the two-sided complementary social structure; the understanding of gender;

and the economic distribution that often followed the system of reciprocity. The two sides of the complementary social structure included an internal female chief and an external male chief. The internal chief presided over the band, village, or tribe, maintaining harmony and administering domestic affairs. The red, male, chief presided over mediations between the tribe and outsiders. (Lugones, 2007)

In the next Chapter, I will discuss how this colonial order of gender impacted Afro-*Jotería*. However, despite the challenges *Jotería* endured during the first wave of coloniality, we have always found ways to survive.

Resistance During the Colonial Period

Though there were many adversities to contend with, *Jotería* found ways to resist overtly and covertly. Some early resistance tactics against repressive colonial laws justified by *El Pecado Nefando* in Mexico involved internal organizing and occupying spaces where ambiguity allowed tolerance. Ironically, rural areas during the colonial era were centers for *Jotería* resistance during the colonial era. Evidence of this is supported by testimonies and gaps in prosecution records (Gruzinski, 2003). One piece of evidence is that between 1657 and 1658, more people were prosecuted in big cities such as Mexico City and *Puebla* compared to urban and rural areas like *Cholula* (Gruzinski, 2003).

As a method of resistance, *Jotería* would organize sexual encounters in rural areas (e.g., *San Juan Penitencia*) located outside the city walls of Mexico City under the guise of parties, dances, and holiday festivities (Gruzinski, 2003). This happened because *Jotería* organized themselves in enclaves, groups sharing the everyday experience of being marginalized because of their sexuality. Through these enclaves, *Jotería* would

continue to fulfill their erotic desires despite the heavy policing that occurred during the colonial period. Organization of these enclaves also served as a type of subversive complicity tactic because groups of *Jotería* networks formed to preserve a type of underground solidarity. Arguably, these enclaves were protected by *chisme*⁴, a tradition we carry among *Jotería* contemporarily (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). These enclaves also transcended certain social barriers such as class and race because members of these enclaves belonged to different levels of the established *casta* system, a racist, classist system imposed by Spain that classified people by their level of “racial purity.” The rural has provided like the *Jotería* in colonial times, cover for organized enclaves of *Jotería* to give value to one another.

Another resistance tactic implemented was coded language that only “*los sodomitas podían entender*” (e.g., nicknames like *la cotita*) (Gruzinski, 2003; Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). This coded language phenomenon is what Goodwin (1989) calls the “double subjectivity of interpretation.” Meaning that messages require the interpretation of the speaker and the receiver to make meaning. Thus, this language is presented in a form that carries a double meaning, requiring subversive knowledge to be understood among its participants. Therefore, a secret system of interaction is formed only subordinated groups can understand (Goodwin, 1989). Many *Jotería* used this system to seek erotic and romantic experiences without detection from colonial powers. The legacy of this resistance tactic continues to this day, considering that many of my contributors disclosed that they also use coded verbal and non-verbal language to look for partners (discussed in Chapter 8).

⁴ Loosely translates to gossip

Temascales were also a space used by *Jotería* enclaves and were predecessors of the bathhouses where *Jotería* would congregate later during the *Porfiriato*. *Temascales* are sweat lodges from pre-Hispanic Indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica (known today as bathhouses). *Jotería*, among other marginal subjects (women who have sex with women and prostitutes), would gather in the darkness to fulfill their desires (Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). These *temascales* facilitated the development and preservation of these same-sex attracted male social networks (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). By 1624, the Church and Spanish crown ordered the surveillance of *temascales* to “weed out” individuals committing the nefarious sin (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This ultimately led to the *temascales* being raided in the mid-17th century. The raids eventually stopped when clergymen and their students were also discovered having intercourse in these *temascales* (Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). Macias-Gonzalez stated that the church hoped that the problem would disappear:

But perhaps because many of the arrested turned out to be students and clerics, the inquisition dropped the subject and, subsequently, policed what we would call heterosexual bathers, discouraging mixed-gender bathing through the establishment of men-only and women-only baths- and ignored same-sex attracted bathhouse patrons altogether, perhaps hoping that by not drawing attention to the phenomenon, it would go away. (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012, p. 36)

Some individuals in those same enclaves also turned to disidentification methods of resistance. Disidentification is acting on and against prescribed identity markers by removing the hegemonic interlockings (Muñoz, 1999). One example was Juan De La Vega (dead name), also called La Cotita. La Cotita was disidentified through their gender

performance, which was culturally tied to women of the colonial period. La Cotita was labeled as effeminate because of the mannerisms and because La Cotita performed domestic labor. La Cotita would cook tortillas, clean, wash, and “sat like a woman” (Tortorici, 2010). Additionally, La Cotita referred to men as *mi vida*, *mi alma*⁵, and *mi Corazon*⁶ (De Los Reyes-Heredia, 2004). La Cotita wore scarves on her head and colorful ribbons, customary to women’s attire at the time (Garza-Carvajal, 2003). She went undetected for most of her life because male effeminacy, though highly stigmatized, was not proof enough to be prosecuted in colonial Mexico of the 17th century (Tortorici, 2010). I will elaborate on La Cotita further in the next Chapter.

Clearly, *Jotería* have had to historically resist and negotiate their identities through various institutions of power that excluded, marginalized, pathologized, and dehumanized them. After the colonial era, some of the subsequent challenges *Jotería* had to face were the imposition of national identity-building discourses that included the construction of Mexican masculinities. In the next section, I will discuss the national discourses that ultimately shaped the identity politics behind Mexican masculinities in the rural. Additionally, I will demonstrate how components of these socially constructed attributes of masculinity in Mexico shaped the politics of respectability and comradery that govern social interactions between men in the rural. Finally, I will show how *Jotería* in the rural have utilized paradoxes in these institutionalized forms of masculinity to resist, navigate, negotiate, and subvert to other versions/waves of modernity in the 19th and 20th centuries.

⁵ My soul

⁶ My heart

Nation Building, Masculinities, Pseudo-Scientific Masculinities, and Colonialism

2.0: *Jotería* in the 19th-20th Centuries

It is important to revisit historicized definitions and social constructions of masculinity in Mexico because they influenced the unwritten social rules that shaped interactions between men in the rural. Patriarchal notions of masculinity were vital to justifying homophobia in the rural, too. “Maleness” and “masculinity” refer to a set of physical characteristics shared by cis-men indicative of a collection of behaviors, attitudes, and attributes that men may or may not exhibit (but that perhaps they ought to) (Irwin, 2003). These shared notions of masculinity are essentially socially constructed and have unstable definitions. Masculinity is also learned, acquired, performed, and on a continuum (Irwin, 2003; Butler, 1988). Though these notions of masculinity are not fixed, they are guided by an imposed system of gender that ultimately affects and seeks to confine people’s behaviors. This gendered system, however, is a historical, ideological process that is dynamic, contradictory, and changing (Bedrmen, 1995). The dichotomous gendered system of male and female is also impossible because we cannot neatly divide people into two categories without considering the biological anomalies (e.g., intersex folks) (Irwin, 2003). Therefore, since definitions of gender are unstable, masculinities are also heterogenous. Ultimately, social constructions of these changing definitions are shaped by discourse. Foucault (2011) argues that discourse creates and reinforces frameworks of how we see the world, essentially bringing to life fixed, compartmentalized, and essentialized definitions (e.g., homosexual).

Discussing masculinities in Mexico involves dissecting the nation building discourses that shaped the contradictions of homosocial relationships between men in the

rural. This is especially true because as notions of masculinity have shifted over time, conceptualizations of “*lo Mexicano*” have followed concurrently (Irwin, 2003).⁷

Following the colonial period, many Central and Latin American countries fought and gained independence from Europe. However, they did not achieve complete liberation because Europe continued to have epistemic and economic control through what decolonial philosophers call “dependency theory.” Dussel (1993) argues that elites from “peripheral cultures” were educated by the imperial empires and echoed the Eurocentric rhetoric they learned in those nations. They became loyal to these “imperial cultures” and were, therefore, disconnected from their peoples. Thus, they became hostages of the imperial nations and their dependent politics (dependency theory). Dussel (1993) stated that peripheral cultures and imperial cultures have an asymmetrical relationship in which “Western metropolitan, Eurocentric cultures that dominated and sought to annihilate all peripheral cultures” (p. 7). He further notes that imperial cultures caused a split between postcolonial cultures encompassing “enlightened elites” and the popular majority. The elites’ authority required them to turn their backs on their ancestral regional cultures and popular majority, and thus, they forsake their communities’ interests and pledged allegiance to imperial powers. The popular majority are the rest of the population that are settled in their traditions, which they defend against the imposition of “technocratic, economically capitalist, imperialist cultures” (Dussel, 1993, p. 7). Thus, many of these new nations that rose from revolutionary wars were essentially what Quijano (2000) defined as “independent colonies.” Through the perpetuation of logics of coloniality,

⁷ Note: Women also had their role during the 19th century and 20th century nation building that allowed men to have sex with men (as long as they had sex with women because of turn of the century rhetoric that women’s role was to reproduce) for more information see *Women in Nationalism and Latin America* by Natividad Gutierrez-Chong.

these nations began national projects aligned to European models. In short, the legacies of coloniality continued to live on through nation building discourses. Nation building discourses became just another phase/wave of coloniality (colonialism version 2).

Historically, national projects of Latin and Central American nations have been racist, Eurocentric, exclusionist of subordinated others, and homophobic (Grosfoguel, 2005). By establishing borders, these nations aimed to invent and uphold what Benedict Anderson (1983) called imagined communities. In essence, nations attempt to construct homogenous identities by integrating Eurocentric ideologies as a deciding factor to determine who does and does not belong within the borders of that nationally imagined community. However, holes in the logic of these competing discourses have made it possible for *Jotería* to continue to engage in resistance tactics even after the colonial era. This was especially true because Mexico has never had a monolithic definition of masculinity. Instead, Mexico has always had “competing discourses that fade in and out over time and accumulate into the messy web of contradictions that is Mexican Masculinity” (Irwin, 2003, p. xvi). This is also true because Mexico also had more than one nation-building process (one of them being a revolutionary one that attempted to liberate discourses and peoples, but unfortunately fell trapped in Eurocentrism because many elites that led these movements were educated in the United States and Europe).

“Cleanliness:” Cruising Porfirian Masculinity

During the early days of independent Mexico, the colonial era discourse on the “Nefarious sin,” the homophobic discourse that justified homophobia and the policing and punishment of *Jotería* during the colonial era, disappeared and remained unformulated in Mexican national discourses (Irwin, 2003). This continued until the 19th

century in Mexico when Porfirio Diaz took power. It is important to note, however, that male effeminacy was still seen with disgust, but it was not assigned a sexual dimension (Irwin, 2003). Thus, effeminacy was not equated to homosexuality during the early 19th century. The fact that Mexico was a nation that was no longer compulsively seeking to punish homosexuality allowed for a sociopolitical space that was later compared to the colonial era. Thus, *Jotería* had more possibilities to employ methods of resistance to subjugation, such as subversive complicity and disidentifications in secret.

By the time Porfirio Diaz and his *Científicos*⁸ took control of Mexico, they tried to build a national understanding of masculinity based on ideological impositions of the European Enlightenment in Mexico. There were shifting, unstable ideals that came with these national masculinity discourses which allowed for navigation by *Jotería*. One of these notions was cleanliness. This was because the elites assumed that cleanliness was linked to modernity. *La gente decente*⁹, believed that daily baths would speed up their “westernization.” This is because *La gente decente* assumed that cleanliness was associated with European customs. However, Spanish colonizers took note of the daily bathing practices of Mesoamericans, which made them stand out in comparison to Europeans. In fact, many folks who traveled to Europe during this era were shocked to learn when they traveled abroad that many Europeans, specifically the Spanish, went days without bathing (disproving the false notion that cleanliness habits come from European ancestry) (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012).

To further prove their “westernization,” *La gente decente* included imported products from Europe to justify their modernity. During the late 1890s-early 1900s, being

⁸ Advisors to Porfirio Diaz that used positivist rhetoric to Westernize Mexico and have it mirror Europe.

⁹ The Porfirian Elite.

clean, then, was associated with manliness (turn of the century) (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This masculinity, however, was often contested because of intersections of ideological differences, race, and class. For instance, when this national project of “westernizing through cleanliness” took off, the *Porfiriato* set up bathhouses for the masses. Many of these bathhouses closed due to medieval superstitions of immorality, disrepute, and ill health with full-body immersions (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). Many Mestizo *gente decente* also refused to attend these bathhouses because their nude bodies would shatter their performance of whiteness (they would not have their expensive clothes and perfumes on) (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012).

However, some Mestizo *gente decente* still continued to attend because the privilege of being able to engage in leisure activities meant you had money. Thus, being wealthy was equated to being whiter and higher in the social hierarchy, but also because of the connections they were able to make through whiteness. Many saw the bathhouses as the feminization of the elite, but others refuted these statements because many of the attendees would substitute hard work with competitive gym sessions (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012).

Macedo (1897), along with other *científicos*, made it clear that the bourgeoisie brand of masculinity, which was coined as “beyond savage,” was restricted to the middle-upper classes when they stated in a government document titled *La Criminalidad en México: Medios de Combatirla: Discurso* that “The crimes of blood are almost always committed by individuals from the lower class against individuals from the same lower class¹⁰” (p. 6). Criminologist Guerrero (1901) (at the turn of the century) also stated in

¹⁰ los delitos de sangre son cometidos casi en la totalidad de los casos por individuos de la clase baja contra individuos de la propia clase.

his study (funded by the Porfirian elite) titled *La Génesis del Crimen en México* that “the dirtiest classes were the poor, who could not afford ‘to even buy soap with which to wash, as it would consume 25% of their income.’ Léperos, soldaderas, beggars, and the like—were not only immoral, promiscuous, thieving, miserable drunks, but have such a disregard for hygiene that their dirt-colored, sore-covered bodies gave off a most fetid stench since the city’s barefoot downtrodden bathed ‘only when it rains’” (p. 40).

Paradoxically, natives, who were among the most marginalized, were cited by Guerrero as clean and hardworking. This discourse portrays the classic contradiction of the representation of extremes as seen in racism, such as when blacks and natives were depicted as savage, aggressive sexually, and more masculine than their white counterparts. However, they were positioned as subordinated and weak at other times week because of their perceived inferiority (Irwin, 2003). Despite this contestation, cleanliness continued to be highly correlated to masculinity in national discourses along with moral, honor, class, racial, and gender lines.

Another key discourse on masculinity during the 19th century was the conversation on comradery and homosociability. Essentially, Mexican nation-building also rested on the notion that homosocial bonding was necessary for a strong nation (Irwin, 2003). This rhetoric was also built on the logic of modernity and racial purity proposed by Porfirio Diaz and the *Científicos*. In essence, the threat of open heterosexual desire was more of a threat to society compared to *Jotería* because of the beliefs that the promotion of heterosexual procreation and desire would “threaten racial purity, blur barriers of social class, corrupt virgins, destroy institutional matrimony (adultery), and produce children out of wedlock” (Irwin, 2003).

In short, preventing racial mixing, maintaining the hierarchy of class, and upholding patriarchy informed the development of the Mexican nation-state in the 19th century rather than actively persecuting *Jotería*. The racial purity component of this discourse eventually shifted to racial integration. Homosocial bonding was used to promote racial integration in this nation-building process. 19th-century brand masculinity encompassed being *hombre de bien* and social do-gooder (Irwin, 2003). National projects during this time consisted of pushing men to get involved in sports, fraternities, and other means of homosocial bonding. This discourse created the possibility of love between men through their shared adventures, intimacies, and horseplay (Irwin, 2003). This love between men was accepted because it had not yet been socio-politically linked to homosexuality (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012, p. 6).

Of course, sometimes the lines between homosociability and homosexuality blur (Sedgwick, 1985). Because homoerotic acts passed as masculine, there was more room for ambiguity. For instance, displays of affection made it possible for some to express their fondness for another man (e.g., slap on the back, measuring muscles, etc.) (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). Therefore, this ambiguity allowed *Jotería* to navigate more easily the socio-political climate of the time. Homosocial bonding combined with the “cleanliness” rhetoric of 19th-century Mexican masculinity allowed for a socio-political climate that facilitated *Jotería* private/secret erotic experiences. For example, in the bathhouses, *Jotería* utilized homosocial rituals to look for sexual partners. Macias-Gonzalez (2012) describes how these erotic encounters between *Jotería* occurred:

Luxurious bathhouses provided a place where scantily clad same-sex-attracted men could congregate and, through careful observation, lingering looks, furtive

glances, and guarded comments, contact others who shared their same sex attraction. What passed unperceived to attendants turned into a mating ritual for those ‘in the know.’ Sex-attracted bathers used the layout to their advantage, looking around until a handsome man held their gaze; the hunted became the hunter. Once mutual interest was established, the couple could safely, discreetly, and separately leave the pool and rendezvous in private bathing cabinets. Once behind closed doors, and perhaps in collusion with a well-bribed bath attendant, they could safely carry on. Contacts could also be made in the exercise rooms, where conversation about weightlifting techniques or carefully phrased compliments about someone’s musculature could safely evolve into a pick-up line (p. 11).

Male eroticism then, went largely unnoticed because it passed as masculine, but also because those erotic experiences all happened in private (Irwin, 2003). This, however, changed after a series of scandalous events that threatened the “morality” of the country.

El Baile Que Nunca Se Acabo: Virilization of the Nation During the Turn of the Century

One of the most notorious scandals that ultimately shifted national discourses was “*el baile de los 41*.” Antonio Arroyo and illustrator Jose Guadalupe Posada broke the news about this national scandal during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (many decades before the Stonewall Riots in the United States) (Capistran, 2018). The story goes that on the night of November 17, 1901, the federal police found 41 men, 19 dressed in beautiful dresses and makeup and the rest dressed in sharp tuxedos, dancing in a luxurious

ballroom in what is today known as *Zona Rosa* in Mexico City. This event, of course, was a big scandal because it was during a time of state-promoted masculinity and homophobia by the *Porfiriato* (Capistran, 2018).

What made this event even more scandalous was that most of the men found dancing with one another formed part of the Porfirian aristocracy.

Initially, there were reports that the number of participants was 42 (though recent unearthed reports claim as many as 60 as many ran away). Still, it was later revealed that among those 42 was Ignacio De La Torre, son-in-law of Porfirio Diaz (Capistran, 2018). To avoid this event becoming an even bigger scandal, the *Porfiriato* bought the silence of the press, which resulted in the number being officially recognized as 41. Porfirio Diaz was also silent for most of the scandal but was forced to address the situation due to public outcry. He did not, however, explicitly mention any names in his official statement and ultimately denied the involvement of anyone from the elite class:

There are those who assure that among those individuals who were apprehended were capitalists and other people belonging to very distinguished families...we believe necessary to rectify these opinions. The truth is that the referred reunion, excessively immoral and scandalous, there was only a group of more than 40 men, very well known for their depraved customs, and more than one time have constructed scandals as part of their style. The majority of them changed their names after being arrested; but the police have been able to identify many of

them, among them is an individual who is a dentist and another a lawyer.¹¹

(Capistran, 2018, p. 43)

The *Porfiriato* elite also paid off the press to omit names and details of the subsequent events that followed the arrests. For instance, *El Imparcial*, one of the most influential newspapers of the time, falsely claimed that all 41 detained men were sent to a military base (Capistran, 2018). Additionally, the newspaper also claimed that authorities did not give any privileges to any of the men who were arrested and that all of them were persecuted equally. According to Bazant (2005), *El Imparcial* also went as far as to claim that all the men arrested were “simple lazy scoundrels” who were jumping from party to party (p. 12). The class and political influence of the *Porfiriato* elite ultimately led to the prosecution of a select few that had no political support to defend themselves. It is important to note that the select men were prosecuted and punished under the merit of “immorality” despite there being no existing laws against homosexuality or male effeminacy (Capistran, 2018). This moment in history is influential because it marked a public paradigm shift that began the valorizing of virility and the demonization of femininity in national discourse. These virile national discourses eventually influenced the way men interacted in the rural.

In the aftermath of the arrests, 19 of the 41 men were selected by the authorities to have their heads shaved and shipped off by train to the Yucatan peninsula to serve in the military barracks of *Gendarmeria Montada*. Indigenous Yaqui and Apache under

¹¹ Hay quienes aseguran que entre los individuos aprehendidos había capitalistas y otras personas pertenecientes a familias muy distinguidas... Creemos necesario rectificar esas opiniones. La verdad es que en la referida reunión, excesivamente inmoral y escandalosa, solo se encontraban un grupo de más de 40 hombres, muy conocidos por sus costumbres depravadas, y que en más de una vez han figurado en escándalos por el estilo. La mayor parte cambiaron de nombre al ser aprehendidos; pero la policía ha podido identificar a muchos, entre quienes se encuentran un individuo que ejercía como dentista y otro que se decía abogado.

Spanish and Mexican rule, who rebelled were also previously taken as laborers to *Veracruz* and *Yucatan*. At every train station, they were met with insults and objects thrown at them by angry protesters whose rage was fueled by this scandal. In response to jeering and violence, the 19 denied their involvement in the scandal by stating things like, “I was arrested for burglary. Stop throwing things at me” (Capistran, 2018). Many assume that the individuals caught in dresses were the 19 sentenced to be sent off to the military. Still, they were a mixture of folks who could not afford a lawyer or lacked political and social influence. The 19 were a mix of working-class folks and male prostitutes struggling to survive (Capistran, 2018). However, many of those who were spared because of political influence were often shunned by their family members to the point where they were forced to leave the country. One example is Antonio Adalid, a member of a family who became a millionaire through the sale of pulque and the only one of the 41 known by name (Capistran, 2018). The aftermath of the 41 marked the start of the national compulsive obsession to make the state virile through methods such as sending men to the military. The disparate forms of punishment and exclusion revealed the existing lineage of classism, a hierarchy derived from the logic of coloniality, prevalent then as it is now among marginalized groups.

The dance of the 41 remained in the national consciousness of the entire nation for many years to come. The conflicting *machista* attitudes of the nation led to the integration of the number 41 as a source of mockery towards homosexuality and male effeminacy. Because of the events of the dance of the 41, the number 41 is considered an unlucky number in Mexico (Capistran, 2018). The number 41 is so stigmatized, Mexican folks avoid disclosing their age when they turn 41 (they go from 40 to 42). Though this

event led to further stigmatization of Gay men, some scholars, such as Chavez (2018), claim that the dance of the 41 solidified the invention of homosexuality in Mexico.

To put Chavez's argument into context, the Dance of the 41 came to define Mexican national identity along with the criteria to create future representations of Gay men. Though many of the representations are deemed stereotypical by those in the Mexican Gay community, some argue that the stereotype of *el hombre afeminado* was the only way openly Gay men could identify. Those who could not hide (or chose not to hide) their identity decided to identify with the stereotype because they had no other options for representation (Bautista, 2018). In essence, some Gay men in Mexico reclaimed the Joto/maricon/effeminate male identity that derived from the dance of the 41 and made it their own. This experience is prevalent in the rural. One of my findings, for example, showed that two of my collaborators chose to disidentify by incorporating effeminate-male performance as a way of subverting the local expectations of manhood.

It is clear, however, that after the events of *el baile de los 41*, effeminacy began to be linked to homosexuality and weakness at the turn of the century in national discourses (Irwin, 2003). For example, by 1905, homosocial practices in bathhouses became unacceptable because of fears of "public health and morality" (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). Similar to the events of the *temascales* during the colonial period, history repeated itself once again. This was because the members of the elite class (political, industrial, etc.) ordered authorities, entrepreneurs, journalists, and many other entities to police the bathhouses for "immoral and unhealthy" acts (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). *El Código Penal del Estado Libre y Soberano de Chihuahua* enacted the 1905 Civil Code, a law that criminalized homosexuality in bathhouses by placing a heavy fine of 500 pesos on

anyone engaging in *Contra-natura* acts (“Código Penal Estado Libre De Chihuahua Edición Oficial,” 1905, p. 178–79). At the turn of the century, many of the bathhouses across Mexico began to develop strict regulations:

Anyone who took too long in the baths was fined; patrons were asked to not congregate in the gymnasium and to only use the equipment for fifteen minutes. These procedures are meant to preserve order and morality in this establishment, in order to avoid any dangers or inconveniences to the customers. The regulations and language employed suggests that baths without adequate means to guarantee privacy, inappropriate or insufficient lighting or surveillance, and with crowded conditions, could lend themselves to bathers cruising the baths, inappropriately touching themselves or each other. Policymakers perhaps hoped that individuals would cease to cruise each other out of fear that society was now on the lookout for their transgressions. (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012, p. 14)

Ultimately, the 41 represented for some Mexican nationalists at the time as exposing the weakness of the leading class that demonstrated too much political and economic dependency on imperialism using Paz’s *chingado/chingon*¹² dichotomy as a justification (which will be discussed later in this Chapter) (Ruvalcaba, 2007).

Compulsive Virility

By the turn of the century, fears and anxieties of homosexuality tainting society implicated homophobia as a leading influence in nation-building discourses during the revolutionary period. Carlos Monsiváis (1995) agreed when he stated, “If the revolution creates spaces for the development of a different sensitivity, revolutionaries also boast of

¹² Fucker/Fucked one

rampant machismo¹³” (p.1(p.10). Despite the national fears of homosexuality, Homosocial bonding was not completely expelled from nation-building discourses. Instead, homosocial bonding was reframed in a way in which homophobic limits were applied (Ruvalcaba, 2007). This was done by elevating virility and (most importantly) the ability to procreate and have many kids as key components to constructing another hegemonic masculinity, a guiding force in revolutionary discourses (Irwin, 2003; Ruvalcaba, 2007). Virility is defined as the quality of having strength, energy, and a strong sex drive, manliness. Virility came to define Mexican masculinity and the Mexican state during post-revolutionary discourses. During the revolution, Pancho Villa embodied this transition into a new era of masculinity and nation building. The nation read Villa’s body as the national hero that was desired yet feared (Ruvalcaba, 2007). This virile movement in national conversations during the war was also read as a national cleansing because, by this time, femininity was viewed as undesirable.

Homosocial bonding continued but influenced by virility rhetoric disseminated during the revolution. Ruvalcaba mentions that there was a type of “virializing homophilia” dynamic in the military where norms of loyalty among revolutionaries displayed “a homosociality constructed through effective pacts rather than military morality, to such extent that we can speak of intimate friendships and loving complicities” (Ruvalcaba, 2007, p. 62). Evidence of this virile homosocial bond is clearly articulated in Katz’s (1998) book *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa*. For instance, Villa addressed his army as “my boys whom he loved a lot” and concluded a letter to Madero with the following: “with affection and respect always” (Katz, 1998, p. 215). Paco

¹³ Si la revolución crea los espacios de desarrollo de una sensibilidad distinta, también los revolucionarios se jactan de un machismo rampante.

Ignacio Taibo (2006) also articulated in his book *Pancho Villa: Una Biografía Narrativa* that Pancho Villa cried at Madero's funeral following his assassination because the two had a powerful bond.

Clearly, this virile movement was evolving and in flux because of homoeroticism (Irwin, 2003). This is especially the case because Villa, who was supposed to be the ultimate symbol of virility, showed signs of sensibility and affection towards other men. There are also rumors of revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata being bisexual (Capistran, 2018). These qualities contradicted the clearly defined lines of virile, *machista* masculinity proposed by the Mexican nation-state.

Still, homophobia continued to set borders for homosocial bonding. Virility became so embedded into this discourse that it became synonymous with Mexican nationalism. Femininity came to symbolize the lack of nationalism as described by Ruvalcaba:

Underline a drastically different romance—a homophilia continuously restrained by homophobia. The circle of seduction and repression reveals a contradiction that provides the meaning of the national hero: in this phallogentric society, the male body claims its centrality as the hero figure; this centrality makes his body and object of desire. On the other hand, if virility is prestigious and effeminacy is dishonorable. To become effeminate, in this system of erotic-aesthetic values, means to lose the most precious value. Thus, losing one's virility means to lose one's nationality: that is why just by being an object of desire, the decorative male bodies in *el aguila y la serpiente* place virility at the center of national aesthetics...Homophobia is articulated in terms of the limits between what is and is

not national...Revolutionary homophobia expresses a rejection of forms and discourses that connote imperialist influence; for example the “French” mannerism of the elite in Porfiro Diaz regime characterizes one type of antinationalism. (Ruvalcaba, 2007, p. 65-66)

This newly branded virile masculinity was so repressive, the only time touches and gazes were not coded as “the nefarious sin” was when they were interpreted as forms of leisure comparable to vice, partying, and racketeering (Noriega, 2014).

This virile rhetoric continued into the 1920s and post-revolution discourses. After the war, the white criollo was removed from the nation’s aesthetic. Mestizos, the hard-working class of *peones* became the symbol of the nation because of revolutionary heroes like Villa (O’Malley, 1987) In essence, the bourgeoisie brand of masculinity of *hombres de bien*¹⁴ and *gente decente*¹⁵ was dismissed as being elitist, effeminate, pliantly homosexual, and un-Mexican (Irwin, 2003). Concurrently, what was long referred to as “lower class masculinity” by the *Porfiriato* (which was coded as savage by the *Porfiriato*) was elevated into national discourses. The subordination and degradation of femininity enforced a masculine/feminine dichotomy in the nation’s subconsciousness, which equated femininity with “lack of nationalism and absence of commitment, and lack of national historical consciousness” (Irwin, 2003; Ruvalcaba, 2007, p. 69). This development of a politics of respectability was informed by homophobia and virility, serving as pillars of the guiding rhetoric. Men were now regarded as sharp, powerful, active, honorable, moral, and working class (Irwin, 2003). Though working-class mestizos were now elevated as central to this post-revolution nation-building discourse,

¹⁴ Good men

¹⁵ The decent people

racism continued to be alive and well. Similar to what happened during the Porfiriato, Indigenous people were excluded altogether from national culture as they continued to be regarded as too uncivilized, passive, and feminized compared to “real Mexican men” which is how mestizos saw themselves (Irwin, 2003).

The racism and homophobia from the national discourse were reflected in the works by Mexican intellectuals during the time of the post-revolution. Vasconcelos is one of the many Mexican scholars and influencers of the post-revolution who demonstrates exclusionary attitudes while attempting to promote liberating discourse for Mexicans. For instance, in his book *La Raza Cosmica*, he emphasizes the notion that mixing with whites or people of European descent was necessary to create the race of the future (Vasconcelos, 1948). This argument is faulty because it recreates the myth of mestizaje; it is based on the racist argument of “racial purity” (with the assumption that Indio and Spanish are “pure” races) (Conlisk-Gallegos, 2020). Indigenous peoples were considered inferior to Europeans or Spaniards. His arguments were also homophobic because “sexual attraction that does not involve reproduction does not result in mestizaje, therefore, it does not promote the cosmic race” (Irwin, 2003, p. 176). The inability to procreate, then, was seen as anti-nationalist. Vasconcelos’ work was essentially a form of eugenics intended to “socially cleanse” Mexico. In the next Chapter, I will detail his *Cuerpos inservibles*¹⁶ discourse. However, it is essential to note the US influence in constructing these discourses.

Enter Eugenics and Sexology: Scientific Homophobia through US Influence

¹⁶ Useless Bodies

Even before Vasconcelos' work was published, European and U.S. eugenics, sexology, and psychoanalysis conversations (which pathologized homosexuality as a type of medical degeneracy) informed Mexican national discourses during the first half of the 20th century (Irwin, 2003). We must, then, analyze this phenomenon of US influence transnationally. This is because through the lens of dependency theory, Vasconcelos and other Mexican cultural influencers studied in the United States during the rise of Eugenics and Sexology.

Sommerville's *Queering the Color Line* (2000) traces the beginnings of Sexology Eugenics to the 19th and 20th centuries. Though they claim to be objective, these discourses were influenced by the cultural realities of the time and, in short, by positivist assumptions of reality. This culminated into pseudo-sciences (informed by coloniality) to surface:

In the 1890s, the work of British sexologist Havelock Ellis became the most influential and authoritative source of American discourses of sexuality...In 1900, Ellis published *Sexual Inversion*. Ellis sought to provide scientific authority for the position that homosexuality should be considered not a crime but rather a congenital (and thus involuntary) physiological abnormality...In the 1910s, Sigmund Freud refuted earlier sexological models claiming "homosexuals" were a discrete group. Yet the older model of inverts as a special type did not disappear altogether from expert or popular discourse...Freud's theories did not resonate because sexologists appealed to those invested in somatic theories, reinforced in the United States by concurred discourses about racial difference...Despite claim

to scientific objectivity and truth, these writers' investigations shaped by political and cultural ideologies. (Somerville, 2000)

Sexology led to gender policing, too. In particular, the scientific justification for policing what we now know to be intersex folks developed in the latter part of the 20th century. For example, folks born with XXY, XYY, or XO were deemed “herapathites” (a term now deemed offensive) as a form of pathologization and othering through pseudo-scientific justifications. As Lugones states:

XY infants with ‘inadequate’ penises must be turned into girls because society believes the essence of manhood is the ability to penetrate a vagina and urinate while standing. XX infants with “adequate” penises, however, are assigned the females sex because society and many in the medical community believe that the essence of womanhood is the ability to bear children rather than the ability to engage in satisfactory sexual intercourse... Intersexed individuals are frequently surgically and hormonally turned into males or females. These factors are taken into account in legal cases involving the right to change the sex designation on official documents, the ability to state a claim for employment discrimination based upon sex, the right to marry... Greenberg reports the complexities and variety of decisions on sexual assignation in each case. The law does not recognize intersexual status. Though the law permits self-identification of one’s sex in certain documents, ‘for the most part, legal institutions continue to base sex assignment on the traditional assumptions that sex is binary and can be easily determined by analyzing biological factors.’ (Lugones, 2007)

In congruence with Lugones, Gil-Peterson's *Histories of a Transgender Child* (2019) evidences this pathologization of folks who do not neatly align with the colonially imagined binary of gender. Gil-Peterson's work looks at the hospital archives (i.e. John Hopkins) (1930s-1960s). Using the framework of the binary, doctors at John Hopkins forcibly gave hormones and performed surgery on intersex and transgender identifying children against their wishes. Essentially, they experimented on children as doctors saw them as mailable:

Real gender trouble has less to do with categories of sex and gender than with their living residence in the child's body and the partially autonomous nonhuman agency expressed in embodied plasticity, one that was quite successful in forestalling the question of genital surgeries, but great cost to the child's health... they hardly acted on the children's interests. (Gil-Peterson, 2019)

One of the most notorious cases was that of John Money, who gave hormones to children without their consent. Sometimes, unknowingly to the parents as well. In essence, mostly cis-male doctors, like Money, became gatekeepers of a child's gender and sex despite them showing signs of agency at a young age:

Some children were old enough to talk back...As money (a doctor) reported, 'As soon as he recognized my face as unfamiliar, he approached me saying over and over again: 'go call my mommy!' There was a look of stark of terror of him, and of look of stark terror...He did not object to the genital examination, but kept perseverating uneasily: 'the nurse cut off my wee wee' I was left wondering whether the child has some kind of cerebral defect. (Gil-Peterson, 2019)

The legacies of sexology cannot be separated from its sister discourse, eugenics. Interlaced systems of oppression informed coloniality; therefore, they cannot be examined in isolation (Grosfoguel, 2005). Eugenics came to be through the twisting of Darwin's theory of Evolution. Francis Galton, the father of Eugenics, defines it as "the science of improving stock, which . . . takes cognisance of all influences that tend in however remote a degree to give to the more suitable races or strains of blood a better chance of prevailing speedily over the less suitable than they otherwise would have had" (Somerville, 2000). Because many eugenicists saw races as separate species (while some saw non-white races as deviations of Adam and Eve), Eugenics was conceptualized as "racial hygiene of reproduction" (Somerville, 2000). In essence, Eugenics was a response to threat of the diminution of white political interests and the decline of white population in the U.S.

Parallel to what happened in the colonial period with the Spanish "Vir" and "Pecado Nefando" rhetorics, hegemonic discourses informed each other and mixed as explained by Somerville:

Arguing that any intermixture was a threat to 'white' purity, Charles Davenport, who dominated the early eugenic movement in the United States. claimed that 'miscegenation commonly spells disharmony'...Sexologists began to use rhetoric of eugenics....William Robinson 1914 in 'My views on homosexuality' labeled homosexuality as a degeneracy and sad pathological phenomenon...in the 20th century it shift to choice....Interracial and homosexuality seen as abnormal sexual object choice...Ottis observation of boarding school where women of color had

sex with white women...Ottis labeled two girls of different races together as perverse. (Sommerville, 2000).

In short, sexology adopted Darwinism as its justification for hegemony, pathologizing, and policing of sexuality and gender while being informed by racist taxonomies. Further, the segregation of US populations served two purposes: police race and sexual mobility. In turn, through the lens of dependency theory, Mexican nation-state cultural influencers of the 20th century replicated these discourses, as shown in the next section.

Pseudoscientific Masculinities in Mexico

With these foreign oppressive discourses, the Mexican state now had a “scientific” basis for justifying homophobia. Monsiváis (1995) notes that Freudian psychoanalysis essentially provided the secular justification of homophobia and partially replaced Roman Catholic, homophobic reasoning: “In fact, the machismo we know is a cultural invention, a byproduct of the ‘Freudianization of the country’” (p. 35).¹⁷ Between 1925 and 1932, homosexuality and femininity came to be seen as a “highly infectious disease” and as a colonialist force that threatened to weaken virility and therefore, the strength of the revolutionary institutions (Ruvalcaba, 2007). It was also seen as a degeneration in which only the “most inferior humans are likely to succumb” (Irwin, 2003, p. xxi).

Many individuals lost their jobs if they showed any signs of femininity or homosexuality. For instance, in 1934, it was common for people who lacked virile

¹⁷ De hecho el machismo que conocemos es un invento cultural, un primer producto de la “freudianización del país.”

characteristics to be removed from public office under the justification of *condiciones psicológicas*¹⁸ (Balderston, 1998). The national obsession to keep Mexico virile led to the constant arguments that heterosexuality would uphold Mexico's strength and virility. The national institutions of Mexico compulsively tried to eliminate femininity and homosexuality from the public sphere. One of the areas of focus was the nation's military. Effeminacy was not permitted among soldiers as it would weaken their virility and turn them into "faggots and forty ones" (Ruvalcaba, 2007, p. 71). Moreover, the institutions did what they could to police the bodies of the army. Ultimately, Mexican institutions deemed it necessary to police the bodies of their citizens and army as a means of maintaining masculinity through virility, national hygiene, and health.

Like the theory of degeneration, the notion that society is in decline because of a biological change (pathologizing), there were a multiplicity of theories that fueled homophobia. One of them was the seduction theory, the argument that one loses sexual difference and becomes more like the *Joto* seducer (Irwin, 2003). Many of these arguments are based on the patriarchal works of Octavio Paz. Paz (1950) suggested that masculinity is a contest of brute force with symbolic notions of penetration. He argues that the loser is *el chingado*¹⁹, gets fucked, and feminized by the winner *el que chinga*²⁰. Thus, according to the logic of virility, the feminine subject is read as the weaker one, while the "masculine" fucker/penetrator retains their masculinity and power. Paz's work has led to many misconceptions about *Jotería* sexual dynamics in Mexico. MEWCCCUS scholars have added to this confusion by conducting studies replicating Paz's claims. In

¹⁸ Psychological Conditions

¹⁹ The fucked one

²⁰ The one who fucks

essence, Anglos and Mexicans have cannibalized on each other's coloniality. For instance, Carrier (1995) believes that the *activo/pasivo*²¹ model is the only authentic model of Mexican homosexuality because it follows the dynamics proposed by Páz, as well as influenced by international Gay liberation discourses (similar to what Carrillo proposed with his Glocality model in Chapter 1) (Carrier, 1995). Páz, however, was Eurocentric, so these MEWCCCUS scholars replicated that same oppressive, Eurocentric rhetoric in their discourses. Additionally, they spoke for *Jotería* instead of allowing them to speak for themselves (Spivak, 2010). For instance, Annick Pierre (1998), also suggests that Paz's model is authentic:

As long as a man is the penetrator, or at least perceived as such, having a homosexual relationship will not be threatening to his self-image or to the images of others have of him. But him since nobody other than a direct witness can really know what happens in bed, there will always be doubt connected to homosexual encounters, and thereby, the risk that a man's masculinity may be perceived as impaired. This is the reason for treating such encounters with so much discretion.
(p. 93)

In agreement with these MEWCCCUS scholars, Mirande (2017) adds that contemporary Mexican systems differ from the "modern American" model because identity labels are determined by power exerted in the sexual act rather than by choice (Mirande, 2017). He continues by stating that *internacionales* act as both passives and actives. This category, however, has begun to phase out and replaced with the term versatile.

²¹ Active/Passive

Essentially, this is happening because of a “globally inspired movement where American culture is exported for consumption and dissemination as part of an imperialist project that makes it look like the world is ‘just like us’” (Mirande, 2017, p. 35). Again, Miranda mirrors Carrillo and Carrier’s arguments on international influence (which can be read as a revamping of the logic of coloniality). Nonetheless, Miranda, along with the other aforementioned scholars suggest that a person’s insertee and inserter position ultimately determines how stigmatized they are. A *mayate*²², for instance, would not be stigmatized because he typically takes on the *activo* role. On the contrary, he would be considered *muy macho* (Mirande, 2017). Meanwhile, the *pasivo* would be considered *puto*,²³ and thus would be stigmatized if exposed (Mirande, 2017, Pieur, 1998). Noriega’s work refutes these arguments made by Anglo and Latinx scholars who have reinforced these *macho/puto* dichotomies. He first suggests that homosexuality as a concept should be revised to fit cultural contexts (Noriega, 2014). He also continues to say that homophobia is a historical and cultural phenomenon that should be studied in relation to the sexual/gender regime in which it takes place. In addition, masculinity should be accounted for as a place of resistance to homophobic powers through explorations of contradictory, disputed, and heterogenous meanings rather than completely hegemonic or a separate discourse. Furthermore, he argues that the dichotomous *masc-activo/femme-pasivo* system does not consider subjectivities such as two cowboys enjoying each other’s bodies after a rodeo or a trans individual penetrating a hetero-cis taxi driver. In addition, he concludes that the *activo/pasivo* system reinforces

²² Not to be confused with the racial term. Mayate in the Mexican sexual signifier context means a man who has sex with men but identifies as heterosexual.

²³ Slut or faggot

gender and sex ideologies of patriarchy and does not encompass all homoerotic experiences.

Noriega further criticizes this mainstream patriarchal model by arguing that one of the first issues of the model proposed by the scholars is that the *insertor-penetrado* system assumes that all homoerotic relations are exclusive to anal penetration when, in many cases, that is not true. Second, it erases nipple stimulation, stroking, kisses, compassionate hugs, and other forms of intimacy that are crucial to the organization of desire and sensation of satisfaction people experience. Third, it renders invisible the fact that when anal penetration does occur; it is not limited to one partner. This is evidenced by an informant of one of his studies who suggested he is not Gay but likes men “who like to have a little fun” but never desires to penetrate (Noriega, 2014, p. 176). Another one of his informants also states that circle jerks and sexual experimentation between men were also quite common in rural regions of Mexico. Anecdotes like this debunk the myth that individuals derive experiences from domination and humiliation. Instead, they stem from culturally specific forms of pleasure, affection, self-esteem, and camaraderie. Furthermore, categorizing *Jotería* based on active/passive roles removes the complexity of diverse bodies, subjectivities, meanings, and politics by reducing them to sexual organs where the penetrator becomes the penis, and the receiver turns into the anus. Ultimately, this model compartmentalizes identity-based on sexual position while imposing gender-stratified meanings. For instance, passives are coded as powerless and weak but have the power to seduce (Noriega, 2014). In essence, these philosophers have reproduced hegemonic gendered discourses through their heteronormative, Eurocentric exploration of homoeroticism. They have also recreated a man-fairy dichotomy that

overlooks complex processes of resistance. A dichotomy that simultaneously traps complex meanings into the erroneous and oversimplifying terms *activo* and *pasivo*.

Soy Hombre, Puta: Resistance to Imposed, Hegemonic National Discourses in the Rural

Noriega's work stretches beyond theorizing about the politics of same-sex intercourse. He also conducted an ethnographic study of masculinities in the rural and urban sectors of the Northern region of Mexico in the 1990s. I argue that many of the themes Noriega found from his study regarding interactions between men (governed by masculinity) in the rural as well as my own findings on *Jotería* in southern Mexico (conducted from 2018-2024) are influenced by the aforementioned nation-building discourses. One of the themes that emerged from his research was that men's bodies are constantly under surveillance to ensure they are performing canon interpretations of masculinity. Meaning that in northern rural Mexico, men must carry themselves confidently and "in control of their bodies" to be more admired (Noriega, 2014, p. 46).

Regulations include refraining from swinging hips, shoulder movement not being tempered, arms not swinging out of control, neck kept straight, and facial expressions suggesting concentration. Also, if met with someone else, one must give a brief salutation (e.g., whistle, say *quebole*, etc.). *Pláticas* conducted for this study demonstrates that social cues influenced by the politics of virility of the second half of the 20th century affected *Jotería* in the rural. One of the exceptions Noriega notes for these strict regulations of the male body is through the consumption of alcohol. That is feme/masc and closed/open binaries are rearranged when drinking is involved. Noriega proclaims that drinking proposes an inside/out binary set that changes social dynamics to which

your private life is exposed to the world. He notes that one of his informants, Raul, hugged him and confessed all his secrets to him at a party. However, the next day, when the effects of the alcohol wore off, the social regulations put his body on lockdown again to the point where he barely said hello to Noriega when he interacted with him again.

I found similar dynamics of policing bodies in my own project. Specifically, I noticed that *Jotería* were policed through communal gossip, or as I called it, ancestral surveillance. Many of my contributors suggested that ancestral surveillance occurs when community members gossip to other members of the community about a person's sexual endeavors. An extreme example of how this happens is through social media sites (SMS). El Suave, one of my participants, divulged that he has witnessed cases of *mayates*²⁴ filming *Jotería* giving them oral sex and distributing the footage via SMS such as Facebook messenger and WhatsApp. Considering that these small communities are tight knit, the footage is often passed on to the entire community through these SMS. *Jotería* bodies are ultimately policed through the threat of exposure and shame through this ancestral surveillance.

Noriega further theorized in his work on the rural that Mexican cultural identity is not monolithic. Thus, the meanings of being a Mexican man are shaped by political and social landscapes that cannot be universally applied. He further stated that in rural communities, men act out values related to masculinities depending on cultural repertoires available to them. However, I argue that national 19th-century and virile discourses have shaped local regulations of manhood to one degree or another. For instance, in his research, Noriega found that many of his informants invited him to sleep

²⁴ Men who have sex with men, but do not claim LGBTQIA+ identities.

in the same bed as him, traveled together, and held hands with men. I believe these were all experiences of the homosocial discourses that derived from 19th century and survived into contemporary times. Noriega further notes that in the rural, *Jotería* relationships are sheltered through the confines of friendship and channeled through the institution of friendship. In addition, he professes that men in the rural utilize the phrase “*aca entre nos*”²⁵ as a space of discourse where they are allowed to be vulnerable and free from the shackles of hegemonic masculine codes of silence. Enrique and Andres, another pair of his informants, embody this phenomenon. Enrique met Andres when he was married, and they worked together. They engaged in occasional sexual encounters during their time working together. The two eventually married women but continued their erotic connection under the framework of their friendship. Their wives also knew about their sexual relations but “do not make a fuss about it because they do not believe “no harm will come out of it” (Noriega, 2014, p. 120). I believe that this phenomenon is like resistance tactics men used in the 19th century to negotiate their identities in accordance with regulations of masculinity to continue having erotic encounters.

Similar to Noriega’s findings, my contributors and I found that *Jotería* in southern rural Mexico resist through comradery. Téó (pseudonym), another contributor, stated that he only introduces his partner as his boyfriend to the most trusted and accepting friends and family members. To everyone else, he introduces his partner as his friend. He also mentioned that (that he knows of) go out to parties with a mix of *Jotería* and *buga*²⁶ friends to mask their *Jotería*.

²⁵ Just between us

²⁶ Mexican Gay slang for heterosexual.

Though 19th century homosocial rhetoric (and negotiation to it) is present, so is 20th century rhetoric of virility. Philosophers of the virile nation-building discourses of the 20th century influenced these moral codes of regulation of rural masculinity. Noriega stated that 20th century philosopher Páz is specifically influential because he coined the term *rajarse*²⁷, which is also a regulator of masculinity. Páz (1950), states that men have the capability to crack “like women.” I believe that this logic is consistent with 20th century beliefs of equating femininity to weakness. In addition, I postulate that medical discourse of sexology plays a role because men in the rural que se *rajan*²⁸ are seen as degenerate men (Noriega, 2014).

Furthermore, other actions and meanings tied to *rajandose* that Noriega notes include not sticking to your word and gossip, which are cited as femme behaviors (and thus hated when men display them). Other tropes of manhood are revered, including the willingness to work hard. This attribute is most likely prevalent because of the elevation of working-class masculinity during the revolution's aftermath.

One of Noriega’s participants demonstrated that there are holes in this 20th century logic. Miguel, for instance, is well known in his community to be a hard worker and wears cowboy boots, clothes, etc., all markers of masculinity in his rancho. He was also known to be sexually involved with other men. Miguel had an experience where he was called a faggot by one of his acquaintances during a confrontation. Miguel shut him down by reinforcing how hard he works, what he wears (cowboy hat, boots and clothes; a marker of what it means to be a true man). Noriega notes that masculinity serves as a moral dimension of a person: responsibility, discipline, respectability, and courage.

²⁷ Flake

²⁸ Men that break.

Miguel used these dimensions of masculinity to negate his acquaintance's discriminatory argument. Miguel thus used these conventional cultural notions of impenetrable masculinity as a form of empowerment. In the end, he used the phrase "*no me rajo*" which symbolized that he did not crack because he upheld constructed notions of masculinity.

In my own project, I found that many *Jotería* perform various socially constructed attributes of virility as a form of negotiation. Like Noriega's participant Miguel, Juan Gabriel (pseudonym) performs virility by highlighting his hard work. Neto (pseudonym), one of my other contributors, suggested that he performs virility by turning it against itself. That is, he inflicted physical violence on those who did go against him for identifying as *Joto*. Consequently, he got those who bullied him to stop referring to him with derogatory terms. Despite Miguel, Neto, and Juan Gabriel's virile performance, the intersections of virile rhetoric and compulsive homophobia is too prevalent to ignore, especially when certain individuals refuse or do not have the luxury of performing virility. Noriega's findings also show that even though *Jotería Rural* have ways to negotiate, those who do not fall under the virile model of manhood are stigmatized. This virile trope of masculinity has ultimately led many *Jotería* to endure prohibitions that derive from homophobia that include shame, guilt, silence, and prevention of manifesting one's feelings (Noriega, 2014). Many of those who defy this virile model go through the process of being othered by being declared inferior. Essentially, they are labeled as *Jotos*, and by the same logic that fueled 20th early century discourse, a *Joto* is equated to effeminate or when he drinks or misbehaves acts, 'like a woman,' makes a public

spectacle of himself with his behavior, makes his sexual preferences public. The *Joto*, thus, violates the post-revolution era inspired canons of being a man.

Monsiváis (1993), states that there is a process that constructs otherness: First, terms used to construct otherness; second, the constructed meanings of the terms; third the application of the terms; fourth, the conduct that mobilizes these hegemonic terms; fifth the types of violence that are derived; sixth form used to resist the violence; seventh distribution of social capability to resist violence; eight, social regulation of activities that promote stigmatization of the parties involved. Noriega (2014) argues that Monsiváis should also include age, social class, family as internal regulators, religious beliefs, rural vs urban conditions, ethnic group, and sensitivity of institutions. Noriega further concludes that patriarchal ideologies silence, naturalize gender identities, and erase histories and experiences. This happens through a socialization that involves homophobic violence. Noriega explains how this occurs:

The father serves as masculinizer with the pedagogy of masculinity which involves the body (e.g., whipping and taking cold showers) with the goal of abandoning sensitivity. Whipping serves as punishment for the transgression of the virile model by inducing behavior changes because of fear of further pain. Other forms of violence include emotional rejection, exclusion from activities or social circles, use of the word *fag*. These are one of the few permissible forms of violence that “sets an example” for siblings, friends, etc. on what happens to those who transgress the order of gender identity. Through this pedagogy of masculine socialization, children learn to harass other children on “lack of masculinity.”

Violence and stigmatizing mechanism of fagishness is a form to exercise power.
(Noriega, 2014, p. 57)

Manuel, another one of Noriega's informants was a victim of this homophobic violence. He stated that he was raped repeatedly by a man whenever he would go to retrieve firewood until someone finally reported the matter to his father. His father responded by beating him and nearly hanging him. This dehumanizing experience was most likely fueled by both compulsive virile rhetoric of the 20th century, but also colonial rhetoric of the nefarious sin that punished the act of sodomy. Cesar, another victim of this violence in Noriega's study, reported that his father would make him take cold showers and whip him to "make him a man." Additionally, his parents would apply urban methods of violence by forcing him to take male-hormones to man him up.

In my project, Ricky (pseudonym) also divulged that he faced this "father as masculinizer" violence. He confessed that his father indirectly told him that if he ever had a *Joto* son, he would hang him from the highest tree. Ricky defended himself by *destapandose*²⁹ and telling him that they are more alike than they think. Eventually, the two ended up making amends and enjoying a positive relationship today.

At a later age, however, Noriega's participant, Cesar, obtained a political position that gave him social capital through *respeto*. Ricky also managed to gain *respeto* through his hard work. Noriega argues that *respeto* and the ideal "image of respectability" are necessary to integrate into most rural communities. Respect involves not getting into scandals or transvestism, observance of discretion, refraining from participating in scandals, and avoiding making public transgressions of gender, and appear and "normal"

²⁹ Loosely translates to coming out of the closet

(in accordance with the rules that govern manliness in the space they occupy). Moreover, *Jotería* must mask themselves and their sexual encounters under the guise of homosociability, friendship, and comradeship. Ultimately, respect is a form of social distinction between *Joto* and “respected” *Jotería*. It is also a social contract between *Jotería* and their local rural communities. Anzaldúa (1987) argues that “Respeto carries with it a set of rules so that social categories and hierarchies will be kept in order: respect is reserved for la abuela, papa, el patron, those with power in the community. Women are at the bottom of the ladder one rung above the deviants” (p.40). *Jotería* who do not follow the social contract (aka the deviants), are seen as not worthy because they have not gone through this “gaining respect” ritual. Respected *Jotería* enjoy being free of stigma but still fear violence.

Noriega further argues that there is a type of reverse discourse in the rural where *Jotería*, who have gained respect, have mastered homosocial dynamics and their contradictions. Those who “have gained respect” know how homophobic dynamics work. They know how to pass homophobic violence because of masculine identity performance and keeping their desires a secret. In addition, by keeping their guilt and self-consciousness of same sex relations at bay by re-signifying their actions in harmless ways (e.g., amor entre amigos, compadres, etc.). *Jotería* created a re-subjectification process regarding sex and same-sex intimacy. This reverse discourse combats machismo and homophobia through negotiation, playing with, and resisting dominant notions of manhood. This involves the mastery and exploitation of dominant sexual and gender ideological contradictions as well as playful and performative ways of resisting homophobic terms. *Jotería* in the rural are engaging in resistance tactics with constructed

forms of masculinity in the rural. Even those who are effeminate who have reached their limits of concealment can earn respect, but this is done through infantilizing them (this can be problematic).

Even though respect is possible for most *Jotería*, Noriega documents that there is more pressure for those who are rumored, expected to be, or “everyone knows about” *Jotería* to gain respect. Irvin, one of Noriega’s *Jotería* informants, declared that he must work harder at not engaging in gossip, adhere to social norms, do more to gain respect to divert attention from him (*para que no hablen de él*)³⁰, and avoid being placed in a category based on his actions. He also noted that he was more discreet and serious about his projects to avoid getting into scandals because all eyes were on him. Furthermore, he must work harder in social settings to be more considerate, careful, and respectful. Finally, he professed that many *Jotería* in his town pursue higher education or get married to achieve this respect.

Irvin’s experience shows the diverse methods of earning the social capital known as *respeto*.³¹ Those who do not gain *respeto* end up damaging their reputations and stigmatizing gain *respeto*, however, end up damaging their reputations and end up stigmatized. Noriega also postulates that those who associate themselves with people who are deemed openly *Jotos* run the risk of being stigmatized through social burning. Thus, emphasis can be placed on reputation and social burning in rural areas.

Respeto and *quemandose*³² were also prevalent themes in my project. My contributor Juan Gabriel, for example, made it clear that he is openly homosexual but is

³⁰ So they do not talk about him.

³¹ Respect

³² Social burning

well respected because of his hard work and his positive reputation in his hometown. However, Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave were *quemados* because they engaged in what the community deemed as scandals. Some of these scandals included cross-dressing, public affection with other *Jotería*, and talking openly about their sexual encounters. This is because Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave refused to comply with this *respeto* social contract. Virile masculinity socialization eventually comes to an end. Noriega argues that it eventually ends for various reasons: 1) the end of adolescence and adulthood marks autonomy and the end of socialization; 2) the person has already constructed his social status, e.g., social, and economic capital; 3) more possibility of the victimizer being the victim; 4) more possibility of “gaining respect. However, the long-term effects of this can be detrimental to those who come out as respected *Jotería*. This is because the respected *Jotería* can eventually end up internalizing their oppression and run the danger of oppressing groups that are even more marginalized. For instance, many of Noriega’s informants reported that they “would not associate themselves with *Jotos*” for various reasons. His informant Francisco suggested he does not have Gay friends because they gossip and thus run the risk of “*quemarse*.” Another informant, Alberto, also evidenced this homophobic language by declaring that he would not be caught seen with someone “acting faggish” or “making a spectacle of themselves.” Finally, Ventura, told Noriega that he only hooks up with “real men and not *Jotos*.” Clearly, even some of those who have mastered the virile system of masculinity have internalized this hatred for femininity. I theorize that this internalization goes beyond socialization. It stems from the layered social context of centuries of imposition, dehumanization, exclusionist nation-building, and the logic of coloniality (Mignolo, 2007).

Ignacio (pseudonym), one of the contributors to my project, often demonstrated his internalization of virility and classism. However, he mostly did this to fend off other forms of oppression, such as homophobia and machismo. Ignacio, thus, resisted through internalization, which was another prevalent tactic of resistance in my project. However, resistance through internalization is a double-edged sword because *Jotería* run the risk of becoming oppressors.

Resistance tactics have been the ultimate form of survival for *Jotería* in the rural. The complexity of masculinities as both hegemonic and as spaces for resistance are illustrated in the multiplicities of the rural, which go beyond the glocalizing. Noriega (2014) agrees that “there are a large range of possibilities that power and resistance may take in relation to homosexuality other than the established forms consistent with coming out and adopting a ‘Gay-lifestyle.’ There is no such thing as homosexuality with different names. There exists no different types of homosexualities, but different forms of organizing sexual intimacy among people of the same sex” (p. 125). These forms of organization are resistances employed by *Jotería Rural* and can be accounted for as rhetorical resistances from colonial legacies, which are re-articulated in the rural. The specific hegemonic rhetoric my contributors and I found in southern rural Mexico includes 19th-20th turn of the century imposition of virility through military punishment, 20th-century virile rhetoric as justification for immense hate of male femininity (Nation building discourse), and 20th-century pathologization of *Jotería* (Influence from medical discourse) which I will discuss in Chapter 7. In turn, this results in covert and overt resistance strategies deployed by *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*, stemming from a legacy of inherited and new resistances to waves of coloniality that I will discuss in

Chapter 8. As we enter the sixth sol, we see more overt resistance as discussed in Chapter 8 (Heidenreich, 2021). In the next Chapter, I offer a complex socio-historic analysis of what I coin as *Afro-Jotería*, the Afro-descendants of the *Jotería* diaspora.

Chapter 3—Mariposas Negras: On *Afro-Jotería* Via an Intersectional, Decolonial and Socio-historical Analysis

The Waves of Coloniality

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, *Jotería* does not seek to replace localized terms as it is an umbrella term. Similarly, what I coin as *Jotería Rural* is also an umbrella term and a theorizing space that does not replace localized terms, but accounts for the multiplicity of *Jotería* lives, experiences, and trans localized histories. What is the difference between the signifiers *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*? *Jotería Rural* is broader and includes multiple rural genders and histories, whereas what I coin as *Afro-Jotería Rural* is more specific to and centers on the intersection of *Afro-Mexicanos*, Chicanos, Latinx folks, and *Jotería*. Both terms used in this study were informed by the *Jotería* contributors I worked with in Mexico (I will unpack the “Rural” in *Jotería Rural* in the next Chapter). Also, waves of coloniality discussed in the previous Chapters influenced *Afro-Jotería*, and identity formation among *Afro-mexicanx* populations. In the next Chapter, I focus on the rural intersection of both *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Particularly, I analyze various historical moments where rhetoric that informs coloniality of power and its various hierarchies (racism, transphobia, patriarchy) were formulated, resulting in the repression, resistance, and identity formation of *Jotería*, Afro-descendants, and *Afro-Jotería*. The historical discourses resurrected for this Chapter were evident in the colonial period (16th-18th century), the Porfiriato (19th century), and the Mexican Revolution (20th century). Subsequently, I draw comparative parallels between key theoretical concepts and their interplay with gender and transnational sexuality, especially concerning *Jotería* and how this is situated within Borderlands

Theory. In sum, I capture moments in various waves of coloniality that inform the repression, identity formation, and resistance of *Afro-Jotería* colonized subjects.

First Wave of Coloniality: Colonial Period 16th-17th Century

The roots of the “isms” that inform the social construction and marginalization of Afro-descendants and *Jotería* in Mexico, and the intersections of the latter, can be traced in the colonial period (16th-17th century). Historically, Afro-descendants have been “invisiblized” because they did not fit the romanticized narrative of a syncretistic Spanish- Indigenous communion (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). In consequence, creating the “mixture” of an alleged “mixed race.” Scholars such as Aguirre Beltran, Delgadillo-Nuñez, Arce, and Forbes have contested this romanticized version of mestizaje (Delgadillo-Nuñez, 2019; Aguirre Beltran, 1989; Forbes, 2013).

The erasure of the African descent population in Mexico occurred over time and related to their economic and racial subjugation within the Spanish colonial period. Some people have studied this. Although Africans came as free and enslaved persons, the largest concentration of Africans arrived as forced laborers with very few protections for life and well-being. Enslaved labor slave labor was utilized to construct New Spain and Mexico (nation state). Spaniards relied on African and Indigenous labor. When I was conducting research, I asked a tour guide about Black labor in Mexico while visiting various buildings in the Zocalo in Mexico City. The tour guide denied this possibility and offered a commentary about the romanticization of mestizaje. As Delgadillo Nuñez (2019) disputes:

For example, in his work Zavala stated about the state of Yucatán that: 'the black race has barely been known in that state, where the number of slaves did not

exceed two hundred, the majority of which were in Campeche.' Mora asserted: 'Blacks from Africa have always been very few in Mexico, and in the last twenty years their introduction has completely ceased', so that in Mexico 'it can be assured that slavery has been unknown; So it has not been difficult to abolish it, and today there is not a single slave in the entire territory of the Republic.' The influence of these authors on later generations laid the foundations of a historical narrative in which slavery and the Afro-descendants are barely mentioned.³³

Aguirre-Beltran, a leading scholar of Afro-Mexican studies, also contends with the pre-existing denial of Afro bodies within the Mexican national imaginary. Their social, economic (involuntary labor), and cultural contributions are unevenly recognized in Mexico's history:

From the early slavery introduced by the expansion of capitalism and predatory colonialism in New Spain... during the colonial and national periods, in Mexico for a long time, the importance of the agricultural worker in the genetic, cultural, and social composition of its population was ignored... historians and ethnographers rarely considered as an ordinary fact the existence of blacks in Mexico.³⁴ (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970)

³³ Por ejemplo, en su obra Zavala afirmaba sobre el estado de Yucatán que: 'la raza negra apenas se ha conocido en aquel estado, en donde no pasaba de doscientos el número de esclavos, cuya mayor parte estaba en Campeche.' Por su parte, Mora aseveraba: 'Los negros del África siempre han sido en México muy pocos, y de veinte años a esta parte ha cesado del todo su introducción', de suerte que en México "puede asegurarse ha sido desconocida la esclavitud; así es que no ha costado trabajo el abolirla, y en el día no hay un solo esclavo en todo el territorio de la República.' La influencia de estos autores en generaciones posteriores sentó las bases de una narrativa histórica en la que la esclavitud y los afrodescendientes son apenas mencionados.

³⁴ ...De la esclavitud temprana que introdujo en Nueva España la expansión del capitalismo y el colonialismo predatorio...en las épocas colonial y nacional, en México durante mucho tiempo se ignore la importancia que tiene el africano en la composición genética, cultural y social de su población... los investigadores de historia y de nuestra etnografía solo en raras ocasiones señala como hecho casual la existencia de negros en México.

