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A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

________________________________________

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Communication Studies

________________________________________

by
Luis Oswaldo Esparza

June 2020

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

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June 2020
Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to celebrate and honor resistance strategies MSM have originally implemented, inherited, and recreated. I accomplished this using a *pláticas*’ methodology (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). This is a methodology that humanizes participants by treating their testimonials as legitimate 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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1 Talks
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¡Abrazotes!
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Miguelito who was killed by the homophobic violence fueled by the perverse logic of coloniality. ¡Descansa en poder amigo! This is also dedicated to my family in both the United States y allá en los Altos de Jalisco. I love you! Thank you for always supporting me. To my hermana Francsico Rodriguez, for always giving me a shoulder to cry on y siempre aguantando mis mesnadas. For my support system Dr. Liliana Conlisk-Gallegos, Shane Burrell, and Loydie Burmah. ¡I love ya’ll! Finally, to all of the contributors (aka the participants), without your voices, none of this would have been possible. ¡Gracias! ¡Que Viva la Jotería!
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ......................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ........................................................................................................ iv

LIST OF FIGURES .................................................................................................................. x

INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................................... 1

CHAPTER ONE: DE-CENTERING MAINSTREAM, EUROCENTRIC, WHITE, COLONIALIST, CAPITALIST, CENTRALIST, UNIVERSALIST, SEPERATIST (MEWCCCUS) .......................................................... 18

The Coming Out Narrative ................................................................................................. 20

How My Rural Study Diffsers ............................................................................................. 22

Carrillo’s Glocality and Europe’s Modernity ........................................................................ 24

CHAPTER TWO: NATION BUILDING AND MASCULINITIES ............................................. 39

Building a Nation: Colonialism 2.0 ..................................................................................... 39

“Cleanliness:” Cruising Porfriian Masculinity ................................................................... 42

El Baile Que Nunca Se Acabo: Virilization of the Nation During the Turn of the Century ......................................................................................................................... 48

Compulsive Virility ............................................................................................................ 54

Enter Eugenics and Sexology: Scientific Homophobia ..................................................... 59

Soy Hombre, Puta: Resistance to Imposed, Hegemonic National Discourses in the Rural ......................................................................................................................... 64

CHAPTER THREE: PLATICAS AND ETHNOGRAPHY: CENTERING OUR VOICES ................................................................. 78

Naming the Rhetoric ........................................................................................................... 78

Decolonial Thinking ........................................................................................................... 79

Re-imaginining History ....................................................................................................... 81

Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 82
CHAPTER FIVE: JOTERIA RANCHERA RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PART 2

Re-articulation of Coloniality, Hegemonic Ideology, and Rhetoric in the Rural that Stems from Repressive Moments in Mexican History ................................................................. 137

19th-20th Turn of the Century Imposition of Virility through Military Punishment (The 41) (IHR) .................................................................................................................. 137

20th Century Virile Rhetoric as Justification for Immense Hate of Male Femininity (IHR) .......................................................................................................................... 139

Pathologization of Men Who Have Sex With Men Through the Influence of 20th Century Medical Discourse (IHR) .................................................................................. 146

Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance (PP2) ...................................................... 149

Father as Masculinizer (PP1) .................................................................................... 152

Resistance Strategies Against Hegemonic Rhetoric (RS) ....................................... 154

Resistance Through Enclaves (RS1) ....................................................................... 155

Resistance Through Coded Language (RS2) ............................................................ 157

Comradery as A Form of Resistance (RS3) ............................................................... 159

Respeto, Religious, And Social Capital (RS4) .......................................................... 161

Performing Virility (RS5) ....................................................................................... 171

Subversive Complicity (RS6) .................................................................................. 175

Resistance Through Internalization (RS7) .............................................................. 177

Negotiation (RS8) ..................................................................................................... 183

Disidentification (RS9) ........................................................................................... 194

Homogenizing Oppression by Personification (RS10) ............................................. 200

Overt Defiance (R11) ............................................................................................. 200

Limitations ............................................................................................................... 201

Conclusion ................................................................................................................ 201
Future Research ................................................................. 203

APPENDIX A: NORIEGA’S PORTRAIT OF TWO MEN HOLDING HANDS ........................................................................... 213

APPENDIX B: VIP MURAL FROM MICKY’S WINGS BAR .......... 215

APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL ...................................................... 217

REFERENCES ........................................................................ 219
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Reflexiones: Duality of how men who have sex with men view their identities ............................................................ 109

Table 2: Moments of Mexican history linked to hegemonic ideology perpetrated in the rural as inhabitable ............................................................ 109

Table 3: Resistance Strategies against hegemonic rhetoric in the rural ........... 109
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Deleted Impactful Pláticas ................................................................. 212
INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2017, my cousin Luis Miguel invited me and one of my friends to his birthday party at one of his father’s corrales. At the time, a friend and I were visiting my family in the rural outskirts of southern Mexico. Every year since 2012, I found myself negotiating my identity when navigating that particular space because I was under the false assumption that rural Mexico was no place for Gay men to live. I especially assumed machismo and hegemonic masculinity dominated and governed all interactions between folks in the rural. This was until I attended Luis Miguel’s party, a moment that changed the way I saw rural spaces forever. As I sat on a wooden fence socializing with Luis Miguel and his friends, whilst listening to the quadruple metered rhythmic sounds of reggaeton music, I turned to see a group of invitees gathering to dance. I paid little attention to them until I saw my hetero, male friend dancing with a couple of other men. This was no ordinary dancing, however. They were perreando! Immediately assuming the folks at the party would start picking on them (specifically the men), I scanned the corral to see people’s reactions. To my surprise, nobody seemed to care that these men were dancing so intimately with my hetero friend. This moment marked the beginning of my journey to attempt to understand the intersections between the rural, sexualities, and masculinities. In addition, I came

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2 Pieces of property where folks grow crops and keep their animals
3 dancing seductively and promiscuously
to find that plurality and co-existence in these rural spaces existed, yet not visible to the settler-colonial prospective.

One of the starting points for this project is the realization of the lack of representation of people of color especially those individuals who live in rural spaces in other countries such as Mexico. This is because “Queerness, has been associated with modernity in most twentieth-century debates on gender and sexuality” (Ruvalcaba, 2016, p. 8). That is, many of the experiences described in the aforesaid debates and studies centralize the narratives of white, queer individuals and fail to mention any of the experiences of people of color in those rural spaces. Examples of these studies in Mexico include 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 Jota* (2018). U.S. examples include Kelley Baker’s *Conceptualizing Rural Queerness and Its Challenges for the Politics of Visibility* (2011), David Bell & Gill Valentine’s *Queer Country: Rural Lesbian and Gay Lives* (1995), Emily Kazyak’s *Disrupting Cultural Selves: Constructing Gay and Lesbian Identities in Rural Locales* (2011), and Kennedy’s *Rural Men, Sexual Identity, and Community* (2010). These examples show how much of Queer theory and “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).

Of these studies, I will be focusing on critiquing Noriega’s Just Between Us: An Ethnography of Male Identity and Intimacy in Rural Communities of Northern Mexico (2014) and Carillo’s Pathways of Desire: The Sexual Migration of Mexican Gay Men (2017). I am focusing on these studies because although Noriega and Carrillo make an attempt to theorize about rural, queer folks in Mexico, they too fall into this trap of failing to centralize the narratives, histories, power structures, and dynamics unique to rural, Mexican queer lives.

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, separatist (MEWCCCUUS) are no strangers to these meta-oppressive tactics that seek to silence these conversations of intersections of race, sexuality, and gender. Instead, many mainstream queer theorists, such as MEWCCUS, see sexuality separate from gender (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 simply just “added on” to existing discourses (Hames-Garcia, 2011). In fact, many queers of color represented in queer readings are commonly represented as “the other.” MEWCCCUS discourses have essentially turned into a metanarrative about domestic affairs between white homosexuals (Hames-Garcia, 2011). 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. 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). Quijano argues that this coloniality of
power continues to be alive. Quijano’s article titled *Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America*, explains decoloniality of power:

America was constituted as the first space/time of a new model of power of global vocation, and both in this way and by it became the first identity of modernity. Two historical processes associated in the production of that space/time converged and established the two fundamental axes of the new model of power. One was the codification of the differences between conquerors and conquered in the idea of ‘race,’ a supposedly different biological structure that placed some in a natural situation of inferiority to the others. The conquistadors assumed this idea as the constitutive, founding element of the relations of domination that the conquest imposed. On this basis, the population of America, and later the world, was classified within the new model of power. The other process was the constitution of a new structure of control of labor and its 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 and reciprocity, together around and upon the basis of capital and the world market. (Quijano, 2000, p. 534)

Quijano further notes that Europeans believed the colonized were in natural places of inferiority using the criterion of race as their justification. Thus, Europe, along with imperialist nations such as the U.S., imposed a modernity that was directly linked to coloniality since its point of departure, a modernity with a legacy
of exploitation, slavery, and dehumanization which continues to live on contemporarily (Quijano, 2000). Grosfoguel (2005), adds that the following interlaced hierarchies make capitalism and coloniality operational:

1. International division of work composed of metropolitan centers, peripheries subordinated to those centers and semi-peripheries that have central relationships with those peripheries, but also peripheral relationships with certain centers.