Arce (2018) further contends in her book *Mexico's Nobodies* with the symbolic, physical, and historic anhelation of the Afro-Mexican: “Afro-Mexicans have been dismissed as culturally irrelevant if considered at all despite the burgeoning historiography recuperating their contributions to Mexican culture. Indians, on the other hand, have been romantically included in their metonymic capacity as exotic icons of the past” (Arce, 2018).

As Aguirre-Beltran states, since the Spanish eliminated much of the native population of Mexico through slavery, disease, and other brutal forms of colonial violence, they were left with a labor deficit that needed to be filled. Another discourse that contributed to the “need” for slave labor was Bartolome De Las Casas’ rhetoric that declared that natives did indeed have a soul while black bodies did not. In essence, “as long as colonial exploitation remained profitable, the demand for slaves was so great that barely enough could be supplied to the developing economy” (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). Afro-Mexican enslaved people were brought to “New Spain” in horrendous conditions. Some were packed in slave ships like sardines. Again, religious discourse and intermixed secular discourse of the colonial period justified the mistreatment of black folks because they were considered not to have a soul while also regarded as dispensable.

The sizeable laboring population of African and African-descent people in colonial Mexico was incremental with the growth of the colony and growing economic demands. Afro-Mexicans were brought into forcibly work in various trades including agriculture and mining. Since the Eurocentric narrative was that their only role was to make the colonizer a profit, many died in these lines of work. As detailed by the manual of Afro-descendants in Mexico:

The history of African people in Mexico dates back to the viceregal period, the 16th century, when, together with the Spanish, they began to arrive forcefully to our country to be slaves and work in the enormous plantations, ranches or mining areas of the viceroyalty. because their physical constitution made them suitable for it. Millions of people who left Africa as slaves would die on the way due to the inhumane conditions in which they were transported and those who managed to survive were forced to do heavy work in agriculture and livestock in the same conditions.³⁵ (Garcia-Hernandez, 2016)

Labor conditions varied by the industry, but the inhumanity of slavery produced a reaction to it by Afro-Mexicana/o people. Despite dehumanizing acts, there has always been resistance amongst marginalized communities in various forms. One of the most impressive forms of overt resistance was the case of Gaspar Yanga. Gaspar Yanga was a slave from Gabon who led rebellions against the Spanish army during the colonial period. Before Mexico became a nation-state, Yanga led an army of former slaves to liberation and established *San Lorenzo de Los Negros*, an autonomous town. Despite the Spanish army's best attempts, they could not defeat Yanga and his armies. Thus, the Spanish were forced to negotiate with Yanga and create a treaty between them and *San Lorenzo de Los Negros*; the first autonomous free, black town in Mexico. In honor of their hero, the people of *San Lorenzo* renamed the town "Yanga." Aguirre-Beltran first documented this

³⁵ La historia de las personas africanas en México se remonta al periodo virreinal, siglo XVI, cuando, junto con los españoles, comenzaron a llegar de manera forzada a nuestro país para ser esclavos y trabajar en las enormes plantaciones, ranchos o zonas mineras del virreinato, pues su constitución física los hacía aptos para ello. Millones de personas que salieron de África como esclavos, morirían en el trayecto por las condiciones inhumanas en las que eran trasladados y los que lograban sobrevivir eran obligados a realizar trabajos pesados en la agricultura y la ganadería en las mismas condiciones. (García Hernández, 2016)

unique case of autonomy and independence before the creation of the Mexican nation-state:

libertarian movement that had Nyanga, a black African committed to achieving the freedom of slaves, as one of its leaders; but, also, their right to land, to self-management of the government, to equality before the law and their honor as individuals...Both discuss important aspects of the Nyanga's defense; the places where he established his palenque, the places where he founded a town; the disputes over jurisdiction that arise; the ethnic stratification resulting from the racial mix and the composition of rural people on haciendas and rancherías in the town of Córdoba at the end of the Colonia domain...³⁶(Aguirre Beltran, 1988)

Like those who formed *Palenques*, Afro-descendant resistors created autonomous communities called *Cimarrones* that were hidden deep in the mountains. From these communities, residents conducted raids on Spanish caravans. Still, other forms of covert resistance existed between the lines among Afro-descendants.

Some of the covert forms of resistance/subversive complicity by Afro-Mexicans was through loopholes in colonial institutions such as government, church, and military. Some of these colonial loopholes served as forms to prevent slave rebellions, but also modes of recruitment for black bodies to work in colonial institutional spaces (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). However, this did not guarantee full freedom as they were still subject to heavy taxes and limits on their freedom. For example, in government, some slaves were

³⁶ movimiento libertario que tuvo por uno de sus caudillos al Nyanga, negro africano comprometido en alcanzar la libertad de los esclavos; pero, también, el derecho de éstos a la tierra, a la autogestión de a gobierno, a la igualdad ante la ley y su honra como individuos...Ambos discuten aspectos importantes de la zaga del Nyanga; los lugares donde establece sus palenque, los sitios en que funda pueblo; los pleitos por jurisdicción que se suscitan; la estratificación étnica resultante de la mezcla racial y la composición de la gente rural en haciendas y rancherías de la villa de Córdoba al término del dominio Colonia... (Aguirre Beltran, 1988)

treated as indentured servants and allowed to pay for their freedom in installments.

Aguirre Beltran also notes: “Some strange situations resulted from the Negroes' efforts to attain freedom. For example, if the owner refused to accept money from his slave, the latter might buy another slave with his savings and exchange him for his freedom” (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). Adding a complexity of sex, gender, and capitalist/coloniality assumptions of production, Afro-descendants who were born female at birth could be granted their freedom if they produced many children and allowed their children to remain slaves (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970).

Through religious discourse, Afro-descendants sought their freedom the service they offered society. As Beltran notes, “These ideas reflected the influence of the Siete Partidas by which a slave was granted liberty if he married a free woman, became a priest, had served for thirty years, or bought his own freedom...Mexican Concilios of the sixteenth century, they obtained a prohibition against Negroes entering the clergy If they never tried to obtain a repeal of the clause by which slaves were liberated after thirty years of good service, it was because the life expectancy of a Negro worker was not that long” (Aguirre-Beltran, 1989).

The military also eventually became a point of covert forms of resistance. Particularly, because Afros were willing to serve in regions where the Spanish refused to work:

Since they were used to harshness of climate, the Negroes were stationed in regions considered unfit for Spaniard. Thus, companies of ‘Pardos’ and ‘Morenos,’ commanded by white officers, were founded and saw service. By the eighteenth century, there were colored troops in most of the important cities of the

colony corations. Nevertheless, although Negroes and mulattoes were forced into service because of the colony's military needs, they were prohibited by law from using firearms, or wearing the silk or expensive decorations to which they were entitled as militiamen. This contradiction was resolved in favor of the Negroes and mixeo bloods in 1765, when a regular army was created. (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970)

Though there was a great deal of overt and covert forms of resistance, one of the most impactful systems that arguably continues to inform the socio-historical racialization and marginalization of colonized bodies in Mexico is the Caste System. In most mestizaje discourses, the noble savage (indio) and the “pure” Spanish are positioned at the center (Aguirre Beltran, 1970; Jiminez-Marce, 2003). Spaniards and whiteness are privileged. However, mestizaje and its legacy is much more complex in Mexico.

Mestizaje or “mixing” of races derived from The Doctrine of *Limpieza de Sangre* (cleaning of blood) during the crusades (Forbes, 2013). The notion of good blood was also taken up in the Americas. Another aspect of Mestizaje is that the *Criollos* (Spanish born in the Americas) wanted to justify their superiority to their non-European counterparts. The rhetoric of mestizaje falls under the false assumption that the mixing of races purifies the blood of Indigenous or African-descent people. However, racial purity is a social construction. There was already a “racial mixing” happening in Europe (e.g., the Spanish with the Moors). As Forbes explains, mestizaje was a myth in the ontological sense:

The Spanish people speak a totally borrowed language, a dialect or branch of Italo-Latin mixed with many thousands of Arabic words. Very few words of the

Indigenous Hispano-Iberic language remain in use.... Racially, the modern Spaniard probably carries relatively few Indigenous genes, the latter having been greatly overwhelmed by Carthaginian, Celtic, Latin-Roman, Germanic, Arab, Moorish, Berber, Jewish, black African, and Gitano intermixture." (Forbes, 2013)

Nonetheless, the Caste System and its colonial, Eurocentric rhetoric impacted various generations to come. The social hierarchy maintained and justified Peninsular and *Criollo* power that ensured European superiority in all aspects of life. The dominant Peninsular and *Criollo* elite controlled the region until the 1820s, when countries began to fight and gain independence. Despite gaining independence and allegedly no longer under formal political colonial rule, this *sistema de castas*³⁷, an ideological apparatus, shaped the social representation of Indigenous and African descent to the bottom. *Casta* paintings highlight twenty-two different racial combinations and provide different names to classify them (Bustamante, 1991). Another key element is that Animals' names were used for racial classifications of black or other mixed-race bodies (e.g., coyotes). Terms also varied by region. The logic of modernity was also used to justify this hierarchy. The lighter you were, "the more forward your family lineage moves." Those who mixed with blacks were called "*salta pa atras*" (moving backwards) (Mignolo, 2007). The darker skinned one was, the more "uncivilized," "primitive," and "backward" a person was on the social ladder. Despite attempts to assimilate Afro-descendants, elements of Mexico's Afro past are present in various cornerstones of Mexican culture, phenotype, cuisines, etc. (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). Since colonial hierarchies are interlaced, the repression of sexuality and genders happened concurrently, as described in the next section.

³⁷ System of Castes

***Afro-Jotería* Repression**

One repressive colonial rhetoric undergirded the oppression of African and Indigenous descent people during the colonial period was *El Pecado Nefando*. When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, they began a long process of colonization that came with violence, rape, and imposition of hierarchies. Sodomy, however, was one of the biggest justifications for conquest. In essence, the Europeans justified the “inferiority” of the natives by demonizing homosexual practices (Grosfoguel, 2005; Trexler, 1995). In the process, Indigenous ways of experiencing life defined as expressions of gender and sexuality were eradicated and reconfigured through a long process of direct and symbolic slaughter (Sigal, 2003; Sigal, 2007). The Spaniards essentially imposed a colonial, homophobic discourse that introduced the category of sodomy.

Spanish understanding of sodomy stems from early medieval times. The discourse on *El Pecado Nefando* has been the religious justification for homophobia in Mexico since colonial times, especially in rural areas where Catholicism had a major influence on societal norms. Some early resistance tactics against repressive colonial laws justified by *El Pecado Nefando* in Mexico involved internal organizing and occupying spaces where ambiguity allowed tolerance. Ironically, rural areas during the colonial era were centers for *Jotería* resistance during the colonial period. Evidence of this is supported by testimonies and gaps in prosecution records (Gruzinski, 2003). One piece of evidence is that between 1657-1658, more people were prosecuted in big cities such as Mexico City and *Puebla* compared to urban and rural areas like *Cholula* (Gruzinski, 2003). *El Pecado Nefando* was used in connection with Spanish discourse of the “perfect Spanish *Vir* man” to surveil and police sexuality and gender during the colonial period (Garza-Carvajal,

2003). Those who did not fit the discourse of the perfect “*Vir*” man were considered further deviant.

Implications on Gender

Though MEWCCUS discourses tend to analyze sexuality, race, and gender separately, we cannot separate these discourses as the project of coloniality of power intersectionally houses the hierarchies of racism, sexism, patriarchy, and other ideological notions. This is evidenced by Lugones’s analysis on the coloniality of gender:

Understanding the place of gender in pre-colonial societies is pivotal to understanding the nature and scope of changes in the social structure that the processes constituting colonial/modern Eurocentered capitalism imposed. Those changes were introduced through slow, discontinuous, and heterogenous processes that violently inferiorized colonized women. The gender system introduced was one thoroughly informed through the coloniality of power... The logic of the relation between them is of mutual constitution. But it should be clear by now that the colonial, modern, gender system cannot exist without the coloniality of power, since the classification of the population in terms of race is a necessary condition of its possibility... Eurocentered global capitalism it is necessary to understand the extent to which the very process of narrowing of the concept of gender to the control of sex, its resources, and products constitutes gender domination. To understand this narrowing and to understand the intermeshing of racialization and gendering, it is important to think whether the social arrangements prior to colonization regarding the “sexes” gave differential meaning to them across all areas of existence... The “dark” side of the gender

system was and is thoroughly violent. We have begun to see the deep reductions of anamales, anafemales, and “third” genders from their ubiquitous participation in ritual, decision making, economics; their reduction to animality, to forced sex with white colonizers, to such deep labor exploitation that often people died working. Quijano tells us the vast Indian genocide of the first decades of colonization was not caused, in the main, by the violence of the conquest, nor by the diseases that the conquerors carried. Rather it was due to the fact that the Indians were used as throwaway labor, forced to work till death. (Lugones, 2024)

Returning to the colonial discourse of who counted as people, in the European psyche, Black and Indigenous women did not count as women but rather as property. However, when Bartolome De Las Casas’ discourse intervened, Indigenous women later counted for colonial and proto-capitalist purposes:

The sense is that the reduction of gender to the private, to control over sex and its resources and products is a matter of ideology, of the cognitive production of modernity that understood race as gendered and gender as raced in particularly differential ways for Europeans/“whites” and colonized/“non-white” peoples. Race is no more mythical and fictional than gender, both powerful fictions. It is part of their history that only white bourgeois women have consistently counted as women so described in the West. Females excluded from that description were not just their subordinates. They were also understood to be animals in a sense that went further than the identification of white women with nature, infants, and small animals. They were understood as animals in the deep sense of "without gender," sexually marked as female, but without the

characteristics of femininity. Women racialized as inferior were turned from animals into various modified versions of “women” as it fit the processes of Eurocentered global capitalism. Thus, heterosexual rape of Indian women, African slave women, coexisted with concubinage, as well as with the imposition of the heterosexual understanding of gender relations among the colonized--when and as it suited Eurocentered, global capitalism, and heterosexual domination of white women. But it is clear from the work of Oyewumi and Allen that there was no extension of the status of white women to colonized women even when they were turned into similes of bourgeois white women. Colonized females got the inferior status of gendering as women, without any of the privileges accompanying that status for white bourgeois women. Though, the history presented by Oyewumi and Allen should make clear to white bourgeois women that their status is much inferior to that of Native American women and Yoruba women before colonization. Oyewumi and Allen also make clear that the egalitarian understanding of the relation between anafemales, anamales, and “third” gender people has not left the imagination nor the practices of Natives. (Lugones, 2024)

Through *metaforización*³⁸, the construction of the black “other” encompassed painting white women as fragile and in danger of being raped by the black body in both the US and Mexico. In turn, black women were painted as being sexually primitive and accessible:

³⁸ Metaphorization

Historically, the characterization of white European women as fragile and sexually passive opposed them to non-white, colonized women, including women slaves, who were characterized along a gamut of sexual aggression and perversion, and as strong enough to do any sort of labor. The following description of slave women and of slave work in the U.S. South makes clear that African slave females were not considered fragile or weak. Patricia Hill Collins provides a clear sense of the dominant understanding of Black women as sexually aggressive and the genesis of that stereotype in slavery: The image of Jezebel originated under slavery when Black women were portrayed as being, to use Jewelle Gomez' words, "sexually aggressive wet nurses" (Clarke et al. 1983, 99). Jezebel's function was to relegate all Black women to the category of sexually aggressive women, thus providing a powerful rationale for the widespread sexual assaults by White men typically reported by Black slave women. (Davis 1981; D. White 1985). Jezebel served yet another function. If Black slave women could be portrayed as having excessive sexual appetites, then increased fertility should be the expected outcome. By suppressing the nurturing that African-American women might give their own children which would strengthen Black family networks, and by forcing Black women to work in the field, "wet nurse" White children, and emotionally nurture their White owners, slave owners effectively tied the controlling images of jezebel and mammy to the economic exploitation inherent in the institution of slavery... This gender system congeals as Europe advances the colonial project(s). It begins to take shape during the Spanish and Portuguese colonial adventures and becomes full blown in late modernity. The

gender system has a “light” and a “dark” side. The light side constructs gender and gender relations hegemonic ally. It only orders the lives of white bourgeois men and women, and it constitutes the modern/colonial meaning of “men” and “women.” Sexual purity and passivity are crucial characteristics of the white bourgeois females who reproduce the class, and the colonial, and racial standing of bourgeois, white men. (Lugones, 2024; Hill-Collins & Bilge, 2015)

These rhetorics later enforced pseudoscience thinking in the 19th -20th centuries as explained in a later section. Though there were many multifaceted contentions *Afro-Jotería* faced, they always found ways to resist interlaced hierarchies.

***Afro-Jotería* Resistances in the Colonial Period**

As a method of resistance, *Jotería* would organize sexual encounters in rural areas (e.g., *San Juan Penitencia*) located outside the city walls under the guise of parties, dances, and holiday festivities (Gruzinski, 2003). This happened because *Jotería* organized themselves in enclaves or groups sharing the common experience of being marginalized because of their sexuality or gender. Through these enclaves, *Jotería* would continue to fulfill their erotic desires despite the heavy policing that occurred during the colonial period. The organization of these enclaves also served as a type of subversive complicity tactic because groups of *Jotería* would form an effort to preserve a type of underground solidarity. These enclaves also transcended certain social barriers, such as class and race because members of these enclaves belonged to different levels of the established caste system.

Another resistance tactic implemented was coded language that only *sodomitas* could understand (e.g., nicknames like *la cotita*) (Gruzinski, 2003; Hernandez-Victoria,

2018). This coded language phenomenon is what Goodwin (1989) terms the “double subjectivity of interpretation.” This means that messages requiring the interpretation of the speaker and the receiver to make meaning. Thus, this language use has a double meaning that depends on other knowledges to be understood. Thus, it comprises a secret system of interaction that only subordinated groups can understand (Goodwin, 1989).

One of the most prominent examples representing the experience of what Guzman-Ramirez calls a “dangerous intersectionality” is La Cotita *de Encarnacion*. If we apply today’s language, I read La Cotita as a Trans*, Travesti, or gender-non-conforming Afro-descendent (Guzman-Ramirez, 2019). However, they were known as a *mulata sodomita* in the colonial period. In essence, her body personified a dangerous intersectionality because her racialized body was read as expressing a “deviant” sexuality and gender that did not fall neatly into the discourse of the perfect “*Vir*” man discussed in the previous Chapter.

Born Juan De La Vega, they self-named themselves La Cotita. La Cotita disidentified through their gender performance which was culturally tied to “women” of colonial period. La Cotita was labeled as effeminate because of the mannerisms and domestic labor they perform in society. La Cotita made tortillas, cleaned, washed laundry, and “sat like woman” (Tortorici, 2010). Additionally, La Cotita referred to men as *mi vida*³⁹, *mi alma*⁴⁰, and *mi Corazon*⁴¹ (De Los Reyes-Heredia, 2004). Furthermore, La Cotita wore scarves on her head and colorful ribbons, which were customary to mulatta women’s attire at the time (Garza-Carvajal, 2003). They went undetected for

³⁹ My Life

⁴⁰ My soul

⁴¹ My heart

much of their life because male effeminacy, though highly stigmatized, was not proof enough to be prosecuted in colonial Mexico of the 17th century (Tortorici, 2010).

Eventually, La Cotita was caught by a *lavandera* (laundry woman) having sex with a man. La Cotita was eventually persecuted and sentenced to burn along with 12 other men (Tortorici, 2010). Don Francisco Fernández de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque, immediately ordered the Spanish to be separated from the scandal, so that out of 26 men, only 14 continued in the persecution process (Tortorici, 2010). All were Indigenous, black, mulatto, and mestizo. In the next phase of judgment, there were only two more exceptions: a young Indigenous man who was acquitted for being a minor (he was given 200 lashes) and an elderly Spanish man who was nicknamed "*La Grande*." On the 16th of November in 1568, La Cotita, along with the 12 other men, was burned at the stake accused of *El Pecado Nefando* (Tortorici, 2010). Clearly, the dehumanizing rhetoric of mestizaje also overlapped and informed the punishment that these gender and sexual “deviants” received, and ultimately, the colonial records show a racialized bias in judgement (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Homage to La Cotita by Luis Miguel Romero (Romero, 2021)



Further, through their dangerous intersections of being Afro, Trans*, and *sodomita* (as the Spanish imposed), La Cotita's body, according to Spanish rhetoric, needed to be burned as an example to the rest of New Spain as a body that cannot be and cannot exist and that "we shall exterminate." Her dangerous intersection is also a product of symbolic annihilation by most historians in Mexico, as they still refer to La Cotita compulsively as Juan De La Vega (Camba-Ludlow, 2005). Overall, La Cotita represents a fragment of *Afro-Jotería* history overlooked by most historians through their gendered, hetero-normative, and Eurocentric lenses. In sum, the colonial period represents identity formation and the resistance of Afro-descendants, *Jotería*, and *Afro-Jotería*. The next wave came as symbolic annihilation through the Euro-centered national imaginary.

18th Century *Casta* Wave

The next wave of coloniality that impacted Afro-descendants was the early implications of pseudo-sciences. In essence, the Spanish began to adopt the strengthen the *Casta* System to justify the whitening and invisibilizing black bodies. In the 18th century, pseudoscience assumptions began to develop with Eurocentrism serving as the guiding rhetoric. Again, these ideological apparati supported the rule by Spaniards and *Criollos*. According to Doris Careaga-Coleman (2015), pseudo-sciences began to form stereotypes about non-Europeans in order to construct the other and solidify the superiority of the *Castizos* in the socio-political arena. In essence, the *Casta* system was one of the many tools to reinforce the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). This was done through symbolic annihilation and *metaforización* of the black body as the other; a practice that arguably continues contemporarily. This one done through the *Casta* paintings mentioned earlier in this Chapter.

Peninsulares and *Criollos* needed to justify their importance in order to construct the other, mainly by controlling economic resources. By proxy, they did this to manifest their vertical relationship with the other. This created a sociopolitical arena in which the Euro-centered-*Casta* system informed the stratification and racialization of Afro-descendants, a system that arguably lingers in contemporary society (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). Subsequently, this move served a double purpose as the passage of *Las Reformas Barbonicas*, Spanish reforms aimed to establish a harsher control of the colonies through taxation and other means. The reforms led *Criollos* to call for independence, but not for all. To further contextualize, the Spanish in the peninsula viewed the *Criollos* as different and less “pure” and “authentic” Spanish as they were now corrupted by being born in the colonies. In some cases, some *Criollos* were richer than some sectors of peninsular Spanish societies. Therefore, the peninsular Spanish felt threatened by the *Criollos*. In turn, the peninsular Spanish passed *Las Reformas Barbonicas* to establish more control of the *Criollos*. At the same time, they “othered” *Criollos* by restricting them from obtaining influence and power in governmental affairs. Conversely, the *Criollos* started to develop a critical lens as they were now hungry to retain, grow, and justify their power in the Americas (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). They did this by arguing that they were now separate from Spain. However, as mentioned earlier, this was part of the double purpose: the call for independence to justify *Criollo*/white interests and superiority in colonial Mexico (Careaga, 2015). Though humanists such as Francisco Javier Calvijero defended natives (perhaps as a ploy to get their support), blacks were still seen as inferior. Therefore, this move by the *Criollos* was just another form of maintaining the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). As we will see in the next section,

the false wars of independence reflected colonial attributes such as modernity and dependency theory. Even before, we started to see dependency theory through the articulation and transformation of pseudoscience ideals in communion with *Casta* System ideologies:

In this definition, the caste is located on the human terrain, while the race for the same historical period is linked to the idea of an impure origin, given by lineage, blood, family ties, and "biological heritage" as it will be said later. It can be noticed that for the 17th century, caste is related to lineage and nobility, while race is linked to a spurious lineage (which has synonyms such as degenerate, corrupted, illegitimate, etc.). Although both concepts indicate lineage, they also imply opposite contents. Consequently, for the 18th century, it can be observed that there is a difference; the concept of caste adds a sense of classification/jerarquization of different human groups that coexist in the vicerojal society (where "the component of color" will determine "new forms of identification and social and political identity") implies for the first time a relationship between caste and race within a human conceptual definition. Taking into account the sociopolitical phenomenon of exchange and coexistence that occurred in the New World, pseudosciences were invaluable tools used by elites in power to reaffirm Spanish dominance over the vicerojal society, especially over Indigenous and Afro-descendants. In the historical context, it is not surprising that the work of European Enlightenment thinkers such as David Hume (1711-1776), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) helped mark the beginning of an era of pseudo-scientific thought on

race. María Elisa Velázquez Gutiérrez notes that these intellectuals "posed as science with methods and procedures based on 'reason', and were concerned with classifying and organizing the natural and social world" ("Orgullo y despejo" 28). The changes generated by this new form of thought privilege the individual over divine laws. However, when explaining the individual, it can be observed that elites in power in viceroyal society used pseudosciences to emphasize the advantages of a eurocentric racial superiority model in contrast to the stereotype of racial inferiority attributed to Indigenous and Afro-descendants as an unwanted racial model. In the case of the latter group, there is also inscribed the Christian concern for blood purity (from Spain's Reconquista of 1492), which dates back to suspicions about the impurities of Moorish and Jewish blood.⁴² (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

⁴² En esta definición, la casta se ubica en el terreno humano, mientras que la raza para el mismo período histórico, "se vincula, entonces con la idea de un origen espurio, dado por linaje, por la sangre, por el parentesco, por la "herencia biológica" se dirá más tarde." Entonces se puede advertir que para el siglo XVII casta se relaciona con el linaje y la nobleza, mientras que raza se vincula con un linaje espurio (que tiene como sinónimo degenerado, corrompido, ilegítimo, etcétera). Si bien ambos son conceptos que indican linaje también implican contenidos opuestos. Por consiguiente para el siglo XVIII se puede advertir una diferencia, el hecho de que el concepto de casta agregue un sentido de clasificación/jerarquización de los diferentes grupos humanos que conviven en la sociedad virreinal (donde "el componente del color" va a determinar "nuevas formas de identificación e identidad social y política") implica por primera vez una relación entre la casta y la raza dentro de una definición conceptual humana. Tomando en cuenta el fenómeno sociopolítico de intercambio y convivencia que se dio en el Nuevo Mundo, las pseudociencias fueron herramientas invaluable usadas por las elites en el poder para reafirmar el dominio de España sobre la sociedad virreinal, en especial sobre los indígenas y los afrodescendientes. En el contexto histórico, no es de extrañar que la obra de pensadores europeos de la Ilustración como David Hume (1711- 1776), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) y Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) ayudaran a marcar el comienzo de una era de pensamiento pseudocientífico sobre la raza. María Elisa Velázquez Gutiérrez señala que estos intelectuales "se propusieron hacer ciencia con métodos y procedimientos basados en 'la razón', y se preocuparon por clasificar y organizar el mundo natural y social" ("Orgullo y despejo" 28). Los cambios que genera esta nueva forma de pensamiento privilegian al individuo en oposición a las leyes divinas. Sin embargo, a la hora de explicar al individuo se puede advertir que las elites en el poder de la sociedad virreinal usaron las pseudociencias para enfatizar las ventajas de un modelo de superioridad racial eurocéntrico en contraposición al estereotipo de inferioridad racial atribuido a los indígenas y los afrodescendientes como un modelo racial no deseado. En el caso del último grupo también se inscribe la preocupación cristiana de la limpieza de sangre (de la Reconquista española de 1492) que se remonta a las sospechas de las impurezas de la sangre mora y judía. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

This 18th century wave of coloniality, then, only grew stronger as Mexico began its transition into a Eurocentric nation-state as detailed in the next section.

19th Century Invisibilization, Assimilation, and Repression Waves of Coloniality

The 19th-century wave of coloniality also shaped the social construction and marginalization of *Afro-Jotería*. In the context of Afro-Latinos, slavery in Mexico began to collapse in the last years of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century. The slave system collapsed because slave labor became more expensive (Aguirre-Beltran, 1970). However, the rhetoric of mestizaje continued during the creation of the nation-states of the U.S. and Mexico. Both nation-states replicated a homogenous, monolithic, and Eurocentric vision of the perfect U.S. and Mexican citizen, particularly one that sought to whiten its citizens (Forbes, 2013). We can also apply the dependency theory reflected because even though Mexico became independent, the hierarchies that inform coloniality and eurocentrism remained intact. For example, When Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla called for the people to lift their arms in 1810, he proposed: “1) the exclusive use of the land by its owners 2) abolition of slavery, 3) extinction of monopolies 4) The suppression of the taxes paid to the Indian”⁴³ (Careaga-Coleman, 2015).

Another indicator of the dependency theory is the alleged elimination of the *Casta* system. The independence movements and the abolishment of the *Castas* aimed to benefit Eurocentric settler-colonialist projects. In 1813, Jose Morelos called for the elimination of the *Castas*. However, this was not intended to be a move toward liberation. On the contrary, the purpose was for the large native and Afro populations to support *Criollo* power. Though the *Castas* were allegedly removed, they remained intact in a

⁴³ 1) el uso exclusivo de las tierras por sus dueños 2) abolición de la esclavitud 3) extensión de los monopolios 4) La supresión de los tributos que pagaban a los indios. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

more subtle form. According to Careaga-Coleman, the implications of the abolition of the *Castas* led to the assimilation of the Afro and a shift in how:

1) Political and discursive integration of Indigenous and black people 2) Afro-descendants disappear from national-state discourses 3) a binary construction was built - mestizaje - an ideology of homonization to describe Mexican national identity 4) inequality problems still persist 5) slavery is still in force. ⁴⁴ (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

Arguably, the elimination of the *Castas* left room for some social mobility such as the ascension of Vicente Guerrero to be the first Black president in Mexico's history. In 1829, monumentally, Guerrero abolished slavery in Mexico. Though this was a tremendous moment for Afro-descendants in Mexico, *Criollos* were still determined to maintain power and establish their superiority over the rest of the population (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). Therefore, pseudo-scientific assumptions of mestizaje were necessary to create this new world order: "New sociopolitical construction of the independent nation...creoles configuration as a modern Western enlightened model... Indigenous people are classified as savages, semi-savages, and civilized...The rest of the population is integrated into the group of mestizos⁴⁵" (Careaga-Coleman, 2015; Jimenez-Marce, 2003). In the romantic, nation-state vision of mestizaje between Spanish and Natives only, Afro-descendants were erased from the national consciousness. Afro-descendants

⁴⁴ Integración política y discursiva de los indígenas y negros 2) los afro descendentes desaparecen de los discursos estado nacionales 3) se construyó una construcción binaria –mestizaje- una ideología de hominización para describir la identidad nacional mexicana 4) aún persisten los problemas desigualdad 5) aún sigue en vigor la esclavitud. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

⁴⁵ Nueva construcción sociopolítica de la nación independiente...los criollos configuración como modelo ilustrado occidental moderna...Indígenas quedan clasificados como salvajes, semisalvajes, y civilizados... El resto de la población queda integrada en el grupo de los mestizos. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015; Jimenez-Marce, 2003).

were also minimized in discourses outside of the *Casta* system and reconfigured as part of the stratification of class (Creaga-Coleman, 2015). However, not all Afro-descendants assimilated into mestizaje. Still, at the nation-state level, the social order sought to assimilate bodies into the mestizo national imaginary (Careaga-Coleman, 2015).

These pseudo-scientific, mestizaje assimilationist approaches can be personified and further evidenced through the body of Vicente Guerrero. Particularly, through the *Pinturas de Guerrero*.⁴⁶ The *Criollo* elite, in essence, saw Guerrero as a threat because as Frantz Fanon argues, bodies of color cannot be represented as heroes as this can empower colonized subjects (Fanon, 1969). As Ballesteros Páez stated in *Vicente Guerrero: Insurgente, Militar y Presidente Afromexicano* (2011), though slavery was outlawed and Mexico became “independent,” the *Casta* System remained in the national psyche and Guerrero was a threat to the social order the *Criollo* elite envisioned:

In written representations, Guerrero is admired and respected by some, as well as despised and insulted for his intellectual abilities and racial origin, by others...within their "conceptual schemes, nineteenth-century Mexican elites defined themselves and Mexico as a nation of white, Latin and Spanish race, physically, morally, socially and culturally” and Guerrero did not seem to respond to that definition... in the mentality of some of the intellectuals and artists, colonial racial prejudices continued. in force...although equality before the law of all Mexicans was declared regardless of racial origin, this was still considered a factor that determined, for some, the character of people and a weapon to resort to when attacking the political rivals...Guerrero's mixed racial origin made certain

⁴⁶ Paintings of Guerrero

groups feel identified with it and support it...Thus, although the caste system disappeared from the legislation, racism did not.⁴⁷ (Ballesteros Páez, 2011)

It was, then, necessary to symbolically annihilate Guerrero. This was through the whitening of his image and, by proxy, concurrently acting as a distortion of reality and history:

They intentionally whitened his figure in many images... It seems that to be considered a national hero, he couldn't be just one of the people, but rather one of the elites in power, having to erase his African heritage. In images that emphasized the elegance of Mexico's political and military elite, he was whitened, while in others he was presented as he was: a dark-skinned person of African descent... Due to the need to build a national identity, Mexican artists sought to distance themselves from colonial racial differentiation and the costumbrist exaltation made by foreigners, presenting instead the modern Mexico of enlightened men, equals and free, that is, the Mexico they wanted to build... This variation is linked to the observer's interest in representing him as part of the 'we,' the elite, or as the "other", foreign to the capital, the Afro-Mexican. Although independence had ended the caste system, the mentality of the elite at the time did not abandon racial differentiation among the population, attributing certain

⁴⁷ En las representaciones escritas, Guerrero es admirado y respetado por algunos, así como despreciado y objeto de insultos por sus capacidades intelectuales y su origen racial, por otros...dentro de sus "esquemas conceptuales las élites mexicanas decimonónicas se definían a sí mismas y a México como una nación de raza blanca, latina y española, en lo físico, en lo moral, en lo social y en lo cultural" y Guerrero no parecía responder a esa definición... en la mentalidad de algunos de los intelectuales y artistas los prejuicios raciales coloniales seguían vigentes...aunque se declarase la igualdad ante la ley de todos los mexicanos sin importar el origen racial, éste seguía siendo considerado un factor que determinaba para algunos, el carácter de las personas y un arma a la que recurrir a la hora de atacar a los rivales políticos...el origen racial mixto de Guerrero hacía que ciertos grupos se sintiesen identificados con el mismo y lo apoyasen...Así, aunque el sistema de castas desapareció de la legislación, no así el racismo. (Ballesteros Páez, 2011)

characteristics to Afro-Mexicans due to their skin color: wickedness, ignorance, violence, vice. If Guerrero and Álvarez were discriminated against for their racial origin, being important military and political figures of the 19th century, what would happen to Afro-Mexicans who worked as artisans, vendors, or coachmen in the capital, port workers or assistants in Mexican ports... Instead of representing racial diversity - so dominant in foreign artists' works of the same era - they insisted on the homogeneity of the Mexican population, whitening Guerrero to make him one of the elite. In their imagined Mexico, the presence of people of African origin was uncomfortable, a problem for the racial homogenization of the country, an alterity they despised and condemned.⁴⁸ (Ballesteros Páez, 2011) [see Figure 6]

Figure 6

The Whitening of Vicente Guerrero

⁴⁸ Se blanqueó su figura intencionalmente en un buen número de imágenes... Parece que para ser considerado héroe nacional, no podía ser 'visualmente' uno más del pueblo, sino uno más en la clase en el poder, teniendo que desaparecer su herencia africana... En las imágenes donde se enfatizaba la elegancia de la élite política y militar mexicana era blanqueado, en otras era presentado tal y como era: una persona morena, de ascendencia africana... Por la necesidad de construir una identidad nacional propia, los artistas mexicanos buscaron distanciarse de la diferenciación racial colonial y de la exaltación de lo costumbrista que hacían los extranjeros, presentando en su lugar al México moderno, de hombres ilustrados, iguales y libres, es decir, al México imaginado que querían construir... Esta variación se vincula con el interés del observador de representarlo como parte del "nosotros", de la élite política, o como el "otro", el ajeno a la capital, el afromexicano. Aunque la Independencia hubiese acabado con el Sistema de castas, la mentalidad de la élite del momento no abandonó la diferenciación racial de la población atribuyéndole ciertos elementos a los afromexicanos por su color de piel: maldad, ignorancia, violencia, vicio. Si Guerrero y Álvarez fueron discriminados por su origen racial, siendo estos importantes militares y políticos del siglo xix, qué no padecerían los afromexicanos que trabajaban de artesanos, vendedores o cocheros en la capital, los trabajadores del trapiche o los ayudantes en los puertos mexicanos... construir. En lugar de representar la variedad racial —tan dominante en las obras de artistas extranjeros de la misma época—, insistieron en la homogeneidad de la población mexicana, blanqueando a Guerrero para hacerlo uno más de la élite. En su México imaginado, la presencia de la población de origen africano era incómoda, un problema para la homogeneización racial del país, una alteridad que despreciaban y condenaban. (Ballesteros Páez, 2011)



This symbolic annihilation and assimilation further intensified in the 20th century, however, concurrently happening in the 19th-20th centuries was discourses that marginalized *Jotería*.

***Afro-Jotería* and 19th-20th Century Nation-State Wave**

In the context of *Jotería*, during the early days of independent Mexico, the colonial era discourse on the “Nefarious sin,” the homophobic discourse that justified homophobia and the policing and punishment of *Jotería* during the colonial era, disappeared and remained unformulated in Mexican national discourses (Irwin, 2003). This continued until the 19th century in Mexico, when Porfirio Diaz took power. It is important to note, however, that male effeminacy was still seen with disgust, but it was not assigned a sexual dimension throughout the 19th century (Irwin, 2003).

Further, the 19th century reproduced coloniality through the nation-state. Dussel (1993) argues that elites from “peripheral cultures” were educated by the imperial empires and echoed the Eurocentric rhetoric they learned in those nations. They became loyal to these “imperial cultures” and were, therefore, disconnected from their peoples. The elites’ authority required them to turn their backs on their ancestral regional cultures and popular majority, and thus, these *vendidos* sold out to imperial powers. Therefore, many of these new nations that rose from revolutionary wars were essentially what Quijano (2000) defined as “independent colonies.”

Through the perpetuation of logics of coloniality, these nations began national projects and imaginaries to build their nations in reference to European models (Anderson, 1983; Dussel, 1993). Nation building discourses became just another phase/wave of coloniality (colonialism version 2). Historically, national projects of nation-states have been racist, Eurocentric, exclusionist of subordinated others, and homophobic (Grosfoguel, 2005). Through the establishment of compartmentalized borders, these nations aimed to invent and uphold what Benedict Anderson (1983) calls imagined communities. In essence, nations attempt to construct homogenous, monolithic identities with the integration of Eurocentric ideologies as a deciding factor to determine who does and does not belong within the borders of that nationally imagined community (Anderson, 1983, Anzaldúa, 1987, & Fanon, 1963). The Mexican nation-state was no exception as they also adopted these Eurocentric ideologies. Two key moments that I will highlight in this response are the positivist movement and the dance of the 41.

In the 19th to early 20th century, Porfirio Díaz rose to power as president/dictator along with his “*Científicos*.” His primary goals were to “modernize” Mexico through a discourse of modernity (Eurocentrism). Porfirio wanted Mexico to mirror France (e.g., shops and tall buildings). *Porfiriato* discourses also re-introduced a civility/savage dichotomous discourse where you were either part of *La gente decente* or a savage. Porfirio essentially wanted Mexico to mirror Europe. Thus, the rise of the *Porfiriato*, and Mexican Positivism rationalized the perfect Eurocentric dictatorship. Mexican positivists like Justo Sierra, Francisco Pimentel, and Andrés Molina Enríquez began idealizing mestizaje to whiten its citizens, further solidifying the positivist influence in Mexico. They did this by idealizing mestizaje as a union “mixture” between “civilized/whitened”

Indigenous and Europeans only. Mestizaje thus became a national project to “whiten” Mexico and erase *los negros* from the national imaginary (Aguirre Beltran, 1970; Careaga-Coleman, 2015).

Happening concurrently was one of the most notorious scandals that ultimately shifted national discourses “*El baile de los 41.*” Antonio Arroyo and illustrator Jose Guadalupe Posada broke the news about this national scandal during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (many decades before the Stonewall Riots in the United States) (Capistran, 2018). The story goes that on the night of November 17, 1901, 41 men, 19 dressed in beautiful dresses and makeup and the rest dressed in sharp tuxedos, were found by police dancing in a luxurious ballroom in what is today known as *Zona Rosa* in Mexico City. This event, of course, was a big scandal because it was during a time of institutional masculinity and homophobia that was produced by the *Porfiriato* (Capistran, 2018). What made this event even more scandalous was that most of the men found dancing with one another formed part of the Porfirian elite. Initially, there were reports that the number of participants was 42, but it was later revealed that among those 42 was Ignacio De La Torre, son-in-law of Porfirio Diaz (Capistran, 2018). To avoid this event becoming an even bigger scandal, the *Porfiriato* bought the press's silence, which resulted in the number being officially recognized as 41. Porfirio Diaz was also silent for most of the scandal but was forced to address the situation because of public outcry.

The *Porfiriato* elite also paid off the press to omit names and details of the subsequent events that followed the arrests. For instance, *El Imparcial*, one of the most influential newspapers of the time, falsely claimed that all 41 detained men were sent to a military base (Capistran, 2018). Additionally, the newspaper also claimed that authorities

did not give any privileges to any of the men who were arrested, and, that all of them were persecuted equally. According to Bazant (2005), *El Imparcial* also went as far to claim that all of the men arrested were “simple lazy scoundrels” who were jumping from party to party (p. 12). The class and political influences of the *Porfiriato* ultimately led to the prosecution of a select few who had no political influence to defend themselves. It is important to note that the select men were prosecuted and punished under the merit of “immorality” despite there being no existing laws against homosexuality or male effeminacy (Capistran, 2018).

In the aftermath of the arrests, only 19 of the 41 men were selected by the authorities to have their heads shaved. They were shipped off by train to the Yucatan peninsula to serve in the military barracks of Gendarmerie Montada. At every train station, they were met with insults and objects thrown at them by angry protesters whose rage was fueled by this scandal. The 19 denied they were part of the scandal and tried to hide their “crimes” by responding, “I was arrested for burglary. Stop throwing things at me” (Capistran, 2018). Many assume that the 19 sentenced to be sent off to the military were the individuals caught in dresses. Still, they were a mixture of folks who could not afford a lawyer or lacked political and social influence. The 19 were a mix of working-class folks and male prostitutes struggling to survive (Capistran, 2018). Many of those who were spared because of political influence, however, were often shunned by their family members to the point where they were forced to leave the country.

The aftermath of the 41 was the start of the national compulsive obsession to make the state virile through methods such as sending men to the military. It also showed that that the lineage of classism, a hierarchy derived from the logic of coloniality, was as

prevalent then as it is now among marginalized groups. Clearly, also, history repeated itself as another group that displayed a dangerous intersection was punished even more severely.

The dance of the 41 would stay in the national consciousness of the entire nation for many years to come. The conflicting *machista* attitudes of the country led to the integration of the number 41 as a source of mockery towards homosexuality and male effeminacy. Because of the events of the dance of the 41, the number 41 is considered an unlucky number in Mexico (Capistran, 2018). The number 41 was so stigmatized, Mexican folks avoid disclosing their age when they turn 41 altogether. Though this event led to further stigmatization of Gay men, some scholars, such as Chavez (2018), claim that the dance of the 41 was the invention of homosexuality in Mexico.

To put Chavez's argument into context, the dance of the 41 came to define Mexican national identity along with the criteria to create future representations of Gay men. Though many of the representations are deemed stereotypical by those in the Mexican Gay community, some argue that the stereotype of *el hombre afeminado* was the only way openly Gay men could identify. That is, those who could not hide their identity (or chose not to hide) chose to identify with the stereotype because they had no other options for representation (Bautista, 2018). In essence, some Gay men in Mexico reclaimed the *Joto/maricon/effeminate* male identity that derived from the dance of the 41 and made it their own. It is clear, however, that after the events of *El baile de los 41*, effeminacy began to be linked to homosexuality and weakness in the turn of the century national discourses (Irwin, 2003). The 20th-century revolutionary discourses would further inform Afro, *Jotería*, and *Afro-Jotería* marginalization, albeit identity formation.

The 20th Century Positivist Mestizaje Wave of Coloniality

In the 20th century, mestizaje in the guise of eugenics and sexology influenced the markers of Afro, *Jotería*, and *Afro-Jotería* and the construction of the other and identity formation vis-à-vis the new national imaginary. The work of Jose Vasconcelos, secretary of education and a cultural and political influencer, informed marginalization, repression, and identity formation. In *La Raza Cosmica* (1948), he emphasized the idea that mixing with whites was necessary to create the race e (Vasconcelos, 1948). Through eugenics logic, he professed that native Mexicans and Europeans once formed part of Atlantis and were closer to being white (Vasconcelos, 1948). Through a clear social Darwinian lens, he declared that blacks would eventually die off to create this race of the future. Through this logic of eugenics, mestizaje romanticized as being a mixture of Spanish- Indigenous, invisibilized and declared Afro-descendants as part of a foreigner trope:

Afro-Mexicans have been dismissed as culturally irrelevant, if considered at all despite the burgeoning historiography recuperating their contributions to Mexican culture. Indians, on the other hand, have been romantically included in their metonymic capacity as exotic icons of the past...Mexican blackness, in turn, was dressed in tropical fanfare and woven into the national aural fabric through an acoustics of otherness. blacks were positioned as the “henchmen” of the Spanish, the intermediaries who would victimize and “contaminate” them with degenerate morals and brutish violence...by the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, ‘Real Mexican men are at first white criollos, and later mestizos.’ (Arce, 2018; Irwin, 2003)

Again, since the elites like Vasconcelos and Octavio Paz, for example, studied in the United States, they were likely influenced by the positivist, colonial assumptions derived from the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, the colonial assumptions that black, enslaved women had high pain tolerance transformed into pseudoscience in the 19th -20th centuries. For instance, Snorton explained the founding of gynecology in the United States. Though there are few studies in Mexico, Snorton's study is a contribution and example of this phenomenon in the Afro-diaspora:

Sims, founder of gynecology, focused primarily on the three and one-half years of experiments performed on chattel women named Anarcha, Betsey, and Lucy, as well as several unnamed captives, which led to his career-making cure for vesicovaginal fistula (VVF)... His enslaved experimental subjects were the ultimate in controllable patients. Moreover, their collective status as slaves organized a way of encountering their bodies, as test subjects that were immanently analgesic or congenitally impervious to pain, and, by the very condition of slavery, inexhaustibly available through their interchangeability...soon rude instruments were made for the purposes of his experiments...Sims's quest for a cure for VVF was situated in a scientific milieu that had yet to reconcile the interchangeability of race and species; scientists and doctors would continue to debate whether blacks were human or otherwise long after Sims published his career-making article on the treatment of VVF...Sims performed on these women without anesthesia, which had not been introduced until after he started his experiments, and which in its infancy Dr. Sims hesitated to use...Sims claimed, African-American women

had a 'naturally higher' pain tolerance...Sims's quest for a cure to VVF, as his dependence on disabled captives became another mode for putting their bodies to work as flesh. (Snorton, 2017)

These colonial assumptions, then, transcended national, state, and local boundaries as we see how hegemonic discourses within the imperial centers of the US and Europe shaped the construction of a Eurocentric, exclusionist Mexican nation-state. So much so that even local and state politics began to be influenced by the colonial waves of sexology and eugenics.

Positivist Informed Nation and State Projects

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, the working-class peon trope became the symbol for the ideal citizen. As described by Careaga-Coleman, this was done through the logics of homogenization:

Consequently, positivists propose solutions to the 'decay' in which Indigenous groups are submerged. Intellectuals agree that Mexico as a nation must have a common goal and insist on the importance of a single national identity that can be achieved - according to their criteria - through homogeneity. 'Homogeneity could help achieve total evolutionary development, which could only be achieved through miscegenation... Miscegenation would not only solve the racial problem but also the evolutionary one.'⁴⁹ (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

⁴⁹ Consecuentemente los positivistas proponen soluciones a la 'decadencia' en la que se encuentran sumidos los grupos indígenas. Los intelectuales coinciden en que México como nación debe tener un fin común e insisten en la importancia de una misma identidad nacional que se pueden conseguir—según sus criterios—a través de la homogeneidad. 'La homogeneidad podría ayudar al desarrollo evolutivo total, mismo que sólo se podía lograr a través de mestizaje... El mestizaje no sólo resolvería el problema racial sino el evolutivo.' (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

From the beginning of the 20th century onward, various media framing tactics were used as tools of colonization to “other” and invisibilize Afro-descendants and natives. This was done through government posters, films, comics (e.g., *memin pinguin*), and magazines. It was a projection of a “civilized” mestizaje. More specifically, the *Charro* was the answer to the positivist assumptions on mestizaje (19th-century positivism that now informed 20th-century positivism):

Mexican intellectuals finally have the stability they were waiting for, so that they can consolidate the identity of the Mexican nation through miscegenation. Over the ten years of armed struggle, little by little, miscegenation has been solidifying in the image of the rural mestizo charro. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)⁵⁰

Similar to what happened in the 19th century with Vicente Guerrero, depictions of the ideal *Charro* mestizo were whitened to fit the agenda of the elite (see Figure 7). The *Charro*, then, was used as another tool of assimilation:

The positivists claim that the union of the Spanish (white) and Indigenous peoples generates mestizos, the ideal union, as it promotes a dualistic construction of identity: Indo-European miscegenation. They also propose that the union of mestizos with other groups such as Afro-descendants and/or Indigenous peoples also generates mestizos. Therefore, this philosophy of miscegenation also entails (in a veiled way) a mechanism of exclusion through whitening, which has

⁵⁰ Los intelectuales mexicanos por fin cuentan con estabilidad tan esperada, para así consolidar la identidad de la nación mexicana a través del mestizaje. A largo de los diez años de la lucha armada, poco a poco e mestizaje se ha ido corporizando en la imagine del charro mestizo rural. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

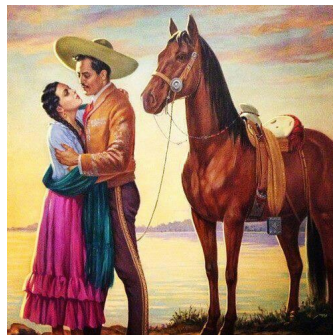
implications not only in the racial sphere but also in the cultural sphere.⁵¹

(Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

These positivist assumptions of the whitened mestizo spilled over into cultural production across the imagined nation-states. Translocalizing *Jalisco* and *Veracruz*, these states saw the impacts of positivist *mestazaje* at the local level.

Figure 7

The Idealized Charro as Nationally Imagined by the Elite



Translocalizing *Jalisco*: Nation-State Projects at the State Level Vis-à-Vis a Black Past

Jumping forward in time to the 21st century for a moment, I would like to begin this section by sharing a *testimonio* on the implications of the legacies of the *Castas* and positivist in *Los Altos De Jalisco*. In 2021, my cousin asked me to go with him to *Arandas, Jalisco*, to show me where the “beautiful people are.” Confused, I agreed to tag along with him to understand what he meant. Upon arrival, I noticed the phenotype of most of the residents in the highlands of *Los Altos* was white skin, blue eyes, and

⁵¹ Los positivistas enfatizan que la unión del español (blanco) y el indígena genera mestizos, la unión ideal, ya que promueve una construcción de la identidad dualista: mestizaje indoeuropeo. Además, proponen que la unión de mestizos con otros grupos como los afrodescendientes y/o los indígenas también genera mestizos. Por lo tanto, esta filosofía del mestizaje también conlleva (de manera velada) un mecanismo de exclusión a través del blanqueamiento, que además de las implicaciones raciales tiene alcances en el ámbito cultural. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

sometimes blond hair. My cousin later explained to me that there were “more beautiful people” in *Arandas* compared to *Tototlán* because there was less “*Prietos*.” *Prieto* is a racialized and classed term coined and used by the Mexican elite to marginalize and humiliate folks of darker complexion. Tenoch Huerta (2022) describes it as “Said of a person: having a dark-skinned complexion. A man or woman who is placed at a disadvantage by society due to their skin color and customs that deviate from the standards of whiteness.⁵²” In essence, it is a form of reconfiguring the lineage of the positivist *mestizaje* in the contemporary social order; product of the lineage of the *Castas* and housed within coloniality of power. In *Jalisco*, I have also heard phrases from friends and family members such as “*trabajo como negro*⁵³” or “*pobrecito nació prietito*⁵⁴,” clearly, another sign of this lineage of the *Castas*. Ironically, *Los Altos De Jalisco* has a black past.

As evidenced by Mario Alberto Nájera in *Los Afro-Jaliscienses* (2002), various enslaved people were forcibly brought to *Jalisco* by the Spanish through the transatlantic slave trade to work in what were to become the haciendas:

Thanks to the records, censuses, and accounts of some chroniclers, we know that Guadalajara and New Galicia were a region with a significant population of African origin... Guadalajara demanded "500 blacks and black women at moderate prices in order to continue working in the fields and mines." In 1570, the number of black and Afro-Mestizos in all of New Galicia was 2,705 per 1,000 Europeans, 108,360 Indigenous people, and 606 Mestizos...there were more than

⁵² Dicho de una persona: de piel morena. Hombre o mujer a quien el sistema social pone en desventaja por su color de piel y por sus usos y costumbres ajenos a los estándares de la blanquitud.

⁵³ Working like a black

⁵⁴ Poor thing they were bork dark

500 slaves living in the city of Guadalajara, not counting the free blacks and mulattos. It is also reported that there were over 500 Spaniards, and it is said that the capital of New Galicia...During the first half-century of life of Guadalajara and its region, the Spanish required and obtained sufficient slave labor to allow them to build a vast territory producer of silver and cattle...the Indigenous people were unable to satisfy the Europeans' demands for wealth on their own, as they could not do so...According to Thomas Clavo in Guadalajara, the 'Afromexican sector consisted mainly of enslaved women. The buying and selling of slaves was a significant business until the late 18th century.'⁵⁵ (Nájera, 2002)

Like the rest of the nation, *Jalisco* went through positivist-informed mestizaje assimilation. However, *Afro-Jaliscenses* (Afro-descendants in *Jalisco*), as Nájera rightfully coins them, never disappeared because various black roots are still ever present in *Jaliscense* cultural production, phenotypes, and genetics of its people:

The undeniable presence of Black and Mulatto people in the past of the current state of Jalisco did not disappear, but rather integrated into the regional melting pot; their legacy became part of the multicultural and multilingual composition.

The Afro-Jaliscenses are here in today's conglomerate, their genetic heritage can

⁵⁵ Gracias a los padrones, censos realizados y a las informaciones de algunos cronistas, sabemos que Guadalajara y la Nueva Galicia eran una región con una importante población de origen africano...Guadalajara demandaba '500 negros y negras a precios moderados con el fin de seguir el trabajo en los campos y minas.' En 1570 la cantidad de negro y afromestizos, en toda la Nueva Galicia, era de 2,705, por 1,000 europeos, 108,360 indígenas y 606 mestizos...tan solo en la ciudad de Guadalajara viven más de 500 esclavos, sin contar los negros y mulatos libres, también da cuenta de más de 500 españoles, y dicen que la capital neogallega...Durante el primer siglo y medio de vida de Guadalajara y su región, los españoles requirieron y despusieron de la suficiente mano de obra esclava que les permitiría construir todo un vasto territorio productor de plata y ganado...los indígenas no hubieron podido solos, como de hecho no pudieron, satisfacer con su solo esfuerzo las apetencias de riqueza de los europeos...Según Thomas Clavo en Guadalajara el 'sector afromexicano consistía primordialmente en mujeres esclavas. La compra-venta de multas fue un negocio significativo hasta fines del siglo XVIII. (Nájera, 2002)

be noticed in the physical characteristics of men and women who, without knowing it, carry African elements in their being; already in the midst of prominent families, already in the working-class community always. In the southern part of the state, like Los Altos, Ciénega de Chapala, the northern coast, or the proud "criolla" City of Guadalajara... Musicologist Rolando Antonio Pérez Fernández studied several Jaliscense sounds in which he successfully identified an unmistakable African influence, a contribution from the Afro-Jaliscenses of the region and explained in the popular song 'Las copetonas,' originating from the southern part of the state... Additionally, composers and musicians were emerging, all of which helped to prefigure the ensembles that already emerged in different regions of western Mexico in the 19th century with the name mariachis, each with their local peculiarities.⁵⁶ (Nájera, 2002)

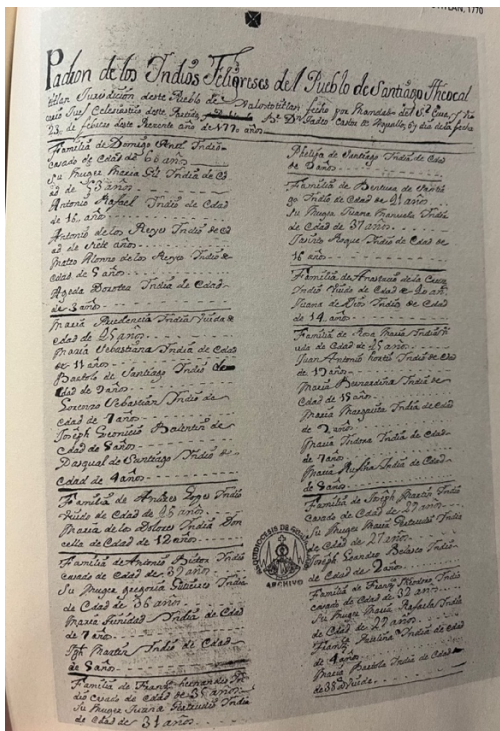
As mentioned by Nájera, *Los Altos De Jalisco*, where some of my contributors are from and where *Tototlán* sits, has afro presence. This is further postulated by Celina G. Becerra Jiménez in her book *Indios, Españoles y Africanos En Los Altos De Jalisco* (2015). In this groundbreaking text, Becerra Jiménez pulls from various census and church records to paint the story of Afro-descendants, natives, and the system of *Castas*

⁵⁶ Toda la innegable presencia Negra y mulata en el pasado del hoy estado de Jalisco no desapareció, solo se integró al cresol regional; su huella se incorporó al compuesto pluricultural y pluriétnico, Los afrojaliscenses están aquí en el conglomerado de hoy, su herencia genética puede notarse en el biotipo de hombres y mujeres que, sin saberlo, portan elementos africanos en sus ser; ya en el seno de familias encumbradas, ya en el pueblo trabajador de siempre; en el sur del estado como en Los Altos, en la Ciénega de Chapala, en la costa del norte o en la orgullosa "criolla" Ciudad de Guadalajara...El musicólogo Rolando Antonio Perez Fernandez estudio varios sondes jaliscienses en los cuales logro identificar una huella inconfundible de africanía, aportación ésta de los afro jaliscienses de la región y explica en el popular son 'Las copetonas,' procedente del sur del estado...también se fueron frojando los creadores de letras y ejecutantes de instrumentos musicales y compositores, todo lo cual ayudo a prefigurar los conjuntos que ya en el siglo XIX surgieron en distintas zonas del oeste de mexicano con el nombre mariachis cada cual con sus peculiaridades locales. (Nájera, 2002)

in Jalisco (see Figure 8). She found a significant amount of black presence, labor, and cultural production in *Los Altos De Jalisco*.

Figure 8

Church and Secular Records of Los Altos De Jalisco Proving Black Presence



INDIOS, ESPAÑOLES Y AFRICANOS EN LOS ALTOS DE JALISCO

	Nombre	Apellido	
	Maria de la Asuncion		Esclava doncella de edad de 20 años
	Juan Antonio		Mulato libre soltero de edad de 18 años
Familia de	Ana Ursula	Macias	Española casada, su marido ausente, de edad de 60 años
	Josela Joaquina		Española de edad de 7 años
Familia de	Don José Manuel	González	Español casado de edad de 68 años
	Dofia Maria Magdalena	Jiménez	Su mujer española de edad de 59 años
	Maria Micaela		Española doncella de edad de 15 años
	Maria Gertrudis		Española de edad de cuatro años
	Teresa de Jesús		Esclava soltera de edad de 20 años
	Lugarda Tadea		Esclava soltera de edad de 15 años
	Juana		Esclavo soltero de edad de 12 años
	Antonio	de la Cruz	Esclavo soltero de edad de 10 años
	Joaquin		Esclavo soltero de edad de 9 años
	José Dionisio		Esclava de edad de 8 años
	Lorena Guadalupe		
Familia de	Juana Maria	Sánchez	Mulata libre soltera de edad de 40 años
	Rafaela Josefa		Mulata libre doncella de edad de 26 años
Familia de	José	Diaz	Mestizo casado de edad de 68 años
	Gertrudis	Sánchez	Su mujer mestiza de edad de 56 años
	José	Diaz	Mestizo soltero de edad de 25 años
	Maria de San José		Mestiza de confesion de edad de 7 años
Familia de	Don Francisco	Rome	Español casado de edad de 30 años
	Dofia Antonia	Jiménez	Su mujer española de edad de 22 años
	Don José Francisco		Español de confesion de edad de 8 años
	Dofia Maria Rafaela		Española de edad de 5 años
	Lorena		Española soltera de edad de 43 años
	Maria Crescencia		Esclava de dos años
	José Maria		Esclavo de edad de 10 años
Familia de	Tomás	Mora	Español casado de edad de 32 años
	Maria Antonia	de Aceves	Su mujer española de edad de 30 años
	Maria Remedio		Española de edad de 8 años de confesion
	José Nepomuceno		Indio soltero de edad de 17 años
	Gertrudis	de la Mora	Española doncella de edad de 18 años
	José Maria	García	Español soltero de edad de 15 años
Familia de	Dofia Juana	de Ando	Española viuda de edad de 70 años
	Dofia Gertrudis	González	Española doncella de edad de 28 años

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At an ontological level, then, the *Charro* represents black, native, and European combined cultural production and a threat to the elite. In fact, *afro-jaliscenses* were some of the first *Charros*:

In Mexico during the early 17th century, ranches had proliferated. The rancher, unlike the powerful "señores de ganados" (landowners), was considered at first as "the most esteemed in social scale among whites, unless referring to a mestizo, a black, or a mulatto" (i.e., the son of a black and an Indigenous person). These components of colonial society, children of multicolored mestizaje, were "men on horseback" just like the Spanish... Many free mulattos and blacks led a life of

servitude by renting themselves out temporarily to haciendas and ranches, mainly to perform the tasks of rodeos... In these rural fields, Afro-Jaliscenses played a fundamental role alongside other mestizos and Spanish creole landowners. In the region of Los Altos, Jalisco, "the labor used in field tasks was mainly of African origin." In 1783, 45% of ranch and farm workers were free mulattos and 43% were slaves. As we can see, the mulatto and black population was more present in this region than commonly believed; therefore, we can assume that "some haciendas were large multiracial communities," especially the vast property of the Rincón Gallardo family in Ciénega Mata. In all these daily tasks that men on horseback had to perform, blacks and mulattos participated; thus, riding, horseback riding, and lassoing became activities that were done for the pleasure and pride of showing off skills... Finally, it is worth reflecting that the African element contributed effectively, in a temporal process that is still ongoing, to forming the regional sociocultural region that is Jalisco today. New historical and ethnographic studies will help us better understand that part of regional identity that enriches and universalizes us through diversity.⁵⁷ (Nájera, 2002)

⁵⁷ En el México de inicios del siglo XVII las estancias ganaderas habían proliferado. El estanciero a diferencia de los poderosos 'señores de ganados, era considerado en un principio como 'lo más majo en la escala social entre los blancos, cuando no designa a un mestizo, a un negro o a un mulato (es decir, al hijo de negro e india),' estos componentes de la Sociedad colonial, hijos del mestizaje multicolor 'eran hombres de caballo,' tal como los españoles... Muchos mulatos y negros libres llevaban una vida de ashumancia alquilándose temporalmente en haciendas y estancias, sobre todo para efectuar las maniobras de los rodeos...en todas estas faenas en los campos ganaderos los afro jaliscienses jugaron un papel fundamental junto a los otros mestizos y los criollos españoles propietarios de las estancias. En la región de Los Altos De Jalisco 'la mano de obra utilizada en las faenas de campo era en su mayoría, de origen africano. En 1783, el 45% de los trabajadores de ranchos y puestos eran mulatos libres y un 43% esclavos.' Como se ve, la población mulata y negra estuvo más presente en esta región que lo que se cree comúnmente; así, tenemos que 'algunas de las haciendas eran grandes comunidades multirraciales, en especial ese era el caso de la vasta propiedad de la familia Rincon Gallardo en Ciénega Mata.' En todas esas maniobras que los hombres a caballo tenían que realizar cotidianamente participaron negros y mulatos; es así que jinetear, colear y lazar su convirtieron, con el tiempo, en actividades que se realizaban por el gusto y orgullo de

Despite this strong evidence of a black past, the compulsive, positivist, Eurocentric, homogenizing, and colonial push to imagine the *Charro* as white pressed forward into the 20th century with the previously mentioned media framing. Now, in the form of films as propaganda for the state and then national imaginary. The image of *El Charro*, geographically, is rooted in *Jalisco* and was adopted by the conservative elites who sought the perfect (hegemonic) trope for their nationally imagined, Eurocentric vision of the perfect citizen. In the 1920s and 1930s, the white *Charro* went from regionally specific to the national imaginary of a conservative nationalism (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). The traveling mobility of the *Charro* smoothed its transition into a national trope of *Mexicanidad*. This mobility involved constant exposition through contests, fairs, and association of *Mexicanidad* to the *Charro* (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). *The Charro* eventually became a national hero via media framing. Particularly, through advancing mediums such as radio, theater, and film (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). The representation of the *Charro* was, again, packaged as white. One of the biggest reasons of this association of the *Charro* to “the landowners, members of the old rural aristocracy of the Porfirian era, and the well-known figures of the secret urban circles⁵⁸” (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). Similarly, in *Veracruz*, the elites unsuccessfully attempted to implement a similar whitening project at the local level.

Translocalizing Veracruz: Visiblizing Afro-Veracruzanos

mostrar habilidades...Por último, cabe reflexionar que el elemento africano contribuyó efectivamente, en un proceso temporal que aun continua, a formar la región sociocultural que es el Jalisco actual, nuevos estudios históricos y etnográficos nos ayudaran a conocer mejor esa parte del ser regional que nos enriquece y universalice en la diversidad. (Nájera, 2002)

⁵⁸ los terratenientes, miembros de la antigua aristocracia rural porfirista, y conocidos personajes de los secretos medios urbanos.

Veracruz was one of the ports that supported the transatlantic slave trade and other migrations in the 19th century operational. Thus, there is a strong black presence in the state of *Veracruz*. One of the forms of cultural production in *Veracruz* that has transcended waves of coloniality is the *Jarocho* musical genre and aesthetic. Despite the strong presence of *Jarocho* in *Veracruz*, it was not enough to question the national imaginary. Specifically, because the elites characterized it as regionally specific and, eventually, foreign, they rewrote history to whiten it (see Figure 9) (Careaga-Coleman, 2015). Like the Charro, in typical colonial fashion, the positivist elite in Mexico sought to whiten, distort and erase the history of *Jarocho* through a cosmic race rhetoric. As Careaga-Coleman writes:

In the 1940s, one can see how the public image of the *Jarocho* also suggests the component of the "Spanish vein," especially through the clothing that is related to "the gala dresses worn by distinguished and aristocratic Veracruz women from the peninsula." Of course, when Spanish heritage is imposed on the *Jarocho*, it also emphasizes a Eurocentric/white past.⁵⁹ (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

Figure 9

Jarocho Blanco

⁵⁹ En la década de los cuarentas se puede advertir como la imagen pública del *Jarocho* sugiere también el componente de la "vertiente Española," sobre todo a través del vestuario que se relaciona con "los vestidos de gala peninsulares que usaban las mujeres veracruzanas distinguidas- 'aristocráticas.' Por supuesto, cuando se impone el pasado español al *jarocho* también se enfatiza un pasado eurocéntrico/blanco. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)



Another tactic the positivist elite and cosmic race thinkers deployed was dismissing *Jarocho* as part of the tropical foreigner trope, particularly in films, as explained by Careaga-Coleman:

However, the black component remains present when representing the Jarocho, especially in film, which not only makes a reference to the Veracruz coast, but also alludes to the Caribbean as a central narrative element, through music, dances, and some characters... In this sense, a series of films will emerge that trace the history of the rumberas (women from Cuba) in Veracruz. This contributes to an ambiguity that places Afro-Mexicans as part of the Caribbean, away from Mexico.⁶⁰ (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

Ultimately, these national-imaginary rhetorics derived from coloniality were also impacting *Afro-Jotería* in terms of their sexuality.

⁶⁰ Sin embargo, el componente negro sigue presente a la hora de representar lo jarocho, sobre todo en el cine, que además de hacer una referencia a las costas veracruzanas, ahora también hace alusión al Caribe como un componente argumental central, a través de la música, los bailes, y algunos personajes... en este sentido van a surgir una serie de películas que trazan el pasado de las rumberas (llegadas de Cuba) en Veracruz. Esto contribuye a una ambigüedad que coloca a los afromexicanos como parte del Caribe, lejos de México. (Careaga-Coleman, 2015)

***Afro-Jotería* Navigating 20th Century Wave of Coloniality**

This same rhetoric impacted *Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería* as Eugenics deemed their bodies as “*inservibles porque no son los cuerpos que van a servir para producir el mestiza imaginario.*”⁶¹ This was done by Jose Vasconcelos’s Cosmic Race discourse. His arguments are also homophobic because “sexual attraction that does not involve reproduction does not result in mestizaje, therefore, it does not promote the cosmic race” (Irwin, 2003, p. 176). Further, the inability to procreate was seen as anti-nationalist. Even before Vasconcelos’ work was published, European and U.S. eugenics, sexology, and psychoanalysis conversations (which pathologized homosexuality as a type of medical degeneracy) began to be implemented into national discourses during the first half of the 20th century (Irwin, 2003). The Mexican state now had a “scientific” basis for justifying homophobia. Monsiváis (1995) notes that Freudian psychoanalysis essentially provided the secular justification of homophobia and partially replaced Roman Catholic homophobic reasoning. Between 1925 and 1932, homosexuality and femininity became to be seen as a “highly infectious disease” and as a colonialist force which threatened to weaken virility and therefore, the strength of the revolutionary institutions (Ruvalcaba, 2007). The national institutions of Mexico compulsively tried to eliminate male-femininity and homosexuality from the public sphere. Mexican institutions deemed it necessary to police the bodies of their citizens and army as a means of maintaining masculinity through virility, national hygiene, and health. Finally, virility became the guiding factor for masculinities as elevation of virility, and (most importantly) the ability to procreate and have many kids, as key components to the construction of another

⁶¹ Useless because they were not the bodies that were capable of producing mestizaje.

hegemonic masculinity which became a guiding factor to revolutionary discourses (Irwin, 2003; Ruvalcaba, 2007). This hegemonic masculinity was personified by the nationally imagined, idealized White *Charro*, as mentioned in the previous section (see Figure 3).

When reflecting on the multiplicity of hierarchies the White *Charro* represents, I am reminded of a friend from *Jalisco* who despite coming a long way since I first met him, he too was impacted by the racial and hegemonic-masculine hierarchies present in the rural personified by the pressure to assimilate into the idealized *Mexicanidad* personified by the *Charro Blanco*. When I first met him, this friend felt he could not love himself because his brothers were lighter skinned whereas he was the only one born “*Prieto*.” I was heartbroken when he told me, “I inherited the worse genes of my dad.” In an attempt to compensate, though, he repressed his love for men by attempting to at least try to live up to the hegemonic masculinity of his father. Through multiplicity of hierarchies involved here, at the time, he was not able live his full erotic self nor love his beautiful dark skin.

The story of my friend is one of the many pressures *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* endure to assimilate in multiple contexts, especially because *Jalisco* is considered “*La Cuna Del Macho*” or the birthplace of the macho. Often creating a *hombre/joto*⁶² dichotomy, Mexican nation-state 20th-Century cinema film propaganda repeated this colonial narrative of hegemony and hierarchy, meant to exclude those sexual identities who do not fit the dominant construct of manhood. In his book *Cinemachismo* (2006), Sergio De La Mora argues that Mexican cinema films construct the macho-man by presenting the effeminate gay male (*The Joto*) as the abnormal and the

⁶² Man/faggot

hetero-macho man as the general definition of what it means to be a man (p.107). In essence, the “Mexican macho-man needs the existence of male transvesties and effeminate gay men to justify his existence” (De La Mora, 2006, p. 108). Although the Mexican macho-man does need the existence of the *Joto*, the *Joto* must be hidden (not erased) from the public sphere to ensure his *macho* existence. The Mexican *macho* man is then put atop as the dominant heterosexualized identity. In cases where homosexual behaviors are permitted in 20th-century Mexican Cinema, they are seen as comic relief and are not taken seriously. De La Mora highlights Rafael Portillo’s film *Munecas De La Noche* (1978) as a prime example:

Rafael Portillo again deploys both male transvestism and homosexuality, at first to momentarily put at risk (for comedy’s sake) the monolithic construction of heterosexual masculinity, which admits no slippage in object choice or “feminine” behavior in men, and to reconfirm and privilege the “normality” and “superiority” of heterosexual masculinity. This is achieved by narrative framing devices in which homosexuality and transvestism are treated as ridiculous and comic elements; in contrast, heterosexual romance is coded as serious drama. (De La Mora, 2006, p.117)

At the face of dangerous inter-sections of the nation-state's wave of coloniality, *Afro-Jotería* have always found ways to resist. One particular example of historical resistance is Amelio Robles. Amelio Robles Avila was a Trans* Mexican *Zapatista* general who fought bravely in the Mexican Revolution. His peers recognized Amelio as a man who his fellow soldiers respected. In essence, Amelio performed all the tropes of 20th-century masculinity to live a fulfilling life as a man.

Amelio The Resistor: Afro-Trans* Coronel in the 20th Century

Amelio Robles was a Mexican revolutionary general known to have been assigned female at birth. Amelio possessed “masculine gestures that could be considered a cultural declaration of the body and a political act” (Cano, n.d.). In her essay, *Amelio Robles, Andar de soldado Viejo: Masculinidad (trangénero) en la Revolución Mexicana* (n.d.), Gabriela Cano argues that the social conditions during the war allowed Robles to construct his identity as a man: “The masculinization of Amelio Robles began in the midst of forced displacements and social disorder during the war. In the battle, ancestral inhibitions and reservations were abandoned, and some spaces of tolerance emerged, allowing Robles to start building himself as a man.”⁶³ (p. 20). Amelio demanded that people address and recognize him as a man. Those who addressed him as a woman were met with Amelio’s pointing their gun toward them (exception for his military comrades who sometimes jokingly referred to him as “*mi coronela*” after a few drinks) (Cano, n.d.). He also dated several women openly. Because Amelio performed a masculinity that was acceptable during the revolutionary period, he was able to live a fulfilling life: “their tolerance towards Robles, whose masculinity seems acceptable to her because it is an exceptional case, without followers and which, in addition, exalts the values of Machismo⁶⁴” (Cano, n.d., p. 17). Nonetheless, Amelio was revered in his rural community and had a school named after his dead name, Amelia. I argue that Amelio’s story and the aforementioned socio-historical moments can be housed within socio-

⁶³ La masculinización de Amelio Robles comenzó en medio de los desplazamientos forzados y el desorden social de la guerra. En el combate se abandonaron pudores y reservas ancestrales y surgieron algunos espacios de tolerancia como el que permitió a Robles empezar a construirse como un hombre.

⁶⁴ su tolerancia ante Robles, cuya masculinidad le parece aceptable por tratarse de un caso de excepción, que no tiene seguidores y que, además, exalta los valores del Machismo.

historical moments, I argue, can be housed within *Jotería* Studies scholarship. However, *Jotería* Studies must be willing to transnationalize, decenter metro normativity, and overall, account for localized histories and identities of the Global South.

***Afro-Jotería* as a Possible Bridge Between Worlds**

It is important to situate these histories in conversation with *Jotería* histories of the Global North in order to gain a deeper understanding and meaning of *Jotería*. Situating Borderland theory, we must engage in a transnational facultad (Anzaldúa, 1987). Further situating Borderlands theory, it is pivotal that we converge “two different ‘worlds’ or ‘cultures’ and act as a ‘fulcrum’ to engage in political change (Anzaldúa, 1987). As nepantlero and naguala scholars, we must serve as the bridge between two or more worlds. In the context of this response, bridging the knowledges and histories between the Global North and the Global South is important.

I believe that *Jotería* as a theorizing space can tilt the power relations from vertical to horizontal in the case of historiography. For example, *Carcia*, a recent film postulates that Afro-Mexican Trans* bodies should be added to the Global North *Jotería* archive. One of my interventions, then, lies on whether current *Jotería* dialogues are sufficiently horizontal as Bañales (2014), a foundational *Jotería* scholar, claims they ought to be. I am specifically concerned with the exclusion of transnational and subaltern voices in theorizing about *Jotería* as their relation to the coloniality of power differs from those marginal groups within colonial centers where theory continues to be articulated and exported to the peripheries (our complacency as scholars of color with U.S.-centrism). Robert Gutierrez-Perez agrees that “In the case of *Jotería*, these narratives of the subaltern disrupt the ‘habitual and habituation [colonial] patterns of behavior that are

constrained by modern ‘situational and material conditions,’ which are ‘ordered by multiple and dispersed discursive practices and conventions’” (Gutierrez-Perez, 2021). In the context of *Afro-Jotería*, Diaz-Casas & Velazquez (2017), agree that, “Therefore, it is urgent to build a dialogue between academic works published in English and Spanish on both sides of the border.⁶⁵”

Recent Trans* scholars from the Global South have begun to center this discourse of asymmetry between global centers and peripheries, as an asymmetry of dissemination of scholarship between the Global North and South. For instance, a group of academics and activists from the journal *Transgender Studies Quarterly* (TSQ) have attempted build bridges between both global spheres through their *Trans En Las Americas* (2019) and *The Transsexual/Transvestite Issue* (2021) editions. Cole Rizki argues in the TSQ *article Trans-, Translation, Transnational* (2021) that American Studies has been Trans Studies’ unspoken center and thus must be de-centered by including Latin American scholarship. They state, “while trans studies has indeed aimed to address questions of empire, racialization, and political economy, for example, it has repeatedly done so through critique that prioritizes the US nation-state and its transnational histories” (Riziki, 2021). Riziki goes on to critique the exclusion of the *Travesti* and *Travesti* theory. Instead, the *Travesti* is positioned as “backward” in comparison to its Trans* counterpart. This phenomenon is also racialized in the context of Brazil; Travesti is associated with black bodies. Thus, the US scholars unintentionally (and sometimes intentionally) replicate colonial gazes through their centrist and universalist theory building (Dussel, 1993).

Rizki states:

⁶⁵ Por lo tanto, es imperante construir un diálogo entre los trabajos académicos que se publican en inglés y español, en ambos lados de la frontera.

Do not we communicate and traffic in the particular colonial, capitalist, real abstract codes of social and subjective being that make up an American grammar?" (176). This is to put pressure on the commensurability of cultural, political, and social arrangements of knowledge. It is also a reminder, as Macarena Gmez-Barris (writes, to recognize when and how 'local vernaculars of struggle' might get 'run through the machine of North American theories, abstracting from local conditions of possibility and constraints' as a form of extractivism. Such cautions are not a call to abandon the work of cultural translation or to abandon these categories but rather to recognize them as particular arrangements of knowledge and experience, as modes of perception and forms of reading that forge grids of intelligibility and regulate epistemological economies...Likewise, Some of the questions this section asks include: How does trans as a geopolitical knowledge formation travel, get received, reshaped, and refused outside the US academy and in the Global South? What kinds of feminist, antiracist, post and decolonial Global South genealogies might unfold through translation or its refusal? What are the material conditions of the circulation and translation of trans knowledges, cultural formations, and political claims? How do we analyze this circulation, from its material conditions of inception, contexts of production through to its movement and recombination? How do material, political, and cultural frameworks affect how trans theory travels (or cannot)? What kinds of counter practices or counter translations might we mobilize? How do geopolitical and scalar categories such as province, state, island, archipelago, region, nation, ocean, or Global South or north facilitate (mis)recognitions or

mediate knowledge formations? refusing to translate formations like brownness, for example, or travesty might also do political work. Such refusals have the potential to generate other forms of proximity, other forms of ‘being-in-common,’ to invoke Jose Esteban Muñoz’s formulation, in excess of geopolitical borders. Translation’s refusal, as a critical mode of accompaniment and care, can signal a commitment to copresence as affiliation that does not collapse, meld, or erase ways of organizing experience. (Rizki, 2021)

In their piece *Latin/x American Trans Studies Toward a Travesti-Trans Analytic* (2019), Rizki offers more transitional possibilities between Global North and South dialogue:

Academics situated in Latin America, for example, do not currently have access to trans studies faculty or research positions within university settings. Scholarship produced from the Global South on trans and travesti embodiment, subjectivity, cultural production, or activism has largely been produced by nontrans academics from both the Global North and Global South—a condition that trans and intersex activists such as Mauro Cabral have vocally critiqued. In the north, trans studies positions are only recently starting to emerge. Rarely do these positions emphasize the Global South, and they remain vulnerable to institutional proclivities within an increasingly volatile neoliberal landscape. Scholars migrating to the north to access these increased opportunities are confronted with new challenges, including shifting racial hierarchies, anti-immigrant sentiment, and discrimination based on accent, and are obligated to produce scholarship in English. Academics across the hemisphere and elsewhere

are impacted by the global demands of the academic market and its valuation of English-language publication. While in English, transgender often needs to be modified in order to respond to local hierarchies of race, class, ability, and other forms of difference, travesti underscores instead the impossibility of such disarticulation in the first place. Nonetheless, travesti is not meant as a corrective to trans, and our authors do not expand the notion of trans to include travesti... Instead, many of the essays in this issue center travesti as an identification, a critical analytic, and an embodied mode of politics... Travesti,” writes Mal Machuca Rose in their contribution to this issue, is the refusal to be trans, the refusal to be woman, the refusal to be intelligible. Travesti theory and identification is a Latin/x American body of work and a body politics with an extensive transregional history. The work of this issue’s authors, including Machuca Rose, Dora Silva Santana, and Mart n De Mauro Rucovsky, demonstrates how travesti identification operates as a politics, a critical mode, and an epistemology. To quote Machuca Rose: Travesti is classed and raced: it means you do not present femininely all of the time because you cannot afford to. It means the use of body technologies to transform one’s body does not come from a doctor’s office but from resourcefulness in the face of precarization, the act by which the matrix of domination makes our bodies and our lives precarious. Mas clarito? It means you get creative, you use your pens for eyeliner, get your hormones and silicones from your friends underground, or use tinta instead of testosterona to transform your body... As a politics of refusal, travesti disavows coherence and is an always already racialized and classed geopolitical

identification that gestures toward the inseparability of indigeneity, blackness, material precarity, sex work, HIV status, and uneven relationships to diverse state formations. To claim travesti identity is to embrace a form of opacity and fugitivity that resists necropolitical systems that pointedly rely on capture (see Santana’s contribution to this issue). Indeed, travesti, writes Santana, is “a negation of an imposed dominant expectation of womanhood that centers on people who are cisgender, heteronormative, able-bodied, elitist, and white.” Travesti identification thus subverts both normative expectations of femininity and trans politics structured around assimilation and respectability. Claiming ‘travesti,’ as our authors make clear, is a way of inhabiting these complex histories of survival and resistance. Neither is the term travesti equally distributed across the southern hemisphere; trans and travesti identifications are constantly shifting and should not be understood as mutually exclusive. The tensions between trans and travesti as identificatory categories are often untranslatable, leading us to ask what sorts of limitations and possibilities are embedded within the terms’ distinctions and critical affinities. If trans men, for example, do not identify as travesti—at the time of writing, few would claim this term—what sorts of recourse do trans men have to localized identification if not trans?” (Rizki, 2019).

Though various Trans* and *Travesti* scholars have made significant contributions towards building bridges between the Global North and South, my second point of departure focuses on rural, subaltern *Jotería*. Because spaces were divided in the European gaze of centers and peripheries, this same philosophy has spatially,

epistemically, and ontologically excluded subaltern *Rural Jotería* subjects from discourse and theorizing. In my region of focus, Mexico, this phenomenon is prevalent like in much of Central and Latin America.

Thus, I posit a community of subaltern *Jotería (Jotería Rural)* which also includes *Afro-Jotería Rural*. In essence, by linking the socio-historical implications of *Rural Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*, I will attempt to make sense of the overt and covert resistances they deploy to their cotemporary realities that are informed by socio-historical systems of oppression. Through nepantlero and through la facultad, in my dissertation, I will address the coloniality of power between the rural and the cosmopolitan in relation to the aforementioned trans-localized history in this response. In the next Chapter, I will put a focus on the “Rural” portion of the *Afro-Jotería Rural* signifier. Moving forward, I will be utilizing the signifiers *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* as both umbrella terms.

Chapter 4—The Coloniality of the Rural: On the Rural intersections of *Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería*

In the last few Chapters, I utilized the term “Rural” at the end of *Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería* signifiers. In this Chapter, I will unpack “Rural” and the complexity that the Coloniality of the rural entails, specifically, the organization of peripheries and relationships to these peripheries. As Dussel previously stated, the world is divided into cosmopolitan centers and rural regions. Vertical rather than horizontal relationships characterize the world’s centers and peripheries (Dussel, 1995). This is because the rural is seen as temporally and spatially primitive and backward, incapable of producing “forward thinking” ideas. This rhetoric is re-articulated in the cosmopolitan/urban/rural divide. However, ironically, rural spaces and bodies have historically been sites and agents of revolution across different moments in Mexican history, as we saw in Chapters 2 and 3. In academia, these misconceptions of rural as backward are rooted in the metronormative assumptions in MEWCCCUS scholarship. To begin with, MEWCCCUS has historically been excluded in mainstream Queer genealogies (Hames-Garcia, 2011). Though there is much contention with Queer theory as a site for liberation, there have been scholars who have attempted to make sense of Queer theory by imagining people of color. For example, Cherrie Moraga imagined a *Queer Aztlan* (1992) within the context of Chican@ Studies (Moraga, 1992). Another example is the groundbreaking book *Cruising Utopia* (2009) by Jose Esteban Muñoz which suggests that Queerness is not yet here because of the compulsive heteronormative landscape that continues to police Queer bodies. He further notes that “Queerness is a longing that propels us onward, beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present...often we glimpse the worlds

proposed and promised by Queerness in the realm of aesthetic. The aesthetic, especially the Queer aesthetic, frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward drawing futurity. Both the ornamental and quotidian can contain a map of the utopia that is Queerness... Queerness is essentially about the rejection of the here and now and an insistence on potentially or create possibility of another world” (Muñoz, 2009).

However, one of the blind spots of the map, blueprints, and schemata that Muñoz proposes is the fixation on cosmopolitan centers and the disregard for peripheral spatiality and temporalities as well as subaltern, Queer bodies. In their article *Contesting Metronormativity* (2014), May suggests that metronormativity consists of a “spatial distribution and referenced to different places, always relative to a socio-spatial hierarchy. Such a move reintroduces considerations of power, specifically in relation to difference, and compels a reassessment of the matter of ‘context’ in literacy research” (May, 2014, p. 232).

I would like to extend May’s argument by tying this “spatial hierarchy” that they propose to Quijano’s theories of coloniality of power. I believe that metronormativity and coloniality of power are linked because like most economic and social power structures, it is tied to modernity, a system of power where certain subjects were placed in natural places of inferiority and deemed ahistorical (Fanon, 1969). Contemporarily, nation-states continue to organize space in the format of imperial centers and peripheries as theorized by Ramon Grosfoguel. Therefore, metronormativity is part of a legacy of interlaced hierarchies that make capitalism and coloniality operational (Grosfoguel, 2005). Following this perverse logic of coloniality, cities are used as allegories and tropes for “forward thinking” (Modernity) indicating that they are synonymous with civility

whereas rural zones are markers of “the past,” “traditional,” and therefore, “uncivilized” (Mignolo 2007). Burger (2020) postulates that “the use of the city as symbol of the future in both Queer and science fiction narratives can, however, be criticized for the ways in which it is influenced by colonial schemas that label both the rural and Africa as a continent as ‘traditional,’ ‘uncivilized,’ and, in short, temporarily lagging behind Western metropolises” (Halberstam 2005, p. 34; Mignolo 2007, p. 30). By extension modernity imposed this schema on the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. This colonial rhetoric further informs metronormativity.

As previously mentioned, the rural has also been eroticized and characterized as “primitive” and “backward in the Urban imagination (Halberstam, 2005, p. 27). The rural is a marker of “tradition,” “pre-modern,” and “underdeveloped” (Halberstam, 2005). Further, the rural is represented as hostile and idyllic by those in urban spaces, where Queer folks occupying those spacing are mythologized as being sad, lonely, and confined by the rural spaces they inhabit and incapable of producing resistance or revolutions (p.36). Further, spaces are fantasized by urban and cosmopolitan centers as sites of horror and degradation (Halberstam, 2005, p.27). In conjunction with Hegel’s and other colonial eyes, cosmopolitan and urban spaces are represented as the birthplaces for LGBTQIA+ identities. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, like the U.S.-Mexican border, this split between urban and rural is another *herida abierta* (Anzaldua, 1987). Border-thinking informs Global North/Global South, third world/first world, nation-state, municipal, and rural/cosmopolitan schemas.

In terms of temporalities, rural time is also placed as “behind.” Decolonial philosopher Walter Mignolo discusses how enlightenment philosophers such as

Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel organized time so that Europe was ontologically always ahead whilst the rest of the world was behind. Cosmopolitan time was conceptualized and theorized by Kant as “ the so-called ‘civilizing mission’ of colonialism conspired to place societies in an imaginary chronological line going from nature to culture, from barbarism to civilization following a progressive destination toward some point of arrival...Hegel built on Kant’s ideas to organize the continents in chronological order—Asia, Africa, America, and Europe—and as a result [t]he planet was all of a sudden living in different temporalities, with Europe in the present and the rest in the past” (Burger, 2020, p. 12, Mignolo, 2007, p. 151). The rural, then, is part of this colonial vision of “lagging behind” in the sub-colonial project of modernity. Jose Ramon, one of my contributors attests to this attribute of the colonality of the rural when he and his collective were discriminated against and ridiculed by drag queens from Guadalajara. The urban drag queens fall back on classist, racist informed assumptions about the rural. I will discuss this further in Chapter 7.

Ironically, even though rural bodies and spaces are represented this way, the rural has been a site of revolutions, resistances, and subjectivities, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation. For example, in the colonial period, various *Jotería* subjects organized enclaves outside the city walls as repressive regimes had a challenging time pursuing and persecuting them there. Further, other revolutions during the colonial period occurred in rural spaces in Mexico, such as the one in Yanga and later during the Mexican Revolution. In its subjectivities and histories of resistance, the rural embodies a site of revolution and rural revolutionary identities. This is why I connect the “Rural” to the signifiers *Jotería* and *Afro-Jotería* to coin *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. I am,

however, not the first to attempt to create points of departure from MEWCCCUS metronormative assumptions of Queerness.

There have been multiple scholars and artists who have attempted to imagine a Queer futurity that is free from the shackles of the Eurocentric and metronormative mirrors. Qintu Collab (2019) applies futurity through an intersectional lens by incorporating an African futurity (African futurity also tends to be metronormative) while also attempting a Queer futurity in the context of embracement of the rural in their book, *Meanwhile ...: Graphic Short Stories about Everyday Queer Life in Southern and East Africa* (Qintu Collab, 2019; Crenshaw, 1995). For instance, Queer folk from Southern Africa are depicted as embracing this Queer identity while also honoring rural parts of their identity. Burger theorizes that in the image, “the rural/urban binary (and the resulting logic, which associates tradition with the rural and modernity with the urban) also plays a role in Africa, even as the traditional rurality depicted in the left side of the image is not denigrated as ‘backward’ or undesirable. Rather, this image of a bathroom mirror divided in two represents the viewer’s attempt (the man depicted in the middle of the image, split in two) to reconcile two different but equally significant parts of his identity. This differs from the Western narrative, according to which the traditional and rural must be left behind when embracing Queerness and urbanity” (Burger, 2020, p. 116-117). The *Pláticas* I shared with my collaborators interrogate this dichotomy of the rural/urban split by demonstrating that in certain rural contexts, there are traces and fragments of Queer utopia that are refused and ignored in a Queer utopia map envisioned by Muñoz (Esparza, 2023). I do this by centering narratives and aesthetics of rural, Queer subaltern folks in southern Mexico. Their narratives counter the Western, metronormative

notion that the “rural must be left behind,” but in addition, demonstrate that the rural spaces can be forefronts of Queer utopia. Scholars have also attempted to situate Queers as part of a Subaltern community.

Peng (2019) theorizes in their article *Queer as Subalterns that Queer Subalternity* is based on Marxist theories. By incorporating Marxism, Queer theory is partially liberated from the “neoliberal impasse, conceivable only if we confront the cold war thinking that automatically attributes Queer rights to the liberal state as both originating in the West and developmentally more advanced” (Peng, 2019, p. 202). Queer Subalternity is essentially an epistemological and ontological refusal and negation of the notions that Queerness is a capitalist reproduction of society, and that Queer is a product of liberalism’s promotion of human diversity. Peng also concludes that Queers are subalterns because “the Queer, like the subalterns, is ‘the subject of stigma’ produced through a ‘negative accounting;’ it is a ‘negativity and an absence, a historical process of exclusion without positivistic contents’ ...like Spivak’s subalterns, ‘the Queer in Ding’s works cannot be defined in advance as preexisting group (women or homosexuals) be the state’ but rather ‘refers to be a wide range of abject beings rendered inarticulate and unrecognizable’” (Peng, 2019, p. 208). Queer theory is not a product of liberalism, but of “fable self-invention” (Peng, 2019, p. 208). Since Queer is a self-invention, it must shift and morph as it voyages across the world. For instance, being “gay de rancho” or “Queer de rancho” is not the same as being Queer in U.S. or Mexican cities such as San Francisco or Guadalajara. Clearly, *Jotos* and Gays de rancho have remolded what it means to be Queer by incorporating local conceptualizations, epistemologies, and cosmologies. This phenomenon aligns with Ruvalcaba’s theories of Queer translation.

That is, Queer is a theoretical tool that confronts colonial, imperial, and hegemonic doctrines that marginalize sexual minorities (Ruvalcaba, 2016). Thus, Queer always requires translation to local contexts and histories. Pedro Paulo Gomez Pereira (2019) theorizes that Queer theory encounters decolonial theory as it voyages to the Global South: “When Queer theory travels through the Spanish-and Portuguese-speaking world, it becomes a crooked theory, a theory of the asshole, a faggot theory, a twisted theory, a pink theory, a transgressive theory that questions, critically, the very position of theory and its supposedly immaculate character. Thereby, at least here in the Global South, this movement serves as an alert against the aspirations of a ‘universal’ (Eurocentric, white, and hetero) theory that aspires to embrace everything” (Pereira, 2019, p. 404).

This modification has taken place to such an extent that, here in the tropics, Queer theory has virtually raised the possibility of distancing itself from, as I affirmed above, pretensions of universality” (Pereira, 2019, p.3). One of the biggest questions that has arisen between decolonial theory and Queer theory is whether they are compatible with one another. Pereira believes that Queer theory can be hybridized with any theory it comes in contact with: “It is therefore a theory stretched to its own limits, that jokes at its own expense and fluctuates with the interpellations of bodies, and that—between this shaking up and outright abdication, tends to fall in love with other theories: specifically, with the other theories that emerge from the multiplicity of bodies and subjectivities. Queer theory is an agonistic theory that sees its only possibility or existing in the practice of distancing itself from itself in order, paradoxically, to construct itself as possibility” (Pereira, 2019). Pereira further theorizes that Queer theory and decolonial theory are compatible to form a decolonial Queer theory. This theory proposes that universal

application of theory is dismantled and “trans-localized” to local language, concepts and ways of thinking. How, then, would a decolonial Queer theory look like? Pereira illustrates decolonial theory as the following:

Decolonial Queer theory would therefore be a movement in search of eliminating this distance, a movement that wagers on other experiences, bodies, and ways of knowing...a propensity of decolonial Queer theory through its investment in voyages, crossings, and paths that pass through the experiences of the bodies that travel them, trans-localize them, and derive from them, as well as in sophisticated forms of agencies...decolonial Queer theory is not an application of external categories formulated in the absence of stories like Cilene’s but movements of approximation and of opening toward theories and experiences that allow these forms of knowledge to affect and transform others. Any pretension of a decolonial Queer theory implies an opening toward these other-theories, an opening that must take place in such a form and with such intensity as to be able to produce something new by the end of the voyage... Decolonial Queer theory is a theoretical possibility that passes through our bodies, as well as through a politics of localization. Thinking as a *sudaca*, as a *bicha*, thinking with a ‘theory of the asshole’ and from the ‘asshole of the world’—to borrow Pelúcio’s provocation—changes the texture of thought and the form of thinking; it alters questions, investigations, and problems. To the extent to which decolonial Queer theory can produce something new, it does so by dislocating theories, delineating other logics, epistemologies, and ontologies, and causing them to emerge...decolonial thinking must make Queerness more attentive to the existence of a matrix of

power that operates by naturalized racial and gender hierarchies; that allows for the reproduction of territorial and epistemological domination; and that obliterates experiences, forms of knowledge, and forms of life...Decolonial Queer theory would therefore be composed of these movements, of itineraries in construction that are always open to other-theories. This opening highlights the centrality of the processes translation, with the task of revising those epistemological categories that seek to universalize themselves through processes of unidirectional translation, thereby destabilizing preconceived notions...This is how a Queer decolonial theory emerges: it moves closer to these other-theories through its propositions of reading histories (other-histories) and other elaborations of agency, other reconstructions of bodies and sexualities, and other investigations of the naturalized hierarchies of knowledge. (Pereira, 2019)

Some scholars have drawn on Queer to develop their own interpretive spaces for theorizing about their bodies, experiences, and history. For example, Raul Moarquench Ferrera-Balanquet professes in *A Queer Case of White Washing* (2023) that "The racism and sexism inherent in the gay community have forced us to reclaim our place within Latinx communities." Gan also agrees when they stated that, "politics is tethered to rigid, reductive identity categories that don't allow for the possibility of exclusions and marginalizations within the categories. Also dismissed is the possibility that the categories themselves might be tools of domination in need of destabilization and reconceptualization" (Gan, 2007). One successful case of this an interpretive twist is the pre-colonial identity of 2-spirit which is:

...an umbrella term for those who may identify as LGBT and also identify as Native American, American, Indian, First Nation Aboriginal, is not meant as a replacement for Indigenous languages which already have the word to describe 2 spirit people. 2 Spirit was derived from the northern Algonquin. Word niizh manitoag, meaning “two spirits,” it is meant to signify the masculine and feminine spirits within one person. (Simpson, 2017)

In the context of Chican@ Studies, Chicana feminist scholars Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua attempted to create a theorizing space for Chicanx bodies respectively. Cherrie Moraga attempted this through her concept of Queer Aztlan which attempted to mold a space for sexual minorities within Aztlan (Moraga, 1992). In *Borderlands*, Anzaldua heeded the call for Chican@s to listen to what their *Jotería* is saying, yet in her latest piece which she wrote before her passing, *Light in the Dark* (2015), she also postulates that “conventional traditional identity labels are stuck in binaries, trapped in *jaulas*⁶⁶ that limit the growth of our individual and collective lives...we need fresh terms that capture our complexities and potentials” (Anzaldua, 2015). In *Gloria Anzaldua Reader* (2009), Anzaldua further expresses the shortcomings of LGBTQIA+ politics situating white bodies. For instance, the term lesbian:

For me the term lesbian es un problema. As a working-class Chicana, mestizal-a composite being, amalgama de culturas y de lenguas-a woman who loves women, ‘lesbian’ is a cerebral word, white and middleclass, representing an English-only dominant culture, derived from the Greek word lesbos. I think of lesbians as predominantly white and middleclass women and a segment of women of color

⁶⁶ cages

who acquired the term through osmosis much the same as Chicanas and Latinas assimilated the word 'Hispanic.' When a 'lesbian' names me the same as her, she subsumes me under her category. I am of her group but not as an equal, not as a whole person - my color erased, my class ignored. Soy una puta mala, a phrase coined by Ariban, a tejana tortillera. "Lesbian" doesn't name anything in my homeland. Unlike the word "Queer," "lesbian" came late into some of our lives. Call me de las otras. Call me loquita, jotita, marimacha, pajuelona, lambiscona, culera-these are words I grew up hearing. I can identify with being 'una de las otras' or a 'marimacha,' or even a jota or a loca porque-these are the terms my home community uses. I identify most closely with the Nahuatl term patlache. These terms situate me in South Texas Chicano/mexicano culture and in my experiences and recuerdos. These Spanish/Chicano words resonate in my head and evoke gut feelings and meanings. (Anzaldua, 2009)

Fellow Chicanas like Cherrie Moraga also had limitations in their thinking and imagining of another space outside of white-conceptualized LGBTQIA+ theorizing spaces. For example, in *To(o) Queer the Writer* (2009), Anzaldua further critiques the power dynamics within Queer:

I've had the legitimacy issue thrown at me by another Chicana lesbian, Cherrie Moraga. In a book review of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, she implied that I was not a real lesbian because I did not stress my lesbian identity nor did I write about sexuality. I gathered that she wanted me to focus on lesbian sexuality. Her criticism implies that there is such a thing as a lesbian writer and that a lesbian writer should only write about lesbian issues and that lesbian issues are about

sexuality. It is ironic that some straight Chicanas/os, seeing only sexual difference because to them it is a glaring difference, also stress lesbian and gay aspects of my identity and leave out the culture and the class aspects. Always the labeling impacts expectations. In this double bind, one reader may view the label as a positive attribute, another as a way to marginalize. This anthology's topic, 'lesbian writers writing about their own writing,' assumes the existence of a 'lesbian' writer. It follows the tradition in which white middle-class lesbians and gay men frame the terms of the debate. It is they who have produced Queer theory and for the most part their theories make abstractions of us colored Queers. They control the production of Queer knowledge in the academy and in the activist communities. Higher up in the hierarchy of gay politics and gay aesthetics, they most readily get their work published and disseminated. They enter the territories of Queer racial ethnic/Others and re-inscribe and recolonize. They appropriate our experiences and even our lives and 'write' us up. They occupy theorizing space, and though their theories aim to enable and emancipate, they often disempower and neo-colonize. They police the Queer person of color with theory. They theorize, that is, perceive, organize, classify, and name specific chunks of reality by using approaches, styles, and methodologies that are Anglo-American or European. Their theories limit the ways we think about being Queer. Position is point of view. And whatever positions we may occupy, we are getting only one point of view: white middle-class. Theory serves those that create it. White middle-class lesbians and gays are certainly not speaking for me. Inevitably we colored dykes fall into a reactive mode, counter their terms and theories-as I am

doing, as I have to do before I can even begin to write this essay. We focus on the cultural abuse of colored by white and thus fall into the trap of the colonized reader and writer forever reacting against the dominant. I feel pushed into trying to "correct" the record, to speak out against it while all the time realizing that colored Queers are not responsible for educating white lesbians and gays. What I object to about the words "lesbian" and 'homosexual' is that they are terms with iron-cast molds. There are assumptions made, by both insiders and outsiders, when one identifies with these terms. The words 'lesbian' and 'homosexual' conjure up stereotypes of differences that are different from those evoked by the word 'Queer.' 'Queer' also provokes different assumptions and expectations. In the '60S and '70S it meant that one was from a working-class background, that one was not from genteel society. Even though today the term means other things, for me there is still more flexibility in the 'Queer' mold, more room to maneuver. 'Lesbian' comes from a Euro-Anglo American mold and 'homosexual' from a deviant, diseased mold shaped by certain psychological theories. We non-Euro-Anglo Americans are supposed to live by and up to those theories. A mestiza colored Queer person is bodily shoved by both the heterosexual world and by white gays into the 'lesbian' or 'homosexual' mold whether s/he fits or not. La persona esta situada dentro de la idea en vez deal reves. I struggle with naming without fragmenting, without excluding. Containing and closing off the naming is the central issue of this piece of writing. The core question is: What is the power and what is the danger of writing and reading like a "lesbian" or a Queer? Can the power and danger be named and can Queer writing be named?... Identity is not a

bunch of little cubbyholes stuffed respectively with intellect, race, sex, class, vocation, gender. Identity flows between, over, aspects of a person. Identity is a river—a process. Contained within the river is its identity, and it needs to flow, to change to stay a river—if it stopped it would be a contained body of water such as a lake or a pond. The changes in the river are external (changes in environment—river bed, weather, animal life) and internal (within the waters). A river's contents flow within its boundaries. Changes in identity likewise are external (how others perceive one and how one perceives others and the world) and internal (how one perceives oneself, self-image). People in different regions name the parts of the river/person which they see. *La búsqueda de identidad - How Queer is Queer?* (Anzaluda, 2009)

This is important as knowledge production regarding sexual and gender identity is placed in the hands of white, middle-class academics and silences other possibilities. In short, unable to find their Mecca in Queer theory, Latinx and ChicanX subjects found their place in *Jotería* Studies.

Jotería studies as a field emerged as a decolonizing project with the aims of de-centering white, homogenous assumptions within Queer scholarship. In essence, prominent Queer scholars like Butler, Sedgwick, and Rubin have ignored Queer of color scholarship within Queer genealogies. Queer of color experiences and scholarship, then, are treated as “add-ons” to “official” Queer genealogies. Muñoz further states that many Queers of color represented in Queer readings are commonly represented as “the other:” “of the cornerstones of Queer theory that are taught, cited, and canonized in Gay and

Lesbian studies classrooms, publications, and conferences are decidedly directed toward the analyzing of white Lesbians and Gay men.” (Muñoz, 1999)

Jotería, thus, is guided by the decolonial framework. One of the key components of decolonial theory according to Ramon Grosfoguel (2005) is to reconfigure and re-signify the oppressive interlockings of that which has been imposed on us. This tradition comes from a long lineage of Indigenous and Afro-descendant subjects who have resisted physical and symbolic annihilation through subversive complicity. That is, re-signifying what the west has imposed upon the world through the development of alternatives modern/Eurocentric/colonial world system (Grosfoguel, 2005, p. 23). It is a way of survival through participation (e.g., the survival of Tonantzin through the Virgin de Guadalupe). In essence, *Jotería* carries on this tradition of subversive complicity. Therefore, one of the tenants of *Jotería* is “a dramatic gesture toward re-signifying the term and refuting the negative connotations that it has carried historically... a visceral level, the word fag did not offer the same possibilities that *Jotería* did for LGBTI+ folks. I wondered for a moment why this was so. Eventually, I responded that although some individuals may indeed reclaim fag, whether casually or consciously, for their purposes, a significant difference is that *Jotería* is culturally and geographically specific to Queer MeXicano/as (although certainly not limited to them) and is an emerging political term that challenges Western thought” (Bañales, 2014). *Jotería* studies can be understood as one of the many fronts of contention against the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). It is also like Two-spirit as it does not aim to replace localized identities.

Jotería, then, holds many possibilities for “Rural” resisters through its decolonial praxis. In particular, *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* are fruitful concepts and

identities. This is because *Jotería* acknowledges and honors those histories; *Jotería* Studies contains clear decolonial tenants; and *Jotería* is inclusive and accounts for Trans*, *Travesti*, and other forms of LatinX, Indigenous, and Afro modes of gender and sexual identity. Because of its inclusive geologies, fruitful historiographies, and clearly articulated decolonial tenants, in terms of alignment, *Jotería* Studies serves and will continue to serve as a home for my scholarship on *Jotería Rural* (Esparza, 2023). In the next Chapter, I will begin to discuss the contemporary hierarchies and contentions (informed by coloniality) that my contributors discussed with me in the knowledge exchange spaces of *Parrandeadas*, *Lumbradas*, and *Convivios* that we shared during my research process.

Chapter 5—*Nagualing Jotería Methodologies: Towards Methodologies of Plurality*

Points of Departure

In studying rural *Jotería*, I draw on multiple existing theoretical concepts and then construct a framework specific to advances I have made studying *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Noriega (2014) and Carrillo (2017) laid the groundwork for research on *Jotería* in the rural with their work on Mexican Masculinities. In 2023, I also published *Desde La Preferia de La Milpa: Testimonios de Jotería Rural de Los Ranchos y Pueblos del Sur de Mexico* (Esparza, 2023). What makes my recent research different is my theoretical perspective, grounded in decolonial, intersectional theories and a wider spectrum of co-collaborators that make up the *Jotería* umbrella. These decolonial, intersectional theories include Enrique Dussel's (2012) Trans modernity and Emma Perez's (1993) Decolonial Imaginary.

Carrillo's theory of glocality provided visibility to experiences of *Jotería* in the rural through the interviews he conducted of migrants in the US coming from Mexico. However, I respectfully disagree with this model because it replicates the logic of coloniality of "enlightened" imperial and European countries educating "backward" people on sexuality. Noriega's results, however, were more reflective of subaltern *Jotería* voices because he used an autoethnographic approach that only reflected the experiences of cis-men (which I will discuss later in this Chapter).

Additionally, he related the experiences and themes he collected to the existence of plurality, imposition of virility, and negotiation. Though Noriega alluded to the hegemonic power structures in place that ultimately govern relationships between men in the rural, he did not historicize where the development of these ideologies stem from.

I analyzed the history of the rhetoric that ultimately led to the stigmatization of femininity in men and valorization of virility in the Mexican rural. Not only was it important to historicize this rhetoric, but it was also vital to conduct a decolonial reading of the history behind the rhetoric. Specifically, I showed how *Jotería Rural* have had to find diverse ways to resist the shifting hegemonic ideologies in Mexico throughout its history including colonial times, the 19th century, the revolutionary period, and the post-revolutionary period (Esparza, 2023). I also drew parallels between these hegemonic ideologies and Noriega's fieldwork with MSM participants in rural northern Mexico.

My contributors were *Jotería* from rural southern Mexico who share diverse histories, cultures, customs, etc. Interestingly, some themes intersected with those of Noriega's research. However, I explored additional distinct themes to build upon Noriega's argument that Mexican identity is not monolithic. My earlier work also included resistance strategies of *Jotería Rural* to colonial rhetoric (Esparza, 2023). However, these studies (including mine) all lack an in-depth intersectional analysis (Hill, Crenshaw). Mainly because they are focused on cis-men. Although I did attempt to honor the identities of my past collaborators by having them self-identify, most of them ended up being cis-men. Thus, another point of departure in this project includes a wider, intersectional spectrum of co-collaborators/participants and their experiences. Particularly, I visit multiple communities across state lines in Southern, rural Mexico. Therefore, I include the complexities of race, class, gender, ability, and sexual orientation (Crenshaw, 1995). I will first break down my theoretical perspective, the methodologies I utilized to co-construct themes with my contributors, and how they

have evolved since my last project.

Decolonial Thinking: Indigenous Approximations

My theoretical perspective is based on anti- and de-colonial philosophy and thought. I take from Linda Tihuwai Smith, Frantz Fanon, Enrique Dussel, Emma Pérez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Walter Mignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel, Aníbal Quijano, Cherrie Moraga. Ultimately, my research is grounded on the idea of plurality, where many worlds and identities can co-exist without imposition (Smith, 1999; Fanon, 1963; Dussel, 1993; Pérez, 1999; Anzaldúa, 1987; Mignolo, 2007; Grosfoguel, 2005; Quijano, 2000; Moraga, 1992). Enrique Dussel (2012) calls this possibility Transmodernity. Dussel states that Transmodernity assumes the positive/non-hegemonic moments of modernity. Transmodernity also incorporates pluriversity that will be the fruit of authentic intercultural dialogue. He argues that we should “inform ourselves and learn from the failures, the achievements, and the still-theoretical justification of the creative processes in the face of the globalization of European/North American culture, whose pretense of universality must be deconstructed from the optical multi-focality of each Culture” (Dussel, 2012, p. 24). I believe this can also be applied to the epistemologies of sexuality in southern, rural Mexico compared to those of metropolitan centers. That is, instead of imposing “enlightened” MEWCCCUS notions of sexual identity to those in the rural areas, we should honor *Jotería Rural* ways of identifying and co-existing (Esparza, 2023). Dussel further theorizes in his discourse on Transmodernity, where he recognizes an asymmetry of cultural and knowledge production between the Global North and the Global South. Knowledge and culture produced in the Global North become valorized, canonized, more often cited, and categorized as “essential,

foundational texts,” compared to work from the Global South. According to Dussel, a *Transmodern* world and intervention involves:

Valorization of one’s devalued cultural moments found outside of modernity traditional values ignored by Modernity should be a point of departure for an internal critique from within the culture's own hermeneutical possibilities the critics, in order to be critics, should be those who, living in the biculturality of the borders, can create critical thought. This means a long period of resistance, of maturation, and of the accumulation of forces. It is a period of the creative and accelerated cultivation and development of one's own cultural tradition, which is now on the path toward a trans-modern utopia. This represents a strategy for the growth and creativity of a renovated culture, which is not merely decolonized, but is moreover entirely new. (Dussel, 2012, p.14)

I utilized transmodernity to validate my contributors’ way of knowing and identifying. That is, I honored their devalued cultural values (which are devalued by MEWCCCUS) (Esparza, 2023). Specifically, their resistance strategies act as a valid way of existing as *Jotería Rural*. This lens led me to ask questions that specifically centered *Jotería Rural*, groups often ignored by MEWCCCUS (Esparza, 2023). I further utilize *Jotería* tenants of honoring *Jotería* as having their unique histories and counter-stories (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014; Bañales, 2019; Alvarez, 2016).

Re-imagining History

In communion with the decolonial beliefs of Dussel, another component of my theoretical perspective is Emma Perez’s decolonial imaginary. The Decolonial Imaginary is a third space where we negotiate new histories (Perez, 1999, Bhabha,

1994). It is a way of decolonizing history and otherness, where multiple identities are at work in one way or another. Perez also defines it as a rupturing space where the voiceless can tell their stories, have their voices honored, and have their agency respected. The decolonial imaginary is also a lens to examine history that refrains from observing it from a white-heteronormative gaze (Perez, 1999, p. 124). Instead, one sees history in a way where difference is embraced. Also, power relations of race, class, and gender are recognized under this lens.

In my literature review, I essentially analyzed the complex history of Mexico in a way that embraces difference, honored *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* (the voiceless), and through a queer, decolonial gaze. Through a decolonial imaginary lens, I historicized the different historical moments that have led to the repression and dehumanization of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in the rural through intersectionality. However, I also argued that *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* use resistance tactics to navigate the different waves of coloniality in Mexico's history (Esparza, 2023). I do this through a socio-historical analysis.

In this project, I utilized this history of resistance (often ignored by MECCCUS) in relation to the experiences of *Jotería* in rural southern Mexico as a continuation of these overt and covert resistance practices. That is, a living history (Anzaldúa, 1985). I made specific connections between their experiences with marginalization and where it stems from. Furthermore, I drew parallels between their experiences of resistance and their own (and sometimes inherited) resistance strategies (that often went ignored). Some of these resistance strategies involve combating coloniality from multiple fronts and in covert and overt (e.g., pride parades) ways. That is, combating symbolic and overt

colonialism and its various masks (gendered, homophobic, racial, classist, and ableist violence).

Research Questions

From the repressive moments of the colonial era to the exclusionist nation-building discourses, *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have always engaged in methods of resistance when confronting colonial powers in Mexico. This dissertation aims to center the voices of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* by sharing their lived experiences and resistance tactics in rural spaces. I will be acknowledging and highlighting los *modos de resistencia*⁶⁷, which visibilizes how *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* combat hegemonic, oppressive systems of oppression that derive from the logic of coloniality and the rhetoric of modernity overtly and covertly. My decolonial theoretical perspective centers on the experiences of resistance and co-existence of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Ultimately, this project is guided by the following questions:

RQ1: How do *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* co-exist or navigate repressive ideologies?

RQ2: What are the overt and covert resistance strategies of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in their respective communities, *Los Altos de Jalsico* and *Tamiahua*?

Interrogating Western Research Methods and Methodology

If my theoretical perspective is to be decolonial, my methodological tools must also align with this lens because the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (Lourde, 2018). For this reason, this project was conducted using a new qualitative mixed methods approach based on a Queer *Pláticas* methodology, autoethnography, and

⁶⁷ Modes of resistance.

Indigenous paradigms and cosmologies. I coined this methodology as a *Nagualing Jotería methodologies*. This methodology matches my decolonial ideals of consciousness, vulnerability, resistance, and respect and aligns with the project of *Jotería*, a decolonial project in praxis (Bañales, 2019). The *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies aligns with the shifting realities of the rural Mexican communities I work with because we are contending with multiple borders and rhetorics that inform those such as coloniality and one of its hierarchies of metro-normativity. I also implemented a thematic analysis approach to help generate themes from the aforementioned *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies (Kennedy, 2010). In academia, these methods are commonly known as “innovative” methods of community-driven participatory action research model (CDPR). The CDPR model consists of the following components: “(a) the promotion of active collaboration and participation at every stage of research, (b) the encouragement of co-learning between community researchers, (c) the assurance that projects are community-driven, (d) the dissemination of results in useful terms, (e) the commitment to using culturally appropriate intervention strategies, and (f) the definition of community as a unit of identity” (Montoya & Kent, 2011, p. 1000).

CDPR also has a Dialogical action component which recognizes the limitations of power between the researchers and the researched. Through dialogical action, the researchers deconstruct the power relations between the researchers and the researched so that none become mere objects of research (Montoya & Kent, 2011). Additionally, the living conditions and issues of the groups must guide the research. Because the issues are still unknown to the researcher, the first step is important for the researcher to engage in meaningful, open-ended dialogue with the population. Ultimately, the

dialogical component creates a co-learner model where the researchers and the population work together to act, reflect, and transform the world (Montoya & Kent, 2011).

Conlisk-Gallegos (2018), however, argues that terms such as CDPR are a simple translation of ways of teaching and experiencing educational exchange through sharing, which predate CDPR and relate to the *modos* of our native ancestors. Though well-intentioned, the CDPR model is not culturally appropriate because it derives from Anglo- Western and appropriation of epistemologies and does not honor the *modos* that have historically been excluded from academia.

These Indigenous knowledges were considered framed by academia as outdated methods that formed part of the “prehistoric past” whilst European epistemologies were positioned as “the future” (Conlisk-Gallegos, 2018; Dussel 1985). Historically, these *modos* have also been devalued and excluded altogether by the hegemonic academy.

Como Un Nagual: Shape-Shifting the Metro-normative Queer Futurity Contour Towards a Jotería Nagual Methodology

My proposed *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies is based on Gloria Anzaldua’s *Borderlands* and her later piece, *Light in the Dark* (Anzaldua, 1987; Anzaldua, 2015), particularly the concept of Nagualismo. In Indigenous cosmology, a Nagual is a being that can shape-shift into an animal or one’s guardian spirit. Anzaldua theorized that the Nagual possesses La Facultad, the capacity for shapeshifting and/or changing form and identity (Anzaldua, 2015). It is a metaphor for articulating subjectivities of the “in-between spaces,” challenging border/compartmentalized thinking in various contexts. In the case of this project, borders of Global North/Global South, rural/cosmopolitan, and

imagined temporal borders are informed by metronormativity. In the context of methodology, I deem it necessary for methodologies to shift when working with various communities with diverse identities and realities. This is because Mexican rural communities are not monolithic; therefore, the methodology cannot be homogenous. For instance, the agricultural community in *Jalisco* that I collaborate with works during the day and rests at night, while in *Veracruz*, there are more diverse roles. For instance, the fishing community in *Veracruz* works at night and rests during the day, while the agricultural workers work similar hours as those in *Jalisco*. In essence, *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies attempt to disrupt methodological homogeneity in research by first centering the community's needs (Kovach, 2009). Linda Heidenrich's in *Nepantala Squared* (2020) agrees that we must make "strategic use of multiple and shifting methodologies to meet the multiple shifting challenges of our lives" (Heidenreich, 2020, p. xxi). Kovach agrees when they state that:

Indigenous methodologies vary and shape-shift, resulting in an array of research decision points that need to be aligned. (a) findings from Indigenous research must make sense to the general Indigenous community, (b) schema for arriving at our findings must be clearly articulated to the non-Indigenous academy, and (c) both the means for arriving at the findings and the findings themselves must resonate with other Indigenous researchers who are in the best position to evaluate our research. We can choose to disengage from either of these communities, but if we enter into academia we must traverse these different worlds... Furthermore, there is a political dimension to this problematizing that has its roots in colonial history, and often manifests itself in

discourses of disbelief, and, within research circles, a desire for universal application. (Kovach, 2009)

Identifying methodologies and methods that fit the realities of the communities one works with offers a more robust approach. Encouraging community members to participate in naming concepts in the work helps to minimize imposition and extractivism. I am both an insider/outsider and an outsider in this project. This is because I worked with the *Tototlán* community, where I am an insider/outsider, and with the *Tamiahua* pueblo where I am an outsider. In this case, I found it necessary to create my own methodology that shifts with the realities of the research and the collaborators/participants. Specifically, the realities of both the researcher and the collaborators/participants. Circumstantially, a one methodology-fits-all model would not suffice because I am working with two communities that intersectionally overlap (through their *Jotería*) but are also distinct (culturally and spatially) (Kovach, 2009). Therefore, I propose a methodology that shifts and molds with the realities of our communities. In a *rasquache* way, I build upon existing methods that seek to decolonize research practices so that they shift to benefit the community and aim for social good. In the following sections, I will explain the spare parts that make up this *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. Like the *Coyolxaqui* Imperative, I aim to combine these pieces together with *Nagualing Jotería* Mythologies, Indigenous modes of knowledge production (Anzaludua, 2015).

Pieza 1: La Raiz De Los Modos: Indigenous Approximations towards Methodology and Research Ethics

Out of respect to the Indigenous scholars whose knowledge we cite and take

influence from, I would like to map where these Indigenous methodologies are rooted and influenced. Therefore, in this section, I will offer a brief discussion on Indigenous critique and methods that I argue inform Chicana, third-world feminist methodologies that I implement in this project while also demonstrating how it informs *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. Simultaneously, I will break down how I am following Indigenous ethics and protocol when working with the communities of *Veracruz* and *Jalisco*.

Indigenous, decolonial approaches seek to interrogate traditional research methods as they have a colonial history of being extractivist and dehumanizing. Often, conventional research methods dehumanize communities by turning them into objects of research through their “objective” approaches. This means that objectivity has made objects of the experiences of vulnerable communities (Anzaldúa, 1989). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) agrees that “‘research’ stirs up silence... it conjures up bad memories and raises a smile that is knowing distrustful...ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonized peoples.” Further, traditional, western, and Eurocentric research methods deny communities their agency to produce knowledge. The researcher, hence, becomes the ultimate holder, interpreter, and disseminator of knowledge. Further, western research methods can replicate the perverse logic of coloniality through the tendencies to “desire, extract, and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them from further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and nations” (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). A fruitful, decolonial

methodology, then, must authentically involve community through modes of reciprocity. In addition, it must involve respect towards those communities in the context of what knowledges they are willing or able to share. Additionally, we must be considerate of community trauma. Tuhiwai Smith agrees when she stated that:

Many community projects require intensive community input. The implications of such input for impoverished communities or communities under stress can be enormous. Every meeting, every activity, every visit to a home requires energy, commitment and protocols of respect. In my own community there are some very descriptive terms which suggest how bothersome and tiring this activity can be! Idealistic ideas about community collaboration and active participation need to be tempered with realistic assessments of a community's resources and capabilities, even if there is enthusiasm and goodwill. (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)

As an attempt at de-centering white, Eurocentric, dehumanizing methodologies, Tuhiwai Smith proposes 25 Indigenous projects that seek to decolonize methodologies. This includes projects like Claiming, Testimonies, Storytelling, Celebrating Survival, Remembering, Intervening, and Connecting (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Overall, a decolonial model that centers the voices of subaltern communities without speaking for them would be a better fit for this project (Spivak, 2010). In addition, this model should also honor lesser-known Indigenous, Afro-Latino, and Latinx contributions to knowledge building. This is especially true for the communities of rural Southern Mexico, mostly comprised of *trabajadores del campo*⁶⁸, who rarely have their voices represented or are misrepresented in academic discourses. In the following sub-

⁶⁸ farmworkers

sections, I will highlight how my project aligns with the ethical goals of Indigenous methodologies. I do not seek to fetishize or appropriate Indigenous research methods, methodologies, and ethics. Instead, I borrow elements to guide my project ethically, as these methods and methodologies align with my decolonial frameworks.

Situating the self: insider/outsider dynamics

In the Spring of 2024, I was invited by a professor to give a talk about my work on *Jotería Rural* that I published in 2023 for his methods course (Esparza, 2023). In this course, I explained that I often contemplate my positionality as a researcher and how to analyze better the communities that I worked with in my scholarship. The professor became visibly irate and annoyed and responded, “So you think you don’t belong to those communities anymore? Do you think you are more *chingon*⁶⁹ now? We still belong to those communities.” Though we can romanticize that we neatly fit with these communities, it is irresponsible not to be self-critical about certain privileges one may have in the Global North academy. In my case, through a global intersectionality lens, I recognize that I have citizenship privilege, social class privilege, and epistemic privilege by having been trained in a university in the Global North (Hill-Collins, P. & Bilge, 2015). This can be best highlighted by a conversation I had with my cousin regarding local elections. He stated, “Yes, you are from here and we love you. We love that you honor this part of you, but also remember that you do not live here for half of the year. You don’t know some of the shit we endure. Right, there are a ton of gasoline thefts... the *maña*⁷⁰ block roads with stones and trees to get what they want. You have to recognize that you do not live some of our realities.” Kovach agrees when they state:

⁶⁹ Better than them.

⁷⁰ Narco

Having a pre-existing and ongoing relationship with participants is an accepted characteristic of research according to tribal paradigms. In my research, I had met all the participants through collegial networks of Indigenous researchers and university instructors, so I could be described as having a pre-existing and ongoing relationship with the research participants. In this sense, I was both insider and outsider in relation to the research participants. We all carry our own experiences and know about our culture, and while we can share some general insights with each other we are also outsiders. In terms of the power dynamics in the researcher and participant relationship, the power of the researcher is in communicating his or her own interpretations of the teachings. (Kovach, 2009)

In the case of *Jalisco*, I deem myself as an insider/outsider as I have a connection (which I will explain later in detail in this Chapter) to this community through my family, community, activism, and intersectional identity. However, I also do not live there half of the year and I also have social and economic privileges. In the case of *Veracruz*, I consider myself to be a complete outsider. This is because I do not have any ancestral or familial connections to these spaces. However, what connects me is my identity of being partially from a rural space while also identifying as *Joto*. To avoid causing harm through extractivism, exploitation, and other forms of colonial violence derived from traditional methods, I deem it necessary to follow Indigenous ethics.

Avoiding “Smash and Grab” Extractivist Methods Through Reciprocity Coalition Building

I first became aware of the positivist assumptions of traditional research methodologies in my master’s program. This was because we were taught to be passive

observers of the communities. At a certain point, the language used in my methodologies courses sounded like we were observing wildlife. This is when I realized how dehumanizing traditional methodologies can be. Tuhuwai Smith agrees that:

In the traditional period of the twentieth century, qualitative research was largely influenced by positivism. Most prominently, ethnographical research design was employed as qualitative ‘objective’ studies of the ‘other.’ Ethnographies of the ‘other’ in the Americas usually meant depictions of ‘exotic’ Indigenous cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2003). These early qualitative studies were responsible for extractive research approaches that left those they studied disenfranchised from the knowledge they shared. (Kovach, 2009)

Kovach further suggests that most traditional research intentionally and unintentionally applies “smash and grab” approaches. Particularly, by entering communities, extracting knowledges, never returning or being accountable for one’s intervention into a community. This can be problematic as the researcher is the ultimate holder and interpreter of knowledge and thus replicates colonial relationships. In a sense, this is a form of epistemic robbery for one’s career advancement. Spanish officials conducted linguistic and cultural research on Nahuatl peoples in colonial Mexico, influencing and interpreting Indigenous knowledge for the colonial empire. Indigenous historians and scribes served as collectors and producers of data. I seek not to replicate these colonial practices. Kovach further defines smash and grab approaches as:

‘smash and grab’ ethnographies that gathered qualitative data from quick in-and-out interview sessions (Martin and Frost, 1996: 606). Still, qualitative research as ethnography, with the powerful imagery of words unavailable to quantitative

approaches that depended upon numerical symbolism, allowed researchers entry into the world of 'other.' Gaining access to this world, researchers of this period interpreted the observations from their own cultural stance, resulting in a skewed perception of what they were trying to understand.