2. An interstate system of dominant and subordinated, metropolitan and peripheral states, hierarchy of the international division of labor and organized around the fictional nation-state.

3. Class hierarchy divided by capital and different forms of exploited labor.

4. Ethnic-racial hierarchy in which white Europeans dominate non-European ethno-racial groups constructed as culturally and/or biologically ‘inferior others’

5. A gender hierarchy where cis-men have more power to infiltrate social relations with a virile, patriarchal machista construction of political, cultural discourses.

6. A sexual hierarchy where heterosexuality is privileged over homosexuality (an any others for that matter including third gender)

7. Spiritual hierarchy where Christianity is placed atop all other religions
8. Epistemic hierarchies where European knowledge is privileged over non-European knowledge through a global network of Universities. (Grosfoguel, 2005, p. 117)

Cantu (2009) also argues that the “capitalism/Gay 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). Interestingly enough, many of the studies of rural queer folks and other sexual minorities aforementioned also fail to complicate their discourses with conversations of race. This is limiting because these discourses fail to capture the fluidity of sexual construction and international political and economic contexts (Cantu, 2009). It is clear that MEWCCCUS have “systematically sought to define the newness and uniqueness of their scholarship through a denial of past” (Hames-Garcia, 2011).

To further complicate queer discourses, it is vital to talk about the experiences of people of color, especially the experiences of individuals who are not from the U.S. By documenting their narratives, we would be honoring their histories and experiences, amplifying their voices, and complicating queer discourses (Spivak, 2010). Additionally, we can create a space for discourse for individuals who do not fall under essentialized labels of identification that mirror experiences of folks in the United States and Europe (Foucault, 2011; Spivak, 2010). By discourse I am referring to the process of how we bring to life the frameworks of how we see the world (Foucault, 2011).
It is essentially important for queers to have their own space for discourse so that they can situate themselves in history (Muñoz, 1999). It is thus necessary to de-centralize MEWCCCUS. I propose the inclusion of a community of Men who have Sex with Men (MSM) in rural, Southern Mexico to shed light on the types of discourses that that are escaping the MEWCCUS eye (Spivak, 2010). Noriega (2014) also agrees that there is still so much research to be done regarding characteristics, meanings, and social political factors of Gay identity in Mexico.

To further decentralize U.S. and European experiences, it is necessary to review and deconstruct the queer history and theory of Mexico. This is especially important because essentializing nature of MEWCCCUS is parallel to the homogenization of the Mexican identity and the oversimplification of rural Mexico as a backwards, *machista* dystopia where queer folks are incapable of living (Carillo, 2017). By analyzing the unique and diverse histories of Mexico, we can see that the aforementioned notion is not absolute truth. Mexico is a country with a complex colonial history. Contemporary, MSM have inherited tactics of resistance from ancestral MSM colonized subjects in a state of resistance to those colonial powers. This results in the observation of MSM who engage in resistance tactics. In rural Southern Mexico, my contributors and I found that in that particular space, some of these resistance tactics include resistance through enclaves, resistance through coded language, comradery as a form of resistance, *respeto* & social capital, performing virility, subversive complicity,
resistance through internalizing, negotiation, and disidentification. These are all in response to repressive moments in Mexican history. Specifically, oppressive systems used to police sexuality that are rooted in its complex history of colonial imposition, settler colonialism, and modernity (Dussel, 1993). Resistance has allowed for MSM to live fulfilling lives throughout this colonial, repressive history. Resistance, thus, should be honored as a legitimate queer experience.

The purpose of this project is to celebrate and honor resistance strategies MSM have originally implemented, inherited, and recreated. I accomplished this using a pláticas methodology. This is a methodology that humanizes participants by treating their testimonials as legitimate 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 continue to be re-articulated in the rural.

I will first breakdown the identity labels used in this thesis. In Mexico, there are multiple labels of queer identification that were derived from local understandings of sexuality. Joto, for instance, was originally a stigmatized term because it closely resembled the US term “faggot.” However, it has been reclaimed to signify an empowering label of identification (Zapata, 2018). Many beloved that joto originated from a prison known as El Palacio Negro de Lucumberri where they would incarcerate MSM in section “J” of the prison.

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4 Talks
However, Schuessler (2018) found that *joto* originated in the jail of Belem located in present day Centro Escolar *Revolución* where they also incarcerated MSM. *Mayate* is also used as a term to describe the phenomena of men who identify as heterosexual but have occasional sexual encounters with other men (Prieur, 1998). Ruvalcaba (2016), defines *mayates* as:

Men who perform the dominant role in homoerotic encounters but identify themselves as heterosexuals are the queerest form of masculinity in Mexican sex culture. *Mayate* is a pre-Gay category that persists on the margins of Gay culture, which I insist on calling hegemonic because of its central, legitimizing position. *Mayate* is another name for the active member in the traditional homoerotic relationship, where the *joto* is the passive homosexual. The *mayate* does not identify as homosexual and therefore cannot be defined as Gay. He has sexual relations with women and justifies his sexual relations with *jotos* by asking them for favors or money in exchange for sex. The *mayate* is, then, sort of fortuitous prostitute. It is from the angle that the *mayate* maintains contact with Gay culture, and from there access to Gay tourism. (Ruvalcaba, 2016) Hector, one of my contributors, also described *mayates* as, “*es un termino que un Gay le llama al hombre. Al hombre que se mete con Gays. Ellos* (los
mayates) no son Gays. Son heterosexuales, pero si tienen sus aventuras con hombres o con Gays. Sus deslices, sus desvalones.⁵

*Buga*, on the other hand, is commonly used by Gay men in Mexico to signify people who identify as strictly heterosexual (Prieur, 1998). *Homosexual* is also commonly used as a label of identification. However, the origins of this term are rooted in U.S. medical discourses that sought to pathologize people who were attracted to other folks of the same sex through the logic of eugenics and social Darwinism meaning that this label was used to classify same-sex attraction as a type of degeneracy (Sommerville, 2000). Though there are some people in Mexico who identify as *homosexual*, others have adopted the commonly known term, *Gay*. *Gay* started as a word that served as a double meaning so that only those within the LGBTQIA+ community could be able to identify each other, but by the 1960s became a label of identification for folks attracted to the same sex (Peters, 2014). Contemporarily, *Gay* has been adopted as a label of identification worldwide.

Lionel Cantu (2009), however, argues that terminology labels are sometimes inadequate (p. 21). He postulates that identity labels are unstable and not monolithic because they are shaped by structural and cultural influences (Cantu, 2009). Cantu utilized the term MSM (men who have sex with men) as an academic, theoretical tool in the literature review of his work. I will also utilize

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⁵ It is a term that a Gay call a man. A man that gets involved with Gays. They (mayates) are not Gays. They are heterosexuals, but they do have their adventures with Gays.
MSM in this project as a theoretical tool. Specifically, as a form of disidentification. Muñoz (1999) agrees that identity is a site of struggle where fixed dispositions clash against socially constructed definitions (p.6). In response, Muñoz coined the term Disidentifications, a “survival strategy evoked by the minority spectator to resist socially prescribed patterns of identification” (Muñoz, 1999, p. 28). Disidentification is essentially a survival strategy utilized by marginalized and oppressed groups. Muñoz further theorizes,

Identification is where the “good subject” chooses a path of identification with discursive and ideological forms. “Bad subjects” resist and attempt to reject the images and identificatory sites offered by dominant ideology and proceed to rebel, to “counter identify” and turn against this symbolic system. Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly oppose it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology. It is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within. Laborin to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance. To disidentify is to read oneself and one’s life narrative in a moment, object, or subject that is not culturally coded to “connect with the disidentifying subject.” (Muñoz 1999, p. 12)
Disidentification essentially involves rearticulating discourses, removing hegemonic interlockings, and highlighting multiplicity. It is rooted in anti-assimilationist epistemologies derived from feminist scholars of color such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Chela Sandoval, Audre Lorde, Kimberley Crenshaw, etc. One example of deidentification is the book *A Bridge Called My Back*. This legendary piece is a collection of writings by feminists of color that ultimately disrupted feminism that only spoke to white, middle class women. This Bridge was a political disidentification strategy that ultimately complicated feminist discourse based on race, class, sexual orientation, etc. (Muñoz, 1999). Ultimately, Disidentification permits the subject of ideology to contest the interpellations of the dominant ideology. Specifically, narrow, static, and fixed minority labels prescribed by liberal multiculturalist discourses (which were appropriated) that seek to whitewash complexities of intersectionality (Muñoz, 1999; Crenshaw, 1989).

Though I agree with Muñoz’s theory, I would like to further develop one of the limitations he proposes. Muñoz proclaims that disidentification practices are only readily available to folks whose class privilege gives them access to systems of representation (Muñoz, 1999). That is, Muñoz assumes that poor or subaltern folks do not have access to disidentification strategies. However, historically, subaltern communities have engaged in these practices of subverting to whilst complying with hegemonic systems of power. Grosfoguel (2005) suggest that practices of epistemological sustenance and resistance at the face
of colonial power from the subaltern side is known as Subversive Complicity. Similar to disidentifications, subversive complicity also involves re-signifying what the west has imposed upon the world through the development of alternatives to the modern/colonial/Eurocentric world system (Grosfoguel, 2005). One example of subversive complicity is when the natives began worshiping the Virgen de Guadalupe. To avoid prosecution from the Spanish, the natives pretended to worship Guadalupe, but actually worshiped their mother god Coatlicue (Grosfoguel, 2005). Clearly, these subversive complicity tactics have been practiced since colonial times by subaltern subjects such as Puerto Ricans, Zapatistas, Islamic Feminists, Afro-Caribbeans, Indigenous, Afro-North Americans, and Marticianans (Grosfoguel, 2005). Thus, subversive complicity and/or disidentification strategies are (and have always been) accessible to the most marginalized of communities just not visible to the Eurocentric eye.

To avoid imposition and/or homogenization of identity onto the participants of this study and thus limiting the scope of possible resistance tactics acknowledged, I utilized a pláticas methodology to respect the agency of the participants so they may self-identify (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). From these pláticas, I found that six of my participants identified as Gay, two as homosexual, and two who refused to identify with any label of identification. One of these participants chose to disidentify by proclaiming that “a mi nomas me gustan los hombres.”6 Chavelo, as he chose to be called, for confidentiality

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6 I just like men.
purposes, disidentified as a response and resistance to “state and global power apparatuses that employ systems of racial, sexual, and national subjugation” (Muñoz, 1999). That is, he refused to identify with labels that derived from neo-liberal, global discourses.

First, in chapter 1, I will focus on sexual hybridity, a phenomenon proposed by Carillo (2017) describing how a system of understanding sexuality, specifically Gay culture and identity, is being imported by U.S. and European-centered intellectuals and scholars into Urban centers of Mexico. He also mentions that these very ideas are being exchanged and intermixed with Gay communities in the rural visiting the urban centers and vice versa. Although this phenomenon is where U.S. and European scholars are influencing Gay understandings of identity in urban and rural spaces in Mexico, this is but addendum to preexisting colonial impositions of hierarchies which included homophobia, repression, gender binaries, class distinctions, and racism and in resistance to them (Grosfoguel, 2005). Focusing on this history and connecting it to current queer discourses will further dismantle the misconception that Europeans are the ultimate holders of knowledge and enlightenment who are eager to share with the non-European countries positioned as subordinate, “ahistorical,” “savage,” and “uncultured (Dussel, 1993).

Chapter 2 is centered on exclusionist nation building discourse that shaped masculinities in Mexico. Specifically, the eras of the Porfiriato (19th century masculinity), Revolutionary masculinity (early 20th century), and 20th
century masculinity. In addition, I observe the resistance methods MSM established to navigate those respective eras of domination. Finally, I tie the rhetoric that derived from exclusionist nation building discourses to Noriega’s (2014) *Just Between Us* as well as some of my own findings.

In chapter 3, I detail my decolonial theoretical perspectives which include Enrique Dussel’s (2012) *Transmodernity* and Emma Perez’s (1999) *Decolonial Imaginary*. Also, I propose two research questions that ultimately guide the direction of the findings. Furthermore, I discuss my research methods which include Fierros & Delgado-Bernal’s (2016) *Pláticas* and auto-ethnography. In addition, I discuss how I analyzed the findings using Saldañas (2009) thematic analysis theories. Finally, taking from *palticas* methodology, I formulated a plan for dissemination that actively includes and centers the contributors of this project.

In chapter 4, I discuss my primary findings. These particular findings include themes of where MSM’s identities fit and co-exist in the rural southern Mexico which include maintaining a queer family unit, communal support, secular community engagement, religious community engagement. Also, drawing from the experiences of my contributors, I included themes that revolve around hegemonic ideologies that (derive from the exclusionist nation-building rhetoric and the logic of coloniality) which are re-articulated in the rural. These ideologies are 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 20\textsuperscript{th} century pathologization of MSM (Influence from medical discourse).

Finally, I highlighted resistance strategies MSM implement in resistance to these hegemonic ideologies which include resistance through enclaves; resistance through coded language; comradery as a form of resistance; respeto, \textit{religious} & social capital; performing virility; subversive complicity; resistance through internalizing; negotiation; disidentification; homogenizing oppression by personification; and overt defiance.
CHAPTER ONE: DE-CENTERING MAINSTREAM, EUROCENTRIC, WHITE, COLONIALIST, CAPITALIST, CENTRALIST, UNIVERSALIST, SEPERATIST (MEWCCCUS)

In MEWCCCUS works centered around Mexican Gay 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 (2018) *Mexico Se Escribe Con Jota*, we see the formation of Gay 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 of the outskirts of Mexico. Carrier’s work was also centralized around MSM in Guadalajara Mexico, another major city in Mexico. Schulzer et al.’s work presented a breakdown of Gay culture through the exploration of anecdotal evidence, films, musicals, art, and literature. However, all of these aforementioned studies are centered in the cosmopolitan experience. After my experience in the rancho, 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 of MEWCCCUS 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 spaces 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 Gay identity. Weston (1995) postulates that stereotyped divisions between the rural/urban relations “locates Gays in the urban and erases them from the rural” (p. 30). In essence, the urban needs the rural to justify its construction of Gay identity, yet it denies the rural as a possible center for the construction of Gay identity. Gay identity in the urban imaginary also requires an urban location and symbolic space that configures Gayness through opposition between rural and urban. Like the U.S.-Mexican border, this split between urban and rural is another herida abierta” (Anzaldua, 1987). In this particular context, the blood of

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7 Open wound
that wound creates what Halberstam calls metro-normativity. Metro-normativity is a term used to describe the essentializing of metropolitan Gay experiences as universal (Halberstam, 2005, p.36).

The Coming Out Narrative

One of example of metro-normativity is the “coming out narrative,” or the idea that every Gay, lesbian, or queer person has to eventually come out of the closet. Howard (1999) suggests that the rural space itself functions as “the closet,” however the ambiguity of queer sexual practices of MSM in the rural shows that there must be another epistemology in place rather than “the closet” that governs sexual mores in rural spaces. Noriega’s (2014) extensive study of masculinities and male eroticism in rural areas of northern Mexico, for instance, showed that there are multiple ways to organize same-sex erotic experiences. For example, many of his informants reported fulfilling their erotic desires under the guise of friendship, thus, eliminating the need of “coming out” because those informants did not deem it necessary. In my project, my contributors and I found that some MSM pass their relationships off as friendships depending on the social circles that accept them. Thus, they are simultaneously negotiating who to disclose their relationships to. Also, many of my contributors disclosed being *tapados* and *destapados*. Meaning many people in this community in rural

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8 Covered
9 Un-covered
southern Mexico do not use “the closet” as a means to discuss the degree of openness of their sexuality. Instead, they utilized a *tapado/destapado*\(^{10}\) system of disclosure.

Some queer folks leave rural areas not necessarily because they seek liberation through migration to urban centers, but instead out of economic necessity. For example, one of my informants, *Ignacio* (pseudonym), suggested that he would leave his pueblo to find better work opportunities in a big city. In fact, many rural queer folks have intentions to return to their small towns and some even tell stories of love, sex, etc. in their rural homelands (Halberstam, 2005, p.38). For instance, one of Noriega’s informants also stated that he had lost count of the number of men with whom had sexual intercourse in his hometown and never felt the need to leave to the city to seek sexual encounters with other men (Noriega, 2014). Another one of his informants also stated that he often had sex with his best friend even after they both married women. In my project, two of my informants, *Alex* and *Trevi* (pseudonyms), told me about their sexual adventures in their *rancho*\(^{11}\) as well as public displays of affection with other men in public places. They also claimed that they would never leave their *rancho* because they already have sexual partners in their hometowns available to them.

\(^{10}\) Covered/uncovered

\(^{11}\) Ranch
Though many mainstream queer theorists still utilize the rural to urban pilgrimage model to justify Gay identity, recent research has shown that “many rural, small-town environments nurture and elaborate sex cultures while sustaining surface social and political conformity” (Halberstam, 2005, p.35). For example, in my findings, community members from a pueblo\textsuperscript{12} I observed put together a beauty pageant for the LGBTQIA+ community. This was a sign that there is a level of respect for these communities. Noriega also found that resect was key for his informants to live fulfilling lives as MSM. His informants were able to live and co-exist in their hometowns because they earned social capital called \textit{respeto}\textsuperscript{13} (I go into detail about this at the conclusion of chapter 2) (Noriega, 2014). I found a similar dynamic in \textit{Tenochtitlan} and \textit{Nuevo Fernandez} (pseudonyms) where MSM with more \textit{respeto} were less stigmatized by their communities than those who did not earn \textit{respeto} (I will detail this in chapter 2).