To avoid and prevent essentialisms and counter extractivist, exploitative smash-and-grab approaches, Kovach recommends principles I adopt and expand on in *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. The first one I will focus on is reciprocity. Kovach calls this "A relational research approach is built upon the collective value of giving back to the community. It is the miyo ethic. In my study, collective responsibility was a consistent theme among Indigenous researchers" (Kovach, 2009). Strega & Brown (2015) also state:

Our ability to shift the research gaze is often complicated by our connections to dominance. As well-intentioned, professional social justice workers, it is challenging to look at ourselves and our own positions as being complicit in creating and perpetuating oppression. But in ant-oppressive research, our complicity is an important focus for study...We might ask, 'how do we (yes, you and I) contribute to the conditions creating poverty in our own community?' Reversing the gaze requires us to put dominance and power under scrutiny. We research 'up.' Keeping ourselves open to an emergent research process allows us to deepen our understanding about what it was we really wanted to know in the first place. But we have to be open to the art of the question through re-searching-----willingness to look again. (revisit for changing and shifting phenomena) Designing and re-designing, a plan to study the questions

(Streng & Brown, 2015)

In my work, I attempt to achieve fruitful reciprocity through coalition building and activism. By coalition building, I mean building transborder activist networks horizontally by offering my expertise and service for community-defined social good without imposing or manifesting academic egos. For example, in *Jalisco*, I was invited to form part of the LGBTQIA+ activist group Toto-Diverso (I will explain this further in Chapter 5). One must come into these communities humbly and not invite ourselves. We must be invited! As an insider/outsider, I became acquainted with this group by humbly asking how I could assist with the labor-intensive portion of the first pride *marcha* (e.g., blowing up balloons). They then asked me to join the organizing committee. I subsequently aided them by constructing fliers and *consignas* (chants) for the *marcha*. Further, together we created a fundraising campaign with *Jotería* from the Global North such as members of AJAAS (Association for *Jotería* Arts, Activism and Scholarship) community, professors, students, muxeres, etc. In total, we raised around \$800 USD in one week for the *marcha*. I continue to be part of Toto-Diverso and offer my labor as my form of reciprocity with these communities in *Jalisco*.

With the *Afro-Jotería Rural* of *Veracruz*, I also avoid smash and grab tactics through transborder coalition building. For example, as a representative of Toto-Diverso, I met with the *Afro-Jotería Rural* and spoke with them about the possibility of forming an alliance/coalition with them. They graciously agreed to form a coalition with us, and we are now in talks through WhatsApp. Recently, we discussed the possibility of putting together a drag show in their community by inviting folks from *Jalisco* to participate. We continue to stay in communication to strengthen our coalition.

To further avoid smash-and-grab techniques with the aforementioned communities, I also follow the second principle proposed by Kovach in Indigenous methodologies, honoring community consent and ownership of the knowledge.

Community Consent, Ownership, and Protocol

Most well-intentioned scholars may replicate smash-and-grab tactics by relying on traditional methodologies and forcing themselves into the community. Earlier I mentioned that I was invited to join the Toto-Diverso community. This was a result of *confianza*/trust that I built. Indigenous methodologies also highlight the importance of first earning and building trust with the communities one works with:

First, Indigenous frameworks inevitably have to accommodate parties with philosophically distinctive worldviews. Simply because a researcher is Indigenous (or following an Indigenous framework) does not automatically translate into community trust. Trust needs to be earned internally. Trusting relationships are engendered in a variety of ways: following protocol, showing guardianship over sacred knowledges, standing by cultural validity of knowledge, and giving back. (Kovach, 2009)

Following the logics of dependency theory and coloniality, researchers from imperial centers tend to fall under the trap of neo-liberal standpoints through their methodologies. For example, as Conlisk-Gallegos argues, traditional methodologies may be re-packaged as “innovative,” such as CDPR, and may have good intentions yet still follow Eurocentric tenants of extractivism. This is because they lack the cultural knowledge to work with these communities, but also because they appropriate knowledge for the benefit of academia. As Kovach states:

A neo-liberal standpoint suggests ethical misconduct is a predicament of researchers having a lack of cultural knowledge but good intentions, while a critical analysis points to a power dynamic sustained by societal and institutional structures that allow the privileged to take, take, and take. Seen from a decolonizing lens, ethical infringement through research is an extension of the Indigenous -settler colonial project. Much has to do with divergent beliefs around ownership of knowledge stemming from collectivist and individualist orientations that hold deep philosophical assumptions about how a society should work.

(Kovach, 2009)

IRB has guidelines on consent, but not ownership, and thus only reflects Western, metropolitan realities. Since I am working with communities in rural *Jalisco* and *Veracruz*, I recognize that I must do everything, so that this project does not result in their exploitation or extraction of their knowledge for my personal or professional benefit. As Indigenous methodologies purport, knowledges (plural) are gifts bestowed onto the researcher/academic collaborator:

Ownership assumes that a community owns cultural knowledge or data collectively, in the same manner that an individual owns personal information, and so the community's consent is required to use its knowledge. The principle of control asserts that First Nations people have a right to control various aspects of the research on them, including the formulation of research frameworks, data management, and dissemination. Access is the ability for Indigenous people to retrieve and examine data that concern them and their communities. The principle of possession refers to the actual possession of data. 'Although not a condition of

ownership per se, possession (of data) is a mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected.’ While Schnarch’s OCAP article is a position paper, the principles of OCAP have gained moral force within the Indigenous community. OCAP outlines clearly the governance that Indigenous people are asserting over their knowledges. It is a set of principles that work to decolonize the Indigenous–Western research relationship, and provides researchers with explicit guidelines for assessing whether said research is exploitive or beneficial to Indigenous interests. Certainly, such a research approach takes effort, but it is required to defend against the ‘smash and grab’ approach. (Kovach, 2009)

The way I approached the conundrums mentioned in Indigenous methodologies regarding ownership is by consulting with local collectives that work directly with these communities as they are the ones that best serve their interests. In *Jalisco*, I consulted with the Toto-Diverso as well as the Poncitlán-Diverso and Jotería-Ocotlán committees. Toto-Diverso, the Poncitlán Diverso and Jotería-Ocotlán committees are three distinct committees that serve LGBTQIA+ communities in the region of rural *Altos de Jalisco*. They engage in various communal efforts including cultural production, lobbying for allocation of resources (e.g., condoms, prep, etc.), and pushing for protections for LGBTQIA+. I will discuss these three collectives further in Chapters 6 and 8.

As an insider/outsider, I am still blinded by certain realities that I no longer live because of my transition to the Global North (United State) (Dussel, 1999). Therefore, I deemed it necessary to consult with these collectives to minimize any blinders I may have had. In addition to checking in with collectives, I also conduct check-ins before, during, and after the project with community members to make sure they are not being

misrepresented in the research, but also to avoid gatekeeping THEIR knowledge. That is, they get to decide what gets released to the public and what stays *aca entre nos* (between us).

The check-ins proved to be key when I worked with the community in *Tamiauah, Veracruz*. Again, in *Veracruz* I was an outsider with the only connection of being *Joto* and having a rural background. Like in *Jalisco*, I consulted with a local activist collective called Afro-Tamiahua where one of my committee members, Dora Careaga-Coleman, serves as a co-founder. Afro-Tamiahua is dedicated towards visiblizing Afro-descendants in *Tamiauah* through archival photography, cultural production, and conferences such as the *Afro-Encuentros*. I consulted with Hector Careaga of Afro-Tamiauah to construct a plan of action and guidelines to follow on how to work with these vulnerable communities. However, I want to reemphasize the importance of check-ins. For instance, even though I had the guidance of Afro-Tamiahua, there are certain aspects of being *Jotería Rural* that I understood from previous experience that the predominantly heterosexual Afro-Tamiahua folks did not. For example, Afro-Tamiahua suggested that I video record the talking circle (I will discuss the method further in the Convivio section). I immediately understood that this would not fit the realities of consent and privacy of *Jotería Rural* because they often navigate what they share, whom they share with, and how the information is disseminated. Instead, I decided to conduct a check-in with the *Afro-Jotería Rural* community members I was working with to gauge their interest in participating in a talking circle. They immediately told me they would prefer the knowledge to be audio-recorded and only available to me. Further, they also asked that I come alone because the talk would be an intimate circle between us. It made sense

because heterosexual intervention would have shifted how we performed our *Jotería* as *Jotería* are often pressured to follow *respeto* politics of respectability for their survival (Esparza, 2023; Noriega, 2015). Check-ins, then, are vital to ensuring community protection as going against their wishes can replicate extractivist violence. Check-ins can also be beneficial for the dissemination of the project.

Ethical Interpretation and Dissemination

The ethical dissemination of my research project, in conjunction with Indigenous ethics, involves a collective interpretation, reciprocity, accessibility, and communal ownership. Collective interpretation of the themes, for instance, were solved with two intentional check-ins. One during the interpretation of the knowledge exchange and the second during the dissemination process. This ensured that collaborators have full control of their testimonies. Further, in accordance with research ethics, this is to address “power dynamics in the researcher and participant relationship, the power of the researcher is in communicating his or her own interpretations of the teachings. To mitigate this power differential, to value the relationship and be congruent with the methodology, participants had final say” (Kovach, 2009). Further, dissemination not only involves the knowledge being accessible and useful to the communities one works with rather than centering the needs and wants of the academy. Finally, in some way or form, the research and the researcher must give back to the community in a healthy, intentional manner that does not involve imposition or a savior complex mentality:

Of the research is a central issue, and it is important to ensure that the research is available to the community in a manner that is accessible and useful. This means ensuring that the research is grounded in community needs, as opposed to the

needs of the academy. Graham Smith emphasizes this point: ‘At the end of the day it belongs to the community, the Maori, and that’s why I keep talking about praxis.’ Giving back is not a difficult concept, yet one of the most egregious actions of Western research into the lives of Indigenous peoples is the negligence of this ethic. Giving back does not only mean dissemination of findings; it means creating a relationship throughout the entirety of the research. (Kovach, 2009)

Nehiyaw Methodologies’ foci is giving back to the community through reciprocity. This is why I decided to include Nehiyaw Methodologies not only as one of the pieces of *Nagualing Jotería* Methodologies, but also as its nucleus as explained in the next section.

Pieza 2: Nehiyaw Methodologies That Shift and Give Back

The nucleus of this *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies features flexibility, circular (rather than linear) logic, and intentional social justice components of Indigenous methodologies. This is mainly because the intention is to continue working with these communities in social justice-based transformative ways. *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies follows what Kovach calls the tenants of Indigenous research. That is:

naming and acknowledging three distinct aspects of Indigenous research: (a) the cultural knowledges that guide one’s research choices; (b) the methods used in searching; and (c) away to interpret knowledge so as to give it back in a purposeful, helpful, and relevant manner. The expression of that framework can vary (Estrada, 2005), but the use of a conceptual framework in Indigenous inquiry will still have these consistent aspects...The methodology built upon several key qualities of Plains Cree tradition, but it is also shared by other tribal groups as

identified in the literature by Indigenous scholars. These key qualities include: (a) holistic epistemology, (b) story, (c) purpose, (d) the experiential, (e) tribal ethics, (f) tribal ways of gaining knowledge, and (g) an overall consideration of the colonial relationship. (Kovach, 2009)

An example of a methodology that reflects this Indigenous qualities and tenants that I take great influence from is Nêhiyaw knowledges. This methodology personifies the ethics, cosmologies, and epistemologies of Indigenous-based, social justice, and responsible research approaches (see Figure 10):

I see Nêhiyaw knowledges as a nest that holds within it properties full of possibility for approaching research. This methodology has several characteristics... These characteristics include: (a) tribal epistemology, (b) decolonizing and ethical aim, (c) researcher preparations involving cultural protocols, (d) research preparation involving standard research design, (e) making meaning of knowledges gathered, and (f) giving back... A consideration of using Nêhiyaw epistemology is a responsibility for protecting this knowledge. It can be difficult for Indigenous researchers to determine how much cultural knowledge to include in a textual format. Fortunately, as a Cree researcher I have had access to documented accounts of Plains Cree culture by Cree Elders in a variety of published forms. As such, these Elders have allowed this knowledge to be shared in the public domain, and so it is appropriate to share. It is for this purpose that Elders and others have agreed to have their words put into text. Furthermore, by observing and talking with Elders, family members, and other Plains Cree individuals with knowledge of the culture, I have gained an understanding of the

ways and how they intersect with my life narrative. As a learner of Nêhiyaw epistemology, I have incorporated my understandings into my research and writing, and have done so with great respect and caution. (Kovach, 2009)

Following similar guidelines, I aim to protect the knowledge exchanged with the vulnerable communities I work with in *Tamiahua* and *Tototlán*. This is why, again, in alignment with Indigenous ethics, I work with Toto-Diverso and Afro-Tamiahua to determine what the best practices would be and what kind of information should be disseminated. Further, I also conduct intentional check-ins with the community members so they can autonomously decide what information to divulge. At the core, the goal of using Indigenous methodologies, epistemologies, and cosmologies is to minimize harm, exchange knowledge ethically, embrace flexibility, and produce scholarship with the end goal of intentional and decolonizing aims informed by tribal ethics (and not performative social justice):

Graham Smith defines the following characteristics of Indigenous theory, stating that it is: Located within a culturally contextual site, born of organic process involving community. The product of a theorist who has an understanding of the cultural epistemic foundations of an Indigenous worldview, focused on change, Although not universal, portable to other sites, Flexible, Engaged with other theoretical positionings (i.e., it is not an isolationist theory), Critical, Workable for a variety of sites of struggle, User-friendly – people can understand what the theorist is talking about. (Smith 2005: 10)...I have identified a theoretical positioning as having its basis in critical theory with a decolonizing aim in that there is a commitment to praxis and social justice for Indigenous research,

flowing from tribal paradigms, shows general agreement on the following broad ethical considerations: (a) that the research methodology be in line with Indigenous values; (b) that there is some form of community accountability; (c) that the research gives back to and benefits the community in some manner; and (d) that the researcher is an ally and will not do harm. (Kovach, 2009)

Figure 10

Nehiyaw Kiskeyihtamowin (Indigenous methods)

Figure 2.1 An Indigenous research (conceptual) framework with Nêhiyaw epistemology



Ultimately, Nehiyaw Kiskeyihtamowin was key in organizing *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. Another Indigenous-based key component that also informs my *Nagualing Jotería methodologies* are *Pláticas* methodologies. This is because these methodologies were used as a starting point to have conversations with community members over the best cultural protocols.

Pieza 3: Pláticas and Restoration of Humanity and Respect in Research

Recent methodological scholarship questions the heteronormative approaches in *Pláticas* methodology as it confines *Jotería* and their unique Jot@ performances and sensibilities (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2003). However, I will first discuss the

genealogy of *Pláticas*. They come from native traditions of talking circles but have been honored by Chicana and *Jotería* circles (Steng & Brown, 2015; Kovach, 2009).

Pláticas is a Chicana/o/x methodology with a relational principle that honors participants as co-constructors of knowledge. In other words, the participants are viewed as contributors and co-constructors of the meaning making process. Whether the researcher has a long-standing significant relationship with the contributors, or the relationship is new, it is grounded in *respeto* for the contributor as a holder and creator of knowledge (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Fierros & Delgado-Bernal (2016) further argue that *Pláticas* provide cultural knowledge through more intimate discourse practices to add personal voices to academia. These Chicana/Latina feminist methodologies go beyond the collection of data and encompass an extension of ways of knowing and being. Furthermore, this methodology also involves the embracement of decolonial theory. Specifically, taking on an activist-scholar role and confronting aspects about ourselves that render us colonized (e.g., our position of power in academia) (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Becerra & Shaw (1984) stated that *Pláticas* emerged because of the realization that ethnographies and surveys did not work with Hispanic participants. This is because methods such as CDPR, structured interviews, ethnographies, etc. follow the Western Anglo logic that is allegedly neutral, a logic of detachment that pressures researchers to detach themselves from their participants and thereby, dehumanizing them in the process because they become “of no use” after the study. *Pláticas* disrupts Western colonial assumptions that “research must or even could be neutral, unbiased, and split of mind, body, and spirit” (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016, p. 102). *Pláticas* is also the most culturally appropriate method for Latino/a/x communities. This is particularly true

because they are “friendly, intimate, and maulstick” way of engaging in dialogue (Valle & Mendoza, 1978). A *plática* typically takes place in the following way:

This process begins with *la entrada*, which includes some sort of discussion of how the interviewer has been linked with the interviewee. Usually this includes discussion of a mutual contact. The process continues with an interview made up of the proper interview and informal ‘conversation by play’ that takes place before ‘getting down to business.’ The informal portion may include verbal and non-verbal culturally sanctioned modes of communication and sharing of information not especially relevant to the interview protocol. Finally, *la despedida* incorporates a display of appreciation by both parties and may also include additional conversation of a more personal characteristic, sharing of family and home relics by the interviewee, and sharing of gifts. (Valle & Mendoza, 1978; Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016).

Valle (1982), stresses the importance of the “relationship building” component because it “reinforces mutuality and reciprocity” (p. 116). Studies after Valle failed to recognize *Pláticas* as a legitimate methodology. In fact, researchers like Marin & Marin (1991), viewed *Pláticas* as an essential “ice- breaker,” but failed to recognize the data from that icebreaker as legitimate knowledge (it was seen as secondary data). Early incarnations of *Pláticas* also disregarded Latin@s everyday experiences as worthy of being part of the research (e.g., the neutrality logic of the West) (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). It was not until Valle and other scholars implemented Chicana/o/x intervention strategies that *Pláticas* was fully recognized as a legitimate methodology in the eyes of the academy. Ultimately, the main difference between early incarnations of

Pláticas in the field of sociology and the Chicana/o/x version is that the Chicana/o/x model honors the researcher's and the researched epistemological position (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016).

Gujardo and Gujardo (2008), recognized *Pláticas* as a valuable method for emphasizing sharing ideas, experiences, stories, and relationship building. For this to occur, the facilitator must be willing to make themselves vulnerable. *Pláticas* is informed through theory, which stresses that scholars must learn, teach, and experience reality and vice versa (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Guajardo and Guajardo (2008) also strongly assert that *Pláticas* and *Pláticas* recognize that knowledge is socially constructed. Thus, this method prioritizes the participants' lived experiences while considering the researcher's epistemology. Gonzalez (2012) also notes that *Pláticas* is a way to gather familial and cultural knowledge by communicating thoughts, memories, ambiguities, and new interpretations. Essentially, conversations, stories, and experiences are valued as actual data. Moreover, *Pláticas* is not a way of collecting data, rather it is a theorizing space where lived experiences are treated as theory.

Contemporary *Pláticas* methodology derives from a combination of theories, including Chicana feminist theories and other critical theories that center on the experiences of marginalized people and draw attention to the systems of oppression and the ways the oppressed navigate those systems (Fierro & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). One of the critical theories that serves as a component of *Pláticas* is Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Crenshaw, 1996). In communion with Cimhya Saavedra, Swecha Chakravarchi, and Joanna Lower's feminist theories, CRT provided the theoretical basis that allowed them to frame their concerns and issues in such a way as to co-resist the notion that

scientifically based knowledge is the only legitimate knowledge. Godinez (2006) further notes that in *Pláticas*, participants guide the research and theory building. In contrast to traditional research methods such as focus groups and interviews where participants are treated as mere informants, *Pláticas* methodology views participants as thoughtful makers of meaning and knowledge. Additionally, connections are made between the research inquiry and the participant's lived experiences, humanizing the process. A traditional interview is too linear because the researcher asks all the questions to collect data. *Pláticas*, however, dismantles those power relations (derived from colonial logic) by making the conversational transactional. Though the researcher's interests and themes guide the *Plática*, this methodology allows contributors to co-discuss and choose topics that matter to them. The very Chicana/Latina feminist perspective that guides *Pláticas* emphasizes and deems it necessary for participants to co-collaborate.

Moreover, Avila (1999) proclaims the transactional nature of *Pláticas* as a space for healing because it is "a deep heart-to-heart talk that continues for as long as it has to" (p. 12). Avila also notes that *Pláticas* is also Indigenous inspired. They note that it is based on Mexica tradition, allowing the *curandera* to co-learn about her client while educating or providing remedies. *Pláticas* enable us to put forward our stories of pain, trauma, negotiations, and hopes for the future as a way of healing (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Again, it is emphasized that the researcher must be willing to be vulnerable so that *Pláticas* serve as a space for healing and self-reflexivity. Avila also notes that the most important ingredient is trust for reciprocity, vulnerability, and self-reflexivity (Avila, 1999). Essentially, the researcher must build a genuine relationship with the contributor. Also, researchers must be willing to do what the contributor asks of them.

Pláticas methodology fits with my decolonial theoretical assumptions of research as it is one of the few methodologies to honor marginalized voices. Fierros & Delgado-Bernal proclaim that the process of decolonization “is not to recover the silenced voices by using hegemonic categories of analysis, but to change the methodological tools and categories to co-reclaim those neglected voices” (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016, p. 115). If the theory seeks to dehumanize and decolonize, the theoretical tools must also have the same purpose. *Pláticas* follows the feminist tradition of theorizing the brown body, following collaborative modes of interaction and analysis, and honoring our communities’ many ways of knowing and learning (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). When extended to the rural and *Jotería* intersections of my collaborators, I believe *Pláticas* would work perfectly with my project because, as a person who identifies as Queer and *Joto*, I can sympathize and relate to one of the communities of Southern Mexico. I am also originally from *el rancho* as for a short time, I lived in a *rancho* in southern Mexico. I specifically used *Pláticas* in my project by building genuine, long-lasting friendships with my contributors. When I met my contributors, they each invited me to their homes, businesses, restaurants, and various public places. We would have lengthy chats about our experiences with interview questions guiding the topics of conversation. For example, Juan Gabriel (pseudonym), one of my contributors, invited me to his store, where we chatted as he tended to his customers. Another contributor, Ricky (pseudonym) also asked me to visit his business and home, where I spoke with him and his boyfriend. To this day, I continue to stay in touch with them and see them when I can. Because I built authentic rapport with my contributors, they allowed me to record them and take notes on their experiences. Finally, I also saw them as

collaborators on the project rather than mere objects of study (which is why I call them contributors rather than participants). Further, since my last project, I have become increasingly involved in *Tototlán* community efforts, one of the communities I worked with in my previous project. By getting involved with *Toto-Diverso*, the first LGBTQIA+/Jotería collective, in *Tototlán*. As one of the inaugural committee members, I helped organize the first-ever Marcha de Orgullo in *Tototlán* history. I did this as a form of reciprocity. I wanted to give back to the community that aided me in formulating my last project (Esparza, 2023). Since my previous project, however, I was exposed to a new body of literature that re-imagines *Pláticas* by acknowledging and contesting heteronormative interlockings.

Contesting Heteronormativity: Re-imagining *Pláticas* to *Jotería*

In 2023, Ángel de Jesus Gonzalez, Roberto C. Orozco & Sergio A. Gonzalez formulated the interrogatory text *Joteando y Mariconadas: Theorizing Queer Pláticas*. In this text, they conceptualized Queer *Pláticas*, a methodology that dismantles the heteronormative and patriarchal assumptions of traditional *Pláticas*. This text marked a seismic paradigmatic shift in methodological approaches by providing a space for *Jotería* to speak their truths without conforming to normative social performances. This methodology allows collaborators (both within and outside academia) to embrace their subjectivities and once prohibited intersections of their intersectional identities. Though this methodology stems from the field of Higher Education Studies, I believe it can be further augmented to work with my project.

Queer *Pláticas* honors yet simultaneously departs from traditional *Pláticas* methodology. Moreover, it also builds upon, yet departs from Chicana and Latina

Feminist (CLF) epistemologies and methodologies: “our research cultivates spaces and practices of queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o kinships. More specifically, we offer our theorization of queer *pláticas* as a methodology that disrupts epistemological boundaries, as well as heteronormative ways of being... This comes from the need for epistemological and methodological underpinnings that more accurately reflect queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o communities” (Duran et al., 2020; Orozco et al., 2021; Delgado Bernal, 2020; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023).

Building upon the disruptive approaches of CLF, Queer *Pláticas* aims to be a space for healing for the co-collaborators of knowledge. These Queer *Pláticas* also differ from traditional *Pláticas* because they center Queer and/or Trans Latina/o/x bodies in the research process whilst contending with normative, patriarchal, and heteronormative lenses of sexuality and gender that often erase, censor, distort, or repress their experiences (Orozco, 2021). Queer *Pláticas* create another rupture as well as align with Indigenous projects in praxis, particularly by reclaiming “spaces for reclaiming and documenting experiences that expose violence and power while also engaging with community and building hope rooted in queer futurity” (Orozco, 2021). Like traditional *Pláticas*, however, Queer *Pláticas* seeks to honor foundational CLF scholars such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga. They also follow the tradition of CLF by acknowledging lived experiences as knowledge, and by “speaking lived experiences, resistance, and liberation into existence” (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). Queer *Pláticas* consist of 5 contours: “jotx/a/o identity and consciousness, space for *querencia*, queer *chisme*, *conocimiento* to *Jotería* identity consciousness, and *mundo zurdo* as queer futurity” (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023).

The Contours of Queer *Pláticas*

The first contour, Jotx/a/o identity consciousness, aims to provide a reflexivity component to *Pláticas*. It “refers to the ways we ground our queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o truths as the foundation of our queer pláticas” (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). However, what makes this self-reflexivity ~~any~~ different from traditional *Pláticas* or any other attempt towards decolonizing methodological approaches? (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez (2023) explain that self-reflexivity in relation to familial experiences often involves giving up pieces of ourselves to be full participants. That is, like the *Coyolxauhqui* imperative, we as *Jotería* are forced to cut pieces of ourselves to fit the heteronormative tropes and allegories associated with Latinidad (Anzaldúa, 2016). These include family rituals such as *Platicando*. Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez (2023) express this by stating:

Continuing familial traditions of *platicando* as expressed by Fierros and Delgado Bernal (2016) does not always allow for queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o people to enter these familial spaces as authentically because of the often-tacit subject placed on queerness as a deviation from cultural notions of heteronormativity. For example, Orozco (2021) beautifully highlighted how Juan Gabriel or Juanga, a prominent Mexican regional music singer and songwriter, was applauded and celebrated for his artistry yet kept in the shadows for his joteness, made famous by his quote, “...lo que se ve no se pregunta...” (you don’t ask about what you can see) when asked if he was gay. These subtle ways queerness, *jotería*, and *mariconadas* are often left out of familial spaces or seen as a taboo subject for Latinx/a/o people reflect how *Jotería* is censored in research examining

Latinx/a/o experiences through presumed cisheteronormativity. Thus, queer pláticas offer a disruption to marginalization by explicitly centering and naming race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality in the research design, theory, methodology, and analysis. (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023)

In alignment with Indigenous, decolonial projects, *Queer Pláticas* begins recovering and remembering both in the past and the present (Duran et al., 2020; Orozco, 2021, p. 182; Tihuwai Smith, 1999). The point of departure in this contour, though, is naming one's queer, trans, or *Jotería* identity to reflect on our connection to one another. In essence, "our bodies serve as a "form of corporeal knowledge" that is positioned to do this research not just from the place of how we know what we know, but also how our bodies feel the experiences we seek to understand... we argue that doing queer pláticas requires us, as the researchers, to foster a space for our co-creators to name their history, reflect on their existence, as an entry point to queer pláticas...truths rooted in contradictions, negotiations, hurt, pain, joy, and love, allow for a nuanced understanding between queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o people in the process" (Alvarez, 2015; Orozco, 2021, p. 183; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). We must then center our own positionalities as *Jotería* researchers/co-creators of knowledge. By doing so, we also heal and move beyond surviving, towards thriving as *Jotería* Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). Self-reflexivity, thus, serves as the point of entry to the *Queer Plática*. Once we have entered this third, liminal space, we move into *Querencia*.

Querencia is defined by New Mexico native Rudolfo Anaya as a love of home, love of place; a place where one feels safe; a place from which one's strength of character

is drawn (Fonseca-Chávez; Romero, & Herrera, 2020). In the context of Queer *Pláticas*, it is manifesting intentional care for one's co-creator during the *Plática*, by prioritizing the co-creator's well-being, emotions, feelings, and auto-historias over intellectual confirmations or research findings (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). This portion also involves embracing *Jotería* communication vernaculars (verbal and non-verbal) that go otherwise erased by written transcriptions of traditional research methods. As researchers/co-creators, we must also provide care for ourselves as the conversations can unpack vulnerable traumas. By showing *querencia*, we minimize the chances of producing harm to our co-collaborators. As *Jotx*, we have formed *querencia* through enclaves (overt or covert) that have allowed us to validate each other and our experiences. I have seen this in my past research of rural *Jotería* where my co-collaborator, Neto, expressed how he found *querencia* in the streets of Tototlán with his *grupitos* of *Jotx* (Esparza, 2023). Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez agree when they stated that:

Queer *pláticas* mirror how past *jotxs*, *marimachas*, *travesti*, and *maricones* have created spaces of existence that serve as safe havens for liberations of the queer and/or trans body in a cisheterogendered world. In essence, our ability to foster a space of *querencia* is directly rooted in our truths as *nepantleras*. Our experiences and lived realities allow us to foster a space of *querencia* (care) in the conversations with our co-creators. Central to how we conceptualize *querencia* are our queer and/or trans identities. Thus, removing these identities as social positions of meaning making would remove the very piece of self that allows for this space of *querencia* within queer *pláticas* to exist. Within a space of *querencia*,

we can terrain different planes of reality crossing between worlds where our ‘interpretation of what’s happening (our reality) is different from our society’s, parents or lovers...versions of reality [that] disempower us.’ When we foster querencia through truth telling, our co-creators and us can inhabit a space where we are the protagonist of our lives in the performance of identity, gender, sexuality, and its politics, taking center stage to tell each other quienes somos (who we are). (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023)

Within these spaces of Querencia, *Jotería* often engage in Queer *chisme*, the third contour of Queer *Pláticas*. Queer *chisme* derives from and builds on Latinx and Chicana, culturally relevant meaning making. They are “sessions where with the co-creators, we engage in healing, raw, authentic conversations that expose cisheteronormativity.” At its core, it is a tool of survival historically used by mujeres, *Jotería*, and the intersections of both (Gutierrez, 2017). I view *Chisme* as a sacred grapevine (network) that shields us from spirit murderers and/or those reproducing coloniality and its physical and symbolic violence (Tijerina-Revilla, 2014). If practiced with *confianza*, *chisme* serves as “a protection and form of ‘self-preservation’ when navigating their leadership roles within the cisheteronormative...they were able to caution each other about who to look out for when no one else did” (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). *Chisme* offers a site of *Jotería* joy and healing as many of *Jotx* subjects use the space of *Chismear* as a method to vent out negative energies. Sometimes it occurs in humorous ways, a tradition that stems from a Mexicanx and Indigenous sensibilities. *Chisme* is a coping mechanism of humoring the situation to ease and minimize the pain and trauma that is being emitted from the previously mentioned traumatic experiences. *Chismear* is often seen through

negative connotations in Latinx cultures and is often culturally mistranslated in the English language:

One critical contribution to this work notes the following distinction of gossip and the translation of chisme. “Although chisme and gossip are linguistically...similar, they are not theoretically equivalent.” Meaning, that in anglicizing and assimilating of language translation of the term, its very own epistemological power is also diluted and changed. As a tool within queer CLF methodologies, it works in opposition to the deficit lens placed on gossip and those who practice gossip. Upholding negative ideologies of chisme perpetuate oppressive discourse of morality, where this notion of them and us, nos/otras, continues. (Anzaldua, 2015; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023)

During *Chisme*, *Jotería* often reflect on *Jotería* identity consciousness, the fourth contour of *Jotería Pláticas*. *Jotería* identity consciousness involves reflecting on our experiences and what it means to be queer and/or trans Latinx/a/o person. It is one of the many paths of *conocimiento* that allow us to obtain “the deeper understanding of oneself that comes from engaging in queer pláticas” as well as systems of oppression (informed by the perverse logic of coloniality) impact and “wreak havoc at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels for those who do not conform to heteronormative ways of knowing and being” (Anzaldua, 1989; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). Further, this contour also incorporates a space for healing *las heridas* (wounds) through solidarity and vulnerability. This contour can also be a framework that guides the formulation of the research questions, methodological assertions made by the researcher, and the analytical interpretations of my research study (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023).

Finally, this is also a space for growth as collaborators reflect on where they are now, where they are going, and who they want to be:

Through this contour, we begin to gain understanding of what past and current experiences have meant to us and formulate meaning, garner a sense of consciousness of who we are, who we were, and who we want to be. This contour centers where we are creating ourselves or perhaps recreating or rebuilding our bodymindspirit. Their vulnerability and reflexivity, trust, and need to understand such aspects of themselves cultivated an affirming space to be in comunidad and show up as their authentic self. (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023)

This contour aligns with my work because I revisited communities, I worked with in my *Desde La Periferia de La Milpa* study (Esparza, 2023). Many of the *Jotería* cis-male participants I have previously worked with have since come out as Trans*, *Travestí*, and *No-binario*. This space for growth represents a liminal, third space for conversations on queer futurity, the fifth and final contour of Queer *Pláticas*.

Mundo Zurdo as Queer *Pláticas* imagines an inversed world of and for *maricones*. This contour is informed by Gloria Anzaldúa and Jose Esteban Muñoz. Both are co-creators of knowledge imaginaries that “imagine possibilities rooted in queer reciprocity, reflexivity, and kinship building. The praxis of queer pláticas necessitates a reimagining of the world, centering the joy of envisioning a mundo zurdo that doesn’t stigmatize Jotería” (Calderon et al., 2012; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). Particularly, a world that de-centers the tragic tropes often associated with marginalized communities. In essence, co-creators engage in a final critical self-reflection where they

acknowledge and reflect on symbolic and physical violence while also focusing on queer joy. Further, it is a space for imagining futures with queer joy serving as a guiding blueprint. This involves engaging in a critical discourse “that allows us to acknowledge the ‘traces of violence, familial rejection, and cultural alienation’ while simultaneously developing sites for transformation centered on joy and love in community as a praxis of imagining new futures” (Rodriguez, 2003, p. 53; Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023).

Though many of the theoretical assumptions of Queer *Pláticas* fit with my work in terms of alignment with the communities I work with, some contours needed augmenting to fit the realities of those communities and to avoid imposition. For instance, contour four of Queer *Pláticas* accounts for only queer and/or trans persons, signifiers, and identities that surfaced and positioned in the Global North and Western assumptions and LGBTQIA+ politics. Consequently, this contour would not account for Rural *Jotería* bodies, their subjectivities, and identities that surface from those liminal spaces and the Global South. For example, in my *Desde La Periferia de La Milpa* piece, many of my contributors did not identify with many signifiers/identities that rose from cosmopolitan centers (e.g., Gay, Homosexual, Queer, etc.) (Esparza, 2023). Mainly because of implications of access to the language of the empire that seeks to define these subjectivities. For example, I recall a recent situation with *Trevi*, one of the contributors of my *La Periferia de La Milpa* piece and Luigi (psyodynam), an HIV activist from Guadalajara where Luigi asked if Lupillo/Yailin was Trans* to which Lupillo/Yailin with an uneasy and uncomfortable look, replied, “Si.” Lupillo/Yailin later spoke to me in private and said “*Un día me siento como mujer y mi llamo Yailin y quizás otro me siento*

*mas masculino y me autonombro Lupillo.*⁷¹” Like a *Nagual*, they have utilized while simultaneously molding and turning gendered language available to them onto itself to articulate who they are (Anzaldúa, 2015). Thus, constructing their identity autonomously forms the other side of the colonial difference. Another example of the *Muxes* of *Juchitan*. *Muxe*, like *mahu*, *hijra*, and *fa'afafine* pre-date Transgender among other non-Western terms that have ultimately survived colonization (Aldama & Aldama, 2020). I would also like to point out that queer and *Jotería* are used interchangeably as signifiers in Gonzalez, Orozco, and Gonzalez’s *Queer Pláticas* (2023), but are not the same projects. *Jotería* is a decolonial move:

Jotería as “the term” to represent and serve all the varying queer experiences and identities of Latino/as and Latin Americans, the decolonizing project of *Jotería* could work alongside the resignification of other racialized queer terms appropriate to different regions and communities... *Jotería* as a political project—like other decolonizing moves—is an intervention from below that attempts to transform how we are, think, feel, and act in the world.” (Bañales, 2019)

Therefore, in my project, contour four would account for *Jotería* bodies and/or counter-identities as they self-define and reflect on them. Additionally, I will use the signifier of *Jotería* instead of queer because, as a decolonizing umbrella term, it accounts for all re-signifying terms and spatialities and temporalities in which they surface.

Though the majority of *Queer Pláticas* fit into my work, the foundation of contour five is

⁷¹ One day I feel like a woman and my name is Yailin, and maybe another day I feel more masculine and I call myself Lupillo.

queer futurities rooted in experiences, imaginations, and signifiers of the cosmopolitan centers, that is, metro-normative blueprints. I do not seek to dismiss contour five altogether, though. Instead, I would like to build onto it to reflect the subjectivities of my co-collaborators. For my project, I propose adding the essence of Queer *Pláticas* with a shifting, *Nagual* component that accounts for the sensibilities, realities, and imaginations of the rural. In sum, *Pláticas* and Queer *Pláticas* serve as a starting point for conceptualizing *Nagualing Jotería* Methodologies. First, I would like to reflect on rural futurities and sensibilities and how their intersection influences the political projects of queer futurity and *Jotería*. This next section was necessary to establish cultural grounding and cultural protocol.

Pieza 4: *Aca Es Otro Pedo*: Conceptualizing Jotería Rural Sensibilities and Augmentation of Contour Five

To understand what methodologies would be best suited for the community members I worked with, I used a Queer *Plática* with the community members themselves. This is what Strega & Brown (2015) call doing the “work” or the relationship work. By this, they mean establishing relationships, building cultural protocol, and establishing cultural grounding. This is mainly because there is no research without authentic relationship work as “research relationships are not time specific or disposable. Rather, we approach them as if we may be in relationship with people for life” (Strega & Brown, 2015). Cultural grounding is defined as:

...within the context of a person’s life and relationship with culture. As with non-Indigenous researchers, its significance may depend upon their life context and

how they engage with culture...there are levels of cultural involvement within research. Some customs are shared openly, others privately. This needs to be respected. Given this caveat, Indigenous research frameworks reference cultural grounding specifically or generally, and permeate the research in a manner consistent with the researcher's relationship with his or her culture. (Kovach, 2009)

It is because of this cultural grounding that we (my collaborators and I) noticed blind spots in the maps, blueprints, and schemata in current Queer *Pláticas* methodologies, there is a fixation on cosmopolitan centers and the disregard for peripheral spatiality and temporalities as well as subaltern, Queer bodies. As mentioned in Chapter 2, LGBTQIA+ spaces and movements from imperial centers such as New York and Los Angeles (e.g., clubs and bars). These theories are what Halberstam (2005) coins as metronormative. Metronormativity is a term used to describe the essentializing of metropolitan LGBTQIA+ experiences as universal (Halberstam, 2005, p.36).

A Queer futurities, or *Jotería* futurities in the case of my project, must include subaltern *Jotería* communities to be genuinely plural, transmodern, and overall, decolonial. This involves engaging in self-reflexivity of the well-intentioned theories as possible imposition. For example, the metronormativity of Queer and *Jotería* futurity by offering narratives and images of a queer and/or *Jotería* future with *Jotería de Rancho* at the forefront. What would, then, a *Jotería Rural* futurity look like then? For this, I engaged in a Queer *Plática* with El Suave, one of my collaborators. *This* is mainly to

establish cultural grounding, but also for cultural protocol and to give autonomy, or what they want to share and how they want to share it, to the collaborators on:

Indigenous research frameworks shift the power of the researcher in controlling the research process and outcome. Methodologically, this means gathering knowledge that allows for voice and representational involvement in interpreting findings. A powerful method for achieving this desire is the use of story, life history, oral history, unstructured interviews, and other processes that allow participants to share their experiences on their terms. The specifics of these methods are discussed in subsequent Chapters, but the point here is that decolonizing theory and methods that work in tandem with tribal epistemologies shape-shift the traditional social relations of research. Such methods act to give power back to the participant and the participant's community. Selecting research by inductive (as opposed to deductive) methods is congruent with Indigenous epistemologies and decolonizing methodologies. (Kovach, 2009)

Figure 11

Jotería Rural Futurities Personified



I spoke to El Suave, the folk dressed in purple pictured in Figure 11. Together, we theorized that the rural has a potential to be a forefront for queer and/or *Jotería* futurities and methodologies. In a conversation they stated: “*Ahorita gracias a bendito Dios me ha ido bien con mi familia y pues no me he quejado y pues todo bien. Literalmente yo, sí. Yo si yo no me da por salirme a otro lado [a vivir] ni a otro rancho ni a otro pueblo a vivir de que dices tú, ‘allí voy a tener la felicidad que no tuve aquí,’ no. Yo hasta ahorita estoy satisfecho aquí en mi casa, aquí en mi rancho estoy a gusto como estoy viviendo con mi pareja y todo y hasta ahorita no me ha faltado nada bendito Dios. Yo pienso que mientras siga así, aquí seguiré estando a gusto*” (Esparza, 2023) ⁷² Clearly, EL Suave’s theories counteract the metronormative narrative that Queer folks must leave their rural homes to be liberated. Jose Esteban Muñoz listed various clubs and bars from New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco as examples of “glimpses of queer futurity” (Muñoz, 1999). My contributors and I offer Micky’s Wings (pseudonym) as an example of a zone that embodies potential for queer and *Jotería* futurity and a third space for dialogue. Micky’s Wings has served as a space for El Suave and their friends to perform what we coined as *Jotería Ranchera*. My contributors and I theorize that *Jotería Ranchera* is a way of disidentifying cosmopolitan center aesthetics of queerness by centering local aesthetics. For instance, El Suave and their friends transcend gender, sexual, performative, and metronormativity by incorporating the local tradition of *El Día De Los Muertos*. Outside of celebratory holidays and in their everyday lives, they also transcend

⁷² Right now, thank God, things have gone well for me with my family and I haven't complained and everything is fine. Literally me, yes. I don't feel like going somewhere else [to live] or to another ranch or another town to live, what you say, 'there I'm going to have the happiness that I didn't have here,' no. Until now I am satisfied here in my house, here in my ranch I am comfortable as I am living with my partner and everything and until now I have not lacked anything, blessed God. I think that as long as it continues like this, I will continue to be comfortable here.

the gender binary by incorporating elements from virile *banda* style while also including makeup from drag queen culture. Micky's Wing served as a space for congregation in *Nuevo Refugio* for folks from this space to *jotear* (Micky's Wings, unfortunately, closed in 2020 due to financial issues). Reactions from the locals are mixed. Like the folks in the pictured adjacent to El Suave, consider them an integral part of the community, and are not easily scandalized by their transcending gender and sexual binaries. However, some folks socially burn them because they do not follow the *respeto* social contract which requires them to perform. However, they still feel liberated: "More than anything I do not see the difference because right here in my ranch, it's my ranch. I can dress, act, and be how I see fit. It would be the same case anywhere. Here I have come to dress as a woman with high heels and everything. Why wouldn't I do it in other places if I am more free here. For me, it would be the same thing because I am used to being myself here. I think in another ranch I could be even more liberated because I already feel comfortable here. If I am already liberated in this ranch, I would be more in another," El Suave stated. Nonetheless, the acceptance and nurturing of *Jotería ranchera* by certain community members clearly shows the potential for a Queer and *Jotería* futurity and dismantles the false notion that the rural is an unlivable space for queer, subaltern folks. As I write this piece, I have been asked to be the godfather for El Suave's wedding. El Suave's wedding will be the first Queer wedding in the history of *Nuevo Refugio*. Though the institution of marriage is a heteronormative one, this is a big deal for queer folks in this space. This is because marriage is an integral part of local cultural norms. Most would read this as a type of homophile movement or subversive complicity; however, we argue that the agency to have the option to marry should be viewed as part of this Queer and *Jotería*

futurity. This is especially because marriages do not always entail monogamy. In sum, queer futurity needs to be re-imagined including rural queerness within imperial centers and subaltern queers in the peripheries of these empires. This can be done by centering *Rural Jotería's auto-historias* into the vision of queer and *Jotería* futurity.. These aforementioned narratives will help strip away the metronormative interlockings of this vision of a *Jotería* future and methodologies.

Overall, I will be augmenting Queer *Pláticas* so that they account for the subjectivities of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*, particularly by adding a Nagual component that accounts for their unique and fluid identity formations in rural spaces. This is also to avoid the imposition of metronormative imaginaries but rather work with rural communities to imagine a plural, Transmodern *Jotería* futurity. Additionally, rural spaces have subjectivities and rituals that Western, metronormative terms do not fully capture. To find out what these sub/augmented/shifted methodologies will look like in *Jalisco*, I sought advice from El Suave during our *Plática*.

Pieza 5: Lumbradas, Parrandeadas, y Convivios: Shifting into Rancho Methods and Methodologies

In our Queer *Plática*, El Suave suggested that the spatiality and temporalities in which we exchange knowledge are seasonal. I agreed with El Suave because, for instance, every winter, we have *Lumbradas* on the dirt roads of the *ranchos* where we engage in “*joteadas y mariconadas* while telling *Joto-historias* of *Putería* (often stigmatized by heteronormativity), love, loss, and *hermana/e-ndad*” (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). In the summers, *Jotería Rural* often go on *Parrandeadas* that often

involve claiming space at the predominant cis-male bars or in remote areas such as *corrales* and *siembras*. In the case of *Jalisco*, my *Naguling Jotería* methodologies will shift to a *Parrandeadas* and *Lumbradas* when working with the communities of *Tototlán* informed by the different aforementioned *Piezas*, but augmented to fit the realities, imaginaries, futurities, and subjectivities of the rancho. *Parrandeadas* and *Lumbradas* would be similar to what Tomas Atencio calls *Resolana*. That is, the exchange of knowledge, but instead of *el oro del barrio*, it would be *el oro de la rancheria*, particularly *el regalo de la rancheria*. This entails gifts of knowledge between myself and my collaborators. My interviews were conducted in various spaces where we dismantled the hegemonic interlockings to carve a third space for knowledge exchange (Bhabha, 1994). *Parrandeadas* or *Parrandeando* can best be described as “a radical act that shamelessly seeks pleasures... embrace ‘slutty,’ working-class, Latina sex-positivity and appreciates how this moment of intoxication, this suspension of time, is a feminist pleasure. Intoxicating feminist pleasures are an embodied archive and epistemology of fandom, women celebration, sexuality, freedom, liberation, empowerment, love, and desire” (Hernandez, 2016). My project involved embracing dissident sexualities and genders, such as *Jotería*. Thus, *Jotería* performativity, such as the one proposed in *Queer Pláticas* is valid and embraced, but with a rancheria twist. *Parrandeadas* happen all year but are more common over the warm months of Spring and Summer (see Figure 12) typically, over the weekends.

Figure 12

Parrandeadas



Lumbradas, on the other hand, are more intimate. I imagine them following the tradition of Indigenous talking circles but without the traditional ceremonial practices. That is,

...employed ‘research circle-talking circles’ to give space for story. It was a method where ‘I could ask questions and people would share what they had to share.’ It provided a forum for people to relate their stories in a holistic fashion that was not fragmented by a structured interview process... (Kovach, 2009)

These *Lumbradas* are more common during the Winter months (see Figure 13). Again, with the embracing of *Jotería Rural* performance.

Figure 13

Lumbradas



These *Parrandeadas* and *Lumbradas* took place across *Los Altos de Jalisco* in various spaces and in the seasons of summer and winter (when I usually live there with my grandma). They also happen only on the weekends because most of the folks I worked with labor in field jobs from sunset to sundown Monday-Saturday. In sum, after consulting with Toto-Diverso and community members, *Parrandeadas* and *Lumbradas* were decided by the community to be the best approaches for working with community members from *Los Altos de Jalisco*.

In the case of *Tamiahua*, I also had to consult with Afro-Tamiahua and community members. Afro-Tamiahua was helpful in helping me find more co-collaborators. Particularly, Doris, Hector Sr., and Hector Jr. Again, this is rooted in building these authentic coalitions as a form of preventing exercises in research extractivism. To understand the context as to how the methodology would shift in this region of *Veracruz*, I went ahead and had *Platicas* with members of Afro-Tamiahua as well as four *Afro-Jotería Rural* community members that I worked with in this project (see Figure 14). With the consultation of both Afro-Tamiahua and *Afro-Jotería Rural* community members, we decided that a *Convivio* would be the best approach. A

Convivio is a group *Plática* or talking circle. This was selected by community members and Afro-Tamiahua because of the plethora of jobs in this particular space. For example, some people work fishing jobs all night and sleep during the day, whereas, some folks work livestock, construction, and merchant jobs during the day and sleep at night.

Because of this diverse workforce, this resulted in a *Convivio* on a weekend.

Circumstantially, this was also because I was only able to visit for a short amount of time.

Ultimately, we ended up getting together at a restaurant near the lagoon in one of the communities of *Tamiahua* (see Figure 13). To reflect the community-centeredness, we decided to meet in this community because of one of the community members does not have a car, and it was difficult for them to meet us in town. Due to the rurality of the area is, it was also the perfect place for us to practice our unique intersection of *joteadas*, *mariconadas*, and *rancheradas* similar to how La Cotita de Incarnacion did in the 17th century.

Figure 14

Un Convivio Next to the Lagoon with Afro-Jotería Rural



Ultimately, all 3 of the methods described above are informal and flexible. Also, all three involve the researcher/collaborator situating themselves in the research. In most traditional, positivist-informed research, we are taught that the primary researchers must be “detached” and “objective” in the research. This resulted “in trying to become 'objective,' Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them” (Anzaldúa, 1987). However, in alignment with Indigenous, Chicana, and third-world feminist praxis, I situate myself within and as a part of the project/research in the *Parrandeadas*, *Lumbradas*, and *Convivios* as defined in the next section.

Pieza 6: Auto-ethnography, Story, and Auto-Historia: Reclaiming My “I” Whilst Acknowledging My Positionality

To reclaim the “I,” something that has been denied to me by academics, I put myself and my experiences in my project, especially since I am originally from *el rancho*. Furthermore, I am also using this to engage in critical self-reflection that is impossible to achieve without considering one’s own communal relations (Villanueva, 2013). Lionnet (1989), postulates that autoethnography is a mode of cultural performance. She explains that autoethnography is a text/performance and “transcends pedestrian notions of referentiality for the staging of the event is part of the process of passing on, elaboration cultural forms, which are not static and inviolable but dynamically involved in the creation of culture itself” (Lionnet, 1989, p. 22). Pratt (1992) argues that autoethnography and autoethnographic expressions refer to instances in which colonized subjects represent themselves in ways that engage with the

colonizer's own terms. Pratt further argues that autoethnographic texts are necessary because ethnographies tend to be theorizing methodologies where only Europeans have the privilege to represent themselves and subject others. Using the colonizer's terms, autoethnography becomes another rupture in Eurocentric academia. Autoethnographic texts become the voice of those being misrepresented by those othering them. This dissertation is me speaking to you using the colonizer's terms (APA format, citations, etc.), simultaneously amplifying my voice and those of my contributors.

In essence, autoethnographic texts are those that the others construct in response to or in dialogue with those metropolitan representations (Pratt, 1989, p. 15). Muñoz (1999) agrees that this rupture is necessary for subaltern speech to be amplified:

Metropolitan form is inflected by the power of the subaltern speech, and the same is equally true in reverse. Metropolitan form needs the colonial "other" to function. Autoethnography is a strategy that seeks to disrupt the hierarchical economy of colonial images and the representations by making visible the presence of subaltern energies and urgencies in metropolitan culture.

Autoethnography worries easy binaries such as colonized and colonizer or subaltern and metropolitan by presenting subaltern speech through the channels and pathways of metropolitan representational system. Autoethnography is not interested in searching for some lost and essential experience, because understands the relationship that subjects have with their own pasts as complicated yet necessary fictions. (Muñoz, 1999, p. 81)

Through positioning myself in the research, I sought to put my grain of sand in dismantling the problematic power structures in place that reduce the contributors to

mere objects of the research. Again, I treat my contributors as colleagues rather than participants. We put the same value on their knowledge as we would an academic textbook. This falls into the tradition of Gloria Anzaldua's concept of auto-historia. That is, situating oneself in the social realities of the work whilst blurring and dismantling the lines of private borders (Anzaldua, 2015).

Though packaged by Western epistemologies as auto-ethnographies, at the core, these methodologies are Indigenous, particularly an Indigenous methodology of storytelling as knowledge exchange. Similar to how Fierros and Delgado-Bernal positioned *Pláticas*, Storytelling goes beyond mere interviews and pre-dates Interviews and *Pláticas* as an ancient form of knowledge gathering. As Kovach says, Storytelling:

In line with Nêhiyaw epistemology, which honour sharing story as a means for knowing, conversation is a non-structured method of gathering knowledge. While this may seem like another way of saying interview, the term interview does not capture the full essence of this approach. For this was very much a combination of reflection, story, and dialogue. Thus, in my research framework participating in the participants' stories – their experiences with culture and methodologies.

(Kovach, 2009)

In congruence with Anzaldua's teachings, Indigenous scholars agree that one must situate themselves in story, contextualizing one's and the collective relationship to the historical context. Further, this aligns with Indigenous cosmologies of circular thinking, learning from past stories to know where we are going in the future. Further, story as methodology serves as a way of passing ancestral knowledge and ways of knowing through culturally relevant forms:

Stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging. Stories hold within them knowledges while simultaneously signifying relationships. In oral tradition, stories can never be decontextualized from the teller. They are active agents within a relational world, pivotal in gaining insight into a phenomenon. Oral stories are born of connections within the world, and are thus recounted relationally. They tie us with our past and provide a basis for continuity with future generations...Stories are vessels for passing along teachings, medicines, and practices that can assist members of the collective. They promote social cohesion by entertaining and fostering good feeling. In times past, as now, stories were not always transferred in lexical form, but through visual symbols, song, and prayer...As with many oral cultures, narrative functions as an intergenerational knowledge transfer. The stories hold information about familial rights associated with territorial stewardship, and though the prominence of story in maintaining generational responsibilities is ancient, it has only recently been recognized in Western jurisprudence. (Kovach, 2009)

Even by well-intentioned researchers, the rigor of Story is questioned or considered “the same” as traditional methods such as interviews. Furthermore, there is an application of border-thinking, mystifying, and privileging Western research methods as the ultimate form of knowledge production. Ultimately, however, Story comes from Indigenous cosmology and praxis, which present in various disciplines such as journalism. If we continue to hierarchize Western research as the ultimate truth, we will limit our methodological possibilities. In turn, we will recreate those methodological

hierarchies. In that case, if we manifest this hierarchical thinking in research, are we really decolonizing? As Kovach explains,

The question undoubtedly arises – how is this different from journalism? With its emphasis on story, is it really research? The response, of course, depends upon the respondent and how he or she defines research. Is research a form of knowledge-seeking that is amenable only to quantifiable generalizations? If that is the belief, it shuts out the possibility of Indigenous research frameworks where generalizabilities are inconsistent with the epistemic foundation. If research is about learning, so as to enhance the well-being of the earth's inhabitants, then story is research. It provides insight from observations, experience, interactions, and intuitions that assist in developing a theory about a phenomenon...Story as methodology is decolonizing research. Stories of resistance inspire generations about the strength of the culture. (Kovach, 2009)

Further, though the use of Story differs from culture to culture, it has the power to bridge cultures together if done ethically. Further, it is more flexible than traditional interviews which allows for autonomy for the collaborator. Thus, decolonizing and decentralizing the imagined “control” the researcher has over the project:

Like the conversational method, the research-sharing circle is a method to engender story. It is meant to provide space, time, and an environment for participants to share their story in a manner that they can direct. The onus is upon there searcher to honour this more exploratory approach and try not to interrupt a story through redirection prompting. This means that interrupting a story to ‘get back to the question’ is not recommended... the more structured the interview the

less flexibility and power the research participant has in sharing his or her story (2000). Through this less-structured method, the story breathes and the narrator regulates...It is recognized that story as both form and method crosses cultural divides. However, the way that a culture employs story differs. In reference to art (a form of story) and method, Kandinsky makes the point: 'The borrowing of method by one art form to another can only be truly successful when the application of the borrowed method is not superficial but fundamental' (1977: 20). Story, as a method, is used differently from culture to culture, and so its application falters without full appreciation of the underlying epistemological assumptions that motivate its use... A researcher assumes a responsibility that the story shared will be treated with the respect it deserves in acknowledgment of the relationship from which it emerges... The privileging of story in knowledge-seeking systems means honouring 'the talk.' To provide openings for narrative, Indigenous researchers use a variety of methods, such as conversations, interviews, and research/sharing circles. For her research, Laura Fitznor employed 'research circle-talking circles' to give space for story. It was a method where 'I could ask questions and people would share what they had to share.' It provided a forum for people to relate their stories in a holistic fashion that was not fragmented by a structured interview process. (Kovach, 2009)

Anzaldúa and Fierros and Delgado Bernal postulated that one must situate themselves in auto-historias and *Pláticas*. This too stems from Indigenous cosmologies. However, one must also be self-critical of what our intentions are as academics.

In asking others to share stories, it is necessary to share our own, starting with self-location (see Chapter 6). For many active in Indigenous research, this comes naturally, as a part of community protocol. The researcher's self-location provides an opportunity for the research participant to situate and assess the researcher's motivations for the research, thus beginning the relationship that is elemental to story-based methodology. Situating self implies clarifying one's perspective on the world. This is about being congruent with a knowledge system that tells us that we can only interpret the world from the place of our experience...saying that knowing one's own purpose and motivation for research was fundamental. This seemed consistent with Western research approaches, and yet my question seemed somehow out of place to that workshop leader. However, I knew instinctively that purpose – Indigenous style – and research curiosity were deeply linked. (Kovach, 2009)

After much reflection and in conversation with community, I determined that my purpose is to build Transborder coalitions with *Jotería* from *ranchos and pueblos* across temporalities and spatialities to archive our movements, but also advocate for human rights. Therefore, that is the purpose of this research and how it will give back. Further, I will also give back to community with my labor and dedication to Toto-Diverso.

These decolonizing tools are key to giving a voice to subaltern communities such as *Jotería Rural* without directly speaking for them. In the process, as a queer, *joto*, and *Mexicano* man who has also been impacted by (and often internalized) these systems of oppression that derive from the logic of coloniality, I attempted to further heal the split within myself through the *Parrandeadas*, *Lumbradas*, and *Convivios* of

this project (Anzaldúa, 1987). Without the contributors, however, none of this would have been possible. Finally, I would like to re-emphasize that I am also originally from a *rancho*. For a short time, I experienced the joy of riding horses to school, dressing up as Pancho Villa, and taking *tortillas* to my dad in the mountains where he worked the fields (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Un Jotito De Rancho



Following My *Jotería*: Another Form of Snowball Sampling

Finding the wonderful contributors who were gracious enough to contribute their time to this study was not a challenge for me. This is because since my last project, I have become more involved with the LGBTQIA+ folks in this region. As Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) said, “listen to what your *Jotería* is saying” (p. 34). Being *Joto* also gives one a special sensibility. I wholeheartedly believe that following my own *Jotería* played a major role in finding contributors. Ultimately, everything fell into place when friends of the contributors introduced me to other acquaintances. Eventually, 15 contributors lent their voices to construct this project. Before documenting their data, I first had to go through UNM’s review

board.

Contributors were then asked to fill out consent forms to protect their confidentiality. To document the data, the localized *Pláticas* were audio-recorded using my HTC One Phone with the written consent of the contributors. I also took notes of my experience in the many situations I was involved in. The *Pláticas* took place in an array of locations, which depended on the preference of the contributors. Locations were private and public, ranging from *plazas*, contributors' homes, bars, and contributor's businesses. To ensure confidentiality, contributors self-selected pseudonyms to protect their identities. I also did not mention the specific location of where the research took place in any portion of this dissertation. Instead, I referred to the location as "rural southern Mexico" to ensure some sort of representation while ensuring confidentiality. I also assigned pseudonyms to various municipalities in rural southern Mexico. Any other unique information that might make the contributors identifiable was excluded. I also excluded data that the contributors preferred not to make public. All the recordings were kept under encrypted passwords only my committee chair and I knew. Upon completion of the study, I erased/destroyed the recordings in accordance with IRB regulations.⁷³

All the data was manually coded and analyzed (Saldaña, 2009). I then transcribed and read through the data carefully. Furthermore, I took notes in the margins and highlighted words, phrases, and/or sentences that responded to my questions and tied to themes using Saldaña's (2009) code-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry, a type of

⁷³ This dissertation study is registered under IRB Protocol Number: 2403116144

thematic analysis. I did this by tying the themes that arose from historical moments in Mexican history to the experiences of my contributors. More specifically, from the developed categorical themes that were linked to my theoretical assumptions in the literature (see Chapters 5 & 6). Whenever asked to disseminate this work, I will make sure always include my contributors in accordance with *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies. Contributors are given the option to be part of the dissemination process.

First, those who decide to be part of the dissemination process are asked to fill out a dissemination informed consent form. Contributors will be phoned in during the presentation utilizing Google Voice, a phone application used to make anonymous phone calls. These phone calls are limited to audio-only, so the audience are not able to see the participants' faces. Therefore, Google Voice serves as an effective tool towards concealing the identities of the contributors and also allows for their voices to be amplified by a speaker so that the audience (and the committee) can listen to their stories, firsthand, creating an interactive thesis defense that aligns with the *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies model. Google Voice also hides their phone numbers, so they will not have to show their real numbers. This application essentially allows the opportunity for contributors to have an active voice in the dissemination process while still maintaining their anonymity. Further precautions are taken to protect the identities of the participants such as referring to them by their assigned pseudonym. In addition, participants are asked to refrain from revealing their real names for their own privacy during the course of the presentation of the results during the dissemination.

It is important to use these methods as way to humanize contributors. It is also vital to refrain from replicating the logic of coloniality by allowing contributors to speak for

themselves.

Nagualing Jotería Methodologies: Bringing the Pieces Together

Nagualing Jotería methodologies, then, is informed by the coming together of the aforementioned spare parts that shift into the realities, temporalities, spatialities, and cosmologies of the collaborators, yet still follow Indigenous ethics, protocols, and practices. One of the main goals of *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies is to reflect and account for regionally specific intersectional realities of people's lives. In particular, their intersectional cultural production and historiography.

In this section, I will breakdown *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies which encompasses Rasquache Research Preparation, Research Preparation: Coalition Building, Decolonizing Ethics, The Shifts: Collective Gathering/Exchanging Knowledge, Check-Ins 1: Collective Making Meaning/Reflexivity, Check Ins 2: Collective Dissemination, and Transactional/Reciprocity Social Justice *Movidás* (see Figure 16). These components work with/balance one another and one cannot exist without the other. Further, inspired by Indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies, *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies is circular/cyclic rather than linear because the intention is to come back to the community, maintain life-long authentic relationship, with community, and a commitment to social justice that never ends. Ultimately, the ethos of this methodology is flexibility and community-autonomy.

Figure 16

A Visual of Nagualing Jotería Methodologies



***Rasquache* Research Preparation**

Rasquache research preparation is the scholarly end of the research process. How one prepares will depend on the discipline. For example, in my case, I am working with elements of history, sociology, and Chicax Studies. Though the disciplinary training and traditions may vary, I believe that it is important in this phase for folks to study localized histories as they can contextualize the unique challenges those communities have historically faced and shed light on the intersectional contexts of each community member. In my case, I initiated a decolonial reading of history to understand the socio-political realities of my contributors and what informs the challenges they face.

Rasquache research preparation can entail looking at archives, reading hidden histories, (decolonial imaginary), It entails working with what one has to build and inform the project. Because we do not always have access to the archives, this can also involve looking at secondary sources (e.g., books on the Florentine codex) through a decolonial lens. At the end of this first phase, the researcher/co-collaborator should be well-informed about the research topic and the communities they will work with.

Coalition Building: Research Preparation

The research preparation phase involves establishing relationships, building cultural protocol, and at the personal level, establish cultural grounding. As Strega & Brown (2015) have stated, it involves doing the work of building genuine long-life relationships with the community members. If one is new to the community, this can entail using existing methodologies known to the researcher to start relationships and conversations on establishing relationships, building cultural protocol, and at the personal level, establish cultural grounding. In my own research, this entailed building coalitions with the communities I work with in a way that embraces reciprocity. To reiterate, in my case, it was building genuine connections with Toto-Diverso, Afro-Tamiahua, and *Jotería Rural* community members. To get the conversations started, I utilized existing methodologies such as *Pláticas* and *Queer Pláticas*.

This is also a phase of self-reflexivity as one attempts to position themselves in this research in a non-hegemonic way. Particularly, as insider, insider/outsider, or complete outsider. The researcher must be completely honest with themselves where their positionality lies with the consultation of community members. This is mainly as a form to minimize imposition and harm.

Decolonizing Ethics

Informed by cultural protocol, cultural grounding, and the genuine connections made, one must develop local ethics that the researcher/co-collaborator must follow in order to respect that community. This can happen with conversations with community elders, organization such as Toto-Diverso and Afro-Tamiahua, or the community themselves. Further, though localized ethics can vary from culture to culture, it is

fundamental for the researcher/collaborator to avoid smash and grab or extractivist practices. Another ethical consideration one must take is taking measures to make sure the knowledge developed by the community will be owned by the community. Further, the researcher/co-collaborator must engage in self reflexivity on how the researcher/co-collaborator will give back and how the knowledge developed from the research project will benefit the community in some way or form.

The Shifts: Collective Gathering/Exchanging Knowledge

This is phase is where the “Nagualing” or shifts take place. That is, the shifts involves the researcher/co-collaborator and the community deciding the best form of gathering knowledge. Informed by community conversations on cultural protocol and cultural grounding the collaborators (researcher and community) determine the best localized methods and methodologies for knowledge exchange to reflect the realities of the communities one is working with. In the end, methods must be chosen and named by the community. Again, these will look different, but the foundation entails flexibility and situating one-self (the “I”) in the process. In my case, I utilized *Pláticas*, *Lumbradas*, *Parrandeadas*, and *Convivios*. Once the methods and methodologies have nagualed/molded and agreed upon by the collaborators, one begins the transactional knowledge exchange. This process involves reciprocity as the researcher is also learning and it not positioned as the ultimate holder of knowledge, but rather in a horizontal way (Friere, 1969). Ultimately, though, the community decides the direction of the knowledge exchange. This is also a very spiritual process as from personal experience, there is a type of collective healing from exchanging counter-stories of resistance (Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023; Esparza, 2023).

Check Ins 1: Collective Meaning Making

This phase involves making meaning of the knowledge exchange. The method of meaning making can shift from discipline to discipline, but the key is for the community to have a voice in their representation of the research. In my case, I am using thematic analysis to analyze themes. However, the check-ins serve as a way to decolonize the power the researcher has over interpreting the community's knowledge and stories. Therefore, it is protocol for these check-ins to take place to ensure the information is interpreted correctly and the themes reflect those interpretations.

Check Ins 2: Collective Dissemination

Based on Indigenous ethics, it is up to the community to decide what information they want to divulge. Therefore, it is necessary to do a second check in to see what will be published and in what formats because the information exchanged by them is their knowledge. Further, the dissemination must benefit the community in some way or form. The goal of this project is to build coalitions, but also to serve as a living archive for rural *Jotería* communities of *Tototlán* and *Tamiauah*. Another element of collective dissemination is inviting co-collaborators/community to take part of oral or video disseminations so they may speak for themselves, but only if they wish to (Spivak, 2010).

Transactional/Reciprocity Social Justice *Movidas*

In the final phase of the cycle, one must engage in one final reflexivity. Particularly, to determine how one will give back in a way that does not replicate savior complex mentality. In this part of the cycle, the researcher must also avoid replicating what Paulo Freire calls false generosity (Freire, 1969). Particularly by being

humanists/intentional about their collaboration rather than replicating a false humanitarianism (Freire, 1969). This portion of the cycle, in essence, is the reciprocity component. The way I am giving back is by coming back and donating by labor to the Toto-Diverso Comité by designing flyers and fundraising through solidarity; a practice I continue to do contemporarily. I will discuss this further in Chapter 8 when I detail overt resistance strategies. In the case of *Tamiahua*, I also aim to build coalitions by working with Afro-Tamiahua as well as starting conversations on building a collective between *Jotería in Veracruz* and *Los Altos De Jalisco*.

Re-birth/Reincarnation of the Cycle: A Life-long Commitment

Since the battle for social justice is far from over, the cycle does not end. Further, it is also possible for the phases/steps in the cycle to change in future projects. Again, it is meant to fit the realities and needs of the community. I wholeheartedly believe that the project of decolonization is a lifelong commitment and must be carried out authentically. It is the duty of the researcher/co-collaborator to not replicate the ivory tower, but rather tear down its walls to allow community to enter. This project is one of the many fronts of decolonization and the end goal is research for transformative social justice. Spiritually speaking, this project is a personal commitment as well. I started working with the *Tototlán* community members in 2018, and it has brought me closer to my *cultura* and even helped me embrace my *Jotería Rural*, an essence that I repressed for many years because of colonality informed by U.S. assimilationism and metronomativity. Therefore, my commitment to *Tototlán* and *Tamiahua* will continue, and the cycle will begin again in the future via *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies, and the new cycle might even look different than what it is now depending on what the

community needs are in the future. In this project, I went to *Veracruz* for the first time, I plan to go back to in the future to further solidify a transformative *Jotería* coalition that transcends spatial, temporal, national, and hemispherical borders. In the next Chapter, I will share my experience and some themes that arose from the *Lumbradas*, *Parrandeadas*, and *Conivivos* I had with contributors of this work and how they tie to the literature of this piece.

**Chapter 6—*El Que No Perrea, No Prospera*: Getting to Know the Collaborators
Rasquache Research Preparation in Praxis: De-assimilation and Re-connecting
with the Rural Communities of *Jalisco***

Los Altos de Jalisco, in particular, the municipalities of *Tototlán*, *Poncitlán*, and *Ocotlán* are the rural communities I chose to work with for this dissertation because of my commitment and experience of working with *Jotería Rural* for the past 7 years. Personally, and through research, I am connected deeply to my ancestral region of *Los Altos De Jalisco*. I also made connections with *Afro-Jotería Rural* folks from the rural municipality of *Tamiahua, Veracruz*.⁷⁴ *Tamiahua, Veracruz* offered a focal space for this project because of its rich Afro ancestry. In this Chapter, through a narrative, chronological format, I detail how I became re-connected and connected to *Los Altos de Jalisco* and *Tamiahua, Veracruz* respectively. Simultaneously, I introduce the collaborators that made this dissertation possible. In regard to the collaborators, some chose to select pseudonyms while others preferred to use their original names. Some folks chose to make “cameos,” meaning they lent their voice and assistance to the project as informants. Some of these folks included my cousin Liz, my aunt Cluadia, my friend Cobain, Toto-Diverso committee member Raul, and Poncitlán Diverso Comité member Jessica. With their consent, they are mentioned throughout the dissertation. Finally, this Chapter will also serve as contextualization of the testimonies that arose from the knowledge exchange in the next Chapter.

A Joto’s Cultural De-assimilation 2012-2017

When I was 6 years old, my father made the difficult decision to migrate back to

⁷⁴ This was thanks to Dr. Doris Careaga whom connected me to this community.

the United States to earn dollars to send to my mom to invest in our little *abarrotes* store in the small *rancho* of *Cucarachas, Jalisco, Mexico*. They both sought to secure a better future for my brothers and I. My dad had originally migrated to the United States (in horrendous conditions through a coyote) in his youth in the 1980s during the Ronald Reagan presidency and amnesty period. He managed to secure residency. Subsequently, he strategically learned English by biking 2 hours a day from work to school and learned the immigration system. This knowledge and experience allowed him to bring my mom with him so that my brothers and I could obtain dual citizenship (I love you dad). However, unable to obtain stable support from fellow family members in the United States, we moved back to Mexico shortly after my younger brother Ivan was born. My dad, however, returned to the US to send money to our store. Hearing of my mom's struggle with raising two boys on her own in *Cucarachas, Jalisco* in his absence, my parents decided it was best for all of us to relocate to Colton, California. Though it was for the best, it was extremely painful for me.

I remember assuming it would be temporary. Little did I realize that I would be leaving behind all the beautiful *rancho* life that I came to adore such as dressing up as Pancho Villa on Mexican Independence Day, riding horses to school with my grandpa (I started school at 3 years old), stealing gum from my mom's store, pretending to fly the pesticide planes with my cousin Luis Miguel, riding bikes on the dirt road with my friend Ramon, and accompanying my mom to the Pueblo of *Atotonilco* to obtain merchandise for the store. All the smells, sights, and rural essences... gone overnight.

Though my father did his best to keep us connected to our *cultura* through frequent trips to Mexico, by the time I turned 8, money became tight around the house, and we were no longer able to make the yearly trips to Mexico. Therefore, I went 10 years without contact with my ancestral roots. Gradually, I came to lose connection with my rural Mexican self through Anglo-assimilation. I was ashamed to speak my *Rancho*-Spanish and began to speak a forced Spanglish. My Eurocentric education did not help as I was taught that rural Mexico was no place for Gay men to live because of *machismo*. Like coyolxauhqui I became fragmented by forcing my tongue and consciousness to imitate Anglo ways.

It was not until 2012 (right after I graduated high school) that my mom forced me to go to Mexico (she even packed my bags for me). Originally, I did not want to go as I saw Mexico as culturally inferior and dangerous for my existence as a *Joto*. However, upon arrival, and reconnecting with my family, I had an out of body experience. One night, I broke down crying after realizing the beautiful pieces of myself I was denying. Suddenly, through nostalgia, I felt all my childhood memories returning to me. In that moment, I made it my life goal to begin my process of decolonization and de-assimilation. From 2012-2017, I began going back to Mexico consistently and can now proudly say that I have successfully reconnected myself culturally. However, there was one piece that was still missing: my connection *Jotería Rural* of my ancestral lands.

Connecting with *Jotería Rural* 2017-Present

In my 2023 *Borderlines* publication *Desde la Periferia De La Milpa* (2023), I detailed how I first began to connect with *Jotería Rural* in the municipality of

Tototlán, Jalisco (Esparza, 2023). My first experience was seeing two cis-men *perreando*⁷⁵ with my cis-male-hetero friend at a party organized by my cousin Luis Miguel. I later learned that among those dancing was my cousin, Lupillo/Yailin, whom my family never told me about either because of estrangement or family problems related to contested inheritances. Two years after my experience at Luis Miguel's party, I returned to rural southern Mexico in December of 2019 with the purpose of asking *Jotería Rural* in the region to assist me with what was then my master's thesis under the guidance of Dr. Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos. This gradually transformed into this dissertation. I packed my bags nervously thinking to myself, "what if I do not find anybody to talk to? "What if I accidentally *out* myself to my family?" At the time only a few family members from Mexico knew I was Gay, so this journey was not solely about research, but also about transformation.

Upon arriving to *Nuevo Refugio* a community within the municipality of *Tototlán, Jalisco*, I was greeted by family members who always receive me *con mucho amor*⁷⁶. Exhausted from the long trip, I decided to start working the next morning. I woke to the chirping birds outside and the wonderful aroma of my *mama*⁷⁷ Teresa's *frijoles pintos*⁶⁴.

Afterward I set out to attempt to find individuals to contribute to this project. My starting point was a friend whom I will call Cobain (he selected this pseudonym because he loves Nirvana). Cobain and I met in 2013 during the region's annual *fiestas*⁶⁵ and became good friends. I also came out to him in 2016 and he has become

⁷⁵ Similar to a twerking dance in the US.

⁷⁶ Much love

⁷⁷ In Mexican rural contexts we refer to our grandparents as "mama" or "papa" rather than abuela or abuelo.

one of my closest friends and allies from *Nuevo Refugio*. Though not a direct contributor, he was instrumental in this project because he introduced me to the two individuals who two years prior were *perreando* with my collegemate at my cousin Luis Miguel's party. These two individuals were Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave. I paired them together in this next section because they are inseparable.

Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave

Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave both openly identified as Gay and are known by the residents of *Nuevo Refugio* as being loud, rowdy, effeminate, and promiscuous. At the time of this project, Yailin/Lupillo was 18 years old and El Suave was 20 years old. They are known by the community as *los Gays que se visten de mujer*. This is because they are comfortable dressing in drag in public as a way of disidentifying. They are both *campesinos* and work more than 12 hours a day in the fields. Though many community members have great disdain for them, they are also respected and loved by many (specifically younger folks) because of their sensibility, fearlessness, and love for partying. They also serve as allies to *Jotería Rural* in *Nuevo Refugio* who want to *destaparse*⁷⁸someday. I argue that both of them made history by being some of the first to overtly *destaparse*. Their courageous acts of resistance and visibility have opened the door for many folks to *destaparse* to this day (2024).

Cobain formally introduced me to Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave one night at a popular bar called Mickey's Wings Bar. They invited us to sit with them and a third person at their table. Both Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave greeted me with a kiss on the cheek, a practice that normally takes place when a man greets a woman in the ranch.

⁷⁸ Loosely translates to "coming out."

The third individual greeted me with a handshake. “*¿Que pinche desmadre el año pasado, verdad?*”⁷⁹ Yailin/Lupillo said to me referring to the party two years prior.

After a couple of hours of reminiscing, they asked me about my studies. I took the opportunity to tell them about this project and asked them if they would be willing to contribute. “*Claro que si amiga! Y si necesitas que te busquemos mas chav@s, nos avisas*”⁸⁰,” stated El Suave. I had a *Plática* and interviewed Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave at El Suave’s house just a week before I left southern rural Mexico. They were the first two contributors to volunteer to help me with this project.

I have been using Yailin/Lupillo to refer to my cousin on purpose. This is because Yailin/Lupillo transformed and grew since I reconnected with them in 2019. Specifically, Yailin/Lupillo *destapandose* a second time as a Trans individual in 2021. Their Transness, however, is distinct from the United States context. In the United States, Trans folks’ transition and leave their “dead name” behind. However, as my primx described to me, her transness is more like a *nagual* as they still wish to occasionally “transition back” to un *hombre*. Therefore, they prefer for folks to refer to them by both names “Yailin” and “Lupillo.” To contextualize, the word “Trans” did not yet arrive to *Nuevo Refugio* until around the 2020-2021. Therefore, Yailin/Lupillo used gendered language available to them to construct their identity. For example, before they would tell me “*Hoy voy a ser mujer*” or “*Hoy sere hombre.*” As they professed to me, they reappropriated the word Trans to construct their identity, but they do not see their Transness as linear path where it is necessary to place their maleness in the past. In a way, this can be translated from Global South to Global North as gender-

⁷⁹ What craziness, right?

⁸⁰ Of course, friend! Let us know!

nonconforming or non-binary. However, to respect the epistemological, cosmological, and ontological position of my primx, I respect the way they have built their identity. I will discuss Lupillo/Yailin's identity further in Chapter 8 as her Transness represents a homogeneity of Trans and *Travesti* voices of the Global South. In sum, I will be utilizing both of my primx's chosen names in this dissertation, Yailin/Lupillo. Though I originally spoke to Yailin/Lupillo for the purpose of my master's thesis in 2019, I spoke to them again this year (2024) for this dissertation.

A Tribute to *Bigotes*

The same night I met Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave, the third individual who was sitting with them could not help but chime into the conversation. "*Sabes que? Yo tengo varios amig@s Gays en Tototlán* ⁸¹," he stated. Bigotes was from *La Milpilla*, the *ranchito* across the road from *Nuevo Refugio* (also in the municipality of *Tototlán*). After Bigotes's dad left to the U.S., he took over the family business selling handmade churros in a *pueblo* about 30 minutes away from *La Milpilla* called *Atonilcho*. Unfortunately, I did not get to interview Bigotes because of his heavy work schedule, but he was key to the success of this project since he introduced me to the two other contributors. "*Si gustas, mañana te recojo y te llevo a conocer a mis amig@s Ricky y Daniel. Creo que te interesara la historia de Ricky porque es bien conmovedora. Hace unos años se cortó la mano en un accidente, pero aún sigue luchando y trabajando sin mano. Vende frutas cercas de su casa allá en Tototlán* ⁸²," Bigotes added. The next morning, I met with

⁸¹ You know what? I have a ton of gay friends in Tototlán .

⁸² If you would like, I can pick you up tomorrow to meet my friends Ricky and Daniel. I think you will be interested in Ricky's story because it is very moving. A few years ago, he lost his arm, yet he continues to fight and survive without an arm. He works selling fruit in front of his house with his family in Tototlán .

Bigotes on the state road that divides *Nuevo Refugio* and *La Milpilla*. Bigotes picked me up in his dad's pickup truck and we were off to *Tototlán*, which was about 15 minutes away from where he had picked me up (note: This is *Tototlán* the *pueblo*). Throughout the dissertation I will often bring up other smaller communities within the municipality of *Tototlán*. Bigotes passed away in 2021 due to health complications. Bigotes, thank you for being so unselfishly kind to me. Your actions that year spoke to the humility and kindness of the folks from the rural. Without you, this project would never have taken off in the way that it did. *Descansa en poder*⁸³, amigo.

Figure 17

Bigotes in the Middle Photo Courtesy of Ricky (far right) Rest in Power Bigotes.



Ricky

Bigotes and I entered Ricky's house greeted by his parents and his sister. They directed us upstairs where Ricky and three other friends were watching the miss Universe pageant on TV from his bed. "¿*Quien es éste?*"⁸⁴ Ricky jokingly asked Bigotes as we walked in his room. Ricky greeted me and invited me to sit on the bed

⁸³ Rest in power friend

⁸⁴ Who is this?

with him and the rest of his friends.

As we conversed, Ricky disclosed to me that he was 34 years old, identified as Gay, and lived in *Tototlán* all of his life. He also briefly discussed his fascination for drag and beauty pageants and running his family's fruit business. As Bigotes had mentioned to me, Ricky has a disability. Rick shared that he had been in an accident when he was employed at *Lecheria Los 41*⁸⁵. His entire forearm was caught in one of the machines and tore it right off the limb. He was immediately let go from his job (something that is quite common in this milk plant).

Over tacos, I asked him if he would be willing to be a contributor for this project. At first, he was a bit hesitant because he said a few students from Guadalajara had come to interview him a few years back but had never reached out to him ever again to follow-up on how his recordings were used. I immediately explained my *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies to him. He responded with the same thing he tells me every year I visit him in *Tototlán*, "*Bueno si nos vas a tomar en cuenta, estamos aquí en el puesto de frutas los lunes a sábado de 8 a 10. Si vienes el Domingo, nos vas a buscar a la casa. Siempre eres bienvenido*⁸⁶." We then agreed to meet later that week at his family's fruit stand. Following this, he suggested I interview his then boyfriend, Daniel.

Daniel

Daniel identifies as Gay and was 25 years old around the time he contributed to this project. He revealed to me that he is originally from a *pueblo* called *El Grucho* in

⁸⁵ The 41 Milk Plant

⁸⁶ Well, if you are going to take us into account, we are at the fruit stand Monday through Saturday from 8 to 10. If you come on a Sunday, you can find us at the house. You are always welcome.

Northern Mexico but moved to *Tototlán* after his family kicked him out. He disclosed to me that he was not immediately kicked out when *se destapo*. He was forced out of his house after he quit the military because his family believed this was the only way to “*hacerlo hombre*.⁸⁷” After he was kicked out, he went to college and received his bachelor’s degree in tourism. He was then adopted by an older Gay teacher friend who continues to lookout for him to this day. “*Conocí a Ricky por internet y tome la decisión de venirme a vivir a Tototlán*,⁸⁸” Daniel stated. At the time I spoke to him, he was working long hours at a chicken restaurant along the state road which made it difficult to schedule a *Plática*. Despite this, we met the same day I spoke with Ricky at their fruit stand business.

Neto

In-between *Pláticas*, I made periodic trips to *Tototlán* after learning there was a gym there called *Imperial*. Once I obtained a membership for the month, I quickly made friends. One of those friends was Neto. Neto was 28 years old at the time I met him at the gym. He is the manager of a local casino known as *Las Venturas*. He identifies as openly *homosexual* and has lived in *Tototlán* most of his life. I had seen Neto before on the Gay hook up app, *Grindr*, but I never asked him about his active profile on the app. A couple of days passed until he asked me if I was on *Grindr*. We both had a good laugh when I showed him the app on my phone. Subsequently, I got to know Neto enough to tell him about this project. He gladly agreed to contribute and asked me to meet him at his house for *café* and a *Plática*.

⁸⁷ Make a man out of him.

⁸⁸ I met Ricky online and then I made the decision to come live with him here in Tototlán .

Ignacio

Neto eventually introduced me to his acquaintance Ignacio, a lawyer in charge of signing off on property rights in *Tototlán*. Neto had spoken to Ignacio about the project over the phone and he agreed to be a contributor. We spoke on WhatsApp and he asked me to meet him at his *despacho* during his lunch. Ignacio identifies as Gay and was 29 years old at the time I met with him. He disclosed to me that his family is well-known in *Tototlán* because they have lived there for generations and because they are all middle-class.

Furthermore, he explained that since his family is so well known, he prefers to be more *discreto*⁸⁹ about his sexuality. Once Ignacio got to know me during our initial meeting, he invited me to return to his *despacho*⁹⁰ again to go more into depth about his experiences in *Tototlán*.

Juan Gabriel

My *tía*⁹¹ Claudia and my *prima*⁹² Liz were also integral parts of the success of this project because they both introduced me to more *Jotería Rural* in *Nuevo Refugio*. First, my *tía Claudia* recommended that I speak to her friend Juan Gabriel. Juan Gabriel identifies as *homosexual* and was 64 years old at the time I met him. He has lived in *Nuevo Refugio* most of his life. He did, however, disclose to me that he immigrated to the United States during his youth, but returned to take care of his mother when she

⁸⁹ Discreet

⁹⁰ Office

⁹¹ Aunt

⁹² Cousin

became ill. Using the money he made in the United States, he opened a successful store in *Nuevo Refugio*. I first met Juan Gabriel in 2012 when my *tía* Claudia sent me to his store to buy chips and sodas. I had no idea he identified as *homosexual*, though. Juan Gabriel was at first skeptical about contributing to this project, but later became open to the idea when I guaranteed anonymity and explained Nagualing *Jotería* methodologies. “*Aquí estaré en la tienda cuando quieras venir*⁹³,” Juan Gabriel said. We met again one night while he was *despachando*⁹⁴ at his store.

Téo

On one of our weekly visits to *Tototlán*, a curly haired young man riding on his motorcycle waved at my *tía* Claudia. “*Mira, ese es Téo. También es Gay*⁹⁵,” she stated. My *tía* Claudia invited Téo *a cenar*⁹⁶ a few days later to introduce us. At dinner, Téo asked me if we could take a walk around *la plaza*⁹⁷ to get to know each other better (and because we could not talk about our sexuality openly with my *mama Teresa* in the house). On our walk around the *plaza*, Téo revealed to me that he was a *campesino* who worked more than 10 hours a day spraying pesticide on *milpa*, one of the region’s main exports. Additionally, he runs his own hair and nail salon business from his home on the weekends. Since then, he now works in a *tequilera* as tequila is now the foci export in *Los Altos de Jalisco*. When I first met Téo, he disclosed to me that he was 25 years old and identified as Gay. He has lived in *Nuevo Refugio* all of his life, but periodically

⁹³ I will be her at the store whenever you would like to come visit.

⁹⁴ Tending to costumers

⁹⁵ Look, he is gay too.

⁹⁶ Have dinner

⁹⁷ The town square of pueblos and ranchos

spends a few weeks living in *Tototlán* with his partner. When I told him about the project, he became ecstatic, “*¡Claro que si amigo! ¡Cuentas conmigo!*”⁹⁸,” he said. When I asked him if his partner would be willing to be a contributor, he paused, shook his head and said “*No amigo. Es que mi novio es bien celoso.*”⁹⁹” Téó and I took another walk through the *plaza* a few days later where we had a more in-depth *Plática* about his experiences in *Nuevo Refugio*.

Chavelo

My *prima* Liz approached me one day saying that her high school friend Chavelo was Gay and was interested in participating in the project. I accompanied her to an abandoned casino her high school graduating class rented in the town of *San Antonio* (municipality of Tototlán) where they were preparing for their graduation. I helped them clean while I waited for Chavelo to arrive. Chavelo was the shyest of all the contributors. We spoke briefly during our first encounter, and he revealed to me that he was 18 years of age and was from a nearby *rancho* called *La Yerba*. I then asked him if he was Gay in which he responded “*No, a mi nomas me gustan los hombres y ya*”¹⁰⁰.” We later met outside my *mama* Teresa’s house where he disclosed to me that he was planning on attending University to study business. At the time he worked as a waiter at a local seafood restaurant to save money for tuition costs. We met again at Liz’s house where he shared more about his life in *La Yerba* (town within the municipality of Tototlán).

Jack-Watson

⁹⁸ Of course, my friend! You can count on me!

⁹⁹ No, he’s really jealous.

¹⁰⁰ No, I just like guys and that’s it.

I met Jack-Watson back in 2013 during *Nuevo Refugio*'s annual *fiestas patrias*¹⁰¹. He was from *La Milpilla* and was rumored to sleep with men around the time I met (according to my cousin Beto who is from the same ranch). At the time, he did not have many friends because of those rumors. Thus, I invited him to join our friends and family circle at the *fiesta*. We connected on Instagram, but lost contact for many years.

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, he commented on an Instagram story I shared on April 2020 where I appeared kissing my ex-boyfriend on the cheek. He private messaged me saying, "*Estamos en las mismas*¹⁰²." We reconnected, and he explained to me that he had come to terms with himself. When he asked me about my academics, I disclosed to him that I was in the process of coding the *Pláticas* I had recorded in December of 2019 that I eventually used in my essay for the 2023 *Borderlines* journal. He then expressed interest to be part of the project over a video chat *Plática*. At the time, he was 25 years old and was still living with his family in *La Milpilla*. Though he identified as *heterosexual* in 2013, he now accepts his attraction to men. When I asked him how he identifies he stated, "*más o menos les digo que soy*¹⁰³" Meaning that he communicates to other men that he has interest for them without subscribing to an identity label. We had a few *Pláticas* over Instagram video chat where he disclosed more details about his life as *Jotería Rural* in *La Milpilla*.

Through scholarship and praxis, my *rasquache* research preparation phase allowed me to learn and re-connect with *Los Altos De Jalisco*. Little did I know, however, that 4 years later, I would be connected at a deeper, transformational level to *Jotería Rural*

¹⁰¹ The annual fiestas.

¹⁰² We are on the same boat.

¹⁰³ I somewhat let them know.

and, thus, contribute to the *rasquache* research preparation: coalition building, decolonizing ethics, the shifts: collective gathering/knowledge exchange, meaning making/collective reflexivity, and transactional reciprocity/social justice *movidas* components of *Nagualing Jotería* Methodologies.

Toto-Diverso: Research Preparation through Coalition Building and Social Justice in Praxis (2023-Present)

To fully contextualize how I became involved with activist work in *Tototlán* via the Toto-Diverso collective, it is prudent to discuss how Toto-Diverso came to be. Particularly, out of respect for Raul and Jose Luis, who spearheaded the project first. Toto-Diverso is a project founded by Jose Luis "Chaparro" Martínez Plascencia (Chaparro), Raul Ariiaz Cardona (Raul), and me in *Tototlán* with the purpose of advocating for the civil rights of LGBTQIA+ folks in *Tototlán* and its umbrella municipal communities (see Figure 18).

Figure 18

The Toto-Diverso Collective Logo Designed by Jose Luis and Raul

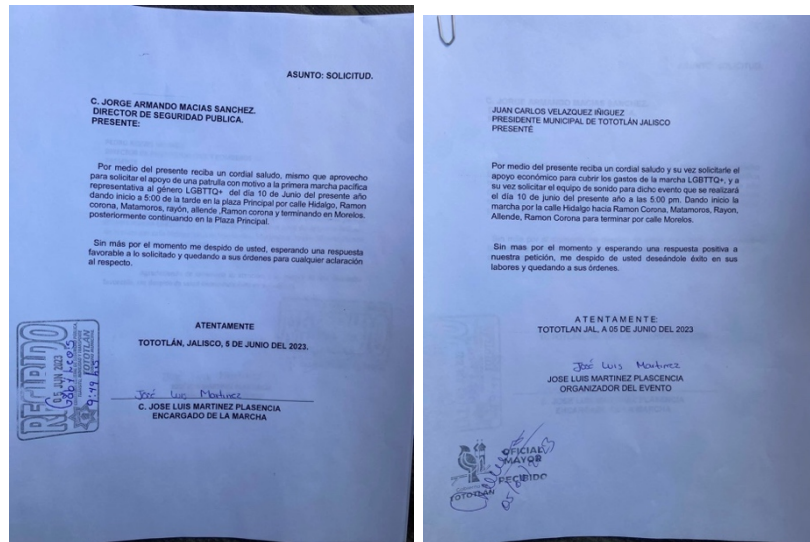


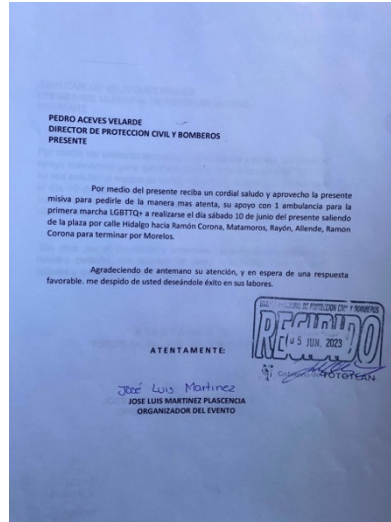
In March 2023, Chaparro and Raul made the first *movida* to interrogate these dehumanizing social stigmas whilst resisting overtly by petitioning to organize the first *marcha de orgullo* (pride march) in the municipality's history which was documented in the local newspapers. They did this by organizing the groundbreaking Toto-Diverso

Collective as medium to obtain funds within the institution. Chaparro and Raul serving as the inaugural committee members. As I will discuss in the next Chapter, Raul was met with resistance from the virile attitudes of the local government. However, he did prevail, and the movement continued. Subsequently, the pair reached out to already established rural, LGBTQIA+ collectives across *Los Altos de Jalisco* and received support and solidarity from the neighboring communities of *El Municipio de Poncitlán* and *El Municipio de Ocotlán* via the Poncitlán Diverso and Ocotlán Diverso collectives; two groups we continue to work with. After rigorous clerical work (such as endless permit petitions), the *marcha de orgullo* was slated for June 10, 2023 (see Figure 19).

Figure 19

Historic Petitions Spearheaded by Chaparro and Raul





Though they approved the petitions, unfortunately, the local government did not provide sufficient funds to the *colectivo*, so the *marcha* was in danger of being postponed yet again. By mere Joto-destiny, I was visiting family, and my cousin invited me to the *marcha*. I reached out to Jose Luis via the collective’s Facebook to see if I could help with decorating the floats, and he immediately asked me if I wanted to join the committee instead. I wholeheartedly agreed to collaborate! Thus, the inaugural cohort of Toto-Diverso was born (see Figure 20).

Figure 20

Luis, Chaparro, and Raul, the First Toto-Diverso Committee Formed in 2023 (from left to right)



Together, we developed a transnational social media campaign to attempt to raise more funds (I will discuss this phenomenon as a form of resistance further in Chapter 8). In just one week, we raised \$800 USD thanks to the generous donations of *Jotería* and ally communities in the United States. Particularly, many faculty and students from the Association for *Jotería* Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS). I also served as the designer for their flyers and *consignas*¹⁰⁴ for the march (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Literature and Fundraising Campaign I Successfully Spearheaded

¹⁰⁴ Collective chants utilized to speak out for a cause.



Chaparro and Raul particularly loved this particular *consigna* I devised: "Toto, *Diverso, ahora es el momento!*" These *consignas* are used by various prides across Mexico to overtly “talk back” and push back against the opposition. They are an overt form of resistance which I will discuss further in Chapter 8. On June 10, 2023, we made history by reclaiming the streets of *Tototlán, Jalisco*, Mexico in the first *marcha de orgullo* with various *Jotería* from local and surrounding municipalities *presente* (see Figure 22)! This is significant because never before has a *marcha* of this kind happened in *Tototlán*. Therefore, the *marcha* is a form of overt resistance which I will discuss in Chapter 8. This year (2024), with the addition of Lupita, Lupillo/Yailin, Yos, and “La Pajarita,” our committee grew to 8 members. Though I did want to include the voices of

my fellow committee members, their busy work schedules did not allow them to participate in this dissertation fully. However, they gave me consent to discuss our experiences as a collective and promised to lend their voices to a future project.

Figure 22

Historic Snapshots From Tototlán's First Pride March in 2023 with Support From our Neighbor Municipalities Ocotlán and Poncitlán



After the events of the first *marcha* in 2023, we stood in solidarity with *Poncitlán* at their local pride march which has existed since 2021. This is a common practice in *Los Altos de Jalisco* where neighboring collectives travel to support *marchas* across the region as a form of solidarity. It was through this collaboration that I met Jose Ramon “Pache King” Ramirez (Jose).

“Pache King”

Jose is a drag performer, activist, spiritual leader, and teacher from the neighboring

municipality of *Poncitlán, Jalisco*. I first met Jose when he came to perform as his alter ego “Pache King” at our pride march in *Tototlán* (see Figure 23).

Figure 23

Jose Ramon “Pache King” Ramirez



Though we did not really interact in *Tototlán*, we became closer leading up to the *Poncitlán* pride *marcha*. I told him about this dissertation project via WhatsApp and he eagerly agreed to participate. I met with him one day before the *Poncitlán* *marcha* to build a rapport. We devised an idea to form a united collective between the municipalities of *Tototlán, Poncitlán*, and *Ocotlán* called the Colectivo de La Jotería Transfronteriza with the purpose of further uniting *Jotería* by transcending municipal, rural/cosmopolitan, state, national, international, and Global North/Global South borders. Despite his busy schedule, Jose fully lent his voice to this project. Today, Jose and I continue to collaborate on projects together in *Los Altos de Jalisco* and I consider him to be a dear friend.

These movements ultimately served as healing spaces for me because I was going

through a rough divorce. Spiritually, it was a powerful reminder of my purpose in this world as an activist-scholar. After the impactful, historic summer I experienced in 2023, I returned to New Mexico and enrolled in an Afro-presence in Mexico course with one of my dear mentors, Dr. Dora Careaga. In this course, I developed my methodology for this dissertation, however, out of this course arose new discourses that shaped a new direction for this dissertation and my activism. After giving a presentation on *Jotería Rural* and my plans to continue writing about the work I do in Mexico, Dr. Dora Careaga-Coleman suggested that I collaborate and work with *Afro-Jotería Rural*. My primary focus on *Tototlán* expanded to include another site where gender multiplicity offers a rich interpretive space to understand gender divergences in the rural.

Particularly by including *Afro-Jotería Rural* from *Tamiahua, Veracruz*. Thus, I began a second cycle of *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies of *rasquache* research preparation: coalition building, decolonizing ethics, the shifts: collective gathering/knowledge exchange, meaning making/collective reflexivity, and transactional reciprocity/Social Justice *movidas* in *Tamiahua, Veracruz*.

Tamiahua: Research Preparation through Coalition Building and Social Justice in Praxis (2024-Present)

I first visited *Tamiahua, Veracruz* in a previous study abroad course I took with Dr. Dora Careaga in 2022, but I did not meet any *Afro-Jotería* folks during that trip. After taking Dr. Dora Careaga's Afro Presence course in 2023, I planned to go to *Tamiahua* in 2025 to meet *Afro-Jotería Rural* community members because of the evolving direction of the research. However, circumstances and destiny sent me to *Tamiahua* in March 2024. Thanks to Dr. Doris Careaga, I met More and Bogart over WhatsApp before

departing for *Tamiahua*.

Tamiahua is a fishing community in *Veracruz*. However, many satellite communities within the municipality also dedicate themselves to agriculture and livestock. I arrived in *Tamiahua* in early March 2024, and More was kind to pick me up from my hotel. Bogart and More then treated me to dinner at a local seafood restaurant. Upon arrival, Bogart gave me a gift *corbatin* that natives from *papantla* wear,, which is significant to *Veracruz*. I was honored, yet embarrassed because I did not have a gift for them. However, I later sent them items that were dear to my own *Jalisco* roots as a form of horizontal gift exchange (but delayed since I sent their gifts in June). I wanted to interview them right away, but they told me to wait until Tuesday to build a relationship with them a little more. This experience partially shaped *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies as I later became hyperaware and reminded of the necessity to build the relationship first. Out of the group of 4 I interviewed, I got to know More first. *Jotería* methodologies as I later became hyperaware and reminded of the necessity to build the relationship first. Out of the group of 4 that I interviewed, I got to know More first.

More

When getting to know her, More stated that she identifies as an Afro-Trans *Mujer*. However, she also expressed that labels and identity politics are not that important to her. I will explore this example of gender fluidity in the Global South in Chapter 8. She is 33 years old and is from the community of Palo Blanco in the municipality of *Tamiahua*. She is a well-known and popular hairdresser and baker. She is successful in two businesses. During our dinner on my first day in *Tamiahua*, I got to know Bogart.

Bogart

Bogart identified himself as an Afro Gay cis-man. He disclosed that he is 40 years old and worked in sales and the hotel business. Further, he revealed that he was born and raised in *Tamiahua*. He has lived in cities since he studied for a bachelor's degree outside of *Tamiahua*. He, however, returned to his community to practice his career. to his community to practice his career.

Nahomi

I met Nahomi through Bogart and More as the three are close friends. Nahomi's story is a truly inspiring. Nahomi identifies as a Trans Woman and is 35 years old. She disclosed to me that she was ostracized by her family at a young age for being Trans (I will discuss this in detail in the next Chapter). She, however, persevered and started her own *empanada* business in 1995. She started by making empanadas at home and selling them on her bike. Her business later grew and now she has her own empanada bakery located in the center of *Tamiahua*. She does, however, continue to sell her empanadas on her bike. I can attest that her *empanadas de camaron* and her empanadas de crema are some of the best I have ever had (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Nahomi's Empanadas



Part of the *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies is adjusting to the realities of the collaborators. Because of their diverse jobs, the contributors worked during the day or at night, so we decided that a *Convivio* would work best in this situation. Further, one of the contributors, Chucho, is from a town far from the center of *Tamiahua* (but still within the municipality) and could not travel because he is a caregiver for his mom. Thus, we decided to meet at a seafood restaurant along the lagoon near Chucho’s house in his community.

Chucho

I first met Chucho when we arrived at *la comunidad de Tantalomos (municipio de Tamiahua)*. In the *convivio*, he stated that he was 54 years old and “*Y igual soy muy orgulloso.*”¹⁰⁵ Meaning, they left their identity as subjective. However, the fellow members I interviewed describe them as gender non-conforming as they transcend the

¹⁰⁵ Is very proud.

binary thinking gender. This is especially true because he does laborious work such as gutting animals and construction; work that even the most masculine men in *Tamiahua* are not willing to do to make a living. Yet he also takes on the “women” roles in his community as described by Bogart, Nahomi, and More. He did, however, state that he is an Afro-descendant.

Though I only spent a small amount of time in *Tamiahua*, More, I talked to Chucho, Bogart, and Nahomi about building bridges and coalitions by organizing drag shows between our communities (I will discuss this further in Chapter 8). Additionally, we discussed the possibility of coming to *Tamiahua* to support their local pride march. More disclosed that their first one did not go well because of low attendance numbers and not enough communal support. In the meantime, I added More and Bogart to our Colectivo de La Jotearía Transfronteriza Collective to include them in our plans to raise funds for the 2025 *marchas*.

Towards the Shifts: Collective Gathering/Knowledge Exchange, Meaning Making/Collective, and Reflexivity

After building rapport with both communities, I engaged in meaningful, horizontal knowledge exchange. Again, this looked different from community to community because of localized practices. Thus, following *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies, the knowledge exchange spaces included *Parrandeadas*, *Lumbradas*, and *Convivios*. I also completed check-ins 1 and 2 during this project to ensure the accuracy and representation of collaborators. In the next Chapter, I will detail how and why *Jotería* Rural and *Afro-Jotería* Rural face contemporarily the hierarchies of contention (informed by waves of coloniality).

Chapter 7—Hierarchies of Contention: *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* at the face of Coloniality

Re-articulation of Coloniality, Hegemonic Ideology, and Rhetoric in the Rural that Stems from Repressive Moments in Mexican History

In Mexico, coloniality has evolved through different waves and forms. From the *lumbradas*, *parrandeadas*, and *convivios*, I connect socio-historical threads between the contributors' experiences and the perverse logic of coloniality. I pts and themes related to colonial legacies and the communities I call *Jotería* in Mexican history. Colonial legacies that are re-articulated to the rural. These sub-themes include 16th-18th *Pecado Nefando*, Gendered, and *Castas* Influence; 19th-20th century impositions of virility through military punishment (The 41); (IHR) 20th - century virile rhetoric as justification for hate of male femininity (Nation building discourses); (IHR) and 20th - century pathologization of *Jotería Rural* (influence of medical discourse). These will be explained throughout this Chapter. I also noticed some identified forms of internalization/proxy perpetuations. The most prevalent ones include (PP1) the father as a masculinizer, Ancestral Surveillance (PP2), and Coloniality of the Rural in Praxis (PP3). Since many of these hierarchies overlap, I will be attaching in-text citations as codes for the hierarchies represented in the responses by the *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Each is decoded in the table below. Further, because of the diverse, localized methods used in conjunction with Nagualing *Jotería* methodologies, some of the dialogue happened in groups or back and forth between me and a collaborator. Therefore, the dialogue involving groups or my participation will be labeled with the names of folks who participated in the dialogue within the block quote. Also, out of

respect for local vernaculars, I maintained the original annunciation of the collaborators and informants as best I could. This was a move to interrogate the language hierarchies informed by Eurocentrism, as discussed by Gloria Anzaldua in *To Tame a Wild Tongue* (1987).

Figure 25

IHR and PP

Moments of Mexican history linked to hegemonic ideologies: Imposed ideologies with historical roots in particular events (IHR)	Identified forms of Internalization /Proxy perpetuation (PP)
<p>1) 16th-18th Century Colonial Period <i>Pecado Nefando</i>, Gendered, and <i>Castas</i> Influence</p> <p>2) 19th-20th turn of the century imposition of virility through military punishment (The 41)</p> <p>3) 20th century virile rhetoric as justification for immense hate of male femininity (Nation building discourse)</p> <p>4) 20th century pathologization of <i>Jotería Rural</i> and <i>Afro-Jotería</i></p>	<p>PP1) Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance</p> <p>PP2) Father as Masculinizer (family domestic violence & abuse)</p> <p>PP3) Coloniality of the Rural in Praxis</p>

Rural (Influence
from medical discourse)

Colonial Period Pecado Nefando Punishments, Gendered, and *Castas* Influence 16th-18th Centuries

The first wave of coloniality in the 16th-18th centuries imposed various hierarchies to subjugate and control black and brown *Jotería* bodies. Some root discourses of these hierarchies derived from the 16th and 18th centuries (which informed one another) include *Pecado Nefando*, Gendered, and *Casta* Influence. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, these imposed hierarchies have shifted and transformed over time but continue to be manifested contemporarily.

***Pecado Nefando* Punishments**

During our *Convivio*, More and Bogart detailed punishments they have either heard of or witnessed that are rooted in these *Pecado Nefando* discourses. In a respectful manner, More and Bogart also honored *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* from the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s that came before them and paved the way for them to co-exist in the *Tamiahua* community. However, they are also hyperaware that these forms of violence continue to be perpetuated today:

Bogart: *Les quiero dar un reconocimiento muy grande a las generaciones, personas de atrás. Porque ellos [los gays de antes] si les sufrieron. Nosotros igual y sufrimos que como se burlaban de nosotros. Mediamente le sufrimos [nosotros]. ¡A los anteriores los mataban! Los metían a la cárcel. Las generaciones de antes que salieron a luchar realmente lucharon.*

More: Aparte, de ser un pecado mortal, era un delito. ¿Porque personas machistas, ¿no? O sea que hacían con la gente lo que querían. No tenían esa autoridad de que de poder defenderse.

More: Pues mira, hace un momentito, un familiar de mi papá, tengo dos tías. Por parte de la familia de los tíos directos no he recibido nada de malos comportamientos, pero por los tíos segundos si hay como que se burlan porque yo era diferente. Entonces vas a crear una coraza de que tú me dices y yo te digo, ósea de tratar de defenderte, ¿me entiendes? Porque no permitía esas burlas porque mi mamá siempre me decía que si te faltan al respeto ósea tu diles que no te dejas. Estas formando esa coraza que no permites que te lastimen. Hay personas que se han llegado a quitar la vida. Por la discriminación. Un día platicando con mi mamá, salió el tema de cuando me hacían comentarios. Cuando se burlaban de mí y te digo ¿cuál es lo mejor? ¡Los que se burlaban, ahora tienen una persona [jota] en su casa! No le quiero llamar karma, pero ellos están viviendo lo que nosotros vivimos. Gracias a dios, nosotros lo vimos diferente [la homosexualidad] a la forma a lo que lo vieron ellos. Porque en el pueblo todos conocemos ósea se dan cuenta como vivimos [nosotras los gays del pueblo] ellos la están pasando mal [the ones that are living in those homophobic households] les están pegando. A uno lo arrastraron con el caballo. Si porque se dieron cuenta y entonces es algo de ver diferencia [de la comparación de como lo tratan a uno comparado a ellos]. A uno lo tratan con amor y lo aceptan y [y el trato que reciben los otros es] algo que es

*una salvajada, una violencia.*¹⁰⁶

As More stated, all folks I interviewed at some points faced violence rooted in the coloniality of power. Though MEWCCUS scholars tend to separate discourses of sexuality and gender, these hierarchies also have roots in the waves of coloniality.

Gendered Impositions

As Nahomi details, she was confronted with violence from multiple fronts as a Trans Woman. She was, however, explicit about her identity serving as a form of transformational change in her family and community's attitudes towards *Jotería Rural* folks, mainly because her family stressed that one of the major contributors to homophobia and transphobia within sectors of the community is a lack of information. Thus, their experiences have served as catalysts of community education and change (I will detail this further in the next Chapter):

Nahomi: *Yo he sentido discriminación. Tomando el tema de familia, sí. Mi papá y mi hermano [me discriminaban]. Mi papá incluso nos decía que me quería*

¹⁰⁶ Bogart: I want to give a huge recognition to previous generations, people from back then. Because they [gay people from before] suffered a lot. We too suffered, just like how people would mock us. We suffered a lot [us]. They would kill them [previous generations]. They would put them in jail. The generations that came before us, who fought, really fought.

More: Besides being a mortal sin, it was a crime. Because macho people didn't respect anyone's authority to defend themselves.

More: Well, just a little while ago, my uncle's relative... I have two aunts. From my dad's side of the family, I didn't receive any bad behavior, but from my second uncles' side, they would mock me because I was different. So, you're creating this shield of saying 'I'm not going to let you get to me' and 'I'm going to defend myself,' you understand? Because I wouldn't let those taunts happen because my mom always told me that if someone disrespects you, you should tell them to stop. You're forming this shield that prevents them from hurting you. There are people who have even taken their own lives due to discrimination. One day, talking to my mom, we brought up the topic of when people would make comments about me when they would mock me and I said, "What's the best part?" The ones who used to mock me now have a gay person living in their house! I don't want to call it karma, but they're living what we lived. Thanks to God, we saw homosexuality differently than they did. Because in our town, everyone knows how we live [as gay people in our town], and they're going through tough times [the ones living in those homophobic households]. They're being beaten up. They dragged someone with a horse because they realized it [that they were gay] and then it's something to see the difference [in comparison to how they treat us]. One is treated with love and accepted and [and the treatment received by others is] something that's brutal, violent.

matar y siempre tuvimos problemas. Mi mamá hace rato platicamos, las mamás siempre nos han protegido. Nos han dado más nuestro lugar. O nos identificamos más con ellas. Porque ya sabes el hombre que es machista si es hombre tiene que ser hombre y a fuerzas quiere que uno sea lo que ellos quieran. En esta actualidad [ser trans]es algo que viene de la naturaleza y la naturaleza pues nos la manda dios y es algo que no podemos cambiar. Los seres humanos no. Entonces, si sufrí. Si sufrí discriminación con mi papá y te digo llegué a batallar con mi mamá. Y en ocasiones yo decía pues yo si soy el problema, pues yo si optaba por, ¿o me quito la vida? ¿O me voy lejos que nadie sepa? Porque yo [pesaba] soy el problema. Pero ya después con el paso de tiempo mi mamá siempre me arropo. Mi familia, también de parte de mi mamá fui más querida más por la familia de mi mamá que por la de mi papá [no me trato bien], al final de cuentas yo fui creciendo y pues dije yo soy una persona buena onda buena gente digo yo no veo el mal en mí y dije pues yo tengo que salir adelante, aunque mi papá no me acepte en algún momento tendrá que aceptarme y si con el paso del tiempo mi papá se dio cuenta que soy un ser humano y valía como tal. Entonces en algún momento el me pidió disculpas y fue cambiando conmigo en la casa y pues ya teníamos en la casa un poco más de armonía y alegría porque ya mi papá [ya] me empezaba a aceptar. Ya mi mamá ya no peleaba con él y pues ya me sentía mucho mejor porque gracias a dios mi papá fue agarrando el rollo. Con gente de fuera, no le tome mucha importancia. Porque ya lo, en la casa, ya lo había sufrido eso, entonces en la calle yo dije ya si me lo hacen en la casa, en la calle que me

espera y pues tengo que ser fuerte. Ya lo de la gente de la calle no me afecto tanto.

Todos: *En la calle aprendes a ser fuerte.*¹⁰⁷

Nahomi's story is important because it highlights the gendered rhetoric of coloniality introduced and re-articulated in the rural. Through her resilience, she has created a transformative atmosphere to shift these deep-rooted ideologies within her nuclear family:

Nahomi: Mi mamá falleció hace 5 años más[más o menos] y pues ella me conoció y me aceptó como tal. Y ahorita nomas tengo a mi papá que no le tengo rencor mucho menos lo quiero porque es mi papá y ha sabido ganarse mi cariño porque antes no me quería y con el paso de tiempo ahorita de los 8 hermanos que tengo, de todos, yo he estado a cargo de él. Y es lo que menos esperaba. El esperaba de otra gente de sus hijos, pero todos están fuera y aquí

¹⁰⁷ Nahomi: I felt discrimination. Talking about family, yes. My father and brother [discriminated against me]. My father even told me he wanted to kill me, and we always had problems. We talked about it earlier, our moms always protected us. They gave us our place. We identify more with them. Because you know, men are macho, and they think they have to be a certain way and want you to be that way too. But being trans is something that comes from nature and nature is something God gives us and it's something we can't change. Humans can't change that. So, I suffered. I suffered discrimination from my father, and I'd say, 'I'm the problem, I'm the one who chose this, or should I take my life? Or should I leave somewhere where nobody knows me?' Because I thought I was the problem. But later, when time passed, my mom always supported me. My family, including my mom's side of the family, loved me more than my dad's side [they didn't treat me well]. In the end, I grew up and said, 'I'm a good person, good people don't see the evil in me,' and said, 'I need to move forward,' even if my dad doesn't accept me sometimes, he'll have to accept me eventually. And if time passed and my dad realized I was a human being worth something.. Then at some point, he asked for forgiveness and began to change with me at home, and we started having a bit more harmony and joy because my dad was starting to accept me. My mom wasn't fighting with him anymore, and I felt much better because thanks to God, my dad started seeing things differently. With outsiders, I didn't take too much importance because I had already suffered that at home, so if they do it to me at home, in the street what's waiting for me? And I have to be strong. The people on the street didn't affect me as much.

All: You learn to be strong on the street.

nada más estoy yo con él. mucho más empezó a valorarme. En un momento yo le dije que no le aguardo rencor para que no se sienta mal que, porque si sufrí y si sufrí en su momento, pero ya sané gracias a dios. Yo lo perdono de corazón. Yo pienso que mi mamá en paz descanse, está orgullosa de mí. Me lo demostró en vida. Hay gente que también si sabe apreciar y valorar, aunque no te conozcan o a que no seas de su familia, pero a mi mamá le decían, 'Tiene un hijo extraordinario, cuídalo es una persona maravillosa, muy alegre muy amigüero muy respetoso.' Siempre la felicitaban porque teníamos un negocio entre las dos y mis clientes siempre decían "es que tu hija esto tu hijo aquello la gente con respeto. Ella también, ella [mi mamá] nunca me hablo de mujer y eso se tiene que respetar a la mejor era para ella más difícil, pero lo aceptaba, pero siempre te hablaban con el nombre que ellos te dieron al crecer y todo, pero también en el momento te respetaban y te daban tu lugar. Había, por ejemplo, había momentos donde la gente se refería 'hay su hijo su hija' y mi mamá decía 'ahh Nahomi.' Ósea ya no decía tanto mi otro nombre (gave them time). También era adaptándose de como uno fue viviendo su vida. Hasta incluso ya hasta relajaban.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Nahomi: My mom passed away about 5 years ago, more or less, and she knew and accepted me for who I am. And now, I only have my dad left, and I don't hold any grudges against him, nor do I dislike him because he's my dad and has earned my love over time. Before, he didn't want to accept me, but with time passing, now I'm in charge of taking care of him, which is what I least expected. I thought others from his side would be like that, but they're all gone and now I'm the only one left with him. He started valuing me more too. At one point, I told him I don't hold any grudges against him so he wouldn't feel bad, because I suffered and suffered in my time, but thanks to God, I've healed. I forgive him from the bottom of my heart. I think my mom, may she rest in peace, is proud of me. She showed me that in life. There are people who also know how to appreciate and value someone even if they don't know them or aren't family, but they would tell my mom, 'You have an extraordinary child, take care of them, they're a wonderful person, very happy, very friendly, very respectful.' Everyone would congratulate her because we had a business together and our customers would always say, 'Your daughter/son is this or that; people treat them with respect.' She never referred to me as a woman and I was fine with it; it was harder for her at times, but she accepted it

It is clear then, that even families facilitate broader acceptance and have their own tactics for challenging homophobia.

***Casta* Influence**

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in an ontological sense, *Jalisco* has Afro-descendent roots. Despite this, *Casta* influence continues to exist in *Jalisco*. One example is the Eurocentric beauty standards attributed to the Ms. Gay and Ms. Trans *certámenes*¹⁰⁹ and drag shows. In the last few years, in *Los Altos de Jalisco*, many *pueblos* and *ranchos* have hosted *certámenes* exclusive to LGBTQIA+ that crown Ms. Gay and Ms. Trans. These crowns, however, have also extended to include the King and Queen of the pride marches. However, despite the strides for inclusivity among LGBTQIA+ folks, *Casta* Influence permeates the selection process. I experienced this first-hand through participating in the Toto-Diverso collective this year (2024). In our planning meetings for the 2024 march (which I will discuss in detail in the next Chapter), we decided to hand pick the next march queens since we needed more funding to assemble a *certamen*. Ultimately, the committee selected two Trans Women identifying queens: Yailin/Lupillo and Yos (see Figure 26). We selected them because when we had our first pride march in 2023, while everyone at the march was apprehensive and fearful, they were the only ones who demonstrated courage and empowerment (see Figure 26).

Figure 26

Yos (front-left) and Yailin/Lupillo (Front-Right) Demonstrating Courage and

[my transness]. But they would always call me by the name they gave me as a child and everything, but they also respected me and gave me my place. There were times when people would refer to 'your child' and my mom would say 'Ah Nahomi,' which meant she wasn't saying my other name (I gave them time). She was also adapting to how one lived their life. Even now, they've relaxed quite a bit.

¹⁰⁹ Beauty Pageant

Empowerment in the First Ever Pride Marcha in Tototlán, Jalisco in June 2023



However, one committee member was against selecting Yos as a queen because she “did not fit the beauty standards.” He, however, did not protest Lupillo/Yailin because they have lighter skin that is more closely connected to European ancestry, whereas Yos has darker skin resembling Indigenous attributes. Not only did the problematic committee member’s views mirror *Casta* Influence, but they also resembled and are a product of localized nation-state projects of constructing the idealized, white *Jalisciense*¹¹⁰ I discussed in Chapter 3. To justify his claims, he consulted with a neighboring municipality diversity collective called Zona Pink, which has been around for 10 years. He argued that Zona Pink has been around longer. Therefore, “they know best.” However, another neighbor collective, Ocotlán Diverso, who are more conscious about racial disparities in Mexico, advised the committee that Zona Pink often replicates *Casta* Influence in their own events. This resulted in a heated discussion amongst the committee as the problematic committee member in question

¹¹⁰ From Jalisco

began to say that Yos “*estaba fea*¹¹¹” did not represent the face of *Tototlán*. However, most of the committee stuck to our position and refused to change our stance. In retaliation, the problematic committee member started a private chat group on WhatsApp that discretely planned to select a new queen to replace Yos. Again, justifying his claims that Zona Pink knew what was best for our march because of experience, he decided to pick a non-LGBTQIA+ “ally” cis woman to replace Yos. When he sent us a picture of the woman, it was a person with blonde hair and blue eyes.

Figure 27

*Reinas of the 2024 Pride March “Ms. Trans” Yos (pink dress) and “Ms. Reina de La Marcha*¹¹²*” Yailin/Lupillo (white dress)*



¹¹¹ Is ugly

¹¹² LGBTQIA+ marches under the cosmology of Mexico.



When we found out about these plans, we protested by stating that his attitudes were racist and that it was unfair to strip someone of a crown that we had already promised it to. His plan, however, backfired as another committee member, Lupita (a Trans Woman), was in charge of raising and growing funds and decided to withhold the funds he planned to use to purchase the crown and dress for his chosen queen (I will discuss the transnational projects I engaged organized to raise funds for the march between *Jotería* of Global North and Global South for the 2023 and 2024 *Tototlán* Pride marches in the next Chapter). He said nothing to me because he knew my role was pivotal in raising funds for the march. Instead, he took his anger out on Lupita through transphobic tactics, particularly by creating a new WhatsApp group for the committee and eliminating Lupita and all the Trans women from the chats. However, as a committee, we refused to participate in his new group. He also embodied hate towards Lupita because before Lupita had joined the committee this year (2024), the year prior (2023), he oversaw 100 percent of the funds. This year (2024), we chose Lupita to take over because she is a business owner and is financially savvy. In the aftermath, he left the committee in protest of Yos becoming one of the queens of the *marcha* and because he no longer had control over funds. In addition, we also found out he had

pocketed/stolen most of the funds from the year prior (2023). I selected this specific case because it represents how ingrained *Casta* Influence lurks even within *Jotería Rural* circles.

In *Tamiahua*, More and Bogart also disclosed that they have also experienced the interlaced hierarchies of gender impositions and *Casta* Influence. Further, they expressed how intersectional their disparities are:

Bogart: *Yo retomando el tema de discriminación. Me tope hace poco al programa de Rupaul. Una vez hizo una reunión el programa y RuPaul saco una frase muy icónica para mí. Dijo que los blancos lo discriminaron por ser negro. Los negros lo discriminaron por ser gay. Y los gays lo discriminaron por ser afeminado. A eso voy. Lamentablemente la discriminación existe en cualquieras de las diferencias que hay en esta vida. Por falta de cultura, por quistiones religiosas argumentan que somos personas que “no deben ser.” Lamentablemente todos hemos recibido en algún momento mucha discriminación. Como digieran vulgarmente. Si eres negro, te discriminan...si eres gay te discriminan... y si eres gay negro afeminado, pues ya tienes 3 tipos de discriminación. Porque dentro de la comunidad existe la discriminación.*

More: *¡Entonces ya estamos tronadas entonces! Hay hasta hombres gay que discriminan a las mujeres trans. Hasta las mismas mujeres cis te discriminan. Si una se arregla, hasta le tiran veneno si se ve mejor una que ellas. Hasta dicen “aquí tu no vas a ser más' que yo, porque yo soy mujer.”¹¹³*

¹¹³ Bogart: Let's go back to the topic of discrimination. I recently watched an episode of RuPaul's program, and RuPaul said a very iconic phrase that resonated with me. He said that whites discriminated against him because he's black, blacks discriminated against him because he's gay, and gays discriminated against him

Clearly, Bogart and More's analysis projects a deep intersectionality of race, gender, sexuality, rural, and Global North/Global South dynamic. Also, they made it clear that *Afro-Jotería Rural* continue to live a dangerous intersectionality. Just like the colonial period, there are also hierarchies of contention in the rural influenced by 19th and 20th turn of the century impositions of virility.

19th-20th Turn of the Century Imposition of Virility through Military Punishment (The 41) (IHR)

In the aftermath of the Dance of the 41 scandal, during the era of the *Porfiriato*, 19 of 42 men, members of the Mexican political and economic elite who were found having a secret underground Gay gathering, were sent to a military camp in Yucatan (Capistran, 2018). This was part of a compulsive obsession to make the Mexican nation-state virile. Like the 19 that were sent to the military barracks in Yucatan as a form of punishment, Daniel was forced to sign up for the military to make him more virile when *se destapo*¹¹⁴. He confessed to me that his family had forced him to sign up for the military as a form of conversion therapy:

Soy originario de Cuernavaca (ciudad). En Cuernavaca es una ciudad muy grande y allá no puedes divulgar 'soy Gay.' Cuando mi papá biológico se

because he's flamboyant. That's what I'm saying. Unfortunately, discrimination exists in all the differences we have in life due to lack of culture, religious beliefs, and they argue that we are people who 'shouldn't be.' Unfortunately, we've all received discrimination at some point. As they say colloquially: if you're black, you're discriminated against... if you're gay, you're discriminated against... and if you're a black, gay, flamboyant person, well, you have three types of discrimination. Because within the community, there is discrimination.

More: So, we're already worn out then! There are even gay men who discriminate against trans women. Even cisgender women discriminate against us. If someone fixes themselves up, they'll even throw shade at them if they look better than they do. They even say, 'You're not going to be more than me because I'm a woman.'

¹¹⁴ Translates loosely to "came out."

enteró que era Gay lo que hizo fue meterme al servicio militar. Estaba un año en el servicio militar porque pensaban que era como una enfermedad que tenía y que con estando con hombres fuertes osea se me iba quitar, pero no fue así. Ser Gay no es ninguna enfermedad ni es malo. He vivido un poco de todo como cuando entré al servicio militar porque no pensé que iba aguantar porque era una situación muy difícil. Mas que nada por mí. Te levantan a las 5 de la mañana porque te meten a bañar desnudo con los demás chavos y tú sabes que tu preferencia son los hombres y te tienes que abstener y dices no manches me gusto equis persona. Y pues si estuvo fuerte la experiencia porque fue mucho tiempo que tuve que aguantar. Ahorita el machismo que es un tema y piensas que te van a golpear, decir algo o humillar.¹¹⁵

The “pathologization of *Jotería Rural*: 20th century medical discourse influence” also appeared in the example of Daniel because his sexuality was also categorized as *una enfermedad*,¹¹⁶ pseudo-medical discourses circulating in the 20th century discourse justified homophobia scientifically. The army was where he was sent by his family to “cure this *enfermedad*” because historically, the Mexican army has been an institution that policed the state and who were better aligned to Mexican virile imaginary. This same compulsive virile ideology was another prominent sub-theme

¹¹⁵ I'm from Cuernavaca (city). In Cuernavaca, it's a big city and you can't just go around saying 'I'm Gay.' When my biological father found out I was Gay, he put me in the military. I was in the military for a year because they thought being Gay was like an illness that could be cured by being with strong men, but it wasn't like that. Being Gay is not an illness or bad. I've lived through a lot of tough situations, like when I was in the military, because I didn't think I was going to make it through because it was a very difficult situation, especially for me. They wake you up at 5 am and make you shower naked with the other guys, and you know your preference is for men and you have to restrain yourself and say "no, I don't like this person." And so, the experience was intense because I had to endure it for a long time. Right now, machismo is a big topic, and you think they're going to beat you up, say something humiliating to you.

¹¹⁶ A sickness

among the traumas faced by the contributors in this study. Specifically, the immense hate for male femininity.

20th Century Virile Rhetoric as Justification for Immense Hate of Male Femininity (IHR)

In the aftermath of the dance of the 41, male femininity became equated to homosexuality (Irwin, 2003). Subsequently, 20th century revolutionary national discourses elevated virile masculinity and demoted femininity as undesirable (Ruvalcaba, 2007). This rhetoric ultimately equated femininity to “lack of nationalism and absence of commitment” (Irwin, 2003; Ruvalcaba, 2007, p. 63). Homophobia guided this exclusionist rhetoric. This 20th -century rhetoric continues to live in the national consciousness of the Mexican nation-state and in rural spaces as evidenced by the *Pláticas* I had with the contributors of this project.

One of the first things I noticed was that femininity continues to be equated to homosexuality. My primo Beto, for example, often gets accused of being Gay because he exhibits mannerisms that many people code as feminine. Many of the *Jotería Rural* I spoke to also ask me “¿Por qué no se destapa tu primo Beto? ¿Si se le nota!”¹¹⁷ Téo revealed to me that the people of *Nuevo Refugio* indeed equate femininity to homosexuality. “*Aquí nos ponen la etiqueta de porque eres así, automáticamente tienes que ser vestida y desatada y no es así. El hecho de que eres Gay no quiere decir que eres así. Simplemente si te gusta un chico, sigues siendo el mismo,*”¹¹⁸ he stated.

¹¹⁷ Why doesn't your cousin Beto come out? If it's so obvious! It's so obvious!

¹¹⁸ They label us here because you're that way, and automatically you have to be dressed up and loose, and it's not like that. The fact that you're Gay doesn't mean you're that way. Simply because you like a boy, you're still the same.

Ignacio and Ricky disclosed that they tend to identify *Jotería Rural* by their level of masculinity or femininity. “*Los detecto cuando son así bien afeminados*¹¹⁹,” Ignacio said. “*Hay unos que se ven bien torciditos desde chiquitos, pero ósea hay que saber cómo convivir con todos*¹²⁰,” Hector stated. Neto added that this 20th century logic is still prevalent because some community members see *Jotería Rural* as criminals, “*hay gente que notas como te mira, mal, que te miran como un delínquete o un criminal*¹²¹,” Neto stated.