How My Rural Study Differs

Though there has been little representation of rural MSM, Noriega and Carrillo (2017) have laid the groundwork for research on MSM in the rural parts of Mexico. What makes my research different is my decolonial theoretical perspective and the interdisciplinary methodologies I implemented (see chapter 3). I use \textit{pláticas} and auto-ethnography methodologies as a culturally appropriate

\textsuperscript{12} Town
\textsuperscript{13} Respect
method for working with (and alongside) marginalized communities (see chapter 3) (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016).

Though Carrillo’s theory of glocality (which I cover in the subsequent section) provided visibility to experiences of MSM in the rural through the interviews he conducted, glocality does not take into account the complex power structures between MSM folks abroad, in major cities, and in the rural. Noriega’s work, however, was more reflective of rural MSM voices because he used an autoethnographic approach (which I will discuss in chapter 3). Additionally, he was able to relate the experiences and themes he collected to the existence of plurality, virility, and negotiation (highlighted in chapter 2). 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 that ultimately led to the stigmatization of femininity in men and 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). In the next chapter, I also discuss the nation building discourses from the 19th and 20th centuries that shaped these power structures and interactions between men in the rural. Not only did I historicize the foundations of this repressive rhetoric, I also conducted a decolonial reading of the history behind the rhetoric. Moreover, I also drew parallels between how these hegemonic ideologies and Noriega’s field work with
MSM participants in rural Northern Mexico. My contributors, however, were MSM from rural southern Mexico; their experiences are similar, but not the same as those in the north.

My last chapter will demonstrate the themes that rose from my research in rural southern Mexico. Interestingly, some of themes intersected with those of Noriega’s findings (which I highlighted at the end of the next chapter in my historical reading of virility in the rural). However, to further prove Noriega’s argument that Mexican identity is not monolithic, there were many themes that were distinct (see chapter 4). 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 cultural differences and contradictions that a person’s identity might hold. It is the in-between space that carries the multiple meanings of culture. Following Bhabha’s understandings, Carrillo defines Glocality as a cultural-exchange model in which local understandings of sexuality are becoming 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 the local,
rural epistemologies. This happens when cosmopolitan MSM 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, one way this occurred was when MSM visited bars in Guadalajara. 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 through the migration of middle-class families into the rural creating two contrasting worlds 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, whom 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 global understandings of queerness that they learned at their universities with them. These families were so accepting of LGBTQIA+, they allowed their children to host parties so they can 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 with 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 there are many other factors that 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+

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14 synonymous with the local vernacular as “corientes,” “ordinary,” and “vulgar.”
tourists from the United States, Europe, and Australia that have molded his understandings of queerness.

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

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). Essentially, 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 irony of this glocality discourse is that the same arguments proposed regarding the process of “globalizing” follows 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 are in natural places of inferiority using the criterion of race as their justification. It is a modernity with 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 also has complete disregard for what was organic and natural (Dussel, 2020), meaning that Europeans could not accept people for how they naturally were. Dussel states:

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
In the context of sexuality, Europeans could not accept the naturalness of homosexuality or queerness, so they decided to exploit and change natural phenomenon like homosexuality in order to fit their vision of what sexuality should be (between a cis-man and a cis-woman). They did this by pathologizing and taxonomizing anyone who did not fit their vision of “natural.” Europe thus positioned its culture and epistemologies as superior while categorizing non-European cultures as primitive, premodern, traditional, inferior, and underdeveloped whilst positioning itself as the “most developed” continent in the world (the U.S. also is guilty of this) (Dussel, 1993). In fact, 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 same logic of modernity is being presented in contemporary times in

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15 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.
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). Essentially, coloniality and modernity take on queer experience and discourse. Although Carrillo’s “glocalizing” theory of U.S. and European scholars influences Gay understandings of identity in urban and rural spaces in Mexico is valid, it does not take into account 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 fails to honor and erases the histories and epistemologies of queerness already present in the rural. Clearly, it is problematic to assume that globalization (aka modernity) are bringing “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. I understand cultural experience as the
consumption of otherness conceived as value in the terms of sex, and ethnicity, following Jacqueline Sanchez Taylor’s suggestion on her work on sexual tourism in the Caribbean. 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. If according to Dennis Altman, Gay and lesbian culture has been one of the most globalized subcultures to the point that people affiliated with this identity have more in common with others around the world than they have in common with their own societies, we can then say that the 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 talk about north/south dialogue
without mentioning global power. Specifically, the colonially of power (Quijano, 2000). He states that many intercultural conversations imply a horizontal exchange, but relations are actually 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. In essence, we must 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 of exploitation of the south (Grosfoguel, 2005).

To dismantle MEWCCUS, we must historicize how Europe’s vision of modernity dehumanized MSM and how MSM have incorporated methods of resistance at the face of this colonial power.

When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, they began a long process of colonization that came with 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, spiritual hierarchy, and an epistemic hierarchy (which were all interconnected) (Grosfoguel, 2005). 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 knowing of gender and sexuality were eradicated and reconfigured along with their bodies themselves.
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, it was not even to be mentioned by name. 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 has a major influence in societal norms.

Some of the early resistance tactics against repressive colonial laws justified by *el Pecado Nefando* in Mexico involved internal organizing and occupying spaces where ambiguity allowed for tolerance. Ironically, rural areas during the colonial era were centers for MSM resistance during the colonial era. Evidence of this is supported by testimonies along with gaps in prosecution records (Gruzinski, 2003). One particular 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).

As a method of resistance, MSM would organize sexual encounters in rural areas (e.g. San Juan Penitencia) located outside the city walls under the

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16 Notorious Sin
guise of parties, dances, and holiday festivities (Gruzinski, 2003). This happened because MSM organized themselves in enclaves; groups sharing the common experience of being marginalized because of their sexuality. Through these enclaves, MSM 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 MSM networks would form in 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 *casta* system, a racist, classist system imposed by Spain that classified people by their level of “racial purity.” Like the MSM in colonial times, I found that some of my contributors also organized enclaves in their rural hometowns to give value to one another.

Another resistance tactic implemented was coded language that only “*los sodomitas podian entender*” (e.g. nicknames like la cotita) (Gruzinski, 2003; Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). This coded language phenomenon is what Goodwin (1989) calls this the “double subjectivity of interpretation.” Meaning that messages require the interpretation of the speaker and the receiver to make meaning. Thus, this particular language is presented in a form that has double meaning that requires other knowledges in order to be understood. Thus, forming

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17 Only the sodomites could understand
a secret system of interacting that only subordinated groups can understand (Goodwin, 1989). Many MSM 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 to me that they also use coded verbal and non-verbal language to look for partners (discussed in chapter 4).

_Tesmescales_ were also a space which channeled these enclaves and predecessors of the bath houses where MSM during the _Porfiriato_ would eventually congregate. _Temascales_ are sweat lodges that originated from pre-Hispanic indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica (known today as bathhouses). MSM, 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 _temescales_ 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 _temescales_ in order to "weed out" individuals committing the nefarious sin (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This ultimately led to the _temescales_ 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 just 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 part of those same enclaves also turned to disidentification methods of resistance. One example was Juan De La Vega, also known as 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 would perform. Particularly, La Cotita would cook tortillas, clean, wash, and “sat like a woman” (Tortorici, 2010). Additionally, La Cotita referred to men as mi vida\textsuperscript{18}, mi alma\textsuperscript{19}, and mi Corazon\textsuperscript{20} (De Los Reyes-Heredia, 2004). Furthermore, La Cotita wore scarves on her head and colorful ribbons which were all customary to women’s attire at the time (Garza-Carvajal, 2003). For much of his life, he went undetected because male effeminacy, though highly stigmatized, was not proof enough to be prosecuted in colonial Mexico of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century (Tortorici, 2010).

\textsuperscript{18} My life
\textsuperscript{19} My soul
\textsuperscript{20} My heart
This disidentification resistance method, however, did not last for La Cotita during this repressive time. Eventually, La Cotita was caught by a lavandera\textsuperscript{21} having sex with another man. La Cotita was eventually persecuted and sentenced to burn along with 12 other men (Tortorici, 2010). Like La Cotita, my contributors simultaneously disidentified with both global notions of queerness and local virile notions of identification. For this, they are met with a different kind of burning, a type of social burning called *quemándose* (I will detail this in chapter 4).