Another instance that shows how prevalent this virile exclusionist ideology continues to be in the rural is my experience with El Suave and Lupillo/Yailin at Mickey’s Wings Bar in 2018. This experience is perhaps one of the most important in this project because it highlights how vital it is to use *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies to decipher cultural-specific meanings that go overlooked when the knowledge of the contributors is not validated as legitimate. I accompanied El Suave and Lupillo/Yailin to dinner at Mickey’s Wings Bar. I noticed that there was a series of murals on the walls. Some of these murals included a Mickey’s Wings Bar logo that was designed like the Harley Davidson brand, an unfinished Club America soccer logo, a *7 Leguas* tequila bottle, and a Texas Longhorn logo. The logo that stuck out the most was an LGBTQIA+ flag located on a wall next to a table directly underneath a staircase with the letters “V.I.P” written beneath the flag (not to be confused with the VIP drag club in *Poncitlán*, which I will discuss later).

Figure 28

¹¹⁹ I detect them when they're like that, so effeminate.

¹²⁰ There are some who can be seen as a bit gay from a young age, but it's also important to know how to live with everyone.

¹²¹ There are people who look at you badly, as if they're looking at a delinquent or a criminal.

VIP Section at Micky's Wings in 2018



At first, I assumed that this LGBTQIA+ flag mural signified that the owner, Micky, had provided a safe space for *Jotería Rural* to congregate. I further theorized this was perhaps a sign of full community support and solidarity. It also emphasizes *convivencia*, considering that El Suave and Lupillo/Yailin were regulars at Micky's Wings. El Suave and Lupillo/Yailin. However, they also clarified that neither of those theories were completely the case. This was because Mickey purposely placed the "LGBTQIA+ VIP section" at the bottom of a staircase (Mickey's was a two-story bar), away from all his other regular customers. However, Mickey still wanted El Suave and Lupillo/Yailin's business and preferred that they be away from the virile, *buga*¹²² men. Lupillo/Yailin expressed sentiments of rejection:

Nos lo hicieron exclusivo para nosotros [la sección VIP LBTQIA+]. Me sonó un poco grosero [el espacio] porque nos aventó a la orilla. Y si varadamente nos viera querido tener allí, nos pondría [el espacio] a medias o a mero medias o arriba medias que se yo. Pero lo puso en la orilla escondida cosa que yo digo bueno, para mí fue un

¹²² Translates to heterosexual in Mexican Gay cosmology. See Mexico Se Escribe Con J and Memma's House.

rechazamiento. (sic) No fue algo impuro que yo digo que yo fuera hecho si yo fuera el dueño a mí me vale que personas se metan, que tipo de persona entre. Consumiendo no importa qué tipo de persona sea (si el fuera el dueño that's how he would run the business). No fue así, como yo lo pensé, vi que si nos echaron como para afuera porque más que nada lo pusieron bien a la orilla. Somos clientes y te reciben pos [pues] con las manos abiertas. Pienso que nos pusieron a la orilla por cuestiones de que dirá la gente o qué dirán las personas que vengan porque tengo a estos [los Gays] enfrente. [A la mejor Mike piensa] No se vayan a querer pasar [los otros clientes] disque los que son más hombres que uno porque quizás vayan a decir 'allí están esos jotos' o 'esos maricas' que se yo. Fue un rechazo. Se vio que todavía están en limbo las cosas de que todavía no entiende la gente.¹²³ El Suave felt the same way as Lupillo/Yailin about the VIP section. "A mí también se me hizo mal que nos hicieron a la orilla como si no valiéramos nada, pero igual nos da la misma¹²⁴," El Suave divulged. I later noticed Micky's subtle homophobia during a conversation I had with him a few days later when I came to the bar with Cobain. Mickey told me that he believed their outlandish femme behavior was "vulgar."¹²⁵ He also stated that the type of behavior they exhibit should not be made in public. Micky's wings went bankrupt in 2020 and closed.

¹²³ They made it exclusive for us [the VIP LBTQIA+ section]. The space sounded a bit rough to me because they threw us to the side. And if I had wanted to have it, I would have put it at half or at least half across the bar. But they put it in a hidden corner, and I say that's not good for me, because for me it was a type of rejection. It wasn't something impure, I say, because if I were the owner, I would be fine with people coming in, regardless of the kind of person they are (if he were the owner, that's how he would run the business). It wasn't like that, as I thought, because they threw us out like that because they put it really on the side (the space). We're customers and they should welcome you with open arms. I think they put us on the side for what people might say or what people who come might say because the owner might have thought I have these [gays] right in front of me. [Mike thinks] Maybe he thought they [other customers] would be discouraged from coming in because they're seeing "those faggots" or "those queers" and so on. It was a rejection. It seems that things are still in limbo because people still don't understand.

¹²⁴ It also bothered me that they treated us like we were nothing, pushing us to the side as if we didn't matter at all, but I don't really care.

¹²⁵ Vulgar

The equating of unapologetic male femininity to vulgarity was another pattern I noticed in *Nuevo Refugio* and *Tototlán*. Many of my family members and *Nuevo Refugio* community members referred to Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave as vulgar because they refused to perform virile masculinity. One of these individuals was Juan Gabriel, who expressed that he disapproved of how Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave “exhibited themselves” in the way they did. Another individual who expressed his disdain for unapologetic, open male-femininity was Ignacio, who revealed that although he has respect for the *certamen* performers in *Tototlán*, he believes that they are highly vulgar and need to have some level of *respeto* (I will discuss *respeto* further in the resistance methods section).

Nonetheless, this virile, homophobic rhetoric continues to affect the lives of the contributors. Neto stated that though there are a percentile of individuals that he considers to be true allies, he also shared his experiences of people attempting to humiliate and discriminate against him and how vital it is for *Jotería Rural* to stick up for themselves in *Tototlán*:

Los vatos son mas así que dicen, ‘pinche joto,’ pero no lo dicen con intención para ofender, pero hay otros que, sí. ¿Y eso se siente, ¿verdad? La gente aquí es muy hipócrita. Aquí como hay de todo hay un 30% que fingen de estar de acuerdo, pero tiran mierda. 20% que de plano si aceptan y nos ven bien. 50% que nos gritan en la calle ‘jotos’ y cosas así o hacen sonidos desagradables con la boca (Neto hace sonido de un pedo con la boca para enseñarme en esta parte de la plática), no se para molestar. Una vez fui a recoger un amigo a la central y se subió a mi carro y grito un taxista, ‘¿ya se van a coger?’ o sea si íbamos a

*coger, pero a el que le importa? Después le grite, '¿le da envidia porque a usted ni quien se lo coja o qué?' O sea, aquí les tienes que responder porque si te callas se van sobre ti. No sé qué tenga que pasar para que ellos entiendan. De hecho, hay gente con familiares homosexuales y aun así son mamones. Son mierda con nosotros. No sé qué tiene que pasar para que ellos entiendan.*¹²⁶

Daniel also shared his experiences with these homophobic virile ideologies during his time in *El Grucho* and the *pueblo* of *Ocotlán*. He suggested that the treatment he received in *Tototlán* was far better than the ones he received in *El Grucho* and *Ocotlán*:

*Es raro, si cambia mucho porque en el Grucho, por ejemplo, donde yo soy, no puedes decir, 'Yo soy Gay' porque la gente te empieza a discriminar. La gente empieza a señalar y decirte, 'mira ese pinche jotito.' Te dan un trato diferente como aquí te dan en comparación [a Tototlán]. Este, una experiencia que te sirva. Estaba trabajando en Santinos [una pizzería en Ocotlán] y llego una pareja de mujer y hombre y pues burlándose, 'hay mira el jotito.' Nunca me había pasado fue algo muy feo, se sintió feo, pero sin embargo cambia mucho el trato [aquí en Tototlán].*¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Guys are like that, saying "fucking faggot," but not with the intention to offend, but there are others who do. And that's how it feels, right? People here are very hypocritical. Here, out of a hundred, 30% pretend to be in agreement but they're actually crap. 20% just accept us and see us well. 50% yell at us in the street, "faggots" and stuff like that, or make unpleasant sounds with their mouth (Neto makes a fart sound with his mouth to demonstrate this part of the conversation). It's just to bother you. One time I went to pick up a friend at the bus station and a taxi driver yelled out, "Are you guys going to get in?" meaning are we going to pick up someone else, but what does it matter to him? Then he yelled, "Does it give him envy because no one wants you or what?" That is, you have to respond because if you stay quiet they'll just talk about you. I don't know what has to happen for them to understand. In fact, there are people with gay relatives and yet they're still bigots. They're crap with us. I don't know what has to happen for them to understand.

¹²⁷ It's weird, because it changes a lot, for example in *Grucho*, where I'm from, you can't say "I'm Gay" because people start discriminating against you. People start pointing and saying, "Look at that little faggot." They treat you differently compared to here, in *Tototlán*. This is an experience that might serve

Ricky mocked the contradictions of this virile masculinity. Specifically, the homoeroticism that virile masculinity embodies (Irwin, 2003):

Curiosamente era lo que vi. Que a nosotros todo mundo Jotos, Gays, o lo que nos quieras llamar, putos [joteamos]. Pero, jotear igual lo hacen los hombres. Según muy hombres, se andan agarrando el culo sus partes y todo como un 'juego de hombres' cuando en realidad nosotros [los Gays] no lo hacemos. A la mejor si payaseamos verbalmente. Nos hablamos de perra, 'ay perra' 'ay jota,' pero nunca nos andamos agarrando.¹²⁸

These virile attitudes have also been manifested through the contemporary nation-state, mainly through local governments. For example, my committee-mate, Raul, disclosed that the municipal president refused to disperse funds or support for our first march back in 2023. The president suggested that *Tototlán* was “not ready” for “this kind” of march. However, Raul was persistent and continued to attend the municipal presidential building every day until one of his advisors persuaded him to give us the minimum support as election season was coming up the following year. Jessica, the committee member of Poncitlán Diverso, who did not have time to give me a full interview because of her commitments as the new CEO of the VIP drag bar in *Poncitlán* (I will discuss this further in the next Chapter), disclosed to me that the local government in *Poncitlán* also outright refused to give her support even though she

you. I was working at Santinos [a pizzeria in Ocotlán] and a couple of a man and a woman came in and started making fun of me, "look at the faggot." It was something very ugly, it felt ugly, but despite that, the treatment changes a lot.

¹²⁸ Curiously, that's what I saw. Everyone calls us Jotos, Gays, or whatever you want to call us, faggots. But, joting [homosexual behavior] is done by men too. According to very men, they grab each other's butts and all as part of a "game among men" when in reality we [Gays] don't do that. At most, we joke verbally. We talk about "perra" ["perra" is a derogatory term for a woman, but in this context, it seems to be used as a playful way to refer to each other], "ay perra," "ay jota," but we never grab each other.

worked at the presidential building. She even received threats from government members, cartels, and community members. However, she prevailed, and they had their first march in 2021. Moreover, Jose did detail to me the nation-state's virile attitudes through their biased and unfair monetary disbursement practices:

Yo Bueno, yo tenía que llegar a participar, pero me daba muchísimo miedo. No cabe mencionar que nunca había asistido a una marcha. Sabía que existían. Sabía que en Guadalajara existían, que ya llevaban tiempo. Y era como un sueño. Yo sabes, será como, decir, ¡ay! ¿Qué padre podrá asistir una marcha? Porque no es como que vivido en un rancho a tengas como la accesibilidad a este tipo de movimientos o este tipo de expresión. Entonces, pues, de repente tú sientes como esa, esa, ese llamado no de querer formar parte de esa comunidad al menos un día como sentirte, pues identificado. Y pues yo creo que no estoy, así como transmisiones de influencers, así como de que todo por Internet, porque pues, no podía. Incluso Este nunca hubo como un interés como de las autoridades como por apoyo para llevarnos a acceder a este tipo de movimientos, pero que es algo que se llama muy curioso, que la parte deportiva es muy este fuerte aquí en Poncitlán y en Ahuatlán, que es la reacción de yo vivo entonces cualquier evento deportivo que va a ver que es importante, sacan camiones. Así de que del rancho a Guadalajara para que la gente pueda asistir. Pero en ningún momento como que tomaron en cuenta la comunidad LGBT

*como para decir, Ah, pues hay que sacar un camión para las personas que quieren asistir a la marcha a Guadalajara, pues vayan, no.*¹²⁹

Folks like Jose and Jessica paved the way for the government to support these events in *Poncitlán*. However, as we discussed, it is out of convenience for politics to be reelected. Still, *Jotería Rural* took advantage of this to receive at least minimal support. Like the cases of the rural zones of *Jalisco*, the nation-state has also repressed *Afro-Jotería Rural* in *Tamiahua, Veracruz*. As More, Chucho, and Bogart described, before the turn of the 21st century, *Tamiahua* had a bit more subjectivity regarding sexuality and gender performance. This allowed for travestí shows to be realized by trailblazer *Jotería Rural* in the 1980s and 1990s, which were quite popular. However, these shows became banned by a virile municipal president in the early 2000s:

Bogart: *Yo me acuerdo de que, ¿te acuerdas Chucho? Hace unos 20-25 años decían que no podría haber shows travestí en Tamiahua. ¡Estaban Cancelados! ¡Por la autoridad municipal! Ósea no podías tú en una fiesta tener show travestí.*

More: *Ósea homofóbico el señor (el presidente).*

Chucho: *¡Un gay es así, Gay! No porque se vaya a hacer. No es gripa.*

¹²⁹ So, I had to participate, but I was really scared. It's hard to mention that I had never attended a march before. I knew they existed, I knew there were ones in Guadalajara, that they had been around for a while. And it was like a dream. You know, it's like saying, 'Oh! Can a father attend a march?' Because it's not like living on a ranch, having access to this kind of movement or expression. So, suddenly you feel like that, that call to want to be part of that community at least one day and feel identified. And I didn't think it was like the live transmissions of influencers or how everything is on the internet, but I couldn't tell because I had never experienced a marcha. Even in this case, there was no interest from the authorities to support us in accessing these kinds of movements. But it's something curious, of the support for sports is very strong here in *Poncitlán* and *Ahuatlán*, where every time there's a sports event that's important, they bring buses from the ranch to Guadalajara so people can attend. But at no point did they consider the LGBT community and say, 'Hey, we should bring a bus for people who want to attend the march in Guadalajara, go ahead!' No way.

Bogart: *Por ejemplo, Chato, Santiago, fueron También como ese parteaguas aquí en Tamiahua para la comunidad. ¡Ósea porque ya hacían su show travesti y la gente iba y ya lo veían (ser gay o trans) de diferente manera! y después les cortaron la idea (los del gobierno a la comunidad) que ya no tenían que ir a eso.*

Luis: *¿Cuándo fue eso?*

Bogart: *Creo que fue entre los 80s y 90s. Cuando estaba prohibido en Tamiahua realizar un show como estos. Pero jalaba gente.*

More: *Fue el presidente.*¹³⁰

Chucho pointed out in our *convivio* that being Jotx is not a cold/sickness.

However, 20th-century virile homophobic discourses (IHR) were still partly justified through the scientific basis of sexology in national discourses (previously through religious nefarious sin justification) (IHR). This pathologizing logic has been another theoretical base people use for discrimination in the rural.

¹³⁰ Bogart: I remember when, do you remember Chucho? About 20-25 years ago, they said there couldn't be drag shows in Tamiahua. They were CANCELED! By the municipal authority! You couldn't even have a drag show at a private party.

More: I mean, the mayor was homophobic.

Chucho: A gay person is like that, Gay! They're not going to 'turn' gay. It's not a cold.

Bogart: For example, Chato, Santiago, were also part of that movement here in Tamiahua for the community. I mean, because they already had their drag shows and people would go and see (being gay or trans) in a different way! And then the government cut off the idea (for the community) that they no longer had to go to that.

Luis: When was that?

Bogart: I think it was between the 80s and 90s. When it was forbidden to perform shows like these in Tamiahua. But people loved them.

More: It was the mayor.

Pathologization of Men Who Have Sex with Men Through the Influence of 20th Century Medical Discourse (IHR)

Between 1925 and 1932, the Mexican nation-state began to implement eugenics and sexology as a secular justification for homophobia (with the nefarious sin being the religious justification) (Monsiváis, 1995). Homosexuality, then, was seen as a “highly infectious disease” that threatened the virility of the Mexican nation-state and the strength of revolutionary institutions (Ruvalcaba, 2007). It was also seen as a degeneration that “only the most inferior humans are likely to succumb” (Irwin, 2003, p. xxi). The legacies of these perverse ideologies carry on to contemporary times and continue to shape discrimination in the rural.

One example of this pathologizing logic still prevalent in the rural is Daniel’s anecdotes of being sent off to the military. As I previously mentioned, Daniel was sent to the military by his parents as a method of conversion therapy because his parents believed that his sexuality was an *enfermedad*. Daniel also stated that his family also sent him to his pastor as another tactic to “cure” his sexuality:

Da mucho miedo porque el pastor donde nosotros íbamos, el pastor tenía las visiones y yo era de las personas que cuando yo iba a la iglesia, nunca me ponía hacia adelante. Siempre me trataba de esconderme con el miedo que el pastor supiera que era Gay. Porque mi mamá me decía estás mal, estás enfermo y me llevaba con el pastor. De hecho, actualmente a veces me habla y me pregunta, ‘¿ya eres normal?’ Como Gay uno tiene una vida muy sufrida, muy doloroso. Un gay sufre más que una persona que no es Gay porque empiezan los rechazos, las indirectas, y si batalla uno y sufre. Pero tiene que saber cómo

afrentar esa situación. Porque siempre alguien detrás de uno que te va a sacar adelante. Mi familia nunca pensó que me iba titular. La última vez les dije que deberían estar orgullosos de mí por titularme. He llevado una vida sufrida, pero al mismo tiempo una muy feliz.¹³¹

Neto also divulged that many community members he has come across tend to pathologize *Jotería Rural* by putting them in the same category as child predators. “*Nos tachan como si fuéramos violadores de niños, abusadores¹³²,*” Neto stated (IHR). Téó also claimed that in *el rancho*, some community members see *Jotería Rural* as corrupters; a clear influence of 20th century seduction theory (Irwin, 2003). “*Realmente no se respetan. [las personas Gay] son realmente criticados y se levantan muchos falsos. Como [la gente] no está preparada para esto, realmente la gente se siente afectada...como que no se cómo somos la apestía del lugar. Que vamos a corrumptar,¹³³*” Téó said.

Like institutions policed *Jotería Rural* bodies in the 20th century, *la gente*, as Téó highlights, have their own method of policing *Jotería Rural*. They do this through *chismes* or *las habladas*. Essentially, it is an elaborate system of Ancestral Collective Surveillance. I recognize that *chisme* is also used as a form of protection by *Jotería*

¹³¹ It scared me a lot because the pastor at the church we went to had visions and I was one of those people who, when I went to church, never sat upfront. I always tried to hide because I was afraid the pastor would find out I was Gay. Because my mom would say, ‘You're bad, you're sick’ and take me to see the pastor. In fact, even now, sometimes she talks to me and asks, ‘Are you normal?’ As a Gay person, one has a very difficult, very painful life. A Gay person suffers more than someone who is not Gay because they start experiencing rejections, hints, and if one fights and suffers. But one has to know how to face that situation. Because someone is always behind you who will help you move forward. My family never thought I would come out. The last time I told them they should be proud of me for coming out. I've lived a difficult life, but at the same time a very happy one.

¹³² They label us as if we were child molesters, abusers.

¹³³ Really, they don't respect us. Gay people are really criticized, and many false accusations are made. Since people aren't prepared for this, people really feel affected... like we're the plague of the place. Like we're going to corrupt.

(Gonzalez, Orozco, & Gonzalez, 2023). However, in the context of the rural, *chisme* is still used to surveille and police *Jotería* bodies too.

Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance (PP1)

Many *Jotería Rural* revealed to me that there is an elaborate surveillance system in their heir *pueblos* and *ranchos* (PP1). This happens because there is a smaller population, meaning there is less room for anonymity. This phenomenon can be best captured by a common phrase that most collaborators articulated, “*pueblo chico, infierno grande*.¹³⁴” In the case of *Nuevo Refugio*, *Tototlán*, and *La Milpilla*, it also concerns familial ties and reputation, meaning your actions ultimately affect your family’s reputation. Nonetheless, this system of ancestral surveillance is a means of policing *Jotería Rural* bodies. Noriega agrees that men’s bodies are constantly under surveillance to ensure men perform virile masculinity (Noriega, 2014). One particular personal experience occurred when I visited Lupillo/Yailin’s house. Lupillo/Yailin had invited El Suave and I to a *lumbrada* get-together in front of his house. Running around the *lumbrada* was Lupillo/Yailin’s nephew, Cesar. Lupillo/Yailin began to encourage Cesar to dance like a belly dancer as a joke. Everyone, including Lupillo/Yailin’s mom Nicaela (also Cesar’s grandma), laughed and clapped, encouraging his performance. There was also an instance during that night when Cesar stared at me, and his eyes twinkled. Nicaela allowed and encouraged him by telling him, “¿*Y esos ojitos? ¿Lo vas a soñar mijo?*”¹³⁵ Once he caught his breath, he stood up again, went up to El Suave, and jokingly said, “*hola mamis*”¹³⁶ (one of Lupillo/Yailin’s favorite salutations when

¹³⁴ Small town, large hell

¹³⁵ And those eyes? Are you going to dream of him?

¹³⁶ Hey darling.

saluting fellow *Jotería Rural* at the time).

At that moment, Cesar's mom showed up out of nowhere and screamed at Cesar to stop. She also threatened to hit him if he continued, "acting that way." It turned out that another one of Cesar's uncles had been watching us from two houses down. He had texted Cesar's mom to express "his concern" for how Cesar was acting. This led to Cesar's mom to interrogate Cesar and thus police his behavior. Clearly, socialization of virility begins at a young age (Noriega, 2014). One detail that stuck out, though, was that Nicaela defended, encouraged, nurtured, and defended Cesar. Lupillo/Yailin stated that this was because his mom is extremely supportive and compassionate.

I further theorize that the ancestral surveillance system that oversees these behaviors also polices sexual practices. The rise of social media sites (SMS) has facilitated this policing. Lupillo/Yailin, El Suave, Cobain, Téó, and my *prima* Liz all told me stories of how *mayates*¹³⁷ sometimes film *Jotería Rural* giving them oral sex without *mayates* showing their own faces/identities). These videos are then circulated across *Nuevo Refugio* via SMS, such as Facebook and WhatsApp, to punish *Jotería Rural* by shaming them publicly. Lupillo/Yailin concurred that ongoing ancestral surveillance through SMS is prevalent in *Nuevo Refugio*. "*Las personas más comunicativas del rancho corren la voz o con el Face [Facebook] o el WhatsApp. Esos de los mitotes si está en el rancho que si se corren las cosas rápido. Que dices tu apenas te echaste un pedo pa' cuando aquel guey ya lo huelo hasta la esquina,*¹³⁸" he

¹³⁷ Mexican Gay Slang for Men who have Sex with Men, but still identify as heterosexual. See Prieur's Memma's House.

¹³⁸ The most chatty people in the neighborhood spread the word either on Face or WhatsApp. Those guys from the neighborhood, if something happens, it spreads fast. It's like someone farts and that dude already smelled it all the way to the corner.

stated. Juan Gabriel agreed when he told me that “*se corre la voz!*”¹³⁹ Neto and Ignacio concurred that ancestral surveillance also exists in *Tototlán*. “*La gente es bien mitotera aquí,*”¹⁴⁰ Neto said. “*Tototlán es un pueblo mitotero completamente*”¹⁴¹ Ignacio divulged.

I also remember one instance when Daniel and I traveled to *Atonilicho*, another nearby pueblo three times the size of *Tototlán*. We ventured into a beautiful park up on the hills. This park had many trees, agave plants, and a clear river running straight through it. On our way back, we had to walk through a secluded road that took us back into town. A few yards ahead of us were two men whom we assumed were just friends. Out of the blue, they began to hold hands and kiss one another assuming nobody was watching. As soon as one of them became aware of our presence, they immediately let go of each other and sped away from us. They probably assumed we were from town or possibly knew who they were. Though *Atonilicho* is a big town, one never knows if a stranger knows one of your family members.

I also had another experience with ancestral surveillance. Although I had visited *Nuevo Refugio* consistently for many years, I assumed that I was safe from the clutches of ancestral surveillance. However, this was far from the truth. One day, I decided to go *ligear*¹⁴² in *Atonilicho*. When I returned, my *mamá Teresa* and my mom asked me “How was *Atonilicho?*” Shocked, I wondered how they managed to find out I had left *Nuevo Refugio* that day on my own. It turns out that somebody had spotted me waiting for the bus alongside the state road. That individual told my *tío* Ruben who told everyone in my

¹³⁹ The word spreads!

¹⁴⁰ People love to gossip here.

¹⁴¹ Tototlán is a gossip town.

¹⁴² Go date

family.

Father as Masculinizer (PP2)

Another theme related to socialization and enforcement of virility in the rural is father as masculinizer. Noriega argues that the father sometimes serves as the proxy for hegemonic ideology through enacting as a masculinizer with a pedagogy of masculinity (Noriega, 2014). This pedagogy involves torturing the body with beatings, cold showers, and verbal abuse to punish transgressions of the order of the gender identity regime. This punishment is also meant to set an example to siblings, friends, etc. so that they may not replicate these femme behaviors (Noriega, 2014).

One example of this occurs in the *rancho* is the story of Miguelito. In an effort to masculinize him, his father forced him to have girlfriends. To masculinize him, his father forced him to have girlfriends. Tragically, his father's verbal abuse led to his eventual suicide because of his father's obsession with making him virile (rest in power, Miguelito). Ricky said that although his family now accepts him, his father was once very abusive. He stated that the only way for this to stop was for him to fight back:

Un día tuvimos un pleito y él me dijo... Nunca se me va a olvidar que le dijo a Miguel [mi amigo] '¡Si yo tuviera un hijo joto, lo cuelgo de una rama, de la más alta!' y que salgo yo y le digo, 'y porque no me has colgado, si sabes lo que tienes?' Muchos dicen que tengo el mismo carácter que él, mi papá pues]. 'Lo que pasa es que tú y yo somos iguales. Por eso no lo has hecho.'

This speaks to how *Jotería Rural* sometimes have to play on the psychological games of the father as masculinizer rhetoric for their own survival.

Coloniality of the Rural in Praxis (PP3)

As mentioned in Chapter 4, the rural is seen as a marker of the past temporally and spatially because of the influence of waves of coloniality. On the contrary, however, rural spaces have historically been *Cunas de Resistencia*¹⁴³. However, various metronormative attitudes continue to manifest. One component of this metronormativity is arrogance regarding the unequal distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities. Jose Ramon disclosed to me an experience that best personified the arrogant nature of those who manifested the coloniality of the rural. Jose Ramon explained that in 2021, *Poncitlán, Jalisco*, had its first drag show in the VIP club (I will detail this further in the next Chapter). This caught the attention of competitive Drag performers in *Guadalajara* (city) who heard of this competition and decided to “poach” the crown:

Pues me doy cuenta de que pudiera mi oportunidad como para explorar, no como mi personaje, mostrar mi arte y demás. y me inscribo y nos meten a un grupo de WhatsApp. Habíamos como como nada más como 3 4 personas del rancho. Y lo curioso es que venían como otras 6 personas de Guadalajara concursar y tuve la oportunidad de estar muy cerca con 1 con una participante y ella me decía, se llamaba Déora. Ella ya le gustaba mucho como cazar concursos. Así lo llamó como que ya le gustaba asistir a todos los concursos drag. Existían en la región porque ella era como que ya estaba acostumbrada a ganar. Y yo me di cuenta de que las personas de Guadalajara, pues de la ciudad ya estaban acostumbradas a este mundo, o sea, para ellos, era algo de cada fin de semana, mientras para mí era algo nuevo, algo que me daba mucho

¹⁴³ Sites of resistance.

miedo para ellas. Ya era como algo que ya se estaba usando. No, en Guadalajara ya tenía mucho tiempo, el Drag, pues este como tal. Ya hay bares que se dedican a contratar este tipo de personas, incluso aunque no te contraten. Hay lugares en los que puedes ir en Drag y disfrutarlo y pues pasarlo chido. Pero pues, acá no acá era algo completamente nuevo. A mí me daba mucho miedo por 2 razones: primero, porque era algo nuevo para mí, y, segundo, porque no sabía cómo iba a reaccionar el público. O sea, como que yo decía que no sé, pero igual me emocionaba. pero me di cuenta de que las de Guadalajara venían con una actitud muy pesada porque se burlaron de nosotros del rancho porque pensaban que no íbamos a poder hacer drags. Decían que ustedes, cómo van a hacer Drag: 'Ah, es que mira mi drag es esto. Mi peluca me costó tantos 1,000 pesos. Mi vestuario me lo hizo tal diseñador,' y los vestuarios que yo usé, me los cosió mi mamá, o sea, mi mamá y yo los pusimos, los pegamos, O sea, estuvimos haciendo muchas manualidades y ella venía con vestuarios muy producidos de diseñadores. Y entonces venían con esa actitud de que, porque se vinieron a hospedar desde, o sea, vinieron a conocer el lugar antes del concurso y se hospedaron en el tiempo del concurso. Aquí en Poncitlán, y era como cosa actitud como de 'Ah, pues el bar está bien... Chiquito. Y ya, pues este casi no hay gente y ¡ay, no pésimo. Nos dieron una atención pésima, porque las participantes nos pusieron en un cuartito, así para que nos cambiáramos.' Como que ya esperaban, que iba a haber como espejos grandísimos para cada participante, así no como un cuarto para ti, solo y como

*tu camerino no se. Pero entonces llegan como con mucha, con esa actitud.*¹⁴⁴

Clearly, the *Draga* from Guadalajara replicated the hierarchical thinking and imaginaries of divides between cosmopolitan, “forward thinking” centers and the “backwards” rural. These cosmovisions and attitudes not only come from outsider cosmopolitan subjects and those who are originally from the *ranchos* or *pueblos* who leave and return to visit or stay. In my own personal experience in *Jalisco*, I have a cousin, Rufina (pseudonym), who identifies as a Trans-*mujer*, who left the rancho to study in Guadalajara and returned with these hierarchical attitudes of the coloniality of the rural. One of my cousins, Maria (pseudonym), who identifies as cis-*mujer* told me that when Rufina and she were close growing up in the *rancho*. Maria further suggested that she accepted and supported Rufina after her transition. However, when Rufina returned, she told Maria, “*Me agrada que me aceptes, pero ya no te puedo hablar. Yo*

¹⁴⁴ I realized that I had the opportunity to explore, not as my character, to show my art and other things. And I signed up [for the drag show] and they put us in a WhatsApp group. We were like 3-4 people from the rancho. And what's curious is that 6 people from Guadalajara came to participate and I had the chance to get close to one of the participants, her name was Déora. She already loved competing in contests. She called it 'already liked attending all the drag contests.' There were many of them in the region because she was used to winning. And I realized that people from Guadalajara, well, they were already accustomed to this world [of drag], or so it was something they did every weekend, while for me it was something new, something that scared me a lot. For them, It was like something that they were used to. In Guadalajara, the drag scene had been around for a long time. There are bars that hire these types of people, even if they don't hire you. There are places where you can go and enjoy the drag scene and have a good time. But here, it was something completely new for me. It scared me a lot for two reasons: first, because it was something new for me, and second, because I didn't know how the audience would react. I mean, I said I didn't know, but I got excited anyway. But then I realized that the people from Guadalajara came with a very pretentious attitude because they laughed at us from the rancho because they thought we wouldn't be able to do drag. They said things like 'You guys are going to do drag? Ah, look at my drag is this.' 'My wig cost me 1,000 pesos.' 'My outfit [the drag queens from Guadalajara] was designed by a famous designer' and the costumes I wore [Jose's] were made by my mom or my mom and I made them together. We did a lot of laborious stuff. And then they came with an attitude like 'Oh, well, the bar is nice... Small. And already there's almost no one [low attendance] and oh no, terrible service. We were given bad service because the contestants put us in a small room so we could change.' They were expecting that there would be huge mirrors for each participant, not like a small room for you, just like a dressing room. But then they came with a lot, with that attitude.

*ya tengo mi licenciatura y tengo educación y tu pues eres una campesina así que ya no debería de hablarte.*¹⁴⁵ I am, too, guilty of this as when I was brought to the United States, I also envisioned rural spaces as uninhabitable and backward until I worked hard for 12 years now to de-assimilate myself and regain my connection to my ancestral lands. Sadly, this is common that when folks leave, they lose connection with their lands and internalize the coloniality of the rural attitudes. As More suggested, this also happens in *Tamiahua*. As a form of horizontal knowledge exchange, she brought to my attention a *Huapangos Huasteco* (a genre of music with Afro-Mexican influence) that personifies this phenomenon of coloniality of the rural called “*La Malinche Huasteca*” by Grupo Versatil Hermanos Gabriel which details the story of a native woman who assimilated into cosmopolitan-whiteness and forgot her rural, native past and namesake. Interestingly, *Tamiahua*, is one of the many rural pueblos mentioned in the song. The lyrics say:

*En Tantima te hallé, flequetera mujer
eras muy tomajona y muy tancha,
hoy te llamas “Gigi” te avergüenzas de mí y
te ofendes si te llaman Pancha.
Ya olvidaste el fogón, donde hacías el tocón,
el huatape, el cachún y los piques,
ahora tomas el té, pero sin chichimbré,*

¹⁴⁵ I am glad you accept me. However, I can no longer speak to you. I have my bachelor’s degree, and well, you are just a farm worker.

sin pemoles y sin alfeñique.

Se te olvido, se te olvido, se te olvido tu huasteca,

la del pemol la del bocol, chamiles y carne seca.

Alamo y Tihuatlán, Pánuco y Amatlán,

Cerro Azul, Tepetzintla y Potrero,

Naranjos y Chicón, Ozuluama y Platón

de palenque en palenque te vieron.

Pero ibas al salón a arreglarte el pajón,

que aplacabas con agua de lluvia,

ahora vas al “glamour” que te den manicure

y los tintes que te han vuelto rubia.

Se te olvido, se te olvido, se te olvido tu huasteca,

la del pemol la del bocol, chamiles y carne seca.

No te gusta Ixhuatlán, no te agrada Alazán

Pueblo Viejo tampoco te gusta,

Tampico Alto es peor, Tlacolula que horror,

Temapache y el Higo te asustan.

Mas recuerda que al fin con jarana y violín,

con cadencia que al alma se mete,

el Huapango y el Son con primil corazón

arrullaron tu dulce falsete.

Se te olvido, se te olvido , se te olvido tu huasteca,

la del pemol la del bocol, chamiles y carne seca.

Para ti lo mejor es Paris, Nueva York,

Buenos Aires, Madrid o Venecia,

Tantoyuca y Tempoal, te parecen muy mal

a Tamiahua y a Tuxpam desprecias.

Sin embargo mujer tienes que comprender

que aunque de tu huasteca te apenes,

desde mayo hasta abril, llevarás zacahuil,

chancacuda y machuco en las venas

Se te olvido, se te olvido , se te olvido tu huasteca,

la del pemol la del bocol, chamiles y carne seca.¹⁴⁶

With this song in mind, the *Afro-Jotería Rural* community members from *Tamiahua* and I reflected on coloniality of the rural and its implications on *Tamiahua*

¹⁴⁶ In *Tantima* I found you, woman *flequetera* you were very stubborn and very *tancha*, today your name is “*Gigi*” you are ashamed of me and you get offended if they call you *Pancha*. You already forgot the stove, where you made the stump, the *huatape*, the *cachún* and the *piques*, now you drink tea, but without *chichimbré*, without *pemoles* and without *alfeñique*. You forgot, you forgot, you forgot your huasteca, that of pemol that of bocol, chamiles and dried meat. Alamo and Tihuatlán, Pánuco and Amatlán, Cerro Azul, Tepetzintla and Potrero, Naranjos and Chicón, Ozuluama and Plato From palenque to palenque they saw you. But you went to the living room to fix your hand job, that you appeased with rainwater, now you go to the “glamour” to get a manicure and the dyes that have turned you blonde. You forgot, you forgot, you forgot your huasteca, that of pemol that of bocol, chamiles and dried meat. You don't like *Ixhuatlán*, you don't like *Alazán* You don't like *Pueblo Viejo* either, *Tampico Alto* is worse, *Tlacolula*, what horror, *Temapache* and the *Fig* scare you. But remember that at last with revelry and violin, with a cadence that penetrates the soul, the *Huapango* and the *Son* with a primitive heart They lulled your sweet falsetto. You forgot, you forgot, you forgot your huasteca, that of pemol that of bocol, chamiles and dried meat. For you the best is Paris, New York, Buenos Aires, Madrid or Venice, *Tantoyuca* and *Tempoal*, they seem very bad to you You despise *Tamiahua* and *Tuxpam*. However woman you have to understand that although you feel sorry for your huasteca, From May to April, you will wear *zacahuil*, *chancacuda* and *machuco* in the veins You forgot, you forgot, you forgot your huasteca, that of pemol that of bocol, chamiles and dried meat.

community members. In the *convivio*, Bogart, More, and Nahomi shared with me that they would not leave their beloved *Tamiahua* as the social dynamic in that space is supportive, tight-knit, and warm compared to the cold-hearted, individualist attributes of the city. Bogart, who also has experience living in the city, described the city as lacking empathy compared to *Tamiahua*. Further, the collective nature of the rural pueblo *Tamiahua* was described by everyone as being a blanket that wraps them:

Bogart: *Yo he tenido la oportunidad de vivir en la ciudad.*

Luis: *¿Cuál es la diferencia?*

Bogart: *La falta de empatía. Aquí nos conocemos y hasta cierto punto nos cuidamos. Siempre va a ver rivalidades siempre va a ver cosas que no te gustan de otras personas, pero en los momentos más difíciles nos unimos y no solo implica lo de la comunidad LGTB. Ósea, si hemos estado acostumbrado cuando hay un duelo, nos unimos y existen organizaciones que se dedicadas a ayudar gente que está pasando por un duelo. Aquí les llaman mutualistas que es un apoyo económico, material, o también moral. Entonces, yo no cambiaría eso por una ciudad. En una ciudad hay mucha frugalidad. Yo me quedo con los pueblos porque todos los pueblos son mágicos.*

More: *Yo no cambiaría mi Tamiahua por una ciudad. A veces si me da ganas de irme por la cuestión que consigues más rápido las cosas (resources). Ósea como aquí batallas para comprar algo, pero aquí es tranquilidad, armonía, paz. Igual saludas a la gente y en la ciudad pues es tu mundo, ¿no? Quizás la gente va por nuevas oportunidades, pero al fin de cuantas la mayoría regresa a la comunidad porque te arropa. Nosotros como gays in la ciudad peligramos*

más y más en la ciudad porque no sabes con qué tipo de personas te vas a encontrar. En ocasiones quieres vivir aventuritas, pero (en la ciudad) vas con el miedo. Porque no sabes con qué tipo de persona te vas a encontrar. A cambio en la comunidad (Tamiagua) si tu tal vez tienes un romance con alguien ya lo conoces, ¿no? Es hijo de Toño jaja. Hay gente También que se van a la ciudad que se va de la ciudad y no se quiere regresar porque se avergüenza del pueblo. ¡De que la ciudad las cambia!

Bogart: Hay gente que ya se fue que me pregunta, que haces en Tamiagua si en Tamiagua no hay nada. ¡Soy feliz! Punto nada más con eso.

More: En mi trabajo me dicen. ¿Y porque no te vas para otro lado? Alla es mejor pagado. Para empezar, no voy a ir a buscar lo que no he perdido. Aparte, estoy cerca de los míos. De mi familia de mi gente. Y como Tamiagua no voy a encontrar otro. ¡No lo cambiaria por nada!

Bogart: Yo por eso me regresé (de la ciudad) y ya me quedé aquí.

Nahomi: Ala mejor en algún momento si lo había pensado por las oportunidades que se te pueden dar en otra ciudad porque es más grande encuentras un poco más de trabajo, pero igual si te gusta trabajar, tu la haces. Es más bien estar en tu pueblo. Yo mejor me quedo aquí la verdad. Vives feliz aquí en paz en armonía. Es una vida muy bonita.

More: Todos nos cuidamos.

Luis: ¿Como cambia la gente cuando se va a la ciudad y regresa? ¿Asimilación metornormativa?

Bogart: *El clásico que se marean un ladrillo. Hay muchas personas que pretenda. Me acuerdo de una persona precisa que se fue estudiar de fuera y regreso a maltratar a una chica en un bar entonces me di cuenta de que existe la necesidad de poseer. Mostrar que yo soy más que tú.*

More: *Es un mundo de apariencias como decir yo tengo yo puedo. Te das cuenta de que esas son personas vacías.*

Luis: *Te digo porque tengo una prima que se fue a cucarachas y le digo a otras primas que ya no te puedo hablar porque yo ya tengo estudios.*

More: *Fui a un curso y el instructor nos dio una idea de cuánto les cobran a sus clientes. Como unos 9000 pesos y hizo un comentario [clasista] dijo 'es que los pobres son los que quieren aparentar.' Entonces yo protesté y le dije 'sabes que yo no te voy a permitir que tu hables mal de esas personas porque de esa gente humilde y trabajadora esa gente vivo yo. ¡Quizás tú puedes cobrar eso porque es una zona petrolera pero allá donde yo vivo yo no puedo cobrar eso, aunque mi trabajo lo valga! Ósea yo he tenido personas que me han dicho More yo quiero ir contigo, pero no me alcanza. Ósea ala mejor hacen el esfuerzo, pero eso no le da el derecho el a referirse a las personas humildes y sencillas que quieren aparentar. Ósea, no. Si me agarre un agarradon con él. ¡Y esa persona era de la comunidad! Gracias esa gente que el hablo mal, vivimos nosotros. Ósea y no les da derecho de hablar mal de las personas. Eso pasa en la ciudad y aquí.¹⁴⁷*

¹⁴⁷ Bogart: I had the opportunity to live in the city.
Luis: What is the difference?

I drew various parallels to what Bogart said about the compulsion of folks “proving that they are better than you,” as this happens with folks within the rural *Jalisco* who never leave as well. In essence, this internalization of the interlaced hierarchies of the coloniality of the rural is prevalent in many rural zones. As Jose

Bogart: The lack of empathy. Here we know each other and to a certain extent we take care of each other. You will always see rivalries and you will always see things that you don't like about other people, but in the most difficult moments we come together, and it doesn't just involve the LGBT community. I mean, if we have been used to when there is grief, we unite and there are organizations that are dedicated to helping people who are going through grief. Here they call them mutualists, which is economic, material, or also moral support. So, I wouldn't trade that for a city. In a city there is a lot of fragility. I stick with the towns because all the towns are magical.

More: I wouldn't change my Tamiahua for a city. Sometimes it makes me want to leave because you get things faster (resources). I mean like here you struggle to buy something, but here it is tranquility, harmony, peace. You still greet people and, in the city, because your world, right? Maybe people go for their own chance, but at the end of the day the majority return to the community because it protects you. We as gays in the city are in more and more danger in the city because you don't know what kind of people you are going to meet. Sometimes you want to live [sexual] adventures, but (in the city) you go with fear. Because you don't know what type of person you're going to meet. In exchange in the community (Tamiahua) if you perhaps have an affair with someone you already know them, right? He is the son of a toño haha. There are also people who leave the city and don't want to return because they are ashamed of the town. That the city changes them!

Bogart: There are people who have already left who ask me, what are you doing in Tamiahua if there is nothing in Tamiahua. I'm happy! Period! Nothing more with that.

More: In my work they tell me. And why don't you go somewhere else? Elsewhere it is better paid. To begin with, I'm not going to go looking for what I haven't lost. Besides, I'm close to my own people. From my family from my people. And like Tamiahua I will not find another. I would not change it for anything!

Bogart: That's why I came back (from the city) and stayed here.

Nahomi: Alas, it would be better at some point if I had thought about it because of the opportunities that can be given to you in another city because it is bigger, you find a little more work, but still if you like to work, you do it. There's nothing else like being in your town. I'd rather stay here, honestly. You live happily here in peace and harmony. It is a very beautiful life.

More: We all take care of each other.

Luis: How do people change when they go to the city and come back? Metanormative assimilation?

Bogart: The classic that makes a brick dizzy. There are many people who pretend. I remember a nice person who went to study abroad and came back to mistreat a girl in a bar, then I realized that there is a [compulsive] need to possess. Show that I am more than you.

More: It is a world of appearances like saying I have I can. You realize that these are empty people.

Luis: I'm telling you because I have a cousin who went to Cucarachas (rancho) and I she tells other cousins that, 'I can't talk to you anymore because I already have studies.'

More: I went to a course and the instructor gave us an idea of how much they charge their clients. About 9,000 pesos and he made a comment (classist) he said, 'the poor are the ones who want to pretend.' So, I protested and told him You know that I am not going to allow you to speak badly about those people because I live from those humble and hard-working people. Maybe you can charge that because it is an oil zone but where I live, I can't charge that even if my job is worth it! I mean, I have had people who have told me More, I want to go with you, but I can't afford it. I mean, maybe they make the effort but that doesn't give them the right to refer to the humble and sensible people they want to appear. I mean, no. If I liked him. And that person was from the community! Thanks to those people who spoke badly, I make a living. I mean, it doesn't give them the right to speak badly about people. That happens in the city and here.

described, this compulsive hierarchization and internalization of coloniality of the rural by *Jotería Rural* in *Jalisco* have even threatened the recent overt resistance movements happening in *Poncitlán* (resistance movements I will detail in the next Chapter). The first major drag show in *Poncitlán*, which was nearly canceled because of internal struggles of envy within the *Jotería Rural* community in *Poncitlán*:

pues, bueno, y así es como ya para la segunda marcha del 2022 Yo ya participo como rey y me conozco un poco más a los organizadores. pues ya se empezó a desenvolver muchísimo más en Poncitlán. Como ya hubo este concurso, ya conocían más, ya tenían un año Conociendo el arte Drag, asistiendo a este bar que habían inaugurado. pues la verdad que ya hubo un mejor recibimiento y este, pues ya la Comunidad muy unida y demás. Sin embargo, para el 2023 el año pasado fíjate que hubo mucha división, y fue algo que me causó mucho impacto porque la Comunidad de Poncitlán se dividió en 2 porque estábamos los que los que, pues tenemos muchas ganas de que la macho era algo muy bonito y todo. y estaban los que tenían más acceso a los recursos para hacerla. Y aun así que quisieron dividirse como para. como por puro orgullo, sabes, como por puros problemas personales entre ellos. No querían apoyarnos, sino que ellos también son de la Comunidad y no querían como como hacer algo grande, sino como que querían cerrarnos, ponernos muchas trabas para que no se realizara la marcha. Y es ahí donde entro yo. Yo, el año pasado desarrolló un papel, siempre que fue algo importante, porque, gracias a mí, logré conseguir algunos permisos para poder estar en las calles sin que se nos llamara la atención para que nos prestara un pedazo y un tiempo en específico

en la plaza para poder aterrizar el mensaje que queríamos dar a Poncitlán este para pintar las calles, pintamos banderitas para señalar donde íbamos a pasar este en marcha, y, pero sí me molestó mucho. Se me hizo muy feo como algo que nos costó que llegara. Poncitlán, que es la marcha, y estos espacios se tornara algo como competente, como que hubiera tenido que dividirse para o como que la misma Comunidad sí sea enemiga, como para no creer, querer apoyarse y crecer. Siento que nos estamos poniendo el pie a nosotros mismos y no nos dejamos avanzar. O sea, en vez de que nosotros nos unamos y apoyamos y para llegar a crecer y ser como como Guadalajara en cuanto a organización y demás, pues nos estamos como queriendo volver a frenar.¹⁴⁸

As we reflected further on this phenomenon of the coloniality of the rural, it became apparent that even identity markers and language reflected this hierarchical thinking of the coloniality of the rural. In the United States, scholars such as Solorzano, Bañales, Alvarez, and Tijerina-Revilla have done extensive work to reclaim the term *Jotería* as a marker of decolonization of sexuality and gender. However, as I found out

¹⁴⁸ Well, and so, for the second march of 2022, I already participate as the king, and I know the organizers a bit more. By then, *Poncitlán* had developed a lot more. Because there had already been that contest, they knew more, they had a year of experience with drag art, attending this bar they had opened. The truth is that we got a much better welcome and the community was very united. However, in 2023, last year, there was a lot of division, and it really affected me because the *Poncitlán* community divided into two groups. We who were eager to make it something beautiful and everything, and those who had more access to resources to make it happen. And yet, they wanted to divide themselves because of pride, personal problems among themselves. They didn't want to support us, but they were part of the community too and didn't want to do something big, they wanted to shut us down, put obstacles in our way so that the march wouldn't happen. And that's where I come in. Last year, I took on a role that was important because thanks to me, I managed to get some permits to be in the streets without drawing attention to ourselves. We could occupy a specific time and space in the plaza to spread our message in *Poncitlán*, painting murals and flags to mark where we would be passing through during the march. But it really bothered me a lot. It cost us too much. *Poncitlán* wanted to march, and these spaces became something like a competition where we would have to divide ourselves or even have the same community become an enemy. It's hard to believe that we don't want to support each other and grow. I feel like we're holding ourselves back and not letting ourselves move forward. Instead of uniting and supporting each other to grow and become like Guadalajara in terms of organization and other things, we're trying to slow each other down.

in 2023, in Mexico, “Joto” is still a double-edged sword signifier, particularly because, in certain contexts, it is used to describe LGBTQIA+ subjects in a positive form. As I later came to find in 2023, however, it is also a classed and hierarchized term. An experience I personally had that reflected this was in the summer of 2023, right before *Tototlán*’s first pride march in history (which I will discuss in the next Chapter). I was sitting on the steps of my tía Claudia’s room when my cousin Edgar approached me. He interrogated me regarding my Instagram name, “@El_jaguarjoto77.” In our conversation, he suggested that I should not call myself *joto*. “*Es que un joto es de lo más bajo como Lupillo/Yailin y El Suave.*¹⁴⁹” He used Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave as examples because they are known to not follow politics of respectability. “*Tu eres Gay o homosexual,*¹⁵⁰” he continued. “*Tu ya tienes tu carrera, estudios, y pues la neta tu ya eres Gay o homosexual. Un joto es una persona que no tiene dinero, que no se respeta.*¹⁵¹”

Surprisingly, before mentioning this experience to Jose during a *parrandeada*, he revealed that he had almost had the same discourse with a member of the *Jotería Rural* community in *Poncitlán*. It was particularly shocking how similar both conversations were word for word and in two different communities. Jose told me that in rural Mexico, “Joto” still carries classed and hierarchized baggage that personifies a deviation from *respeto*. As mentioned in Chapter 3, *respeto* is often used as a social capital for *Jotería Rural* to navigate so that they may co-exist in rural contexts to minimize facing prosecution (Noriega, 2015). Further, “Joto” is still sometimes seen by

¹⁴⁹ It’s just a joto is the bottom of the barrel like Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave.

¹⁵⁰ You are Gay or homosexual.

¹⁵¹ You already have your career, studies, and you're just a gay or homosexual. A Joto is someone who doesn't have money, who isn't respected.

non-*Jotería* and *Jotería* as the bottom of the signifier hierarchy in the homosexual/Gay/Joto trichotomy as described by Jose:

Jose: *Curioso que una vez me dijo una persona gay de ciudad cuando vino al pueblo porque era de ciudad y vino al pueblo me dijo, 'Ay, no es que aquí hay mucha Jota.' Y yo le dije, '¿por qué?' De repente es una palabra muy fuerte, ¿no? Como muy grotesca. Escasa. Es como para se usa más como insulto que como para clasificar a alguien, ¿no? Entonces le dije pues '¿porque te expresas así?' Porque se expresó muy feo, sino que él también era gay., Le dije, 'pues si tú también eres Joto.' Y me dijo, 'no es que es muy diferente.' Dijo, 'joto, gay y homosexual. Son cosas diferentes.' Yo me quedé como a cabrón, espérame. No estoy entendiendo a ver, explícame cada uno porque, según yo, es lo mismo se encasilla lo mismo. Lo mismo me dice, 'no es que mira un joto, es una persona que no se va a respetar. Es este este hombre que se viste de mujer que se prostituye, que se droga y que la gente lo mira, así como de que anda mal vestido y que, pues sí, no. Como que ese prostituto, eso es un joto. El gay, ya era un hombre que le gustaban los otros hombres, pero pues te daba como a respetar. Y un homosexual ya era un gay adinerado. Este era un adinerado pudiente con un papel importante en la sociedad que logró sobresalir y respetado.' Y te juro que cuando me lo estaba platicando, yo me quería hacer como de así, ¿eh? No mames. Qué mamadas se está diciendo neta, porque, o sea, ni siquiera nada que ver. Nada que ver. Es lo mismo. Esa es un el homosexual, el gay, el joto, que son palabras para describir lo mismo, pero nada que ver con clase social nada que ver con, pues con eso. Y es una de las*

cosas más estúpidas que he escuchado mi vida. Yo creo, siendo [esa persona] que venía, que es parte de la Comunidad y se va a ser muy estúpido como exista entre la misma comunidad este clasismo, ¿no?

Luis: Es como una asimilación asimilarte a esos pensamientos, así como que 'hay eso mejor que tú' ¿no? Y fíjate que a mí me pasó algo parecido con un primo. ese primo me quiso meter, el mismo discursito que me acabas de dar, porque para armar este diálogo entre con la experiencia en diferentes partes de donde he participado pues no espacios donde están reclamando esa palabra [joto] como algo positivo. Entonces yo fui a conocer esas ideas allá [en estados unidos] a todo plano. Bueno, es que mi Instagram ya ves que me pongo el jaguar joto y un día estaba sentado y llega mi primo que me dice, '¿wey porque te pones joto en tu perfil?' Y yo, 'porque es una palabra chida. Y me gusta.' Y él, como que [me dijo] 'no, no deberías hacerlo.' Yo dije en me cabeza, 'tú no tienes el derecho como heterosexual. decirme quién soy, ni el resto. Dos personas que están aquí, o sea, ellos son parte de tu sociedad, porque sin ellos, tu sociedad no va a funcionar.'¹⁵²

¹⁵² Jose: "It's curious that a gay person from the city once told me when they came to the rancho because they were from the city and said, 'Oh, there's a lot of jotos here.' And I said, 'Why?' Because it's a very strong word, isn't it? Like very grotesque. It's like it's used more as an insult than to classify someone, isn't it? So, I said, 'Why do you express yourself like that?' Because they expressed themselves very badly, but he was also gay. I said, 'Well, you're also a joto.' And he said, 'I'm not that it's very different.' He said, 'joto, gay, and homosexual are different things.' I stayed silent, surprised. I wasn't understanding what he was saying. He explained each one to me because, according to me, they're the same thing. He says, 'No, look, a joto, it's a person who doesn't respect themselves. It's this man who dresses up as a woman who prostitutes himself, who takes drugs and people look at him like he's bad dressed and [he] says yes, no. Like that prostitute, that's a joto. The gay is a man who likes other men, but he gives respect [and is respected]. And the homosexual is a rich and respected man with an important role in society who managed to stand out and be respected.' And I swear when he was telling me that, I wanted to get up and... like that, right? No way. What nonsense is being said? Because that has nothing to do with anything. Nothing to do with class or... whatever. And it's one of the stupidest things I've ever heard in my life. I think being that person who came

To add complexity and intersectionality, Jose described to me that folks who are sexual “bottoms” are seen as sexual deviants, whereas “tops” are viewed as “real” men. These attitudes are reflective of 20th-century discourse of Octavio Paz’s *Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950) where Paz declared *chingado/el que chinga*¹⁵³ dichotomy and now reflected in rural settings:

Jose: Tonto que incluso la ciudad te haga eso, no porque justamente. sino que si se hubiera mantenido aquí en el pueblo. Es como que pues no ni siquiera te dicen te esfuerzas por darle una clasificación. Es lo que es, pues es gay, te gustan los hombres, si te quieres llamar joto, le quieres llamar homosexual, llámalo homosexual. Pero ¿cómo la ciudad te hace que una misma como que la dividan a esto? ¿Significa que todavía no tienes dinero? Y cómo te, o sea, porque a mí no me importó la verdad. Pero, cómo que te puede generar a una persona le puede generar un trauma como decir más. Bueno, yo no me imagino un contexto en el que diga en el que alguien diga, ‘¡ay, pues no tengo dinero. Entonces soy joto,’ o sea, como que sí, todavía hay otra clase. Otra etiqueta, además de las etiquetas que existen como que todavía hay otra, porque no tienes dinero. ¿es esto ya cuando tengas dinero, ya te puedes hacer llamar así

from [the community] is part of the community and it's very stupid that this classism exists within the same community.

Luis: It's like [they try] assimilating [you] to those thoughts, like 'there's something better than you' right? And I noticed that something similar happened to me with my cousin. My cousin wanted to give me the same speech because I had conversations about this in different places where I participated in spaces where people claim this word [joto] as something positive. I had a different perception of the word joto in the US context. Well, you can see on my Instagram that I call myself 'jaguar joto' and one day my cousin comes to me and says, 'Hey why do you put joto on your profile?' And I'm like 'Because it's a cool word and I like it.' And he said, 'no you shouldn't do it.' I thought to myself 'you don't have the right as a heterosexual to tell me who I am or what I am. Two people [Lupillo/Yailin and Suave] are here who are part of your society because without them your society wouldn't work.'

¹⁵³ Fucked and fucker

[homosexual o gay]? Porque incluso sabe que [eso es] estúpido. Pero bueno, también fijate que yo lo que he notado, que, para estos, yo creo que lo pasa en todo el mundo. Pero vas a un también pasa en el rancho que siempre te preguntan, Y esta pregunta es bien detonante. Te preguntan, '¿Tú eres el que da, o tú eres el que recibe a ti?' Ósea, '¿te la mete o tú la metes?' Y también la respuesta detona. Mucho. ¿cómo te van a cómo van a reaccionar? Ah, es que sabes qué, pues no sé, vamos a decir que es pasivo. Entonces. ah, no, Pues que a mí me la meten, ¡ay, no, Y eso te quita valor también. Pero, sin embargo, dices, 'ah, no es que yo soy el que la mete.' Ah, no, pues ja. ¡qué perro, No que no mañoso, te ven como todavía. O sea, además de que ya estás diciendo que eres gay, pero todavía decir que tú eres el activo. Eso te da más prestigio a que fueras pasivo. O sea, y este es un problema bien grande, porque, como el tener dinero, no tener dinero, el ser activo o pasivo y el ser de un rancho. Cómo te clasifica, o sea, cómo te en este mundo de del de la comunidad. La gente como te etiqueta siendo después siendo viviendo en esta zona, no me imagino que en otros lugares pase, pero ya veo que sí me veo porque me dices que también a ti te pasó. Pero pues, siendo que una ciudad ya es como más abierto. Esto no es como que no hay necesidad de ver o demostrar si tienes dinero o no hay como gente tan estúpida que lo ve tan así, porque, sino que, a pesar de que se están levantando mal estos movimientos, LGBT, sigue habiendo machismo, incluso machismo dentro de la comunidad. O sea, todavía hay gays machistas y no eso

*está bien feo o bien fuerte de mujers.*¹⁵⁴

Clearly, homosexual and Gay are indicated by the coloniality of the rural as markers of modernity, privilege, and atop of the signifier hierarchy, but “Joto” is regarded as the bottom in terms of class and sexuality by coloniality of the rural as markers of modernity, privilege, and atop of the signifier hierarchy, but “*Joto*” is regarded as the bottom in terms of class, sexual, and politics of respectability in the homosexual/Gay/Joto trichotomy. “*Joto*,” then, is a deviation of *respeto*. In Chapter 4, I discussed how Noriega found that *respeto* was used as social capital as resistance in Sonora. In Sonora, *Jotería* earn respect from the community through their hard work and status. In essence, climbing other hierarchies, such as class hierarchies, is a way to earn *respeto* as social capital. The same applies to *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in *Tamiahua* and *Los Altos De Jalisco*. In the next Chapter, I will discuss *respeto* as a form of social capital and resistance in the context of *Jalisco* and *Veracruz*. However,

¹⁵⁴Jose: It's stupid that even the turns you that way, not because it's just that, but if you had stayed here in the rancho. It's like you don't even make an effort to give it a label. It's what it is, it's gay, you like men, if you want to call yourself a jotot, call yourself homosexual [its synonymous]. But how does the city make you feel like they're dividing you into this? Does it mean you don't have money? And how does that affect someone, because I don't care about it. But people project trauma with those attitudes. Well, I can't imagine a context where someone says, 'Oh, I don't have money. So I'm a joto,' or something like that, it's like there's still another class, another label besides the existing labels, because you don't have money. Is this when you have money, can you then be called gay or homosexual? Because even knowing [that dynamic] that is stupid. But notice that I've noticed that this happens everywhere in the world. But when you go to a ranch, they always ask you, 'Are you the one who gives or are you the one who receives?' or 'Do you get it or do you put it in?' And also the answer detonates a lot. How will they react? Ah, I mean, no, it's just stupid. It's like they think being passive is bad. So no, it's not that I'm the one who gives. Ah, no, it's like that. They look at me as if I'm still something. Besides saying that you're gay, but still saying that you're active gives you more prestige than being passive. That's a big problem because having money or not having money, being active or passive and being from a ranch. How do they classify you? In this world of the community. People label you when you live in this zone, I can't imagine that happening in other places but I see that it happens because you tell me it happened to you too. But since the city is more open already, this isn't like there's no need to see or show if you have money or not because there are people who are so stupid who see it that way, because despite these LGBT movements rising up, there is still machismo even within the community. There are still gay machistas and its just a big problem.

as the *Afro-Jotería Rural* pointed out in our *convivío*, *respeto* as social capital is highly contradictory and hypocritical as the standards of respectability are more strictly applied to *Jotería Rural* compared to their *buga*/heterosexual counterparts, which means *respeto* as social capital has limits. I have seen this even in the city and rural contexts where people say things like “*Yo lo respeto, pero nomas que no se besen porque eso es faltar el respeto.*”¹⁵⁵ This is especially true when it comes to public intimacy. I have also seen cases where two men holding hands is considered a violation of *respeto*, whereas a *buga*/heterosexual exchanging a passionate French kiss goes visibly and intentionally unnoticed. More compared this hypocrisy to the colonial period with the burning of *La Cotita* (which we discussed in More’s hair salon). More drew parallels as to how *Jotería* intimacies continue to be surveilled and prosecuted contemporarily. More and Bogart described these fallacies of *respeto*:

Chucho: *Mi papá se burlaba del hijo de mi tío Inorio y yo Sali así jaja. Me decía, tu si quieres hacer tus cosas vete al monte. Es como un respeto, ¿no?*

More: *Si claro porque no vamos a hacerlo enfrente tiene que ver cierto respeto.*

Bogart: *¿Como cualquier pareja heterosexual También para que hacerlo enfrente de todos? Por eso se llama intimididad.*

More: *Si es que en su tiempo a la mejor era diferente ósea el papá el papá le está diciendo (a chucho) si tú quieres, vete a un lugar donde no te vean. Ósea porque no es muy común. Ósea a julanita la encontraron con julanita, pero porque es heterosexual, es correcto. Ósea, pero si ven a como cotita con unos*

¹⁵⁵ I respect the LGBTQIA+ community as long as they do not kiss in front of me because that is not respectful.

*caballeando, y que fue lo que hicieron, ¿no?*¹⁵⁶

Clearly, hegemonic rhetoric that derives from the logic of coloniality continues to justify the marginalization of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in the rural. *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have not passively accepted these hierarchical, homophobic impositions. From the repressive moments of the colonial period to the exclusionist moments of the 19th and 20th century nation-building discourses, *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have found ways to resist and survive in the face of colonial power. Though the logic of coloniality continues to survive, so have the resistance tactics *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. In the next and final Chapter, I will detail overt and covert resistance strategies *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have deployed.

¹⁵⁶ Chucho: My dad made fun of my uncle's son Inorio and I came out like that haha. He told me, if you want to do your things, go to the mountains. It's like respect, right?

More: Yes, of course, because we are not going to do it [be intimate] in front of them, it has to do with a certain respect.

Bogart: Like any heterosexual couple. Also, why do it in front of everyone? That's why it's called intimacy.

More: Yes, maybe in his time it was different, I mean the dad is telling him (to Chucho) if you want, go to a place where they won't see you. I mean because it's not very common. I mean, they found some person with another person, but because he is heterosexual, it is correct. I mean, but if you see how it's a little bit of a fight with some people, and that's what I did, right?

Chapter 8—*Jotería* Resistance: Resisting in the Sixth Sol

Resistance Strategies Against Hegemonic Rhetoric

Since my initial encounter with Yailin/Lupillo and El Suave back in 2017, I wondered how *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* resisted or navigated in rural settings and the hierarchies of contention in the last Chapter. This led me to ask my research questions: (RQ1) How do *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* co-exist or navigate repressive ideologies? (RQ2) What are the overt and covert resistance strategies of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in their own respective communities, *Tototlán* and *Tamiahua*? Through this project, my collaborators and I articulated a variety of resistance methods contemporarily employed in the rural. Methods that stem through centuries of resistance to repression, cruel punishments, pathologization, imposed virility, and nationalist exclusion. These resistance methods are overt and covert. Similar to the previous Chapter, because the resistances overlap, I will place them in in-text citations after every quote from the collaborators (see Figure 29).

Figure 29

Resistances

Covert Resistance Strategies

(CRS)

- 1) Resistance Through Coded Language (CRS1)

Overt Resistance Strategies (ORS)

- 1) Resistance Through Enclaves (ORS1)
- 2) Disidentification (ORS2)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2) Comradery as A Form of Resistance (CRS2) | 3) <i>Marcha</i> Movements as Resistance (ORS3) |
| 3) <i>Respeto</i> , Religious, And Social Capital (CRS3) | 4) <i>Marcha</i> Collective Enclaves as Resistance: Enclave Coalition Building (ORS4) |
| 4) Subversive Complicity (CRS4) | 5) <i>Marcha</i> Tradition as Resistance (ORS5) |
| 5) Negotiation (CRS5) | 6) El VIP: Space Occupation as Resistance (ORS6) |
| | 7) <i>Transformismos</i> and Drag as Resistance (ORS7) |
| | 8) Carnaval As Resistance (ORS8) |
| | 9) Afro-Mexican Spirituality and Sensibility as Resistance (ORS9) |

Covert Resistance Strategies (CRS)

Resistance Through Coded Language (CRS1)

Many enclaves in the 17th century implemented coded language that often-

involved double meanings (Gruzinski, 2003; Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). This facilitated the way *Jotería* could find and identify one another. The legacy of coded language as a resistance method has continued into contemporary times. Téó divulged that it was because of this coded language that he met his boyfriend. “*Pude saber que era Gay en la forma que se expresaba y ciertos comentarios,*¹⁵⁷” he stated (RS2). These *formas*¹⁵⁸ that Téó discusses are the double meanings in words. One example he used was “*me caís muy bien*¹⁵⁹” or “*te estimo mucho.*¹⁶⁰” Through the untrained ear, these may sound like common exchanges between friends, but how they are disseminated can help *Jotería Rural* identify one another.

Macias-Gonzalez (2012) argued that many *Jotería Rural* during the *Porfiriato* era sometimes found one another by “gazing at one another” inside bathhouses. This coded language method of “gazing” that existed during the *Porfiriato* continues to be implemented in the rural. In *Totoilán, La Milpa, and Nuevo Refugio*, this phenomenon is translated into *echando los ojos*¹⁶¹ or *la mirada*¹⁶². I first heard of *la mirada* from Cobain when he told me that a girl “*le estaba echando los ojos/la mirada.*” To the untrained eye, one might believe that *la mirada* is just the person imagining things. This is precisely what I wrongfully told Cobain back in 2014. I told him that he was crazy and just imagining things. However, *la mirada* is method used by folks in the rural to discretely communicate their interest to one another in public settings.

Daniel confessed that before LGBTQIA+ SMS such as Grindr, he would identify

¹⁵⁷ I was able to tell he was gay with the way he expressed himself with certain comments.

¹⁵⁸ forms

¹⁵⁹ I like you

¹⁶⁰ I hold you to high esteem.

¹⁶¹ Giving the eyes

¹⁶² The look

other *Jotería Rural* in *El Grucho* (where it was less acceptable to identify as Gay) with *la mirada*:

Antes yo soy de los que iban a la plaza. Y si me ve alguien y cruzamos la mirada. En el cruce de miradas se ve uno. A si uno dice me gustas te gusto pues ya empezamos a tener algo. Pero está en eso, el cruce de miradas. Por ejemplo, tú te le quedas mirando a una persona no sé, el instinto o bueno para mí el instinto. Mi instinto me dice es Gay o tiene fachitas de Gay. Te le quedas mirando y si te responde, ya con eso y supiste. Si hay química y eso ya se conocen y todo eso. En El Grucho hay mucho de eso. Si vas a la plaza, hay mucha gente. Si tú te sientas a un lado y el otro está al lado contrario y se te le quedas viendo como coqueteándole, y te responde, esa es la clave que es Gay. Ya con las redes sociales y las aplicaciones que hay pos ya sabes.¹⁶³ (CRS2)

Lupillo/Yailin stated that he has never required the use of SMS because he is able to tell by *la mirada* and by the way men react to him. “*Yo me le arrimaba a esa persona y si esa persona respondía y me echaba la pierda [confirmaba] que sí, si es Gay pues me le arrimaba y pues echarnos a conocer nos tratábamos y conoceríamos y ya pues yo pienso que sí,¹⁶⁴”* Lupillo/Yailin said (CRS2). Jack-Watson also confirmed the

¹⁶³ I was one of those who used to go to the plaza. And if someone sees me and we make eye contact. In that moment of eye contact, you see each other. If one of us says 'I like you, you like me' then we're already starting something. But it's in that moment of eye contact. For example, you keep looking at someone, maybe it's instinct or good for me, it's my instinct that tells me they're gay or have gay vibes. You keep looking at them and if they respond, that's already enough. If there's chemistry and that's how they know each other and all that. In Guadalajara, there's a lot of that. If you go to the plaza, there are a lot of people. If you sit on one side and the other person is on the other side and you're looking at each other like flirting, and they respond, that's the key that tells you they're gay. Already with social media and apps, you know now.

¹⁶⁴ I would get close to that person and if that person would respond and I would confirm it, yes, if they're gay, then I would get close and we would get to know each other and know each other and well, I think yes.

existence of *la mirada*, “*Pues es que con los que yo ya estado ya no me dicen nada [cuando nos vemos]. Nomás con la mirada,*¹⁶⁵” he disclosed (CRS2). “*cómo es esa mirada?*¹⁶⁶” I asked. “*Pues como te explico, más o menos así,*¹⁶⁷” he said while winking his eye. Though there are those who resist through coded language, other *Jotería Rural* choose to subvert through the framework of friendship.

Comradery as A Form of Resistance (CRS2)

In the 19th century, one of the primary national discourses was comradery and sociability; masculinity entailed being a loyal friend, *hombre de bien*, and a social good doer (Irwin, 2003). Because homoerotic acts passed as masculine, the social climate of this era facilitated *Jotería Rural*'s accessibility to sex in secret (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This homosocial bonding, however, was reframed with homophobic limits in the 20th century after the events of the Dance of the 41 (Ruvalcaba, 2007). This resulted in a shift in the meanings behind masculinity in Mexico, with virility and masculinity serving as the guiding ideologies. As a result, this virile masculinity and homosociability involved being sharp, powerful, active, honorable, moral, and working class (Irwin, 2003). Still, *Jotería Rural* have continued the legacy of using the rhetoric of homosociability and friendship to carry out romantic and erotic relationships. This phenomenon is especially true in the rural. Noriega agrees that *Jotería Rural* relationships in the rural are sheltered through the confines of friendship and channeled through the institution of friendship (Noreiga, 2014). Five participants in this project shared that they must pass off their relationships as friendships around their community

¹⁶⁵ Well, it's that with the people I've already been with, they don't say anything to me when we see each other. Only with the gaze.

¹⁶⁶ What is mirada like?

¹⁶⁷ Well, how do I explain it to you? It's something like this.

members. Téó, for instance, suggested that his relationship with his boyfriend often takes on the guise of friendship around people he does not feel comfortable disclosing his relationship to (CRS3 & CRS6). He also stated that although there are very few places for *Jotería Rural* to congregate, friendships with *bugas* help create those spaces because they lower suspicions:

*La relación ha sido no abiertamente. Sí, nomás en parte sí y en parte no. O sea, así como en círculo social que llevamos juntos así muy libre, pero así con el resto de la gente, así como amigos. Como comunidad no hay tan lugar así [para que los gays congreguen], pero así que se juntan los fines de semanas sí, pero igual salen con sus amigos que son y no son gay.*¹⁶⁸ (RS3 & RS6)

Ignacio agreed when he stated that he meets *Jotería Rural* through mutual friends. He remains discreet with his relationships and passes them off as friendships. “*He tenido dos parejas estables completamente. Han sido por casualidad conocidos de mis amigos,*¹⁶⁹” he revealed (CRS2 & CRS6). Jack- Watson, Chavelo, and Juan Gabriel also divulged that they too are discreet and pass their erotic and romantic encounters as friendships. Juan-Gabriel even stated that his relationship with his current boyfriend is one of the first he has ever had in Mexico. Yailin/Luipillo, El Suave, Neto, Ricky, and Daniel divulged that this is not the case with them. They openly introduce their partners as their boyfriends. However, what they do in public with their partners varies between them. For instance, Neto, Ricky, and El Suave kiss, hold hands, and hug their respective

¹⁶⁸ The relationship has been somewhat hidden. Yes, only in part yes and in part no. I mean, like in the social circle we're part of, we're very free, but with the rest of the people, like friends. There isn't really a place like that [where gays gather], but they do get together on weekends, but they still hang out with their friends who are and aren't gay.

¹⁶⁹ I've had two stable relationships completely by chance, known through my friends.

sexual and romantic partners without considering what *la gente*¹⁷⁰ think. Ricky and Daniel (along with the 5 who resist through comradery), though, believe that there must be some level of respectability.

Respeto, Religious, And Social Capital (CRS3)

19th-century masculinity entailed being un hombre de bien (Irwin, 2003). This attribute carried over into the 20th century with “honorable” and “moral” influencing virile definitions of masculinity (Irwin, 2003). These 20th century virile attributes of masculinity have carried on in the rural. In order to fit that mold of “honorable” and “moral,” *Jotería Rural* resist by accumulating social capital known as *respeto*. Noriega notes that *respeto* and the ideal “image of respectability” are necessary to integrate into most rural communities (Noriega, 2014). Respect involves not getting into scandals or “transvestism,” observance of discretion, refraining from participating in scandals, refrain from making public transgressions of gender, and appearing “normal” (in accordance with the social rules that govern manliness in the spaces they occupy) (Noriega, 2014). *Respeto* is a form of social distinction between *joto* and “respected” *Jotería Rural*. It is also a social contract between *Jotería Rural* and their local rural communities. Those who do not follow this social contract are considered unworthy because they have not gone through this “gaining respect” ritual. Those who do not gain *respeto*, also end up damaging their reputations and end up stigmatized. Respected *Jotería Rural* enjoy being free of stigma but still fear violence.

Noriega further argues that there is a type of reverse discourse in the rural where *Jotería Rural*, who have gained respect, have mastered homosocial dynamics and their

¹⁷⁰ The people

contradictions. Those who “have gained respect” know how homophobic dynamics work. They know how to pass homophobic violence because of masculine identity by keeping desires a secret and by keeping their guilt and self-consciousness of same-sex relations at bay by re-signifying their actions in harmless ways (e.g., *amor entre amigos, compadres*, etc.). *Jotería Rural* create a re-subjectification process regarding sex and same-sex intimacy. This reverse discourse combats machismo and homophobia through negotiation, playing with, and resisting dominant notions of manhood (Noriega, 2014). This involves the mastery and exploitation of dominant sexual and gender ideological contradictions as well as playful and performative ways of resisting homophobic terms the best they can. Ultimately, *respeto* is one of the ways rural communities in rural Northern Mexico nurture and elaborate sex cultures while sustaining surface social and political conformity (Halberstam, 2005). Anzaldúa, however, states that “*Respeto* carries with it a set of rules so that social categories and hierarchies will be kept in order: respect is reserved for *la abuela, papa, el patrón*, those with power in the community. Women are at the bottom of the ladder, one rung above the deviants” (p. 40). Thus, Noriega talks about the social contract between the former, *Jotería Rural*, and the people in power. Therefore, Trans Women and Lesbians do not always benefit from *respeto*, but as mentioned later in this section, they demand it. My contributors and I found a similar dynamic in rural Southern Mexico.

Juan Gabriel, for instance, made this a topic of focus in our *plática* after a situation with Yailin/Lupillo that took place in front of Juan Gabriel’s store. A day before our *plática*, Yailin/Lupillo “fooled around” with an older man who looked visibly intoxicated. Yailin/Lupillo grabbed the man’s genitals while the man and his friends

laughed and joked at the fact that he dared to grab him in that manner. Furious, Juan Gabriel explained the importance of *respeto*:

Los mismos patos y patas nomás diferentes. Más antes había más respeto, mucho más respeto. Uno con sus padres, tanto con las personas, y tanto con sus parejas. En la época de nosotros, supimos respetar ahorita ya no. Muchos ya que se hacen públicos. ¿Para qué? ¿Para qué necesitas publicidad más de la que tienes? Ni que fueras un artista (refiriéndose a Lupillo/Yailin). Ha habido muchas personas en México que han sido grandes hombres y gays. Como Juan Gabriel (el cantante famoso). ¡Supieron superarse! No mueren como un perro en la calle porque supieron en que caerse muertos. Tuvieron algo con qué vivir. Yo tengo con qué vivir (su tienda). Mi negocio y mi casita, ¿qué más quiero? La gente aquí me aprecia y me respeta porque yo veo a la gente aquí con cariño. Si un niño o cualquier persona me llega [a mi negocio, los trato] con respeto. En mi negocio tiene que ver respeto. Con si tanto a mí como a la persona.¹⁷¹

He continued by expressing disdain, yet concern for Yailin/Lupillo's actions:

Yo en Estados Unidos fui mesero, cantinero, hasta travesti, pero siempre he hecho mis cosas con mucho respeto. Al respeto a lo que me rodea a mí.
[Respeto] a mis patrones, familia, etc. ¡Con mucho respeto! No me ando

¹⁷¹ It is the same ducks with different feathers. There was more respect in the past, a lot more respect. With your parents, with people, and with your partners. In our time, we knew how to respect each other, but now it's not like that anymore. Many people have become public figures. Why? Why do you need more publicity than you already have? It's like you're an artist (referring to Lupillo/Yailin). There have been many important men and gay people in Mexico, like Juan Gabriel (the famous singer). They knew how to take care of themselves! They didn't die like a dog on the street because they had something to fall back on. They had something to live for. I have something to live for (my store). My business and my little house, what more do I need? People here appreciate and respect me because I see people here with kindness. If a child or anyone comes to my business, I treat them with respect. In my business, there has to be respect for both me and the person.

meneando por la calle ni enseñándole los huevos a quien sea. Como el otro día el muchacho que le estaba agarrando los huevos a [esa persona] está mal. Yo lo veo como vulgar especialmente en un establecimiento público (pasó enfrente de su tienda). El respeto se lo tiene que llevar a él mismo (Lupillo/Yailin) para enseñarse respetar a él mismo. Si él es así, es su problema debe respetarse así mismo. Siempre hay que evitar enfermedades siempre con precaución porque siempre hay que usar preservativos no hay de otra.¹⁷² (RS4)

Clearly, Yailin/Lupillo breaking the unspoken social contract of *respeto* placed them in the category of vulgar and ultimately stigmatized by fellow *Jotería Rural* such as Juan Gabriel (and Nuevo Refugio community members who witnessed this event and many others Lupillo/Yailin has been involved in). Juan Gabriel went as far as calling those who do not follow the *respeto* social contract parasites. Furthermore, he expressed that *respeto* is one of the reasons his business has been so successful:

Mis valores son respetarme a mí mismo y a los demás, porque una gente vulgar, es un parasito. Un Gay, un homosexual, que anda de aquí allá no es bueno. Como ese baboso que estaba haciendo esas cosas enfrente de ti, eso está mal. Ese [Lupillo/Yailin] es un niño muy vulgar bien corriente. Yo de viejito como estoy, agarro más [hombres] que él. Ellos [Lupillo/Yailin y El Suave] que están tiernitos y yo viejito, pero hasta allí yo si respeto. Yo nunca ando buscando

¹⁷² I was a waiter, bartender, even a transvestite in the United States, but I've always done my thing with a lot of respect. I respect what surrounds me. [Respect] my bosses, family, etc. With a lot of respect! I'm not strutting around on the street or showing off to anyone. Like the other day, that boy who was exposing himself to [that person] is bad. I see it as very vulgar, especially in a public establishment (it happened in front of my store). Respect should be taken by oneself (Lupillo/Yailin) to learn to respect oneself. If he's like that, that's his problem, he should respect himself. You always have to take precautions to avoid diseases because you always have to use condoms, there's no other way.

*cabrones por la calle. Ni me ando agarrando ni de la mano con alguien [en la calle], yo no tolero eso. Porque no nomás es ser homosexual también es de llevarse con la gente. Ya ves que en mi negocio siempre llega gente. Yo no voy a estar aventándole los perros a la gente. ¿para qué? Hay mucho tiempo y espacio para hacer eso. Pero yo para aventarme a un galán, ni madre. No por el qué dirán. si no por al respeto a sí mismo.*¹⁷³

Yailin/Lupillo, unaware of how Juan Gabriel feels about him, expressed to me that even though he refuses to conform to social norms in public, he does have a level of *respeto* at home. “*Pues yo en la casa aguardo más respeto si no con mi papá y mi mamá. Ya en la calle me da igual me desato como toda una puta colombiana y pues sí,*¹⁷⁴” Lupillo/Yailin stated. Neto, who, for the most part, is entirely unapologetic, expressed that he would not be so intimate with partners in front of the children of Tototlán. “*A mí me vale madre yo cuando he tenido pareja voy por la calle, yo voy de la mano. Si le doy besos. Siempre hay respeto que no haiga niños,*¹⁷⁵” Neto said. Ricky suggested that there is a time and place to *jotear* so that one can maintain *respeto*:

Mira, la verdad hora como estábamos el otro día. El respeto que tú das es el que tú recibes. Yo nunca he sido de las personas problemáticas. Nunca me he

¹⁷³ My values are respecting myself and others, because a vulgar person is a parasite. A gay, a homosexual, who's walking around here and there isn't good. Like that slob who was doing those things in front of you, that's bad. That Lupillo/Yailin is a very common, crass guy. I, as an old man like I am, get more [men] than he does. Those [Lupillo/Yailin and El Suave] are softies and I'm an old man, but even so, I do respect. I never go looking for guys on the street. Neither do I grab hands with someone [on the street], I don't tolerate that. Because it's not just about being homosexual, it's also about treating people with respect. You see that people always come to my business. I'm not going to be bothering people on the street. Why would I? There's plenty of time and space for that. But for me to get involved with a guy [in the open], forget it. Not because of what others say, but because of self-respect."

¹⁷⁴ So, I try to respect at home because of my dad and my mom. Already on the street, I don't care how I am and I release myself like a Colombian slut.

¹⁷⁵ I don't care give a shit. When I have a partner, I walk around the street, holding hands. If I give kisses, however, I make there are no kids out of respect."

gustado meterme en problemas ni faltar al respeto ni nada. Se donde jotear y donde no. Sabe uno los lugares donde puedes y cuales personas que puedas. Obvio cuando uno está con familia no vas a andar joteando y eso verdad. Ya si uno esta con sus amigos, jotear y vale madre. Ya hasta los amigos jotean. El principal es respeto. Mira, porque yo me ha aprendido a Respetar, ¡yo se respetar! En cualquier familia que tenga un hijo Gay o Lesbiana lo promedial es que te sepan respetar desde tu casa. Como dicen, un hijo es como una buena sopa, se cocina en casa. Entonces, si desde tu casa, te enseñan a respetar, tú sabes respetar. Cuenta mucho el ámbito donde te desenvuelves. Por ejemplo, yo siempre andaba con mi hermano y sus amigos y sabían lo que yo era, pero siempre con respeto. Siempre que no me les echaba ni de aprovechar de las situaciones, ni de decir que ando con ellos, o tratar de agarrarlos [de sus partes], no. Salimos en plan de amigos de compas y de respeto. Se donde jotear y donde no. Sabe uno los lugares donde puedes y cuales personas que puedas. Obvio cuando uno está con familia no vas a andar joteando y eso verdad. Ya si uno esta con sus amigos, jotear y vale madre. Ya hasta los amigos jotean.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ It is like we were the other day. The respect you give is the respect you receive. I've never been one of those problematic people. I've never liked getting into trouble or disrespecting anyone or anything. You know where to jotear and where not to. You know the places where you can and can't, and the people you can and can't be around. Obviously, when you're with family, you don't go around joteando around and that's true. But if you're with your friends, joking around is okay, as long as there's respect. The main thing is respect. You know why I learned to respect? Because I knew that from home! Any family that has a gay or lesbian child will tell you that they should be respected from home. As they say, a child is like a good soup, it's cooked at home. So, if they teach you to respect at home, you know how to respect. The environment where you develop also counts. For example, I always hung out with my brother and his friends, and they knew what I was about, but always with respect. We never took advantage of situations, never said we were hanging out with them or tried to touch them inappropriately. We went out as friends with mutual respect. You know where to jotear and where not to. Obvious when you're with family, you don't go around joking around and that's true. But if you're with your friends, joking around is okay, as long as there's respect. Even friends joke around.

Noriega postulated that *Jotería Rural*, who refuse to participate in this *respeto* social contract, end up stigmatized and socially burned (Noriega, 2014). The pathologizing nature of 20th-century rhetoric heavily influences these views. Moreover, those who are associated with open *jotos* (who refuse to engage in *respeto*) are also stigmatized and socially burned. My contributors and I found a similar dynamic in rural southern Mexico. In rural southern Mexico, these concepts are known as *quemarse*¹⁷⁷ and *reputaciones*.¹⁷⁸ If *Jotería Rural* refuse to follow *respeto*, they are considered by community members to be *quemados*¹⁷⁹. Simultaneously, their *reputación* is *quemada* in the minds of many community members. Concurrently, the *reputación* of the family also runs the danger of being *quemado*. Parallel to Noriega's findings, *quemados* also have people turn away from them because they risk being socially burned through association. I experienced this phenomenon of *quemarse* by association firsthand. One evening in 2018, I was having dinner with El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo at the annual fiesta of *Nuevo Refugio*. Suddenly, my mom and my *tía* Ruka stormed by and asked me to accompany them. When I refused, they became so obsessed with getting me away from Yailin/Luipillo and El Suave that they nearly dragged me out of my chair. I told El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo I would return after I talked with them. “¿*¡Qué fachas son esas Luis!?* ¿*No te da vergüenza?*”¹⁸⁰ my mom said in the most hateful and disgusted tone. “*¡No te deberías andar juntando con esos mocosos! Entiende que ellos ya están quemados. Ya tienen su reputación manchada. ¡Si te ven con ellos, también van a*

¹⁷⁷ A type of social burning.

¹⁷⁸ Individual and familial reputations

¹⁷⁹ Socially burned people or families

¹⁸⁰ Look how ridiculous you look, Luis! Do you not feel any shame?!

*andar hablando la gente de ti y de nosotros [la familia]*¹⁸¹” my tía Ruka said bitterly. “*Ustedes son un par de colonizadas*,¹⁸²” I said angrily as I stormed off in tears. I later discovered that my tía Ruka had instigated the scenario by convincing my mom to intervene and get involved. This was because she refused to have our family’s name tainted by “a scandal like that” (referring to me being associated with El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo). If she only knew that 5 years later, I would be on the committee to organize the first pride *marcha* in *Tototlán*. That night, I experienced a taste of the stigmatization El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo experience in their daily lives. However, I was lucky enough to have my tía Claudia and my tía Angelica stand up for me when they saw me sobbing. They asked my mom to reflect on how much she was hurting me in order to please her sister (my tía Ruka). Since then, my parents have somewhat come around, and to my surprise, my tía Ruka also came around.

Téo stated that before he met his partner, he refrained from sleeping with men in Nuevo Refugio to avoid *quemarse*. “*Experiencias [sexuales] aquí no he tenido ninguna, nomás con mi pareja en nuestro noviazgo, pero afuera nada que ver*,¹⁸³” Téo stated. This is because many *mayates* often expose *Jotería Rural* by filming them without their consent (without exposing themselves). SMS messenger apps have increased the dangers of *Jotería Rural* being harassed and *quemarse* because the videos circulate among the *Nuevo Refugio* community. This typically happens when *Jotería Rural* perform oral sex on those filming them. Countless times, I received warnings

¹⁸¹ You should not be hanging out with those kids! You have to understand they are already socially burned! Their reputation is smeared. If people see you with them, people will be talking about you and our family.

¹⁸² You are both colonized!

¹⁸³ I haven't had any sexual experiences here, only with my partner during our relationship, and nothing notable outside of that.

from cousins to avoid hooking up with *mayates* from *Nuevo Refugio*. El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo, who typically do not mind any restrictions, said they prefer to keep their hookups in *Nuevo Refugio* to a minimum. “*En un rancho es más vulgar la gente más chantajista y pos en un pueblo se ve de todo,*¹⁸⁴” Said El Suave. “*y más estúpida la gente [en un ranchito],*¹⁸⁵” Lupillo/Yailin added.

Juan Gabriel divulged that he refrains from associating himself with *Jotería Rural quemados* or *irrespetuosos* to avoid *quemarse* himself. “*Yo no convivo con homosexuales. De amigos tengo 2 amigos homosexuales. Unos de La Mata y otros de Tazula (otros ranchos y pueblos). Pero [con los que convivo], son de categoría, bien chingones,*¹⁸⁶” he stated. Many *Jotería Rural* find ways to gain *respeto* to maintain social conformity. Ignacio suggested that he has obtained *respeto* through his hard work and the way he has carried himself. “*Bueno, muchas personas del pueblo saben mis preferencias y me he ganado un respeto tanto con mi trabajo tan como mi condición de como lo ha manejado,*¹⁸⁷” Ignacio said. Working hard was one of the ways Ignacio has earned *respeto*. Of course, hard work is one of the characteristics of 20th century virile masculinity (IHR). Many *Jotería Rural* choose to perform more than one attribute of virility as a way to earn *respeto* and to ultimately resist.

More, Bogart, and Nahomi suggested they also deploy *respeto* in *Tamiahua* that

¹⁸⁴ In a ranch, people are more crude and blackmailing, and in a town you see everything.

¹⁸⁵ And the people here are so stupid.

¹⁸⁶ I don't hang out with homosexuals here. I have 2 gay friends. Some from La Mata and others from Tazula (from other towns and rural areas). But [the people I hang out with], they're from a different league, really cool guys.

¹⁸⁷ Well, many people in the town know my preferences and I've earned respect both from my work and how I've handled my situation.

looks parallel to *Los Altos De Jalisco*:

Nahomi: *Si claro porque la gente no está de acuerdo. En cómo nos vestimos o a veces como hablamos. Hay que ser realistas hay gente que como a veces vulgares y la verdad se escucha algo un poco irrespetuosa. Hay que tener muy marcado las cosas que uno es y cómo se debe de expresar ante de alguna sociedad también. Porque a veces hay niños o mujeres. Saber respetar el lugar donde uno esta porque hay momentos para todo.*

More: *En caso, es muy importante la manera de expresarte. A veces hay personas que son de la comunidad (LGBT+) y suenan ser muy vulgares. Y por una pagamos todas. Nos pasan a etiquetar y decir no te juntes con ellas porque son muy mal habladas. Todas son muy groseras. Te insinúan.*

Bogart: *Es muy importante respetar espacios.*

More: *Tenemos que tener bien marcados que somos. Hasta donde Podemos llegar. Hay limites que no podemos rebasar.¹⁸⁸*

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, *respeto* is a double-edged sword as it hypocritical, and not disseminated equally, meaning only *Jotería* are held at high standards for obtaining *respeto* as social capital compared to their *buga/heterosexual*

¹⁸⁸ Nahomi: Yes, clear because people don't agree. In how we dress or sometimes how we speak. We have to be realistic, there are people who can be sometimes vulgar and what we hear can sound a bit disrespectful. We have to have very clear what one is and how one should express oneself in front of society too. Because sometimes there are children or women. Knowing how to respect the place where one is because there are moments for everything.

More: In cases, it's very important how you express yourself. Sometimes there are people from the LGBT+ community and they sound very coarse. And because of that, we all pay the price. They label us and say don't hang out with them because they're very badly spoken. All of them are very rude. They imply things.

Bogart: It's very important to respect spaces.

More: We have to have well-marked what we are. Up to where we can go. There are limits that we cannot overstep.

counterpart. Also, Lesbian cis-women and Trans Women are excluded from the *respeto* social contract. *Afro-Jotería Rural* suggested that they challenge this dynamic of *respeto* by *exigiendo el respeto*¹⁸⁹ towards their identities. Particularly, Trans women in the *Afro-Jotería Rural* umbrella:

Bogart: *Es un respeto que uno exige, pero al mismo tiempo respétenme a mí que no me gusta decirte así. Para mí el punto es respeto nada más. Cada quien vive su vida como quiere. Así lo veo yo.*

More: *Yo creo que hablándote con respeto yo creo que todo existe mucho mejor.*

Nahomi: *Prácticamente más como mujer. Pero, como dice mi amiga More, tememos que marcar muy bien porque hay gente que es por molestar como lucidos. En un momento pasas y como que quieren llamar la atención porque en realidad quieren que tú los voltees a ver, pero la verdad son ellos quienes quieren llamar la atención [misgendering HER]. Como de provocarte de una cierta forma, pero por la necesidad para que lo voltees a ver o ves quien va. Me imagino yo. Quizás no tienen el valor suficiente de decirte hola como te llamas mírame me gustaría conocerte o que se yo. A veces se van mal por lo fácil y decir “va a reaccionar mal y de todos modos me va a hacer caso.” Porque siempre buscan el tema por molestar. Entonces como saben que yo me considero brava también. Hay límites. Pero si tu llevas el juego y eso hay límites como convivir con las personas con uno se lleva así se faltan al respeto tememos que ser notadas por eso. Porque somos personas y seres humanos y yo creo, así como respetemos a heteros y mujeres yo creo También pedimos nosotros para nuestro*

¹⁸⁹ Demanding respect

género, ¿no? Que seamos respetados... Mucha gente vas acompañada vas al super o un restaurante y de dicen "no tengo compa." ¿Como que compa? Ósea, no estás viendo. Si es como dices tu. ¿Estas ciego o qué onda? Llámame como mujer! ¡Obviamente lo que tu (uno) representa es lo que se ve!¹⁹⁰

Respeto sometimes gets mixed in with *relajo*¹⁹¹ in the context of *Tamiahua* as they also joke around and allow community members some flexibility. Particularly by reconfiguring slurs such as "*puto*¹⁹²" in a playful manner. They also use *relajo* amongst each other for communal protection. However, they tell when *relajo* falls into a lack of *respeto*:

Bogart: *¿Se te falta el respeto a lo que tú eres? A uno lo comprenden todavía.*

Como yo que me considero un hombre homosexual, pareciera que sí. Es como le llama la corrida de toros. Ya cuando está toreando, ves la mirada de todos. Yo creo que si ha habido mucho avance de 10 años para acá la situación ha cambiado, pero no está al 100. Aún falta. Cuesta trabajo a algunas personas

¹⁹⁰ Bogart: It's a respect that one demands, but at the same time, respect me too, I don't like being spoken to that way. For me, the point is respect, nothing more. Each one lives their life as they want. That's how I see it.

More: I think that speaking to you with respect makes everything much better.

Nahomi: Practically more like a woman. But, as my friend More says, we're afraid to mark ourselves too much because there are people who want to bother us as they're flashy. At a moment you pass and it's like they want to call attention because in reality they want you to look back at them, but the truth is they're the ones who want to call attention [by misgendering HER]. They're trying to provoke you in a certain way, but because they need you to look back or notice who's there. I imagine it. Maybe they don't have enough courage to say 'hello, what's your name? I'd like to get to know you' or 'I'm interested in getting to know you.' Sometimes they go wrong by being too easy and saying, 'they'll react badly and anyway they'll take notice.' Because they always seek the thrill of bothering someone. So since I consider myself feisty too, there are limits. But if you take the bait and there are limits, like how to live with people who treat us this way, we're afraid of being noticed for that. Because we're people and humans, and I think, just as we respect heteros and women, I think we also ask for our gender to be respected... Don't we? That we be respected... A lot of people go out with friends to a supermarket or a restaurant and say, 'I don't have and, my dude.' 'What do you mean my dude? Are you not seeing me?' If you say what you say, are you blind or what's up? Call me woman! Obviously, what you (one) represent is what's seen!

¹⁹¹ Messing around

¹⁹² Slut or fag

entender las diferencias de otras. Y no solo de la parte de las diferencias sexuales o la identidad, ¿no? Por ejemplo, cuando entre nosotros nos decimos puta, loca, pero la intención es de cariño. De protección.

More: ¡De esa chispa que te hace particular! Pero la forma en que lo digas tiene mucho que ver va a determinar como le va llegar a otro persona.

Luis: ¿Como el tono de voz?

Bogart: ¡Sin duda!

More: Ósea a cierto punto ya me estas agrediendo, ¿no? Si te lo dicen con cariño o así con ese chip que tenemos los Veracruzanos no lo tomas así con agresión, pero si te lo dicen fuerte pues. Si. Ósea hay gente que te dice "¡¿puto?!"

Chucho: Si, hay gente con quien te llevas.

Bogart: Aun no existe el respeto que se diferente a ti o que hagan las cosas diferente a ti. Todavía hay ese detallito.¹⁹³

This act of negotiating *respeto* parallels subversive complicity, another resistance strategy.

¹⁹³ Bogart: Do you lack respect for what you are? One still doesn't understand it. Like me, who considers myself a homosexual man, it seems like it. It's like the bullfight. When you're actually fighting, you see everyone's gaze. I think that if there's been a lot of progress over the past 10 years, the situation has changed, but it's not 100%. There's still more to go. It takes effort for some people to understand the differences of others. And not just about sexual differences or identity, right? For example, when we say "puta" or "loca" among us, the intention is out of affection, out of protection.

More: That spark that makes you unique! But how you say it has a lot to do with how someone will take it.

Luis: Like the tone of voice?

Bogart: Absolutely!

More: So at a certain point, you're already attacking someone, right? If someone says it with affection or with that Veracruz accent, we're familiar with, you don't take it as aggression, but if someone says it loudly, then yes. There are people who say "¡¿puto?!"

Chucho: Yes, there are people with whom you get along.

Bogart: There still isn't respect for being different from you or doing things differently from you. There's still that little detail.

Subversive Complicity (CRS4)

Grosfoguel (2005) defines subversive complicity as re-signifying what the west has imposed upon the world through the development of alternatives modern/Eurocentric/colonial world system. It is a way of survival through participation. Neto argued that *Jotería Rural* he knew from previous generations developed a *Jotería ranchera* identity. This identity involved participating in gender norms and virile masculinity, but *jotear* on the weekends:

Los gays de hace mucho eran de vestirse como los demás. Lo hacían para seguir la norma porque entre semana si era de andar con playeras, así como de albañil y el fin de semana había personas que se vestían como hasta de mujer. Era algo bien raro ellos no se no me explicó pues, pero ¿igual respetar no? Es lo que estoy pidiendo, criticando.¹⁹⁴

Ignacio suggested he engages in subversive complicity because he performs the community's image of him. He stated that he comes from a recognized family in the pueblo who is well respected, well recognized, and holds a “high image.” He stated that he attempts to carry out that image (with *respeto*) when seen in public but still has his sexual encounters in private:

Si tengo novio no me agarro de la mano con él en la calle. Sí he tenido parejas bien estables. Mis papás los han conocido mis hermanos también y hemos convivido y no nos exhibimos. Y no por respeto si no por imagen. Nada más por eso. Porque yo digo, al ser una pareja homosexual o heterosexual yo pienso que

¹⁹⁴ The gays from back then used to dress like everyone else. They did it to follow the norm because during the week they'd wear casual clothes, like a construction worker, and on weekends they'd dress up as women. It was something strange, but shouldn't we respect it? That's what I'm questioning and criticizing.

pa tu privacidad hay lugares. Una persona que está sentada junto de mí no es el momento para estarnos tocando cosas allí, hay lugares para eso. Yo siempre he sido de mi espacio, de mi tiempo, y lugar. Por ejemplo, si estuviera con mi familia no haría eso con mi familia porque tampoco mi familia lo hace [intimidad pública]. Y si alguien así eso yo respeto.¹⁹⁵

Similar to subversive complicity, *Jotería Rural* also engage in Negotiation.

Negotiation (CRS5)

Another way *Jotería Rural* have resisted is through negotiation. This involves negotiating one's identity to specific situations, environments, and contexts. It is essentially a way of navigating. Ricky addressed that he negotiates his identity by knowing where to *jotear*. He emphasized that he refrains from *joteando*¹⁹⁶ in other people's homes. Especially when he is unsure if those individuals are accepting. He argues that every *Jotería Rural* in *el rancho* should *saber donde y cuando jotear*:

Cuando me accidenté me hice muy vulnerable e inseguro. Si no lo hice antes [vestirme], ahora menos. Si payaseo y todo y todos andamos en tacones y mi mama viéndonos y todo aquí en la casa en lo privado, pero ya en si de grande no lo aria. Ósea soy Gay, so le que me gusta, pero nunca he tratado de ser una

¹⁹⁵ If I have a boyfriend, I don't hold hands with him on the street. I have had pretty stable relationships. My parents have met my partners, my siblings have too, and we've lived together and we don't put on a show. And it's not out of respect, but out of image. Nothing more than that. Because I say whether you're a same-sex or heterosexual couple, I think there are private spaces for that. Someone who's sitting next to me, it's not the moment to be touching things there, there are places for that. I've always been about my space, my time, and my place. For example, if I'm with my family, I wouldn't do that with my family because even my family doesn't do that [public intimacy]. And if someone does that, I respect that.

¹⁹⁶ Performing in *jotería* performance

mujer ni quería ser mujer.... Ósea, tememos que saber equilibrar y saber dónde jotear. Para mí es la palabra adecuada HAY QUE SABER DONDE JOTEAR. Por ejemplo, si tú me invitas a tu casa, yo no voy a llegar joteando. Yo no voy a llegar torcida con tacones. Hay que saber comportar. Si llegamos con [nuestro amigo] Héctor, allí si podemos decir 'hay chula.'¹⁹⁷

Daniel negotiates his identity in a similar way. He stated that he is both *destapado* and *tapado*¹⁹⁸ concurrently because *se tapa*¹⁹⁹ in situations when he knows it is not safe to articulate his sexuality. We both jokingly said that he is *el camaleón*²⁰⁰ from the classic corrido of the same name by *Los Diferentes de La Sierra*:

Yo ahorita estoy en una situación en la que tanto soy tapado y destapado. Por ejemplo, aquí en este pueblo [Tototlán] soy destapado. ¿Por qué? Porque saben lo que soy ya me conoce mucha gente. Pero si yo voy a Ocotlán, yo tengo que ser tapado y muy discreto por el [mi papa adoptivo maestro que vive allí] o si me voy al Grucho tengo que estar completamente tapado porque no puedo decir soy Gay y ya por lo mismo que mi papa [adoptivo] es maestro yo no quiero que se meta en problemas. Se puede decir que tengo dos vidas. Una que es siendo tapado y otra destapado, pero si siento que soy más destapado. A final descuentas, estoy

¹⁹⁷ When I had an accident, I became very vulnerable and insecure. If I didn't dress a certain way before [i.e., as a woman], now even less so. If I walk around and everyone's wearing heels and my mom sees us and everything at home in private, but now as an adult, I wouldn't do that. So, I mean, I'm Gay, and that's what I like, but I never tried to be a woman or wanted to be a woman... I mean, we're afraid of not knowing how to balance and not knowing where to gay out. For me, the right word is YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHERE TO GAY OUT. For example, if you invite me to your house, I won't arrive flaunting it. I won't arrive with heels on. You have to know how to behave. If we arrive with our friend Hector, then we can say, 'hey beautiful.'

¹⁹⁸ Out and not out

¹⁹⁹ Loosely translates to goes back into the closet.

²⁰⁰ The chameleon.

navegando. Puedo decir aquí soy yo y en otros lados tengo que ser discreto óseo lo más hombre que se pueda. Si, si se ha batallado. [en otros lugares] uno tiene que ser más masculino y te tienes que vestir de acuerdo con la situación en que estés. Por ejemplo, ahorita puedo estar con pantalón y camisa y no pasa nada. Si me voy a una fiesta o un trabajo, tiene que ir bien. Por ejemplo, estuve trabajando en la Nestlé y allí era de traje, corbata, etc. Tienes que ir diferente a lo que tu estas acostumbrado.²⁰¹

Daniel also added that he had to negotiate his own happiness. He disclosed that he was better off economically before *se destapo*. He also expressed that he misses his family dearly since being kicked out of his home. He often juggles with thoughts of whether it was the right decision to *destaparse*, but then realizes that it was the right decision:

Con mis hermanos no me la llevo muy bien. Hasta el día no me han parado de mandar mensajes de que para ellos estoy muerto. Entonces, la única con que yo cuenteaba era una hermana, pero falleció hace 2 meses. Cuando tu pensabas que te iban a dar el apoyo, te dan la espalda y te humillan. Fue una situación muy complicada. Ala mejor mi rol fue no saberles decir cómo era en realidad o a la mejor no fue un error o no se. Hasta ahorita no sé qué me motivo para

²⁰¹ I'm currently in a situation where I'm both out and in the closet. For example, here in Tototlán, I'm out. Why? Because people already know what I am, and many people know me. But if I go to Ocotlán, I have to be in the closet and very discreet because my adoptive father, who lives there, is a teacher, and I don't want him to get involved in any problems. It's like I have two lives. One is being out and open, and the other is being closeted. But deep down, I feel like I'm more open. Ultimately, I'm navigating. I can say "this is me" here and in other places, I have to be discreet or as masculine as possible. Yes, it's a battle. In other places, you have to be more masculine and dress according to the situation you're in. For example, right now I can wear pants and a shirt, and nothing happens. If I go to a party or work, I have to dress up properly. For example, I worked at Nestlé and there, I had to wear a suit, tie, etc. You have to dress differently from what you're used to.

decir 'sabes que mama, sabes que papa, soy Gay' sabiendo ahorita como estoy. Creo que hace 9 años estaba más bien porque tenía una mama, un papa, y hermanos que me daban todo. Me tenían consentido. Entonces si fue un cambio bien drástico porque un momento lo tienes todo, y luego lo perdiste todo básicamente. Nomás tengo a mi papa [adoptivo] y es todo lo que tengo. Mi papa biológico no me acepta. Nomás cuento con mi papa adoptivo y con la familia con quien estoy ahorita (con la familia de Ricky). Mi segunda familia. Estoy muy agradecido porque cuando no tenía nada, ellos (familia de Ricky) estuvieron allí por mí. Dieron la cara por me. Pues uno dice 'quede bien' ellos se siguen queriendo, me siguen queriendo, me siguen ayudando y pues estamos bien aquí con ellos.²⁰²

Neto suggested that before he would hide his identity as a form of negotiation:

Al principio fue ocultarlo. Yo ahorita veo chavitos que salen a los 12 años y me da una envidia así que bonito porque yo no pude porque yo no pude. Antes era peor eso o quizás era porque yo lo permitía porque era más chico y me daba miedo defenderme que me fueran hacer algo.

²⁰² I don't get along with my siblings very well. Until recently, they wouldn't stop sending me messages telling me that I'm dead to them. So, the only one I could count on was a sister, but she passed away two months ago. When you think you're going to get support from them, they turn their back on you and humiliate you. It was a very complicated situation. In the best-case scenario, my dilemma was not knowing how to tell them how I really was or I don't know if it was mistake to tell them or not. Even now, I don't know what motivated me to say 'you know, mom, you know, dad, I'm gay' knowing how I am now. I think I was doing better 9 years ago because I had a mom, a dad, and siblings who gave me everything. They spoiled me. Then it was a very drastic change because one moment you have everything, and then you lose everything basically. All I have is my adoptive father and that's all I have. My biological father doesn't accept me. All I rely on is my adoptive father and the family I'm with now (Ricky's family). My second family. I'm very grateful because when I had nothing, they (Ricky's family) were there for me. They stood up for me. So, one says, 'it's okay' and they still want me, they still like me, they still help me and we're doing well here with them.

Téo disclosed that his way of navigating is through maintaining positive relationships with his community members and ignoring the *chisme*:

*No es tanto como ocultarlo, más bien ignorando. Llevarte bien con las personas es clave de todo [navegar identidad] independientemente de cómo seas [Gay o bug]. Y pues eso [ser Gay] no afecta en nada.*²⁰³

One of the most compelling and complex narratives disclosed to me was the way Ricky navigates, considering his intersectional identity of being Gay, *afeminado*²⁰⁴, and *discapacitado*²⁰⁵. In our *Platica*, we covered an array of topics such as his disability as a pathway to familial acceptance; his experience with MEWCCCUS Gays in both cosmopolitan and rural spaces; his internal struggle with body politics within the LGBTQIA+ community, experiences with discrimination, and perseverance:

Tienen que pasar a huevo las cosas para agarrar más. Por ejemplo, yo me accidenté, perdí me mano y eso. A baso de eso [mi familia y yo] nos unimos más... hubo más comunicación. Desde entonces, yo mismo lo dije... Si tuviera que pasar otra cosa así otra vez, por ejemplo, perder mi otra mano, para estar bien, para estar unidos como hermanos, lo volvería hacer. Después de mi accidente, todo se fue acomodando. Salía con mi papa, mis hermanos, y todos a gusto. Tengo muy buena relación hasta ahorita. Cualquier cosa que me pase, yo tengo la confianza de decirles. De hecho, mi mama tiene la confianza de decirme, 'mira fijate mijo que vi a un muchacho bien guapo para ti.' Hasta me

²⁰³ It's not so much about hiding it, rather about ignoring. Being able to get along with people is key to navigating your identity, regardless of whether you're gay or straight. And that [being gay] doesn't affect anything.

²⁰⁴ Effeminate

²⁰⁵ Person with disabilities

da más vergüenza a mí y le digo 'hay ma ya cállate la boca.' Pasan muchas cosas a una persona mocha. Cambia tu mentalidad y punto de vista. Si me perjudico porque mi misma cabecita me hice creer que 'nadie te va a querer porque estas mocho.' Igual hay muchos hombres que son bien materialistas, enfocados en los cuerpos y con eso me traume. Ósea, nadie me decía, '¡mira hay va el mocho! Son puras cosas que yo me metía a la cabeza. Hasta que cambia mi chip de eso, quizás voy a cambiar. Al año y medio entre a trabajar lo básico. Después empecé a tener broncas porque el encargado del negocio decía que no servía para nada. También me dijo, 'tú no sirves, eres diferente.' Yo le dije... '¡Yo soy igual que tú, hasta puedo ser mejor que tú! No te descuides porque hasta puedo terminar en tu puesto y la verdad te lo prometo.' Ya cuando te falta una parte de tu cuerpo, ya nomas estas buscando como le haces. En mi caso, pos empecé de ceros mi vida cambio. El encargado me traía para un lado a otro, pero así con una mano le sacaba el trabajo. Ahorita bendito dios se cómo amararme las cintas, se cortarme las uñas. Se hacer muchas cosas. Mi mama me quería traer como uno cuando se pone malo [chiqueado]. Me quiera bañar y todo y le decía, '¡déjame!' Ella me contestaba '¡no quiero que te lastimes.' Yo le dije 'Déjame tropezarme a mí mismo para que yo mismo me levante y me enseñe. Nunca me vas a dejar ser. Si faltas tu dios no lo quiera, ¿qué va a ser de mí? Yo tengo que valerme por mí mismo.' Ahorita a 5 años de me accidente, siento que estoy bien adaptado a la sociedad. Yo siento que lo puedo hacer todo, agusto la verdad. Tengo mucha fuerza de voluntad y

*autoestima. Yo mismo no me dejo caer.*²⁰⁶

El Suave suggested that he negotiates to hook up with men. For instance, to avoid ancestral surveillance, he travels to other pueblos where nobody knows or recognizes him:

*Para pareja siempre buscaba las localidades grandes de trabajo y pues más que nada allí encontraba uno que otro (Jotería Rural) pues se familiarizaba uno y platicaba con ellos y esto y el otro y miraba sus maneras de ser sus maneras de pensar y ya pues decías bueno este es igual que yo. Le voy a tirar los perros y si la pego bueno y pues despegado esta igual.*²⁰⁷

Yailin/Lupillo said that he also tries his best to avoid ancestral surveillance by

²⁰⁶ Things have to take a turn for the better to get better. For example, I had an accident, I lost my hand and that. Because of that, my family and I grew closer... there was more communication. Since then, I've said to myself... If I had to go through something like that again, for example, losing my other hand, to be well, to be united as brothers, I would do it again. After my accident, everything fell into place. I would go out with my dad, my siblings, and everyone was happy. I have a very good relationship with them since then. Whatever happens to me, I have the confidence to tell them. In fact, my mom has the confidence to tell me, 'Hey son, look at that handsome guy over there for you.' Sometimes it even embarrasses me, and I say, "shut up!" People go through many things in life that change your mindset and perspective. If I was hurt, it was because in my own head I told myself, 'No one will want you because you're disabled.' But there are many men who are materialistic, focused on bodies and that's what traumatized me. Meaning, no one would say, 'Look, the cripple is here!' Those are just things that I put in my head. Until I changed my mind set about that. After a year and a half, I started doing basic movements again. Then I started having fights because my boss at work would say I wasn't good for anything. He even told me, 'You don't serve any purpose, you're different.' I told him... 'I'm just like you, maybe even better than you! Don't underestimate me because I can end up in your position and I promise you that.' When you're missing a part of your body, you're just trying to figure out how to do things. In my case, I started from scratch and changed my life. The boss would bring me around one way or another, but with one hand I could still do the work. Today, thank God I know how to love myself, wrap bandages, cut my nails. Do many things. My mom wanted to dress me up like a baby like when one gets sick [sickly]. She wanted to bathe me and everything and I'd say, 'leave me alone!' She'd answer, 'I don't want you to hurt yourself.' I told her, 'Let me stumble on my own so that I can get up by myself and learn from it. You'll never let me be myself. If God forbid you are gone, what will happen to me? I have to take care of myself.'

²⁰⁷ For a partner, I was always looking for big work opportunities, and I'd find one or two (Rural Guys) guys there, and I'd get to know them and chat with them, and so on. And I'd look at their ways of being, their ways of thinking, and I'd say, "Ah, this guy is just like me." I'm going to take my chances and if I hit it off, then it's all good and we're off to a good start.

hooking up in pueblos. “Aquí en el rancho casi no hay pero igual nos íbamos para Tototlán pateábamos y como allí miraban que éramos unas mariquitas bravas pues se nos arrimaban y todo y pues allí coqueteábamos y todo,²⁰⁸” he claimed. In the rural, there also exists Overt Resistance Strategies.

Overt Resistance Strategies (OSR)

Resistance Through Enclaves (ORS1)

Gruzinski (2003), stated that many *Jotería Rural* in the 17th century colonial period were able to navigate because of the organization of enclaves. The tradition of *Jotería Rural* standing in solidarity despite the repressive societal norms has been a resistance method that has transcended the sands of time. Contemporarily, many of the *Jotería Rural* I spoke to testified that they organize enclaves as a support system. These enclaves are shaped around their shared experiences of marginalization. Neto shared with me that there was a group of *Jotería Rural* that formed as means to resist through visibility:

Cuando yo estaba en mi adolescencia nos juntábamos un grupito de gays. Grande, porque éramos unos 16. Era bien padre porque de allí nos empezábamos a dar valor entre todos como ya éramos muchos. De allí nos empezamos a apoyar y sentirnos como no estábamos solos y nos juntábamos en una esquina. Era bien padre, pero se deshizo el grupo. Yo me fui a GDL y empezó a ver pleitos entre ellos y eso se acabó. Pero igual esa etapa sirvió para

²⁰⁸ There is not that any gay guys here, but we'd still go to Tototlán, we'd kick back and have fun, and since they would look at us like we were sharp little queens, they'd come up to us and we'd flirt with them and have a good time.

*que también la gente viera porque aquí en Tototlán nunca se había visto antes de eso que salieran libremente siendo Gay vistiéndote distintos a los demás.*²⁰⁹

Ricky agrees that visibility through enclaves is one of the reasons *Jotería Rural* are more widely accepted in *Tototlán* contemporarily. “*Ya es normal [ser Gay] aquí en Tototlán. Eso del tema Gay ya era normal. Antes nos juntábamos 13 y andábamos de cuadra a cuadra todos así y andábamos de un lado para otro,*²¹⁰” Ricky said.

El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo also organized enclaves in *Nuevo Refugio* at Mickey’s Wings. While I was in *Nuevo Refugio*, we would gather almost every weekend. El Suave, who is the more social one out of the two, invited *Jotería Rural* from different ranchos and pueblos from various municipalities in *Los Altos De Jalisco*. Though Mickey intended to hide away *Jotería Rural* underneath the staircase to preserve the virility in his business (while hypocritically still wanting the business of El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo), El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo always made sure that “VIP section” was always packed.

Disidentification (ORS2)

Muñoz defines disidentification as a “survival strategy evoked by the minority spectator to resist socially prescribed patterns of identification” (Muñoz, 1999, p. 28). It is a strategy that works on and against the dominant ideology. Chavelo and Jack Watson disidentify because they refuse to identify themselves using global identification labels. They essentially refuse narrow, static, and fixed minority labels

²⁰⁹ When I was in my adolescence, we'd get together with a small group of gay friends. There were a lot of us, around 16. It was great because we started to support each other and feel like we weren't alone. We'd meet up at a corner and it was great, but the group eventually broke up. I moved to GDL (Guadalajara) and there were conflicts between them, and that was the end of it. But that era served as a milestone because before that, people in *Tototlán* had never seen openly gay people who dressed differently from the rest.

²¹⁰ It's normal to be gay here in *Tototlán* now. That whole gay thing was already normal. Before, we'd get together 13 of us and we'd walk around from block to block, all of us like that, and we'd walk from one side to the other.

prescribed by liberal multicultural discourses, which white-wash complexities of intersectionality (Muñoz, 1999, Crenshaw, 1989). For instance, Chavelo states that “*nomas me gustan los hombres*²¹¹” whilst Jack Watson said that “*más o menos les digo que soy.*²¹²” Téó and Juan Gabriel argued that they disidentify with global, cosmopolitan aesthetics by dressing in the aesthetic of *el joto de rancho*²¹³. Juan Gabriel described to me what this aesthetic looks like. “*Aquí en el rancho pues yo nos enseñaron a tener chores, gorra, botas, pantalones. El buen vestir. Una buena texana. Así me gustaba, pero cuando era joven y bello. Ahora me vale [como me visto] jaja,*²¹⁴” Juan Gabriel stated. As another means of disidentification, many contributors also transformed cultural logic from within by removing their hegemonic interlockings and highlighting multiplicity (Muñoz, 1999). In essence, they implemented multiple disidentifications towards multiple sites simultaneously. Some of these sites and/or fronts of resistance include globalism/modernity, neoliberalism, and imposed virility (derived from the logic of coloniality). They did this by not fully identifying with and subscribing to (and working on and against) globalism/modernity, neoliberalism, and virility. Instead, the *Jotería Rural* I spoke with identified their third space where they took the non-hegemonic, liberating, multiplicity, and intersectional meanings of all three to mold their identities to create a *Jotería ranchera*²¹⁵ and *Jotería de pueblo*²¹⁶ (Bhaba, 1994). This is similar to Dussel’s transmodernity theory which states that we

²¹¹ I just like men

²¹² I more or less tell them what I am.

²¹³ Joto with queer ranch aesthetics

²¹⁴ Around here, at the ranch, they taught us to dress properly, with a hat, boots, pants, and good clothes. A good Texan hat. I liked it that way, but when I was young and handsome. Now, I'm fine with how I dress...I don't really care (laughs).

²¹⁵ Queerness with rural ranch aesthetics

²¹⁶ Queerness with rural town aesthetics

must also take from the non-hegemonic moments of modernity.

El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo embodied this *Jotería ranchera* when they described their identities to me. One dimension of their identity that makes them unique is their love for their community's local culture. Specifically, their pleasure for *corridos*²¹⁷ and *band*²¹⁸. *Corridos* and *banda bailes*²¹⁹ are some the rituals of manhood linked to performance of virility. Every year in the fiesta of *Nuevo Refugio*, men utilize *los bailes* as a platform to showcase their virility with how well versed they dance this genre of music. They do this through the mastery of the speed, versatility, and leadership of the movements. This is also a way for *bugas* to communicate romantic and/or sexual interest towards a potential female partner (except for when *bugas* ask their family members to dance). Every year, I am galvanized by how El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo outperform their *buga* counterparts on the dance floor. “*Así de jotos como nos vez les ponemos la muestra,*²²⁰” El Suave stated.

Another dimension of *Jotería Rural* dis-identification in *Nuevo Refugio* is the reclaiming of the *joto/maricon/effeminate* male identity derived from the events of the dance of the 41 (Chavez, 2018; Capistran, 2018). This is done in private by those who seek to retain *respeto*, but in public by those who openly subvert to *respeto*. Like *La Cotita de incarnacion* disidentified with colonial constructs and visions of identification, El Suave and Yailin/Luipillo disidentify with their performance of

²¹⁷ Regional Mexican musical genre common in rural areas.

²¹⁸ Regional Mexican musical genre common in rural areas.

²¹⁹ Parties with regional Mexican music.

²²⁰ As joto as you see us, we set the example.

hombre *afeminado*²²¹ and *vestida*²²². They do this by transgressing the imposed gender regime. El Suave suggested that he feels liberated when *se viste*. In fact, he proudly goes out into public clothing an attitude of *una mujer empoderada*.²²³ He emphasized that he is the same person in private as he is in public:

*Pos al igual yo cuando vi que me gustaban los tacones y los vestidos dije bueno, ¿si a mí me gustan, a la gente que? [me vale lo que piensan]. Yo me sentía liberada en como yo me vestía a como me visto y usar tacón y eso y nunca me ando fijando en que dirá la gente mucho menos sus opiniones. Pues al igual de mi en las comodidades, yo me siento agusto de una forma de otra. No le pongo pretexto a una forma o la otra (masc o femme). Si salgo vestido de mujer es igual que salga vestido de hombre y pues si la gente se te queda mirando raro y equis cosa, pero es mejor que te miren nomas una vez para verte cualquier vez [que se acostumbren]. Yo en la casa y en la calle soy igual soy el mismo, digo el mismo vocabulario, soy el mismo. Trato igual a las personas. Mas que nada no escondo en la calle lo que soy aquí en la casa. Soy igual aquí y afuera.*²²⁴

While performing down the runway of El Suave's living room in stylish red heels, Lupillo/Yailin shared that *se viste* to "mess around" and only does it in private spaces.

However, they have since come out as Trans*:

²²¹ Effeminate

²²² Dress as the opposite sex

²²³ An empowered woman

²²⁴ When I saw that I liked high heels and dresses, I thought, 'Well, if I like it, what about everyone else?' [I don't care what they think]. I felt free to dress how I wanted to, in heels and that way, and I never paid attention to what people would say or their opinions. And just like my comfort, I feel at ease in one way or another. I don't set conditions for one style or the other (male or female). If I go out dressed as a woman, it's the same as if I go out dressed as a man, and if people stare at me weirdly, but it's better if they only glance once to see me sometimes [and get used to it]. At home and on the street, I'm the same person; I use the same vocabulary, I'm the same. I treat people equally. More than anything, I don't hide who I am here at home what I am outside. I'm the same inside and out.

Si de primer si [me daba pena usar ropa de mujer], pero después agarras confiancita y te vale madre (at this point of the platica Lupillo/Yailin starts snapping their fingers) y allí andas puteando agusto con tacón y todo. (puts on tacones at this point of the platica) Pues a mi no me importa lo que dirá la gente. Hay que darles de comer un gatito para que tengan de que hablar. La genta es una estúpida y me da lo mismo (starts performing and walking with tacones). A mi las dos cosas me gusta ser (femenino y masculino). Como pa vestirme de mujer me gusta para payasear, pero para andar en público no me gustaría.²²⁵

Juan Gabriel also articulated that *se viste* only in private. He also shared that he only did so in public when he briefly lived in the United States. “*A mí me encantaba vestirme de vieja cuando vivía en estados unidos. Hasta tenía más de 90 pelucas, pelucas hermosas de 500 tantos dólares. ¡Hacia pista vestido grande! No chingaderas. Pero me gusta el desmadre,²²⁶*” he revealed.

Ricky stated that he also enjoys *visteándose*²²⁷, but in private and for fun:

Yo nunca he concursado, pero como espectador yo los admiro. En fiestas privadas si payaseo. Si me he vestido en fiestas privadas entre amigos y hacemos concursos pequeños entre amigos, pero ya para concursar en el

²²⁵ If at first [I felt embarrassed to wear women's clothing], but then you gain confidence and it's fine, mother (at this point, Lupillo/Yailin starts snapping his fingers) and you're just fine, comfortable with heels and all that. (puts on high heels at this point) Well, it doesn't matter what people say. You've got to give them something to talk about, like a cat to feed. People are stupid and I don't care (starts performing and walking in high heels). To me, both things are pleasing (feminine and masculine). I like to dress up as a woman to have fun, but I wouldn't want to walk around in public like that.

²²⁶ I loved dressing up as a lady when I lived in the United States. I even had more than 90 wigs; beautiful wigs worth \$500 each. I'd get dressed up big-time! No nonsense. But I like the drama.

²²⁷ Dressing up

*certamen creo que no lo haría. Cuando me accidenté me hice muy vulnerable y inseguro. Si no lo hice antes, ahora menos. Si payaseo y todo y todos andamos en tacones y mi mama viéndonos y todo aquí en la casa en lo privado, pero ya en si de grande no lo aria.*²²⁸

Ricky further expressed that his identity is unique because he is *un Gay de pueblo*. He also suggested that he has his own aesthetic of dressing that does not fit the Gay aesthetic nor that of *el pueblo*. He also highlighted his refusal to use SMS as a form of *ligear*. A practice quite common among cosmopolitan folks (Hernandez-Victoria, 2018).

*Soy Gay, pero no de los locos. Soy Gay más de pueblo. Tengo más principios o si ósea más al antigüitas se podría decir. Yo siento que así soy. Yo soy uno de los pocos que quedan que no está de acuerdo con las redes sociales. Incluso yo con Daniel fue lo que le dije. El día que tú y yo quieres que funcionemos como pareja, ocupo que te retires de las redes sociales. Entran muchas dudas y el diablo donde quiera está metiendo su cola. Las redes sociales es mucha tentación. Yo no estoy de acuerdo con eso. He conocido personas en redes sociales y todo, pero no me ha ido bien en la feria. Es mejor de conocer en persona. ¡Menos en Grindr! Que se estén mandando fotos. ¡Menos! Yo estoy ahorita en divorcio total de las redes sociales.*²²⁹

²²⁸ I've never competed, but as a spectator I admire them. In private parties, I would dress up. If I dressed up at private parties with friends and we would have small competitions among ourselves, but I don't think I would compete in the actual contest. When I had an accident, I became very vulnerable and insecure. If I didn't do it before, I certainly wouldn't now. If I were to get dressed up and we're all going to heels and my mom is seeing us and everything here at home in private, but I wouldn't do it publicly.

²²⁹ I'm Gay, but not crazy. I'm Country Gay. I have more principles, or if you want to say, I'm old-fashioned. I feel like that's how I am. I'm one of the few who disagree with social media. Even with Daniel, that's what I told him. The day you and I want to work as a couple, I'll make sure you quit social media.