Clearly, we can see that globalism has not always been the pathway towards MSM romantic and erotic encounters nor identity formation in Mexico. In fact, MSM 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 MSM had to face were the imposition of national identity building discourses that included the construction of Mexican masculinities. In the next chapter, 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 MSM in the rural have utilized paradoxes in these institutionalized forms of masculinity to resist, navigate,

\textsuperscript{21} Washerwoman
negotiate, and subvert to other versions/waves of modernity in the 19th and 20th centuries.
CHAPTER TWO:
NATION BUILDING AND MASCULINITIES

Building a Nation: Colonialism 2.0

It is important to revisit definitions and social constructions of masculinity because they were instrumental in influencing the unwritten rules that govern interactions between men in the rural. They were vital to the justification of homophobia in the rural as well. “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 clearly fixed, they are guided by an imposed system of gender that ultimately affects and confines people’s behaviors. This gendered system, however, is a historical, ideological, process that is dynamic, contradictory, and always 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).

It is not possible to discuss masculinities in Mexico without dissecting the nation building discourses that took place that ultimately 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). Following the colonial period, many central and Latin American countries fought and gained independence from European countries. However, they did not reach 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 own 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

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22 Mexicaness. 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.
annihilate all peripheral cultures” (p. 7). He further notes that imperial cultures caused a split between postcolonial cultures which encompasses “enlightened elites” and popular majority. The elites’ authority required them to turn their backs on their ancestral regional cultures and popular majority and thus these vendidos23 sold out 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, these nations began national projects to build their nations in reference 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). Through the establishment of borders, these nations aimed to invent and uphold what Benedict Anderson (1983) calls imagined communities. In essence, nations attempt to construct homogenous 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

23 Sell outs
community. Holes in the logic of these competing discourses, however, have made it possible for MSM 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 processes (one of them being a revolutionary one that attempted to liberate discourses, but unfortunately fell trap to the Eurocentrism considering that the elites that led these discourses 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 MSM during the colonial era, disappeared and remained unformulated in Mexican national discourses (Irwin, 2003). This continued even until the 19th century 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 that was laxer compared to the colonial
era. Thus, MSM had more possibilities to incorporate resistance methods such as subversive complicity and disidentifications in secret.

By the time Porfirio Diaz and his *Científicos*24 took control of Mexico, they tried to build a national understanding of masculinity based on Eurocentric impositions of the European enlightenment in Mexico. There were shifting, unstable notions that came with these national masculinity discourses which allowed for MSM to navigate.

One of these notions was cleanliness. This was because the elites assumed that the cleanliness was linked to modernity. *La gente decente*25, believed that daily baths would speed up their “westernization.” This is because *La gente decente* assumed that cleanliness was associated with European customs. This notion is, however, false because we actually inherited our bathing practices from our native ancestors and not Europeans (natives would bathe up to three times a day).

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 as means to justify their modernity. To be clean, then, was associated to manliness

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24 Advisors to Porfirio Diaz in charge of “westernizing” Mexico based on Eurocentric notions.
25 The Porfirian elite
during the late 1890s-early 1900s (turn of the century) (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This masculinity, however, was often times contested because of intersections of ideological differences, race, and class. For instance, when this national project of “westernizing through cleanliness” took off, the Porfiriato setup bathhouses for the masses, ironically not a western custom. Many of these bathhouses closed down because of 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). 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. 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 also 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 “los delitos de sangre, son cometidos casi en la totalidad de los casos por
Criminologist Guerrero (1901) (at the turn of the century) also stated in his study (funded by the poriferan elite) titled *La génesis del crímen 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 to be clean and hardworking by Guerrero. This discourse portrays the classic contradiction of representation of extremes as seen in racism. Such as when blacks and natives were portrayed as savage, aggressive sexually, and more masculine than their white counterparts. However, other times they were positioned as subordinated and weak 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 happening concurrently during the 19th century was the conversation on comradery and homosociability. Essentially, Mexican nation-building also consisted on the notion that homosocial bonding

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26 The crimes of blood are, in totality of the cases, are committed by individuals of the lower class against individuals of the same class.
was necessary for a strong nation (Irwin, 2003). This rhetoric was also built on the very 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 MSM 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 the patriarchy were bigger national priorities than actively persecuting MSM. The racial purity component of this discourse eventually shifted to racial integration. That is, homosocial bonding was used as a means to promote racial integration in this nation-building process. Nineteenth century (and turn of the century) Masculinity then, 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

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27 Man of social good
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 for MSM to more easily navigate the social climate of the time.

Homosocial bonding combined with the “cleanliness” rhetoric of 19th century Mexican masculinity allowed for a political climate that facilitated MSM private/secret erotic experiences. For example, in the bathhouses, MSM utilized homosocial rituals to look for sexual partners. Macias-Gonzalez (2012) describes how these erotic encounters between MSM 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, discretely, 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, 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 Porfiran aristocracy.

28 The dance of the 41
Originally, 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 turning into 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 the majority of the scandal but was then forced to address the situation because of public outcry. He did not, however, explicitly mention any names in his official statement and ultimately denied the involvement of anyone in the aristocracy:

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 abogado29. (Capistran, 2018, p. 43)

29 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.
The Porfiriato aristocracy 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 men who were detained 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). In reality, the class and political influences of the Porfiriato aristocracy ultimately led the prosecution of a select few that 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). This moment in history is influential because it marked the paradigm shift that began the valorizing of virility and the demonization of femininity in national discourse. These virile national discourses would eventually influence 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 *Gendarmería Montada*. At every train station, they were met by insults and objects thrown at them by angry protesters whose rage was fueled by this scandal. The 19 denied they were part
of this scandal by stating things like “I was arrested for burglary. Stop throwing things at me” (Capistran, 2018). Many assume that the 19 that were sentenced to be sent off to the military were the individuals who were caught in dresses, but they were actually 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. One example is Antonio Adalid, a member of a family that became millionaires through the sale of pulque and the only one of the 41 known by name (Capistran, 2018). 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 the lineage of classism, a hierarchy derived from the logic of coloniality, was as prevalent then as it is now among marginalized groups.

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 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 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*\(^\text{30}\) was the only way openly Gay men could identify. That is, those who could not hide (or chose to not hide for that matter) their identity chose to identify with the stereotype because they had no other options of representation (Bautista, 2018). In essence, some Gay men in Mexico re-claimed the Joto/maricon/effeminate male identity that derived from the dance of the 41 and made it their own. This is definitely something that is prevalent in the rural. One of my findings, for example, showed that two of my participants chose to disidentify by incorporating this effeminate-male performance as a way of subverting to 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 in the turn of the century national discourses (Irwin, 2003). In the process, 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

\(^{30}\) The effeminate man
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*[^31] went as far as enacting the 1905 Civil code a law that criminalized homosexuality in bathhouses by placing a heavy fine of $500 pesos to anyone engaging in *Contra-natura* acts[^32] (“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)

[^31]: Penal Code of the Free and Sovereign State of Chihuahua 1897

[^32]: Acts that are deemed immoral
Ultimately, the 41 represented to the collective minds of Mexican nationalists of the time as the exposure of weakness of the leading class that demonstrated too much political and economic dependency on imperialism using Paz’s *chingado/chingon*\(^{33}\) 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 placed homophobia as the guiding factor of nation-building discourses during the revolutionary period. Carlos Monsiváis (2011) agrees when he stated, “*Si la revolución crea los espacios de desarrollo de una sensibilidad distinta, también los revolucionarios se jactan de un machismo rampante*\(^{34}\)” (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 which homophobic limits were applied (Ruvalcaba, 2007). This was done through the elevation of virility, and (most importantly) the ability to procreate and have many kids, as key components to the construction of another hegemonic Masculinity which became a guiding factor to revolutionary discourses (Irwin, 2003; Ruvalcaba, 2007). Virility is defined as the quality of having strength, energy, and a strong sex drive;

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\(^{33}\) Fucker

\(^{34}\) If the revolution creates the spaces of development for a distant sensibility, there are also those revolutionary that boast rampant machismo.
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. Villa’s body was read by the nation 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 to live on but guided by virility rhetoric now 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 bonds are 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 also concluded a letter to Madero with the following: “with affection and respect always” (Katz, 1998, p. 215). Paco Ignacio Taibo (2006) also articulated in his book *Pancho Villa: Una Biografia Narrativa* that Pancho Villa cried at Madero’s funeral following his assassination because the two had a powerful bond.

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35 Pancho Villa: A Biographical Narrative
Clearly, this virile movement was contradictory because of the 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. These qualities contradicted the clearly defined lines of virile, *machista* masculinity proposed by the Mexican nation-state. Still, homophobia continued to set borders to this homosocial bonding.

In fact, virility became so embedded into this discourse, it became synonymous with Mexican nationalism. Femininity then, became 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 phallocentric 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 esthetics…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 and the mestizo, hard working class 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\textsuperscript{36} and gente decente\textsuperscript{37} was now defeated and 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 immense hate for femininity produced 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 eventually led to the development of politics of respectability between men with homophobia and virility serving as the guiding

\textsuperscript{36} Men of good
\textsuperscript{37} Decent people
rhetoric. That is, 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, racism continued to be alive and well. Similar to what happened during the Porfiriato, natives 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 national discourse is reflected in works from academics of the time of the post-revolution. Vasconcelos is one of the many Mexican scholars and influencers of the post-revolution that demonstrates these exclusionist attitudes albeit, while attempting a liberating discourse. For instance, in his book *La Raza Cosmica* he emphasizes the notion that mixing with whites 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). 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). The inability to procreate, then, was seen as anti-nationalist. Vasconcelos’ work was essentially a type of eugenics intended to “socially cleanse” Mexico.

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38 The Cosmic Race
Enter Eugenics and Sexology: Scientific Homophobia

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 Mexican national discourses during the first half of the 20th century (Irwin, 2003). 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: “De hecho el machismo que conocemos es un invento cultural, un prior producto de la ‘freudianizacion del pais’ (p. 35). 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). 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 characteristics to be removed from public office under the justification of condiciones psicológicas (Balderston, 1998). The national obsession to keep

39 In fact, the machismo that we know is a cultural invention, a product of the feralization of the state.
40 Psychological conditions
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 MSM seducer (Irwin, 2003). Many of these arguments are based on the patriarchal works of Octavio Páz. Páz (1950) suggested that masculinity is a contest of brute force with symbolic notions of penetration. He argues that the loser is *el chingado*\(^{41}\), gets fucked, and feminized by the winner *el que chinga*.\(^ {42}\) Thus, according to the logic of virility, the feminine subject is read as the weaker one whilst the “masculine” fucker/penetrator retains their masculinity and power.

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\(^{41}\) The one that cracks and gets fucked.

\(^{42}\) The one who fucks. The winner in Paz’s logic.
Paz's work has led to many misconceptions about MSM sexual dynamics. MEWCCCUS scholars have added to this confusion by conducting studies that replicate Paz’s claims. In essence, Anglos and Mexicans have cannibalized on each other’s coloniality. For instance, Carrier (1995) believes that the *activo/pasivo*\(^{43}\) model is the only authentic model of Mexican homosexuality because it follows the dynamics proposed by Páz as well as influence from 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 MSM 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 system differs from the "modern American" model

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\(^{43}\) Active/Passive
because identity labels are determined by power exerted in the sexual act rather than by choice (Mirande, 2017). The two main Mexican sexual roles are *activos* and *passivos*. He continues by stating that *internacionales* act as both passives and actives. This category, however, has begun to phase out and replaced with versatile because of the term versatile. 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, Mirande mirrors Carrillo and Carrier’s arguments on international influence (which can be read as revamping of the logic of coloniality). Nonetheless, Mirande, along with the other aforementioned scholars suggest that a person’s insertee and inserter position ultimately determines how stigmatized they are. A *mayate*, 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*, 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.

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44 Passives; those who have a penis inserted into them  
45 Internationals  
46 MSM who only seeks discrete sexual relations with other men.  
47 Very masculine  
48 Fag
(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 take into account 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 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 aforementioned scholars is that the inserter-penetrator system assumes that all homoerotic relations are exclusive to anal penetration when in many cases that is not true. Second, it erases nipple simulation, 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 himself 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 was 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, camaraderie. Furthermore, categorizing MSM 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 whilst imposing gender stratified meanings. For instance, passives are coded as powerless and weak, but in fact 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 process 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 MSM in southern Mexico (conducted from 2018-2020) 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, shoulders movement should not be tempered, arms not swing out of control, neck kept straight, and facial expression must suggest concentration. Also, if met with someone else, one must give a brief salutation (e.g. whistle, say quebole, etc.). I believe this is influenced by the politics of virility imposed during the second half of the 20th century to cleanse of the effeminacy of men. One of the exceptions Noriega notes for these strict regulations of the male body is through the consumption of alcohol. That is, femel/masc and closed/open binaries are rearranged when drinking is involved. Noriega proclaims that drinking proposes an inside/out binary set which 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 MSM 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). *Trevi* (pseudonym), one of my participants, divulged that he has witnessed cases of *mayates* filming MSM 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. MSM 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, meanings of being a Mexican man are shaped by political social landscapes which 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 in some way or another.

For instance, in his research, Noriega found that many of his informants invited him to sleep in the same bed as him, traveled together, and men that held hands (see appendix A). 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, MSM 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 nos49” 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 while 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 similar to resistance tactics men used in the 19th century to negotiate their identities in accordance to regulations of masculinity in order to continue having erotic encounters.

Similar to Noriega’s findings, my contributors and I found that MSM in southern rural Mexico resist through comradery. Téo (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 MSM in his ranch

49 Just between us
(that he knows of) go out to parties with a mix of MSM and buga friends to mask their joteria\(^{50}\).

Though 19\(^{th}\) century homosocial rhetoric (and negotiation to it) is present, so is 20\(^{th}\) century rhetoric of virility. Philosophers of the virile nation-building discourses of the 20\(^{th}\) century influenced these moral codes of regulation of rural masculinity. Noriega stated that 20\(^{th}\) century philosopher Páez is specifically influential because he coined the term \textit{rajarse}\(^{51}\), which is also a regulator of masculinity. Páez (1950), states that men have the capability to crack “like women.” I believe that this logic is consistent with 20\(^{th}\) century beliefs of equating femininity to weakness. In addition, I postulate that medical discourse of sexology definitely plays a role because men in the rural que \textit{se rajar}\(^{52}\) are seen as degenerate men (Noriega, 2014). Furthermore, other actions and meanings tied to \textit{rajandose}\(^{53}\) 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. I believe this attribute is most likely prevalent because of the elevation of working-class masculinity during the aftermath of the revolution.

One of Noriega’s participants demonstrated that there are holes in this 20\(^{th}\) 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

\(^{50}\) Gaying out
\(^{51}\) To crack
\(^{52}\) Crack
\(^{53}\) cracking
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. 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 MSM perform various socially constructed attributes of virility. Similar to Noriega’s participant Miguel, Juan Gabriel (pseudonym) performs virility by highlighting his hard word. 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 so against him for being MSM. Consequently, he was able to get 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 rural MSM 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 to many MSM 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 as 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 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 in order to “make him a man.” Additionally, his parents would apply urban
methods of violence by forcing him to take male-hormones as a way 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, however, defended himself by destapandose and telling him that they are more alike than they think. Eventually, the two ended up making amends with one another and enjoy a positive relationship today.

At a later age, however, Noriega’s participant Cesar managed to obtain a position in politics that earned 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, from making public transgressions of gender, and appear and “normal” (in accordance to the rules that govern manliness in the space they occupy). Moreover, MSM must mask themselves and their sexual encounters under the guise of homosociability, friendship, and comradery. Ultimately, respect is a form of social distinction between joto and “respected” MSM. It is also a social contract between MSM and their local rural communities. Anzaldua (1987) argues that “Respeto carries with it a set of rules so that social categories and hierarchies will

54 Revealing his sexuality
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 about the deviants” (p.40). MSM who do not follow the social contract (aka the deviants), then, are seen as not worthy because they have not gone through this “gaining respect” ritual. Respected MSM enjoy being free of stigma, but still fear violence.

Noriega further argues that there is a type of reverse discourse in the rural where MSM who have gained respect have mastered homosocial dynamics and their contradictions. Those who “have gained respect” know how the homophobic dynamics work. They know how to pass homophobic violence because of masculine identity and 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.). MSM 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. This involves the mastery and exploitation of dominant sexual and gender ideological contradictions as well as playful and performative ways of resisting homophobic terms. MSM 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 MSM, Noriega documents that there is more pressure for those who are rumored, expected to be, or “everyone knows about” MSM to gain respect. Irvin, one of Noriega’s MSM informants, declared that he has to 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), and avoid being placed in a category based on his actions. He also noted having to be more discreet and serious about his projects to avoid getting into scandals because all eyes are on him. Furthermore, in social settings, he has to work harder to be more considerate, careful, and respectful. Finally, he professed that many MSM in his town either 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*. Those who do not gain *respeto*, however, end up damaging their reputations and end up stigmatized. Noriega also postulates that those who associate themselves with people that are deemed openly *jotos* also run the risk of being stigmatized through social burning. Thus, emphasis can definitely be placed on reputation and social burning in rural areas.

*Respeto* and *quemandose* were also prevalent themes in my project. My contributor Juan Gabriel, for example, made it clear that he is openly *homosexual* but is well respected because of his hard work and his positive reputation in his town.

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55 So they do not talk about him
56 Social Burning (as coined in rural southern Mexico)
hometown. Alex (pseudonym) and Trevi, however, were quemados\textsuperscript{57} because they engaged in what the community deemed as scandals. Some of these scandals included cross-dressing, public affection with other MSM, and talking openly about their sexual encounters. This is because Alex and Trevi refused to comply with this \textit{respeto} social contract.