Since coming out as Trans, Yailin/Lupillo disclosed how she disidentifies with Global North, homogenous conventions of Transness. When I first reconnected with Yailin/Lupillo from 2017-2019, the signifier Trans was not used often in rural *Jalisco*, and I argue that it had not yet arrived in the rural zones of *Jalisco*. In that case, she utilized the gendered language available to her to construct her identity, as depicted in the previous quote. Now that Trans has arrived, she now openly identifies as Trans. However, I later found that her Transness does not fit neatly with the dynamic and identity politics of the Global North. When I spoke to her during a *parrandeada*, she disclosed to me the complexity of her identity:

Yailin/Lupillo: *No prima, yo si mi voy a operar y todo, pero igual hay días que me siento más como vato y pues también soy vato. A mí me gusta ser vato también.*

Luis: *Ósea, eres Trans, ¿pero hombre y mujer?*

Yailin/Lupillo: *Así es, me siento más como mujer, pero igual hay días que si quiero andar como vato.*

Luis: *¿Entonces como quiere que le diga?*

Yailin/Lupillo: *A mí me vale madre primo. Usted dígame Yailin o Lupillo.*

Luis: *Me recuerdas a los Naguales.*

Yailin/Lupillo: *Si así mero.*²³⁰

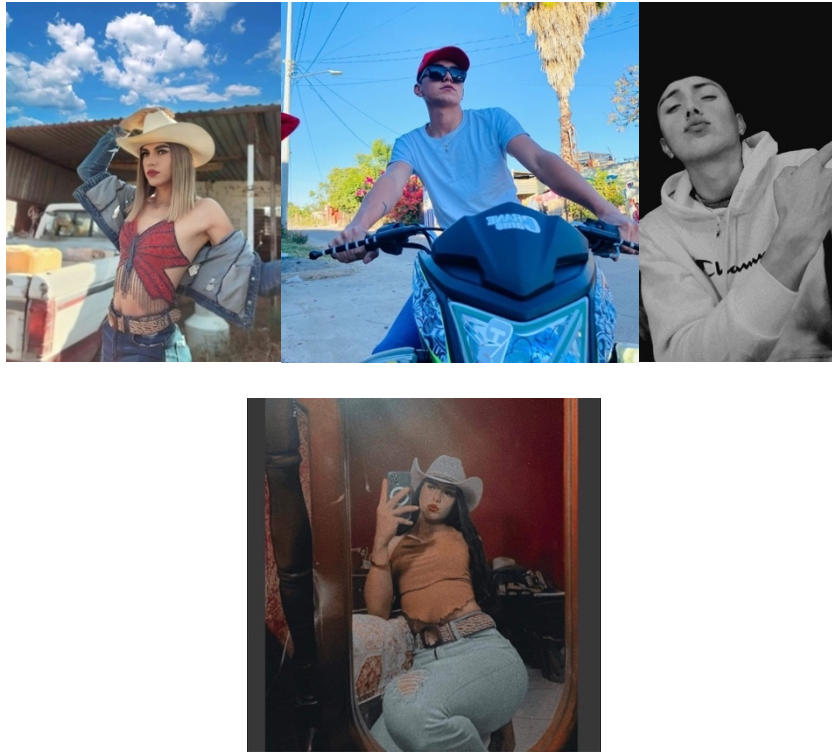
There are many doubts, and the devil is putting his tail wherever he wants. Social media is too tempting. I don't agree with that. I've met people on social media, yes, but it didn't go well for me in the end. It's better to meet in person. Less on Grindr! Sending pictures all the time! No way! Right now, I'm totally divorced from social media.

²³⁰ Yailin/Lupillo: No, cousin, I will want to get an operation [transition], but there are days when I feel more like a guy and then I'm also a guy. I like being a guy too.

Luis: So, are you Trans, but man and woman?

Figure 30

Yailin/Lupillo's Nagual Transness de Rancho



As Yailin/Lupillo described, they are Trans like a *nagual* via shifting identity. Through *Rasqachismo*, Yailin/Lupillo built their identity via the resignification of language. She re-signified Trans and situated the signifier to the dynamic of the rural as well as her shifting component. This is validly distinct as to how most folks identify in the Global North where identity is in a line and the individual refers to their birth name as their “dead name.” However, Transness cannot be seen as monolithic. As Mexican Trans author Évolet Aceves stated at the 2024 AJAAS conference, she does honors and

Yailin/Lupillo: Yeah, that's me, I feel more like a woman, but there are days when I want to walk around like a guy.
Luis: So, what do you want me to call you?
Yailin/Lupillo: It's okay with me, cousin. You can call me Yailin or Lupillo.
Luis: You remind me of the Nahuals.
Yailin/Lupillo: Yeah, exactly!

remembers her past as a boy and was received with heavy criticisms by some of the audience members. However, identity, like Trans, is heterogeneous and everchanging, as demonstrated by Évolet and my cousin Lupillo/Yailin. As Gloria Anzaldua stated,

Identity flows between, over, aspects of a person. Identity is a river-a process. Contained within the river is its identity, and it needs to flow, to change to stay a river-if it stopped it would be a contained body of water such as a lake or a pond. The changes in the river are external (changes in environment-river bed, weather, animal life) and internal (within the waters). A river's contents flow within its boundaries. Changes in identity likewise are external (how others perceive one and how one perceives others and the world) and internal (how one perceives oneself, self-image). People in different regions name the parts of the river/person which they see. (Anzaldua, 2009)

Thus, by homogenizing perspectives on Transness on the Global North, we are limiting identity to *jaulas*²³¹ and replicating coloniality in the process (Anzaldua, 2016). More and Bogart also expressed that identity labels can be limiting in *Afro-Jotería* contexts:

Luis: *¿Ósea tu piensas que las etiquetas son?*

More: *...Puras Pantallas! Si claro. Para mí sí.*

Bogart: *Yo pienso que cade quien decide lo que quiere ser. Tanto tienes la Libertad de poder decir que quieres ser. ES que por ejemplo existe. Por ejemplo, salieron los temas controversiales de decir ella/el o elle, ¿no? Creo que todos tenemos la Libertad de decir que quiero ser. Pero la mismo yo tengo*

²³¹ cages

la Libertad de decir lo que yo quiera. Te voy a poner un ejemplo... cuando entre hombres heterosexuales surge que alguien le dice mujer al hombre rápido hace mención que hey soy hombre. Quiere que le digan como hombre. Lo mismo sucede con las personas no binarias.

More: *Si ya está marcando uno lo que es.*²³²

Chucho's personifies this move away from the confines of rigid identity labels and roles. As More and Bogart described to me, Chucho wears dresses and fulfills cultural roles of both cis-males and cis-females. For example, they do heavy work that not even the most masculine men in *Tamiahua* want to do, such as gutting animals and construction work. Through a duality of masculinity and femininity, they also fulfill roles of the household traditionally done by cis-women. Clearly, there is a heterogeneity of Transness among other identities that we can learn from in the rural, Global South. These overt, unapologetic resistances like Lupillo/Yailin, More, and Chucho form part of a historic trajectory of resistances, such as the *marchas* in *Jalisco*.

***Marcha* Movements as Resistance (ORS3)**

The *marchas* in *Jalisco* have been a recent organized form of overt resistance. My involvement in the *marchas* began in the summer of 2023 when I volunteered to blow up balloons for the organizers, Toto-Diverso. As described in Chapter 6, I was

²³² Luis: So, you think labels are...

More: ...Pure Screens! Of course, for me.

Bogart: I think whoever decides what they want to be. You have the Freedom to say what you want to be. It's just that, for example, there are controversial topics like saying 'she' or 'he' or 'they,' right? I think everyone fears the freedom to say what they want to be. But I also have the freedom to say what I want. I'll give you an example... when among heterosexual men, someone says 'woman' to a man quickly makes a comment like 'hey, I'm a man.' They want people to call them a man. The same thing happens with non-binary people.

More: So, it's already marked what it is.

invited by the inaugural committee members Raul and Chaparro to form part of the Toto-Diverso committee. This resulted in my involvement as a fundraising coordinator and as a designer for the collective. What was significant about the fundraising was the transcending of imagined hemispherical borders between the *Jotería* of the Global North and Global South through coalition building. I explained to my fellow committee members that I had connections to professors and students who formed part of the Association for *Jotería* Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS), an academic-activist national organization, conference, and community. I then devised a transnational fundraising campaign to raise more funds for the march, as the municipal government gave us little funds. Because we only had a week until the march, we had to move fast. Therefore, I designed a flyer and released it to various *Jotería* community members and allies in the Global North via social media. The response was swift with the first person, Nerli, donating within the hour that I released the call for funds (see Figure 31).

Figure 31

Nerli, the First Person to Donate to the First Marcha in Tototlán's History



In total, we raised \$800 USD in one week. Subsequently the next step for the *marcha* was to design the *croquis*²³³. As a combination of both overt and covert resistance, we used the same *croquis* as the church procession of the pueblo’s saint *Sabas* (which usually happens in May) as a form of “talking back” to the virile institutions that have historically repressed *Jotería Rural* communities in *Tototlán* (see Figure 32). Though the *croquis* are commonly used across pride movements across the world, something unique about the *marchas* of Mexico are the *consignas*²³⁴. *Consignas* are commonly used in protests across Mexico as a collective voice of protest and unity.

Figure 32

The Official Croquis for the First Marcha in Tototlán’s History



Naturally, the next step after designing the *croquis* was formulating the *consignas*. Because none of the committee members had knowledge of the *consignas* used in Mexico, the first step was to conduct research via social media. In a *rasquache*

²³³ The march map

²³⁴ chants

way, we researched *consignas* used in *marchas* across Mexico including Mexico City and Guadalajara such as “*No Que No, Si Que Si, Ya Volvimos a Salir*”²³⁵ and “*Si Zapata Viviera, En Tacones Anduviera*.”²³⁶ After getting inspired by existing *consignas*, I formulated my own *consigna*, “*Toto, Diverso, Ahora Es El Momento!*”²³⁷ (see figure 33).

Figure 33

Some of the Official Consignas of the First Marcha in Tototlán’s History



²³⁵ No, no, yes, but yes, we are out again!

²³⁶ If Zapata was alive, in heels he would be!

²³⁷ Toto, Diverso, now is our time!

After rigorous organizing, everything was finally ready for the *marcha*. On June 10, 2023, we gathered in front of the municipal government building. We were honored to have been joined by the neighboring municipalities, *Poncitlán* and *Ocotlán* (I will discuss this alliance further in the next section). At first, we were extremely nervous, apprehensive, and full of fear. Especially, since there was an incident earlier that day where two men drove by and screamed homophobic slurs at our drag queen guests from *Ocotlán* and *Poncitlán*. However, we were also excited as to our surprise, many families across various municipalities showed up to support including various older LGBTQIA+ folks and allies (see Figure 34). I was also later informed that many older folks who came to the *marcha se destaparon* for the first time that day.

Figure 34

Jotería Rural and Ally Communities from Various Rural Communities Across Los Altos De Jalisco



At around 7pm, we cut the ceremonial ribbon and the *marcha* was off (see Figure 35)! Again, we were apprehensive and quiet at first with only the music from one of the float speakers giving ambiance to the *marcha*. However, mirroring various *marchas* across the world, history repeats itself in the context that Trans women are the

almost always the ones to lead the charge of overt resistance. As mentioned in Chapter 6, Yailin/Lupillo and Yos began dancing and *perreando* to the music and rallying the *Jotería Rural*. Gradually, we let go of our fears and began to chant “*Toto, Diverso, Ahora Es El Momento!*” and sent shockwaves across *Tototlán*. Extemporaneously, El Suave, who was also present that day screamed “*Jototlan!*”²³⁸ We made those streets ours that day and for the first time in 500 years of colonization, we were visibly and unapologetically *presente!* Throughout the procession of the march, we received lots of mixed reactions from the *Tototlán* community.

Figure 35

The Official Start of the Marcha at 7pm on June 10, 2023



Some reactions were of disdain and disgust, but most were supportive and nurturing. Perhaps the most impactful and meaningful moment of the *marcha* was folks joining us when we reached their block. For example, my friend Alvaro mentioned to me that he would not be marching because *se quemaba* with his grandparents. However, after

²³⁸ I wrote a poem about the imagined space that is Jototlán in the Borderlines Journal 2023 edition.

seeing how empowering the *marcha* was when we passed his street, he became empowered and, in the end, decided to join us. The subsequent plan was for the *marcha* to end at the municipal plaza (across the street from the municipal government building where the march began). After the *marcha*, we hosted a drag show at the municipal plaza featuring Toto-Diverso committee members Raul and Chaparro and guests from our neighboring municipalities, *Ocotlán* and *Poncitlán*. Among those guests was Jose “*Pache King*” (see Figure 37). Various community members joined us for our event in the plaza.

Figure 36

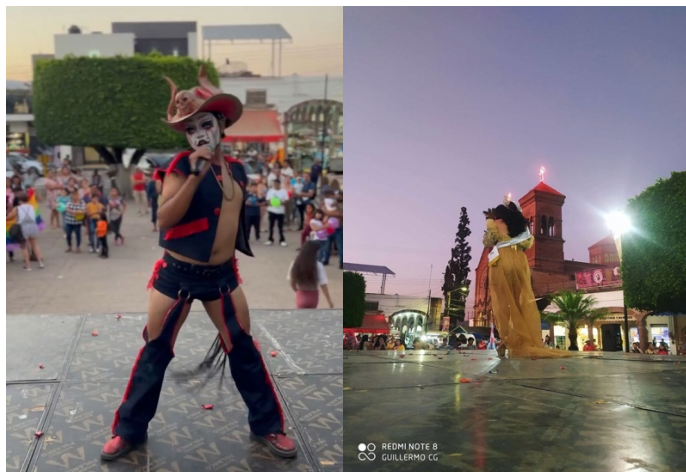
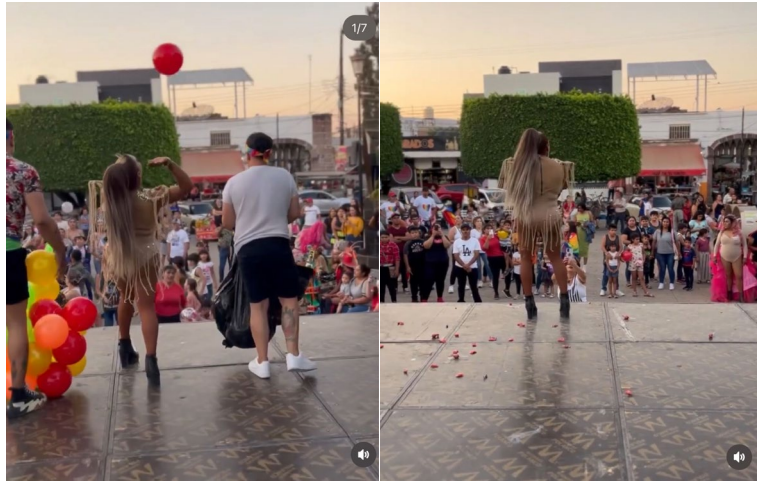
Iconic Photo of Alvaro at Tototlán’s First Pride Marcha



In addition to the drag show, we also planned to give thanks and acknowledgments to those who made the *marcha* possible as well as discourses on the purpose of the *marcha*. I gave a discourse on the historical context of the *marcha* which we listed on the program. One of the discourses and performances that stuck out to me, though, was Jessica’s.

Figure 37

Performances and Discourses in the Plaza



In her performance, Jessica expressed to the crowd, “*Es muy importante que apoyen a su comunidad LGBTQIA+! ¡Formamos parte de diferentes sectores de su comunidad, aunque no lo sepan! Somos sus doctores, sus maestros, ¡sus dentistas! ¡¿A caso nos prefiere Muertos?!²³⁹*” Another detail that stuck out to me regarding her performance is that she gave away *pelotas*²⁴⁰ to the community. After later meeting her, she explained to me that the activism in the rural zones looks different because “*te los tienes que ganar.*²⁴¹” Meaning, one has to win the community over through empathy. She also did this through the goodwill of gifts, something common in the rural zones. Again, because of her busy schedule, Jessica was unable to lend her full voice to this project but promised to have a *plática* with me regarding the history of the *marchas* and activist tactics unique to the rural in a future project. In solidarity, the Toto-Diverso collective went to *Poncitlán* ’s 3rd annual *marcha* and gave out *pelotas* (see Figure 38).

Figure 38

Solidarity with Poncitlán

²³⁹ We are part of different sectors of your community, although you may not know it! We are your doctors, your teachers, your dentists! Would you prefer us dead?

²⁴⁰ Balls

²⁴¹ You have to win them over.



Because of the short time frame I had to conduct this part of the research, I am unsure when the first *marcha* in rural *Jalisco* took place. However, what I am sure about is that *Poncitlán*'s march took place before ours 2 years prior.

Jose historicized the recent history of the *marchas* in his home municipality of *Poncitlán*. As he professed, there was little to no support for the *marchas* at first. Jessica had also previously mentioned this to me in a brief conversation. Nonetheless, the first *marcha* in *Ponictlán*'s history took place in 2021 as historicized by Jose:

Bueno, fíjate que la Primera Marcha LGBT llegó a conciliar en el 2021, y me acuerdo de que hubo muy poca difusión en redes sociales, o sea, las personas que estaban organizando en ese entonces. Yo no era parte del Comité, pero a hicieron la mayor decisión que tuvieron. Sin embargo, no hubo como tanta interacción de ahí mismo de Poncitlán. De hecho, creo que mucha gente de la que vino eran invitados de personas que, o sea, de los organizadores. Vinieron invitados como de Guadalajara. Y así para que hicieran como más esta aglomeración, o sea, para que se viera más movimiento. Realmente muchas personas de Poncitlán incluso me incluyo...Pero bueno, independientemente,

pues surgió llega en 2021. La primera marcha. Yo me acuerdo de que yo vi unas amigas y amigos, queríamos dar como un mensaje, porque queríamos como aprovecharlo, ¿no? Y esto bien divertido. Todavía de tener fotos. sí las mujeres fueron vestidos de niños y los niños de niñas. Yo me llevo una faldita y así y amigas llevaban pantalones. Así llevamos como elegantes. Pero como intercambiamos el rol no, o sea, yo me puse falda y así me acuerdo de que también hubo muchas críticas porque, o sea, todavía Poncitlán, Ahuatlán, no estaban como tan listos para esto. Sabes, era como iba hasta la primera marcha, o claro que iba a ser muy polémica. Entonces yo sí recibí muchos malos comentarios. La gente se burlaba. Hubo muy poca participación en el aspecto en el que casi no hubo gente viendo la marcha. Se fue como muy poquita gente estuvo viéndola. Y Pues bueno, al final se al final. Es un chido porque no te digo que fue una mala experiencia porque al final terminó en una fiesta y estuvimos toda la comunidad. Bien, padre, nos reunimos en un bar y estuvimos divirtiéndonos. Y bueno para la segunda marcha, ya formaban parte del Comité. Y este ya era parte. pues incluso iba como rey porque gané un concurso que se llama reinas del Break, que se organiza en el escenario VIP.²⁴²

²⁴² Well, look, the First LGBT March arrived in 2021, and I remember there was very little coverage on social media, I mean, from the people who were organizing at the time. I wasn't part of the Committee, but they made the biggest decision they had. However, there wasn't as much interaction as I would have expected from Poncitlán. In fact, I think many people who came were invited guests of the organizers, like from Guadalajara. And so, they came to make it seem like a bigger gathering, so that more people would see the movement. Many people from Poncitlán, including myself... But good, regardless, it happened in 2021. The first march. I remember seeing friends and wanting to send a message because we wanted to take advantage of it, don't you know? And it was a lot of fun. We even took photos. The women wore dresses, and the men wore skirts. I wore a skirt, and my friends wore pants. We looked elegant. But we didn't switch roles, I mean, I wore a skirt and... Ah, yes, I also remember that there were many criticisms because Poncitlán and Ahuatlán weren't ready for this yet. You know, it was going to be a very controversial first march, so I received many negative comments. People mocked us. There was very little participation in terms of hardly anyone watching the march. It was like very few people were watching it. And well, in the

In the 2022 and 2023 marches, he became more heavily involved as a member of the Poncitlán Diverso Committee. He even saved the 2023 *marcha* as it was in danger of being cancelled because nobody from his committee had filed the paperwork. In addition to historicizing his *marcha*, he also elaborated on the dynamic of neighboring collectives traveling to support neighboring *marchas*. Together, we theorized that this too was an activist tactic unique to *Los Altos De Jalisco*.

***Marcha* Collective Enclaves as Resistance: Enclave Coalition Building (ORS4)**

In previous sections, I discussed enclaves as resistance. As Jose and I came to find, enclave tactics can also apply on a larger scope. Particularly, a tactic Jose and I coin as enclave coalition building and it is rooted in *Jotería* tradition of marginalized communities finding themselves, giving themselves value amongst each other, and working towards empowering one another to openly subvert which is a phenomenon we have seen since the colonial period and now manifested in the *marchas de Los Altos de Jalisco*. Interjecting borderlands theory, the municipalities refuse to follow the compartmentalizing logic of the *municipios*, and instead build coalitions and alliances amongst each other (Anzaldúa, 1987). Jose further contextualized this phenomenon as this enclave coalition building was instrumental to the success of *Poncitlán's* second *marcha* and *Tototlán's* first *marcha*:

Cuando fue la primera Marcha de Poncitlán. Ocotlán Es un poquito más grande, más por poblado. Ellos también andaban empezando con sus marchas para esas

end... It's not bad because I'm not saying it was a bad experience because in the end it ended up being a party and we all got together. Well, we met at a bar and had fun. And for the second march, they were already part of the Committee and this one was already established... In fact, I even went as royalty because I won a contest called The Queens of the Break that takes place on the VIP stage.

fechas. Entonces gente de Ocotlán vino a reforzar la marcha de Poncitlán para que se diera más numerosa. Y hubiera más participación. Entonces este también los mismos de Ocotlán al final del pues fueron como importante para al cierre de la marcha, pues hubo como se aterriza un mes. Se trata de dar un mensaje a la plaza totalmente público, pues para que entienda la gente porque lo hacemos no para hablar un poquito más sobre estos temas y pues ya. Pero ya una vez te explico, la marcha que fue en 2022 se dio ya en Poncitlán, pues ya había más gente interesada, más gente unida que había vivido la primera. Y entonces me gustó mucho, porque a Tequiza, a Atotonilquillo, Perdón, abrió su primera marcha. Entonces ahora nos tocó nosotros como fungir el papel que Ocotlán había hecho con nosotros hace un año, o sea, porque nos tocaba ir, nosotros de Poncitlán. apoyarlos en su marcha de riqueza. Y este a Atotonilquillo, los cuales y fue muy padre porque nos apoyamos entre todos para irnos en camioneta de Jessica. Jessica es este una icona de Poncitlán en activismo este. Pero bueno, Jessica puso gasolina y demás. Y Fernanda y demás. Y todos los que somos aquí Ponci. Y nos fuimos a tequila y a todo el equipo para apoyarlos en sus marchas. Organizamos un míster gay. Bueno, lo organizo Atoto, pero nosotros fuimos de ya está. Fernanda fue dio show y ale pascual También dieron show y yo fui conductor. Entonces la gente me acuerdo de que se me hacía bien padre porque, o sea, yo, Poncitlán estaba como haya acostumbrado a que me vieran como le queda, Pues hace. ¿Drag? No. Y es como que te miran como de que hay, pues no te miran como con tanta admiración, te ven como después. Ahí se dedica a hacer eso. ¿no? Sin embargo, bien dice un dicho que I no es profeta en su propia tierra,

porque en la riqueza de nosotros en Atotonilquillo, se estaban tomando más fotos conmigo y me veían y me dicen, 'no mames, Me encanta tu maquillaje, tu vestuario igual y foto y foto aquí foto ya.' Y fue así como de que me trataron como como me sentí como una draga importantísima. Me sentí como un drag queen, así como de que Omega es como de lo mejor. porque a la gente le encantó como con cómo conduje. Los estuve haciendo todo el tiempo tomar muchas fotos conmigo con ale con Fernanda porque era para Atotonilquillo. También era algo nuevo. Así como pasó En Poncitlán un año atrás en el 2021 para ellos les pasó en el 2022 un año después, porque para ellos, como era su primera marcha, toda la gente estaba, así como asombrada porque había dragas porque había habido un concurso porque la gente se mostró porque había muchos maquillajes. Y entonces bueno, estuvo muy padre para el 2023 nos tocó ir a Toto. Este a Tototlán perdón, que ya fue donde nos conocimos justamente, pero pasó igual. Nos fuimos a apoyar a Ocotlán. Los de Ocotlán vinieron a la marcha Poncitlán. Los de Ocotlán y Poncitlán fuimos a la marcha de los de Atoto y los de Poncitlán, Ocotlán y a Atoto, fuimos a la marcha de Tototlán, que era su primera marcha. Y fíjate que cuando llegamos honestamente, no sé si te lo compartí anteriormente, pero cuando llegamos los de Poncitlán, nos quedamos viendo, así como de que haya bien poquita gente o sea nomás. Éramos nosotros. Y pues ustedes habían organizado, pues también su camioneta y demás. Pero era muy poquita gente. Sin embargo, no nos desanimamos porque dijimos, me acuerdo de que nos hicimos, así como nos fuimos hacia la placita y dijimos: hoy, no hay nadie. Esto está muerto. El pueblo está muerto. Seguimos, pero llegamos a la conclusión de que

nos recordó tanto Ocotlán y Poncitlán cuando fue nuestra primera marcha porque así estuvo está muerto. No hubo reacción de la gente, y muy pocos gays o lesbianas, o parte de lo de la gente que forma parte de la comunidad LGBT pues tampoco se animaba a participar por el miedo. ¿no? Sin embargo, yo creo que es una de mis mejores experiencias. Y me divertí muchísimo Tototlán. Porque primero tuvimos un recibimiento muy cálido de los organizadores, que eran ustedes. Segundo, porque siento que también la gente que se acercó a mirar el show a la plaza lo disfrutó, se divirtió. Y como que vio no esta otra faceta. Él, como los mismos ranchitos. Estamos logrando esta conexión entre todos los ranchos y este apoyo no. Y te digo, yo creo que así debería ser. Todos los ranchos de que quiera empezar con sus marchas como que, pues sí, saben qué echarme la mano y unirnos. Y así se va a ver una marchatotota. Está así grandota en cada rancho, porque vamos a asistir todos a la marcha. Depende de qué en qué ranchito sea. Y bueno, en Tototlán Yo sí disfruté muchísimo, porque pues yo me divertí mucho Este mostré mi drag en lugares en los que no. Todavía no me conocía Tototlán.²⁴³

²⁴³ When it was the first March in Poncitlán. Ocotlán is a little bigger, more populous. They were also starting their marches around that time. So, people from Ocotlán came to reinforce the march in Poncitlán to make it more numerous and have more participation. And at the end, the people from Ocotlán were like the icing on the cake for closing the march, because it had been a month since it happened. It's about giving a message to the public sphere, so that people understand why we do this, not just to talk a little bit about these topics and that's it. To explain further, the march that happened in 2022 in Poncitlán already had more people interested, and united people who had lived through the first one. And then I really enjoyed it because Tequiza and Atotonilquillo opened their first march. Then it was our turn to play the role that Ocotlán had played for us the year before, so we had to go support them in their march. We went to Atotonilquillo, and it was great because we all supported each other. Particularly Jessica who took us there with her car. Jessica is an icon in Poncitlán via her activism. Jessica put the money for gas and everything. And Fernanda and everyone else. And all of us from Ponci went to Tequiza and everything to support them in their marches. We organized a drag show. Well, Atoto organized it, but we went as is. Fernanda gave a show and Ale Pasqual also gave a show, and I was the host. Then people remembered that I felt good because Poncitlán was used to seeing me like that, making me feel like a big deal. Drag? No. They looked

Capitalizing on this dynamic of enclave coalition building, Jose and I decided to organize a stronger alliance between the neighboring communities of *Tototlán*, *Poncitlán*, and *Ocotlán*. In 2024, we organized an alliance collective fundraising campaign for all 3 of our *marchas*. We did this by having the *Jotería Rural* from all 3 municipalities take pictures of themselves in drag in rural contexts. Jose organized the queens in *Poncitlán* whilst I organized folks in *Tototlán* and *Ocotlán*. This resulted in the sale of *Jotería Lotería Rural*²⁴⁴ cards based on the Mexican traditional game of *Lotería*²⁴⁵ (See Figure 39). I designed the *Jotería Lotería Rural* cards and sold them here in the United States in various conference spaces including AJAAS, NACCS,

at me like there's something wrong with you, they don't look at you with admiration, they see you afterwards. Ah, they dedicate themselves to doing that. However, as they say, 'one is not a prophet in one's own land,' because in Atotonilquillo's richness, they were taking more photos with me and looking at me and saying, 'No way! I love your makeup, your outfit is great, and your photos are amazing!' And it was like that's how they treated me like an important drag queen. I felt like an Omega-level drag queen because people loved how I hosted the show. I was taking photos with Ale and Fernanda all the time because it was for Atotonilquillo too. It was something new. Like what happened in Poncitlán last year in 2021 for them, it happened again in 2022 one year later because for them, it was their first march, and everyone was amazed because there were drag queens because there had been a contest where people showed off their makeup skills. And then, in 2023, we had to go to Ocotlán again. This time we went to support Ocotlán. The people from Ocotlán came to our march in Poncitlán. The people from Ocotlán and Poncitlán went to Atotonilquillo's march and also to Tototlán's march, which was their first one. And honestly, I'm not sure if I mentioned it earlier, but when the folks from Poncitlán arrived to Tototlán, we noticed how there were hardly any people. We remember that you all took initiative and organized by providing your own truck and everything else. But there weren't many people there. However, we didn't get discouraged because we said to each other that when we had our first march, we also said: 'Today, no one is here. The town is dead.' We kept going but ended up concluding that it reminded us of when Ocotlán and Poncitlán had their first march because it was dead too. There was no reaction from the people, and very few gays or lesbians or part of the community didn't dare to participate out of fear. However, I think it [Tototlán] was one of my best experiences. And I had a lot of fun in Tototlán because first of all, we had a warm reception from the organizers themselves. Secondly, I think that the people who approached to watch the show at the plaza enjoyed themselves too. And I think that's what makes us different from other places because we're not just about our own towns; we're about connecting all of them together with this support network. And I say that everyone should do this too; every town should start its own marches and know that they can count on others for help and unity. That way, you'll see a huge march everywhere because we'll all attend each other's marches. It depends on which town it is. And well, in Tototlán I really enjoyed myself because I had a lot of fun showing off my drag skills in places where I didn't know anyone yet.

²⁴⁴ Collectable cards.

²⁴⁵ A bingo-like Mexican board game.

and LSA for \$15 each. Though we did plan to also sell them in Mexico, we did not get any sales out there. In total, we made \$1,000 USD in sales in the

Figure 39

Promotional Materials and Samples of the Jotería Lotería Rural Cards



United States! Jose and I believe this campaign was a *Nepantlero* move in between spaces via *Transfronterizo* enclave coalitions through the dynamic of *Jotería* activists from the Global North donating to Global South. The move was also a contention with border thinking (Anzaldúa, 1987). Particularly, by transcending various borders including chronemic borders, municipal borders, cosmopolitan/rurales borders, state borders, nation-state borders, *Internacionales*²⁴⁶, and ultimately, a small attempt to bridge and horizontalize the unequal axis of the Global North and Global South border in the context of *Jotería* activism. This fundraising campaign resulted in the creation of the Colectivo de La Jotería Transfronteriza Collective to solidify our unity even further. Recently, I also recruited More to our collective in order to expand our unity to

²⁴⁶ International

Veracruz since she openly disclosed to me that the first *marcha* did not receive support last year.

In the end, the money made from the *Jotería Lotería Rural* campaign was formally split between the three municipalities (see Figure 40). We also organized a post-campaign to thank all donors (see Figure 41).

Figure 40

Official Disbursement of Funds Certificates



Jose disclosed that he was so proud of our project, he expressed his desire for us to continue this alliance in years to come:

Claro. De hecho, fijate que sí, a mí me gustaría poder, o sea, seguir con esta dinámica y unirnos, y no solamente unirnos ranchos, sino unir a las ciudades. Poner las ciudades, unir a los estados. Imagínate que padre sería no llegar a tener como tanta esa sinergia tan fuerte que sean eventos realmente que todo el mes de junio se vea súper colorido y no sea como o sea que ya no sea tan difícil para mí, ya no es porque yo ya, pues esto más grande ya puedo pagar mi transporte y demás. Pero yo creo que incluso para las nuevas generaciones, las personas más chicas es como un sueño poder decir, ay, qué ganas de ir a Guadalajara o que gracias a una marcha a tal lugar. Pero imagínate yo creo que,

si este movimiento crece, vamos a tener incluso el apoyo necesario como para que las autoridades digan saber qué, pues se va a organizar una salida a Guadalajara, a la marcha y que entonces podamos este a llevarnos a toda la gente de Poncitlán de toda la gente de Ocotlán y de Tototlán y demás a este lugar a estos lugares. Pues grandes. y pues, como representar, no imagínate qué padre en Guadalajara puede llevar una lona, un carro grandísimo que día Poncitlán. Y entonces que vean cómo empezó siendo una marcha muy chiquita en la que nadie participó ahora, ya estando en la ciudad.²⁴⁷

Before organizing this campaign, the Toto-Diverso committee feared that the *marcha* tradition would not continue into 2024 because of lack of funds. Visibly, however, thanks to this solidifying of enclave coalition building, our own collective, Toto-Diverso arose economically and politically stronger.

Figure 41

Appreciation Campaign Literature

²⁴⁷ Of course. I'd like to be able to keep this dynamic and unite, not just unite towns, but cities. Imagine how great it would be to have a strong synergy that would make events really colorful and so it does not become something that's difficult. Through these collaborations, I could afford my transportation and other things, but I think it's also important for new generations, young people, to have the chance to say, 'Oh, I wish I could go to Guadalajara' or 'I'm grateful for a march in such a place.' But imagine if this movement grows, we'll have the necessary support to make the authorities take notice and say, 'Okay, we're going to organize an outing to Guadalajara for the march' and then we can take everyone from *Poncitlán*, everyone from *Ocotlán*, everyone from *Tototlán*, and so on. That would be amazing. And as a representative, imagine how great it would be in Guadalajara to bring a big banner or a huge truck from *Poncitlán*. And then they'd see how a small march that didn't have anyone participating at first has now become a big event in the city.



This is because the 2024 *marcha* was arguably more successful than last year’s. Mostly, because the planning for the 2024 *marcha* now included neighboring municipalities. Further, our committee grew to include Lupita, Yailin/Lupillo, Yos, and La Pajarita (all Trans Women youth except for La Pajarita). This led to a new type of resistance to be born which will be carried by a new lineage of *Jotería Rural* youth: *Marcha* Tradition as Resistance.

***Marcha* Tradition as Resistance (ORS5)**

Planning for our 2nd annual *marcha* began in April 2024. We recruited Lupita to be our director of finances since she is the owner of a successful café in *Tototlán* and is an expert in financial literacy. Yos and Yailin/Lupillo joined as they were chosen to be this year’s *reinas de la marcha* because of their fearlessness the year prior (see Figure 42). Because we had more time and funds to organize this year, we launched a full-scale

advertising campaign. This time, it included video packages via Tik Tok, digital fliers, and physical literature (see Figure 43). Inspired by our first original *consigna*, our new *consigna* served as a slogan for this year: “*Toto, Diverso, Estamos De Regreso.*”²⁴⁸”

Thanks to our stronger economic power this year, we also debuted a new stage. I would also like to note that some of our economic power came thanks to Lupita, who managed to get us more sponsors.

Figure 42

Colectivo Toto-Diverso 2024

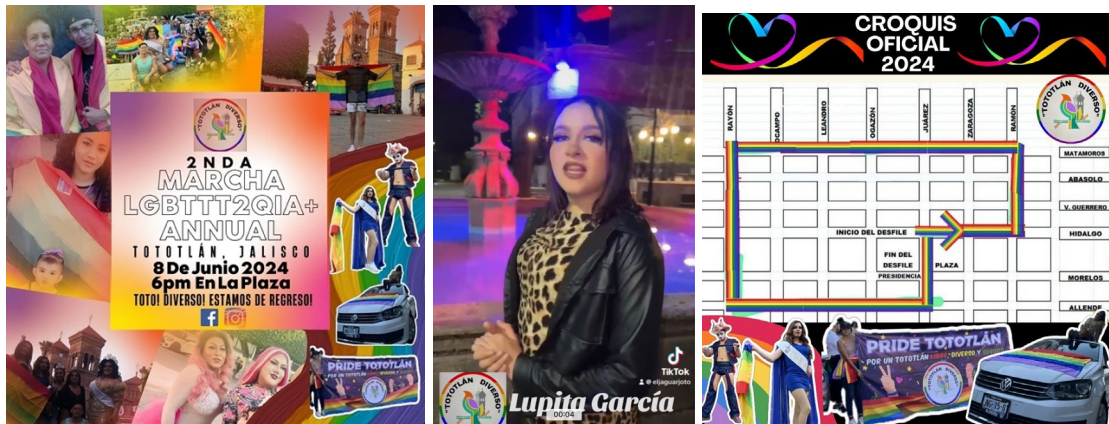


As I mentioned in Chapter 6, there was quite a bit of infighting this year where I often had to serve as the mediator. However, we prevailed and the *marcha* took place on June 8, 2024. Similar to the format from last year (2023), we began the *marcha* near the municipal presidential building. However, this year, we decided to crown this year’s queens before initiating the *marcha* (see Figure 44). I was tasked with crowning Yailin/Lupillo. In my speech, I mentioned how Yailin/Lupillo along with El Suave are the reason why so many people in *Nuevo Refugio* found the courage to *destaparse* (I love you cousin).

²⁴⁸ Toto, Diverse, We Are Back!

Figure 43

Promotinal Materials for the 2nd Annual Marcha



Subsequently, we headed towards the streets to reclaim them for a second year in a row! In addition to *Pocitlán* and *Ocotlán*, this year we joined by the municipality of *Sayula* collective. We began the *2nda marcha* at 7pm near the plaza. I can laugh at it now, but the *marcha* started off rough because the municipal police and the transit police both received different directions regarding the *corquis* of the march, so one of the floats went down one street and another float went down another (Note: I have received criticisms regarding having the police at the *marcha*, however, these come from a US-centric lens as in the context of the rural *Jalisco*, the police and the cartel are the two sides of the same coin and we need their indirect support in order for the *marcha* to transpire). Also, the transit and municipal police began arguing which I had to go diffuse, “*hora es nuestro día, no nos hagan esto,*”²⁴⁹ I said to them. However, everything worked out. This year, we asked the youth to lead the *marcha* (see Figure 45). I immediately became emotional and wept because despite the exhaustion of organizing, in that moment, I remembered why this work is so important.

²⁴⁹ Today is our day! Don’t do this to us.

Figure 44

The Crowning of Las Reinas de La 2nda Marcha 2024



This is something bigger than all of us on the committee. We are following the lineage of the *Jotería* ancestors that came before us and starting new traditions that speak to our visibility. As Linda Heidenreich stated, we are entering the sixth sol, and this is one of the many pieces of evidence of it (Heidenreich, 2020). This movement is a pathway for the youth as they will be the ones to carry this movement to new heights. Again, we sent collective shockwaves with the *consigna*, “*Toto, Diverso, Estamos de Regreso!*”

Figure 45

The Youth Leading the 2nd Marcha



Like the year before, we ended the *marcha* in the Plaza, but this time all chanting “*Si se pudo!*²⁵⁰” We then produced an impromptu drag show featuring the talents of the *Sayula* collective (see Figure 16). After the *marcha*, the Toto-Diverso collective travelled to *Poncitlán* to participate in the re-inauguration of the *Escenario VIP Club (El VIP)*. In a previous section, Jose described *El VIP* as a transformative and safe space for *Jotería Rural* communities to congregate without the fear of persecution and judgment. *El VIP* is an example of space occupation as a resistance strategy by *Jotería Rural*.

Figure 46

Highlights from the 2nd Marcha Anual Including Sponsors Handing Out Waters, Participants, and Our New Stage Design

²⁵⁰ We did it!





El VIP: Space Occupation as Resistance (ORS6)

El VIP is a drag and *transformista* bar that hosts drag shows, *transformismos*²⁵¹, and *certámenes* every weekend since it first opened in 2021. This is also where the first *marcha* in *Poncitlán* was organized. My first time at El VIP was after the 2023 *Poncitlán marcha*. This space is so unique and rare because of how small the *pueblo* is. In fact, *Ocotlán* has more resources and population count than *Poncitlán*, yet *Ocotlán*

²⁵¹ Similar to drag, it is a process by which a person performs, imitates, and transforms to an existing famous artist.

has yet to open an LGBTQIA+ friendly space. Thanks to the activist work of Jose and Jessica, the community advocated for a space like El VIP. As Jose historicizes:

El escenario VIP. que es este un bar que también se abrió hace apenas poco aquí en Poncitlán, y es un espacio dedicado a dar shows. Es como una. No es imitación, porque lo está haciendo muy bien, pero a pesar de que es un lugar muy chico, lo quieren. La gente busca como a Xicoantrix bar y como estos lugares grandes de Guadalajara, como que para las personas que no podíamos como asistir allá. La creadora de este bar, como que dijo. Bueno, luego [necesitamos uno] aquí en Poncitlán. Y fíjate que pegó muy bien, o sea, imagínate que había tanta necesidad. Bueno, no necesidades, sino tienes ganas de asistir de eventos. Tenemos acá. En el rancho. Se lo volvió un lugar muy icónico. De repente, todos nos reuníamos. Ahí invitaban a muchas drag queens y organizaron este concurso de drag. Y fíjate que algo bien curioso de este concurso que, por cierto, gané a este fue que cuando sale, o sea, lo publica la convocatoria. Y así, bueno, yo creo que el VIP llegó a Poncitlán para hacer un libro como un lugar seguro. Una lugar seguro, me refiero al que tú puedes estar con tu pareja. Te puedes estar, o sea, no dentro van a estar ahí, pues faltando el respeto. Como a un nivel de extremos, tú puedes dar besar a tu pareja. Este es el lugar ideal para hacerlo, porque nadie te va a juzgar, Nadie te va a estar observando. Pueden haber personas que conoces, o sea, incluso me gusta porque en el VIP pues es este espacio para ser quién eres. Nadie se va a fijar con quién vas, no se van a fijar este lo que estás haciendo. Si llegaste con un hombre, si acaso con una mujer, es como un espacio muy abierto en el que vas y

te diviertes, te incluye en muchísimo. Me ha tocado ver parejas heterosexuales, estando ahí por entre, por irse a divertir parejas lesbi lésbicas, parejas homosexuales. Y es este espacio seguro para divertirse, para beber, para cenar en el que sabes que por más que hagas lo que hagas, digan lo que digas, vas a ir vestido como vayas, vestido. No van a estar criticándote porque te digo, ya está muy abierto esto, y puedes [comparado a] ir a cenar con tu pareja, los tacos a la plaza vas a ver que no va a faltar quien te esté mirando quien te esté criticando Y en este espacio [en la plaza] no está fácil. Justamente para eso siento que el Vip llegó a Poncitlán para ser como este espacio de relajarse y de expresarse, de divertirse y diciendo que debería haber más espacios.²⁵²

What makes El VIP even more special now is that it is *Jotería* owned as Jessica recently purchased it, became the new and first Trans CEO, and re-inaugurated it the same day as or 2nd *marcha*. Not only is the space a site of resistance, but so too is the performance of drag and *Transformismos*.

²⁵² The VIP Club. This is a bar that recently opened in *Poncitlán*, and its concept is to be a space dedicated to hosting shows. It's like... it's not limited, because it's doing very well, but despite being a small place, people want to go. People look for it like a type of Xicoantrax bar, and like these big places in Guadalajara. People who attend are those who don't have access to those kinds of places. The creator of this bar said... Well, we need [drag bars] in Poncitlán. And noticed how well it did, I mean, imagine how much demand there was. Well, it's not about needing something, but rather wanting to attend events. We have it here. In the ranch. It became a very iconic place. Suddenly, everyone would gather. They would invite many drag queens and organize this drag queen contest. And notice something curious about this contest, which I happened to win... And so, I think the VIP came to Poncitlán to create a safe space. A safe space where you can be with your partner. You can be yourself, I mean, no one will be there disrespecting each other. At an extreme level, you can give your partner a kiss, just like any other sexual activity in a bar. This is the ideal place to do so, because no one will judge you, no one will be watching you. There may be people you know, or even like it because in the VIP, it's a space to be yourself. No one will pay attention to who you're with or what you're doing. If you came with a man or a woman, it's like an open space where you can have fun and include yourself in many things. I've seen heterosexual couples, lesbian couples, and homosexual couples all having fun together and being themselves. And this is a safe space to have fun, drink, eat, and know that regardless of what you do or say, you'll be dressed as you want and won't be criticized. People won't be looking at you or criticizing you. And that's exactly why I think the VIP came to Poncitlán to become this space where people can relax and express themselves, have fun and say that there should be more spaces like this one.

Transformismos and Drag as Resistance (ORS7)

Jose explained to me that *Transformismos* are attempts to imitate a celebrity whereas Drag has a more artistic expression (see Figure 47). Further, Drag is not confined to the rhetoric of gender. Mainly because women, men, and non-binary folks perform all kinds of gender performance:

Una transformista se puede transformar. Una transformista, se enfoca más en imitar artistas que transforma en un artista y se enfoca tanto en parecerse físicamente y el vestuario aparecer artistas. [Por ejemplo,]Gloria El Suave, Jenny Rivera, Marco, Antonio Solís Juan Gabriel, porque también hay transformistas que hacen personajes masculinos. No solamente se enfocan en imitar personajes femeninos; también se enfocan en pues en Edwin CaZ. este Peso Pluma han hecho Peso Pluma. Entonces, este ojo aquí, que el Transformismos no tampoco no va de la mano relacionado a un sexo, o sea, es transformarte en un artista y dar ese show y puedes hacer, y ya junto eso meterle algo cómico. Y bueno, ya cada quien a cada artista decide cómo hacer sus shows, Pero, pues, es de esa tirada. No Basta vestido de un artista y te cantas, canciones. Solo es artista y tratas como de divertir al público y entretenerlo bajo esa caracterización. Por el otro lado, el drag ya es esto: un arte más desarrollado. No tiene límites. Vamos a decirlo así, tú te puedes llamar como como quieras, pues tener el pelo de color que quieras, el maquillaje puede ser como quieras. El botón puede ser como quieras. Y el drag, pues justamente también no es solamente femenino. Te decía, yo hago drag, pero mira, que es masculino, y tengo una amiga que se metió al concurso el año pasado. Hizo

drag, pero ya es este una mujer. Si es género, es una chica, es una y le gusta el drag. Entonces también hizo Drag. Entonces esto también es Lo menciono para también decir que el drag no solamente tiene que ser una persona de la comunidad LGBT. Hay mujeres, cis género y hombres cis género que les gusta. En Drag está el caso de Cristian Peralta. Es el ganador de la primera temporada de DragRace México. Él tiene su esposa. Este tiene sus hijas. Es un hombre y hace Drag y ganó el concurso vestido de mujer. Pero eso en ningún momento lo define como de que, pues es gay, porque lo hace. Bueno, esa es la diferencia, no que el drag es como un arte más desarrollado, pues no tienes límites, tú haces tu personaje. Y ya pues puedes hacer tu show. Puede ser musical con puestos hacer instrumental. Puede ser dramático, y todo va a repetir cómo va a ser un poco mucha protesta. Puede ser este un drag cómico y vas a hacer como mucho de hacer ruido. A la gente hay unas que se llaman reinas de la belleza que sola les gusta hacer drag para verse bonitas y comportarse como masculinas. Pero pues ya es como clasificaciones del drag. No hay unas que se llaman drags oscuras que su drag es como muy de verse como deformada, así como de terror.²⁵³

²⁵³ A *transformista* transforms. A *transformista*, focuses more on imitating artists who transform into an artist and focus on looking physically and dressing like the artists they're imitating. For example, Gloria El Suave, Jenny Rivera, Marco Antonio Solís, Juan Gabriel, because there are also drag queens who create male characters. They don't just focus on imitating female characters; they also focus on creating male characters like Edwin CaZ and Peso Pluma. So, we also have to acknowledge that transforming is not just about relating to a specific sex, that is, becoming an artist, one can give a show and add something comedic to it. And well, each artist decides how to do their shows, but it's from this line. It's not just about wearing an artist's outfit and singing their songs. You have to be an artist and try to entertain the audience under that characterization. On the other hand, drag is an even more developed art form. It has no limits. Let's say it like this, you can call yourself whatever you want, have hair of any color you want, makeup however you want it. The wig can be however you want it. And drag is not just female; I do drag, but look, I'm a man and I have a friend who entered the contest last year. She did drag, but she's a woman. She's a cisgender woman who likes drag. So she also does drag. I mention this to also say that drag doesn't just have to be for

Figure 47

Drag shows and Transformismos at El VIP



As mentioned in Chapter 7, *Transformismos* and what *Afro-Jotería Rural* called *Travestí* shows were also common in *Tamiahua* before they were banned by the municipal presidency in the early 2000s. More, Bogart and Chucho all reminisced about how acceptable *Travestí* shows before the ban and suggested reviving them soon in collaboration with the collectives from *Jalisco*:

Bogart: *Porque yo recuerdo cuando yo era niño y mi primera disco (cuando existían los discos) fue en un todo santos que vino una imitadora de Thalía y yo juraba que era Thalía.*

Chucho: *Yo también la vi. La cintura, la cadera, ¡igual!*

Bogart: *La visibilidad y expresión, cultura y baile, siempre ha existido.*

people from the LGBTQ+ community. There are cisgender women and men who enjoy it too. In fact, there's the case of Cristian Peralta, the winner of the first season of *DragRace México*. He has a wife and children. He's a man who does drag and won the competition dressed as a woman. But at no point does that define him as gay because he does it. Well, that's the difference - drag is an even more developed art form with no limits, you create your character and do your show. It can be musical with instrumental parts or dramatic, and everything will repeat itself like a bit of protest. It can be comedic drag and you'll make a lot of noise. Some people call themselves beauty queens who only like doing drag to look beautiful. But that's just one type of classification for drag. There are those who call themselves dark drags who create very distorted characters, like horror-like ones.

More: *Por ejemplo, Chato, Santiago, fueron también como ese parteaguas aquí en Tamiahua para la comunidad. ¡Ósea porque ya hacían su show travesti y la gente iba y ya lo veían (ser gay o trans) de diferente manera! Y después les cortaron la idea (los del gobierno a la comunidad) que ya no tenían que ir a eso.*

Nahomi: *Seria bueno Volver a hacerlos. No se alguien que los organice a gente que quiera venir a participar. Tenemos amigas de otros municipios. De Jalisco. Podemos invitar a gente de otros estados.*²⁵⁴

Why, then, were *Travestí* shows so acceptable in *Tamiahua*? As Bogart explained to me, it is because they were associated with gender and sexual subjectivities of *Carnaval*, an Afro-descendent tradition.

Carnaval As Resistance (ORS8)

Carnaval is a tradition within the state of *Veracruz* and can be traced to Afro-Mexican roots. What is unique about *Carnaval* is the subjectivities of sexuality and gender. There is even a tradition that Hector, a co-founder of the Afro-Tamiahua collective, explained to me where the cis-men dress as women. These subjectivities

²⁵⁴ Bogart: I remember when I was a kid and my disco bar (when disco bars existed) was a Thalía impersonator in All Saints, and I swore it was the real Thalía.

Cucho: I also saw her. Her waist, her hips, it's just like Thalía!

Bogart: Visibility and expression, culture, and dance, have always existed.

More: For example, Chato and Santiago were also doing similar things here in *Tamiahua* for the community. I mean, because they were already doing their show as *travesties* and people would come and see them (as gay or trans) in a different way! And then the government people cut off the idea that they didn't have to go there anymore.

Nahomi: It would be good to bring them back. Someone should organize people who want to participate. We have friends from other municipalities. From Jalisco. We could invite people from other states.

have allowed for *Afro-Jotería Rural* to flourish within the space of *Carnaval* (see Figure 48).

Figure 48

Carnaval in Tamiahua, Veracruz



As More, Bogart, and Chucho historicized, *Afro-Jotería* expressions have always been associated with *Carnaval* starting with some of the trailblazers:

Bogart: *El Carnaval surgió en 1994 [En Tamiahua] y era un niño. Y existía La Condora. ¿Llegaste a conocer a La Condora, Chucho?*

Chucho: *Hay sí.*

Bogart: *La Condora ya se vestía era trans. Espectacular. Desde que inicio el carnaval, existe la expresión gay.*

More: *El Famoso Chato Bellesteros, eso es una persona super importante aquí y hace 30 años Santiago.*

Bogart: *Mis tías tienen son de unos 60 70 anos y son de esa generación. Salían con Chato, Santiago, Lenchito, pancho que ya son grandes generaciones de*

*Jotería, ¿no? Desde entonces existe la expresión. Que haya sido disfrazada o mal-implementada en ocasiones es otra cosa.*²⁵⁵

Bogart mentioned some of the trailblazers of *Afro-Jotería* expressions in *Carnaval*. He also added that even his father's generation believe that *Afro-Jotería* are essential to *Carnaval*. In addition, More reflected on her experience participating in *Carnaval*:

Bogart: *Hace años cuando uno veía al carnaval en Veracruz. Lo pasaban en la tele. Mi papa decía que el Carnaval sin gays, no era carnaval.*

More: *Eran los que armaban el ambiente.*

Bogart: *Mi papa siempre ha sido bien respetoso y entiende mucho ese mundo, ¿no? Siempre me encantaba ver el desfile. Y siempre mi papa decía que el carnaval de Veracruz sin los gays no existiría porque los gays eran los que le daban color, le daban alegría, le daba show. Lo mismo sucede en Brasil y yo creo que en Tamiagua.*

More: *Yo participe en los Carnavales y mis papas me acompañaban.*

Bogart: *¿Tú eras una niña?*²⁵⁶

²⁵⁵ Bogart: Carnival emerged in 1994 [in *Tamiagua*] when I was a kid. And *La Condora* existed. Did you ever get to know *La Condora*, Chucho?

Chucho: Yes, I did.

Bogart: *La Condora* was already dressed as trans. Spectacular. Since the carnival started, there has been a gay expression.

More: The famous *Chato Bellesteros*, that's a very important person here and from 30 years ago, Santiago.

Bogart: My aunts are around 60-70 years old and they're from that generation. They used to go out with Chato, Santiago, Lenchito, and Pancho - those are big generations of *Jotería*, right? And since then, there has been expression. Whether it was disguised or poorly implemented at times is another thing.

²⁵⁶ Bogart: Years ago, when you'd see the carnival in Veracruz on TV. My dad would say that a carnival without gays wasn't a carnival.

More: They were the ones who set the atmosphere.

Bogart: My dad has always been very respectful and understands a lot about that world. I always loved watching the parade. And my dad would always say that the Veracruz carnival wouldn't exist without the

More: *Tenia 14 años. Me aplique del carnaval porque un carro alegórico se nos quebró.*

Bogart: *Pero si me acuerdo que tú y Rubi participaban. Marisol, su hermano, etc. Fuimos parte importante en el carnaval porque todos andábamos en el desmadre.*

Later in the *Convivio*, Bogart explained that the tolerance and acceptance for gender and sexual plurality can be traced to Afro-sensibility and spirituality.

Afro-Mexican Spirituality and Sensibility as Resistance (ORS9)

Bogart and More both disclosed to me that they wholeheartedly believe their Afro roots are correlated to their acceptance by their family. Bogart compared this phenomenon to the dynamic of the Muxes. The Muxes are a third gender in Juchitán, Oaxaca and have resisted waves of colonization (Aldama & Aldama, 2020). The reason why Bogart believes their customs are so parallel is because parents of Muxes consider it to be good luck to have a Muxe in the family as they are usually the ones who stay and take care of them:

Bogart: *Yo desde que tengo uso de razón, soy gay.*

Cucho: *Yo también.*

Bogart: *Pero, me avente a decirlo, ¡a los 17 años! Igual que puedes encontrar un niño de 6 o 7 años de que nosotros a los 6 o 7 años ya sabíamos obviamente que*

gays because they were the ones who gave it color, joy, and a show. The same thing happens in Brazil, and I think it's the same in *Tamiahua*.

More: I participated in carnivals and my parents accompanied me.

Bogart: You were just a little girl, no?

More: I was 14 years old. I got hurt during the carnival because an allegorical car broke down.

Bogart: But I remember that you and Rubi used to participate. Marisol, her brother, etc. We were an important part of the carnival because we were all part of the chaos.

nos gustaba.

More: Ya estamos amaneradas.

Bogart: Yo creo desde que estaba dentro de mi madre.

More: Ya te movías en el vientre.

Bogart: Ya... de hecho, somos 3 hermanos varones. Mi mama sintió. Ella después analizo sus 3 embarazos y se dio cuenta que el mío era diferente. Es algo que me platica mi mama. Como para more y para Nahomi saben que mi mama es el ser más precioso que tengo en esta vida. Para mí es el Tesoro. Protejo más a mi mama. Ha habido una conexión desde que yo era niño ha habido una conexión. Y ella me comenta que cuando ella estaba embarazada. No sé si sea una visión o algo que no sucedió. Pero ella lo tiene muy presente que cuando estaba embarazada, ella escucho el llanto de un bebe y que el bebe venia de su vientre. He leído sobre eso sobre esa parte y algunas percepciones desde el punto de vista afro dicen como si sugiera algo como una persona distinta (a sign). Porque para algunas comunidades desde ser una persona homosexual implica una habilidad como en el caso de los muxes y en el caso de los mayas, el tener en la familia una persona homosexual representa un privilegio porque tememos ciertos dones o ciertas percepciones que heterosexuales no lo tienen. El gusto por el arte, por la música, por la comida. Todas las áreas que Podemos desarrollar las desarrollamos en una forma chida. Como con más pasión. Porque le tememos que demostrar al mundo que aquí estamos y que somos.

More: A muchas personas le han dicho a mi mama que es muy afortunada de tener a mí en la casa. Una señora le dijo a mi mama “como yo quisiera o viera querido

tener en la casa a un hijo como tú lo tienes.” A mí me da mucha alegría o me siento muy bien porque entonces quiere decir que estoy hacienda bien ósea que la gente quiere lo que mi mama tiene. Que muchas quisieran tener a alguien como yo. Por ejemplo, las muxes hacen fiesta.

Bogart: *Si, porque tienen a alguien así en la casa.*

Luis: *¿Entonces ustedes piensan que eso viene de algo Afro?*

Bogart: *Yo creo que sí.*²⁵⁷

Apart from the spirituality, Bogart and More suggested that there is an Afro-sensibility that allows for plurality which transcends phenotype:

Bogart: *Yo siempre he ligado la parte afro con la alegría con estar feliz. Lo disfrutamos mucho.*

More: *Ósea hoy en día un va maquillada, con pelo rizado, Morena, causa un impacto*

²⁵⁷ Bogart: I've known I'm gay since I was old enough to reason.

Cucho: I'm the same.

Bogart: But I must admit, I came out at 17 years old! Just like you can find a 6- or 7-year-old kid who knows that we, at 6 or 7 years old, already knew what we liked.

More: We're already showing behaviors.

Bogart: I think I knew since I was in my mother's womb.

More: You were already moving Gayley in her womb.

Bogart: Yeah... actually, we're three brothers. My mom felt it. She later analyzed her three pregnancies and realized that mine was different. It's something my mom tells me. Like More and Nahomi know that my mom is the most precious thing I have in this life. For me, she's a treasure. I protect my mom more than anything. There's been a connection since I was a child, and she comments that when she was pregnant, she heard a baby crying and the baby was coming from her womb. I've read about that, and some Afro perspectives suggest that it might be like a sign of something different. Because for some communities, having a gay person in the family is seen as a privilege because we have certain gifts or perceptions that heterosexuals don't have. For example, an appreciation for art, music, food. We can develop these areas in our own unique way.

More: Many people have told my mom that she's very lucky to have me in the house. A woman once told my mom, 'I wish I could have had a child like yours.' It makes me very happy, or I feel good because it means that people want what my mom has - they want someone like me. For example, Muxes celebrate parties.

Bogart: Yes, because they have someone like that at home.

Luis: So, you think it comes from something Afro?

Bogart: I think so.

que la gente te volteé a ver.

Bogart: Nahomi acaba de sacar un buen punto. Ser Afro no nomas a ser con el fenotipó. Tú puedes ser afro con tu alegría. A una persona muy alegre que siempre le encuentra lo positive a las cosas.

More: Mi amiga (Nahomi) dice que es española jajajaja. Es esclavizada jaja. Traída de España.

Nahomi: Es algo muy de los Veracruzanos también porque nos gusta el relajo, la fiesta, y el ambiente. Hay mucha gente de otros partes que son más calmados serios y hacen sus relajos en costumbres que ya tienen. Por lo regular una persona que viene de afuera y se va de aquí de Tamiahua, se va contenta por la gente que somos alegres que nos gusta bailar, la fiesta. Etc.

Bogart: Hay te voy con otro ejemplo. Aquí en Tamiahua cuando alguien fallece es una fiesta. Quieras o no, es una fiesta. Te acompaña el dolor sí, pero es una fiesta. Hay otro detalla hay juegos especiales que solo se usan para un velorio. Hay unos que dicen que es para no dormir. Creo que la finalidad es para que la tristeza sea pacifica porque nos terminamos carcajeando. Es algo particular y que no romperías la tradición. Pero así es como la esencia de nosotros. Yo una vez fui a Tampico y fui a un Velorio de una persona de aquí y fue mucha gente de aquí (Tamiahua) y los de allá como que se molestaron el de hecho para ellos era una falta de respeto porque era un velorio y pues para nosotros era algo particular. Desde mi punto de vista, en ninguna circunstancia deberías de dejar de sentir alegría.

More: Una vez fui a un velorio de una amiga y puse a carcajear bien recio y nos tuvimos que ir. Igual, hay límites, pero es que no vayas a reírte del duelo que están

*viviendo ósea es la particularidad que tememos nosotros.*²⁵⁸

Jotería Rural, *Afro-Jotería Rural*, and I worked hard to construct this project that visibilizes and celebrates the aforementioned resistances. There were some limitations, though.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this project was the small sample size. Though the 15 contributors were able to provide a dense amount of content, perhaps recruiting more participants would have allowed for more themes to arise. Furthermore, to add more complexity and generalizability to this project, more *Jotería Rural* contributors from more municipalities across southern Mexico could have been included.

Furthermore, though *Nagualing Jotería* methodologies is effective, it can sometimes lead to contributors telling me what I want to hear. Furthermore, as explained in Chapter 5, I am not a complete insider, so I am bound to have blinders. Finally, the conversations

²⁵⁸ Bogart: I've always linked the Afro part with happiness and being joyful. We really enjoy it.

More: So, nowadays, someone who's black, with curly hair, dark skin, causes people to turn around and look at them.

Bogart: Nahomi just made a great point. Being Afro is not just about physical appearance. You can be Afro with your joy. A very joyful person who always finds the positive in things.

More: My friend Nahomi says she's Spanish, haha, enslaved, brought from Spain (sarcasm).

Nahomi: It's something that's very characteristic of people from Veracruz as well, because we like to relax, party, and have a good time. There are many people from other places who are more serious and do their relaxing in their own way. Usually, someone who comes from outside and goes to Tamiahua leaves happy because of how the people are here, we like to dance, party, etc.

Bogart: Let me give you another example. Here in Tamiahua, when someone dies, it's a party. Whether you like it or not, it's a party. The pain is there, but it's a party. There are special games that are only used for funerals. Some people say it's to not sleep. I think the purpose is to make sadness peaceful because we end up laughing. It's something unique and not something that breaks tradition. But that's what makes us who we are. I once went to a funeral in Tampico and there were many people from here (Tamiahua) and those from there got upset because for them it was a lack of respect because it was a funeral and for us it was something special. From my point of view, under no circumstances should you stop feeling joy.

More: Once I went to a friend's funeral and I started laughing loudly and we had to leave. Okay, there are limits, but it's not that you're not going to laugh at the grief they're living through, rather that's what we Afro-Mexicans are particular about.

were based on the experiences of participants. This means that many of their comments are reflective of their points of view and perspectives. This could have led to the projections of comments reflective of their own internalizations.

Conclusion

It is clear that MEWCCUS have done little to recognize the experiences of *Jotería Rural* in Queer scholarship. I proposed the inclusion of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* in rural southern Mexico to shed light on the discourses that are escaping the MEWCCUS eye. My points of departure addressed that Joto/a/@s have their own lineages and come from ancestors who have navigated homophobia, patriarchy, white supremacy in both the Global North and Global South and this project would document those unique histories situated in the rural. The main discourse of this project was on the resistance strategies *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* have implemented to combat the hegemonic ideologies that stem from the perverse logic of coloniality (Fanon, 1969). This was an attempt to bridge Global North/Global South dialogue through the analysis of *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural*. Through a decolonial socio-historical lens, I analyzed different eras of domination and repression which included the colonial period 16-18th century, 18th Century, 19th century Porfiriato, 20th century revolutionary period. I then examined overt and covert resistance methods *Jotería Rural* and *Afro-Jotería Rural* of each era implemented to navigate and subvert the best they can. The root of these restrictions in the rural stem from hegemonic ideologies derived from coloniality and exclusionist nation building. This exclusionist rhetoric found in repressive moments in Mexican history is rearticulated into the rural which included 19th-20th turn of the century imposition of virility through military punishment (the 41),

20th century virile rhetoric as justification for immense hate for femininity (national building discourse), and 20th century pathologization of *Jotería Rural* (influence from medical discourse). I found that similar resistance methods implemented by *Jotería Rural* throughout history and now, contemporarily. Methods that should be honored and celebrated. ¡*Qué viva la Jotería Ranchera!* ¡*Qué viva la Jotería del pueblo!* *Que Viva La Afro-Jotería Rural!*

Future Research

Future research should include *lesbianas*, *marimachas*²⁵⁹, and prospective on their experiences in the rural, and it should also extend to other rural regions of Mexico besides *Jalisco* and *Veracruz*. Furthermore, contemporary Indigenous epistemologies on sexuality and gender could be another direction to take research on rurality. To accomplish this, I recently connected with Muxe activist Xenari who plans on collaborating with me in the future. Finally, scholars from other countries affected by eurocentrism and logic of coloniality should consider looking into the experiences of Queer folks in their rural regions. A separate comparative study could be conducted which compares the resistance strategies of people from ranches from different regions.

²⁵⁹ Mexican term for lesbians

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