Virile masculinity socialization eventually comes to an end. Noriega argues that it eventually ends for various reasons: 1) end of adolescence and adulthood mark autonomy and end of socialization; 2) 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. The long-term effects of this can however be detrimental to those who come out as respected MSM. This is because the respected MSM 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 \textit{jotos} for various reasons. His informant Francisco suggested he does not have Gay friends because they gossip and thus runs the risk of “\textit{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 \textit{jotos}.” Clearly, even some of those who have mastered the virile system

\textsuperscript{57} Socially burned
of masculinity have internalized this hatred for femininity. I theorize that this internalization goes beyond socialization. In fact, it stems from centuries of imposition, dehumanization, exclusionist nation-building, and the logic of colonality (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. Resistance through internalization, however, is a double-edged sword because MSM run the risk of becoming oppressors.

Clearly, resistance tactics have been the ultimate form of survival for MSM in the rural. The complexity of masculinities as hegemonic and as a space for resistance show the complexities 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). In chapter 4, I explore where the identities of MSM co-exist in southern Mexico. Some sub-themes that arose from this are maintenance of the (Queer) familial unit, communal support, secular community engagement,
religious community engagement. Furthermore, I will demonstrate how rhetoric from colonial legacies throughout Mexican history 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 MSM (Influence from medical discourse).

Finally, I will detail the full list of resistance tactics my contributors and I observed including resistance through enclaves; resistance through coded language; comradery as a form of resistance; respeto, religious & social capital; performing virility; subversive complicity; resistance through internalizing; negotiation; disidentification; homogenizing oppression by personification; and overt defiance.

In the next chapter, we will explore my theoretical perspective and methodologies I utilized to center the voices of MSM in rural Southern Mexico.
CHAPTER THREE: PLATICAS AND ETHNOGRAPHY: CENTERING OUR VOCES

Naming the Rhetoric

Noriega (2014) and Carrillo (2017) both laid the groundwork for research on MSM in the rural. What makes my research different is my theoretical perspective which is grounded in decolonial theories. These decolonial theories include Enrique Dussel’s (2012) Trans modernity and Emma Perez’s (1993) Decolonial Imaginary. I also use decolonial, interdisciplinary methodologies which are pláticas and auto-ethnography.

Carillo’s theory of glocality provided visibility to experiences of MSM in the rural through the interviews he conducted. However, I respectfully disagree with this model because it replicates the logic of coloniality of “enlightened” imperial and European countries educating “backwards” people on sexuality. Noriega’s results, however, were more reflective of subaltern MSM voices because he used an autoethnographic approach (which I will discuss later in this chapter). Additionally, he was able to relate 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 those ideologies stem from. I analyze 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 MSM have had to find diverse ways to resist to the shifting hegemonic ideologies in Mexico throughout its history including colonial times, the 19th century, the revolutionary period, and post-revolutionary period. I also drew parallels between these hegemonic ideologies and Noriega’s field work with MSM participants in rural northern Mexico. My contributors were MSM from rural southern Mexico whom shared diverse histories, cultures, customs, etc. In my last chapter, I will analyze the themes that rose from my research in rural southern Mexico. Interestingly, some themes intersected with those of Noriega’s research. However, to further prove Noriega’s argument of Mexican identity not being monolithic, there were many themes that were distinct. I will first breakdown my theoretical perspective and the methodologies I utilized to co-construct themes with my contributors.

Decolonial Thinking

My theoretical perspective is based on anti- and de-colonial philosophy and thought. I take from Frantz Fanon, Enrique Dussel, Emma Pérez, Gloria Anzaldúa, Walter Migñolo, Ramón Grosfoguel, Aníbal Quijano, and Chela Sandoval. Ultimately, my research is grounded on the idea of plurality where many worlds and identities can co-exist without imposition. 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 of 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 rural MSM’s ways of identifying and co-existing. Dussel further notes that the steps for a Transmodern world involve:

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 as a way to validate my contributors’ way of
knowing and identifying. That is, I honored their devalued cultural values (which
are devalued by MEWCCCSS). Specifically, their resistance strategies as a valid
way of existing as MSM. This lens led me to ask questions that specifically
centered rural MSM, a group often ignored by MEWCCCSS.

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 look at 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 embraced difference, honored MSM (the voiceless), and
through a queer, decolonial gaze. Through a decolonial imaginary lens, I
historicized the different moments in history that have led to the repression and dehumanization of MSM in the rural. However, I also argued that MSM engaged in resistance tactics to navigate the different repressive, dehumanizing moments in the history of Mexico.

In my project I utilized this history of resistance (often ignored by MECCCUS) in relation to the experiences to MSM in rural southern Mexico. 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).

Research Questions

From the repressive moments of the colonial era, to the exclusionist nation building discourses, MSM in the rural have always engaged in methods of resistance when faced with colonial powers in Mexico. The goal of this project is to center the voices of rural MSM in the rural, specifically, from the sharing of their own lived experiences and resistance tactics in the rural spaces they occupy. Finally, the ultimate goal of this research is to highlight and honor and celebrate los *modos de resistencia*58 that have permitted MSM to combat hegemonic, oppressive systems of oppression that derive from the logic of colonality and the latter rhetoric of modernity. The decolonial theoretical

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58 Modes of resistance
prospective made me think about designing questions that would center the experiences of resistance and co-existence of MSM. Ultimately, this research is guided by the following questions:

RQ 1: How do the identities of MSM co-exist or navigate despite the repressive ideologies and the dehumanizing and punishing acts that derive from Mexican historical moments such as the colonial period, 19th century, and post-revolution?

RQ2: Where and how do the identities of MSM fit into the fabric of Southern Mexican rural society in contemporary times?

Pláticas: Restoration of Humanity and Respect in Research

If my theoretical perspective is to be decolonial, my methodological tools must also align with this lens. For this reason, this study was conducted using a qualitative mixed methods approach based on a Pláticas methodology and autoethnography; methodologies that match my decolonial ideals of consciousness, vulnerability, and respect. I also implemented a thematic analysis approach to help generate themes from semi-structured interviews (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

59 Talks
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 of them 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 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. Thus, a decolonial model that centers the voices of the subaltern communities without speaking for them would be a better fit for this study (Spivak, 2010). In addition, this model should also honor lesser known indigenous and Latinx contributions to knowledge building. This is especially true for the communities of rural Southern Mexico who mostly comprise of trabajadores del campo⁶⁰, folks who rarely have a voice and are often misrepresented. This is why I will utilize a pláticas methodology as a culturally appropriate method to center the voices and perspectives of MSM in southern Mexico.

*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 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 ways in order 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.

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⁶⁰ Field workers
Furthermore, this methodology also involves the embrace 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 who 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 useful method for its emphasis of sharing ideas, experiences, stories, and relationship building. In
order for this to occur, the facilitator must be willing to make themselves vulnerable. This is because Pláticas is informed through theory which stress that scholars must learn, teach, and experience reality and vice versa (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). Guajardo and Guajardo (2008) also place strong emphasis on Pláticas and on recognizing that knowledge is socially constructed. Thus, this method puts priority on the participants’ lived experiences while still taking into account the researcher’s epistemology. Gonzalez (2012) also notes that Pláticas is a way to gather familial and cultural knowledge through the communication of 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, 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, which were woven together with critical theories that center the experiences of marginalized people and draw attention to the systems of oppression and navigation of those systems by those oppressed by them (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 lived experiences of the participants; humanizing in the process. A traditional interview is also too linear because the researcher asks all the questions with the selfish purpose of just collecting 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 room for contributors to co-discuss and chose topics that matter to them. In fact, the very Chicana/Latina feminist perspective that guides *Pláticas* emphasizes and deems it necessary for participants to co-collaborate. Moreover, Avila (1999) proclaims that the transactional nature of *Pláticas* for 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 that allows the *curandera* to co-learn about her client while also educating or providing remedies. The *Pláticas* essentially allow 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 in order for *Pláticas* to serves as a space for healing and self-
reflexivity. Avila also notes that in order for reciprocity, vulnerability, and self-reflexivity to even take place, the most important ingredient is trust (Avila, 1999). Essentially, the researcher must build a genuine relationship with the contributor. Also, researchers must be willing to share what is asked of them by the contributor. In other words, researcher must do the same thing we are asking the participants to do, be valuable. Pláticas methodology fits with my decolonial theoretical assumptions of research as it is one of the few methodologies with the objective of honoring 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). Meaning, if the theory seeks to dehumanize and decolonize, the theoretical tools must also have the same purpose. Overall, Pláticas follows the feminist tradition of theorizing the brown body, following modes of interaction and analysis that are collaborative, and honoring the many ways of knowing and learning in our communities (Fierros & Delgado-Bernal, 2016). I believe Pláticas fits perfectly with this study because as a person who identifies as Queer and Joto, I can sympathize and relate to MSM community members of Southern Mexico. I am also originally from el rancho as for a short time, I lived in a rancho in southern Mexico. I also visit my family twice a year for lengthy amounts of time.
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 either 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. Ricky (pseudonym), another contributor, also invited me to his business and his home where I spoke with him and his boyfriend at the time. To this stay, I continue to stay in touch with them and visit them when I get the chance. 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 to the project rather than mere objects of study (which is why I call them contributors rather than participants).

**Auto-ethnography: Reclaiming My “I”**

Concurrently, I also utilized auto-ethnography as a method to place myself in this self-reflexive, co-reclaiming experience *Pláticas* proposes. Also, as a way to reclaim the “I,” something that has been denied to me by racist academics. I did this by putting myself and my experiences in my project, especially since I am originally from *el rancho*. Furthermore, I am also using this as a way 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 represents themselves in ways which 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 subjected others. Using the colonizers terms, autoethnography becomes another rupture in Eurocentric academia. Autoethnographic texts become the voice of those being misrepresented by those othering them. This thesis is me speaking to you using the colonizer’s terms (APA format, citations, etc.), yet 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 the combination of Pláticas and Autoethnography as decolonizing, methodological tools, I sought to put my grain of sand in dismantling the problematic power structures in place that reduces the contributors to mere objects of the research. Again, I do this by treating my contributors as colleagues rather than participants. That is, putting the same value of their knowledge as we would an academic textbook.

These decolonizing tools are key to giving a voice to subaltern communities such as rural MSM without directly speaking for them. In the process, as a queer, joto, and Mexicano man who has also been affected 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 Pláticas of this research (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.

Following My Joteria: 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 was because I
already knew MSM folks who lived in the region. Unintentionally, I utilized a
snowball sample to recruit contributors. After I spoke to two of my contributors
whom I had met a year before I decided to do this research, they graciously
offered to introduce me to friends who would most likely be interested in
contributing. As Gloria Anzaldua (1984) said, “listen to what your joteria is
saying” (p. 34). Being joto also gives one a special sensibility. I wholeheartedly
believe that following my own joteria played a major role in finding contributors.
Ultimately, everything fell into place when friends of the contributors introduced
me to other acquaintances. Eventually, a total of 10 contributors lent their voices
to construct this project. Before documenting their data, I first had to go through
California State University San Bernardino’s Institutional Review Board.
Contributors were then asked to fill out consent forms in order to protect their
confidentiality. To document the data, the 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 and ranged from plazas\footnote{Town squares}, 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 thesis. Instead, I referred to the location as “rural southern Mexico” to ensure some sort of representation whilst also ensuring confidentiality. I also assigned pseudonyms to the various municipalities within 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 of the recordings were kept under encrypted passwords that only myself and my committee chair knew. Upon completion of the study, I erased/destroyed the recordings in accordance to IRB regulations.

All of 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 highlight words, phrases, and/or sentences that respond to my questions and tied to themes using Saldaña’s (2009) code-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry, a type of 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 initial codes, I developed categorical themes that were linked to my theoretical assumptions in the literature (see chapters 4 & 5). Whenever asked to disseminate this work, I will make sure to
always include my contributors’ in accordance to *Pláticas* methodology. Contributors are given the option to be part of the dissemination process, however, rigorous efforts are taken to mask their personal data.

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 *Pláticas* 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. In the next chapter, I will share my experience and
some themes that arose from the *Pláticas* I had with contributors of this work and how they tie to the literature of this piece.
CHAPTER FOUR:
JOTERIA RANCHERA: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION PART 1

El Que No Perrea, No Prospera: Getting To Know the Contributors

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 MSM in the region to assist me with this project. I packed my bags nervously thinking to myself, “what if I do not find anybody to talk to? “what if I accidently 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 self-reflection. Upon arriving to Nuevo Fernandez in rural southern Mexico, I was greeted by family members who always receive me con mucho amor. 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 Teresa’s frijoles pintos. Afterward I set out to attempt to find individuals to contribute to my study. 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 and became good friends. I also came out to him in 2016 and he has become one of my closest friends and allies from Nuevo Fernandez. Though not a direct contributor (he identifies as heterosexual), he was instrumental in this

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62 With much love
63 In this context, translates to grandma
64 Pinto beans
65 Festivals
project because he introduced me to the two individuals who were *perreando* with my collegemate at my cousin Luis Miguel’s party two years prior. These two individuals were Alex and Trevi.

**Alex and Trevi**

Alex and Trevi both openly identify as Gay and are known by the residents of *Nuevo Fernandez* as being loud, rowdy, effeminate, and promiscuous. At the time of this project, Alex was 18 years old and Trevi was 20. They are known by the community as los *Gays que se visten de mujer*\(^66\). This is because they are comfortable dressing in drag in public as a way of disidentifying. They are both *campesinos*\(^67\) 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 MSM in Nuevo Fernandez who want to *destaparse*\(^68\) some day.

Cobain formally introduced me to Alex and Trevi 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 Alex and Trevi greeted me with a kiss on the cheek, a practice that normally takes place when a man greets a woman in the ranch. The third

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\(^{66}\) Gays who dress like women

\(^{67}\) Field workers

\(^{68}\) Revealed himself to be MSM. (similar to coming out in US context)
individual greeted me with a handshake. “¿Que pinche desmadre el año pasado, verdad?”69 Alex 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 sí amiga! Y si necesitas que te busquemos mas chav@s, nos avisas,”70 stated Trevi. I had a plática and interviewed Trevi and Alex at Trevi’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.

The same night I met Trevi and Alex, 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 Tenochtitlan,”71 he stated. Amanda, as he chose to be called, is from La Milpilla, the rancho72 across the road from Nuevo Fernandez. After Amanda’s dad left to the U.S., he took over the family business selling handmade churros in a pueblo73 about 30 minutes away from La Milpilla called Atonilcho. Unfortunately, I did not get to interview Amanda 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.

69 What disaster(ous) last year.
70 Of course, girlfriend! And if you need us to find other folks to interview, let us know! *Important: the vernacular will not be "corrected" nor will (sic) be designated as this reinforces the hierarchization of language.
71 You know what? I have several Gay friends in Tenochtitlan.
72 Ranch
73 Town
“Si gustas, mañana te recojo y te llevo a conocer a mis amig@s Ricky y Daniel. Creo que te interesará la historia de Ricky porque es bien conmovedora. Hace unos años se cortó la mano en un accidente, pero aun sigue luchando y trabajando sin mano. Vende frutas cercas de su casa allá en Tenochtitlan,”

Amanda added. The next morning, I met with Amanda on the state road that divides Nuevo Fernandez and La Milpilla. Amanda picked me up in his dad’s pickup truck and we were off to Tenochtitlan, a pueblo located about 15 minutes away from where he had picked me up.

Ricky

Amanda 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. “¿Quién es éste?” Ricky jokingly asked Amanda as we walked in his room. Ricky greeted me and invited me to sit on the bed 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 Tenochtitlan all of his life. He also briefly discussed his fascination for drag and beauty pageants and running his family’s fruit business. As Amanda had mentioned to me, Ricky has a disability. Rick shared

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74 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 Tenochtitlan.

75 Who is this?
that he had been in an accident when he was employed at *Lecheria Los 41*. 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 *pláticas* methodology to him. He responded with the same thing he tells me every year I visit him in Tenochtitlan, “*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.*” 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 Northern Mexico but moved to *Tenochtitlan* after his family kicked him out. He disclosed to me that he was not immediately kicked out when

76 The 41 Milk Plant
77 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.
se destapo\textsuperscript{78}. He was forced out of his house after he quit the military because his family believed this was the only way to “hacerlo hombre.”\textsuperscript{79} 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 Tenochtitlan,”\textsuperscript{80} 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 Tenochtitlan after learning there was a gym there called Imperial.\textsuperscript{81} 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 Tenochtitlan 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.

\textsuperscript{78} Revealed he was MSM
\textsuperscript{79} Make a man out of him
\textsuperscript{80} I met Hector online and then I made the decision to come live with him here in Tenochtitlan.
\textsuperscript{81} Imperial
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.

Ignacio

Neto eventually introduced me to his acquaintance Ignacio, a lawyer in charge of signing off on property rights in Tenochtitlan. 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 Tenochtitlan 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 about his sexuality. Once Ignacio got to know me during our initial meeting, he invited me to return to his despacho again to go more into depth about his experiences in Tenochtitlan.

Juan Gabriel

My tía Claudia and my prima Liz were also integral parts of the success of this project because they both introduced me to more MSM in Nuevo Fernandez. 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 with him.
met him. He has lived in Nuevo Fernandez 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 became ill. Using the money he made in the United States, he opened a successful store in Nuevo Fernandez. 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 the plática methodology. “Aquí estare en la tienda cuando quieras venir,” Juan Gabriel said. We met again one night while he was despachando at his store.

Téo

On one of our weekly visits to Tenochtitlan, a curly haired young man riding on his motorcycle waved at my tía Claudia. “Mira, ese es Téo. También es Gay,” she stated. My tía Claudia invited Téo a cenar a few days later to introduce us. At dinner, Téo asked me if we could take a walk around la plaza 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

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86 I will be her at the store whenever you would like to come visit.
87 Tending to the customers.
88 Look, that is Téo. He is Gay too.
89 Dinner
90 Town square (center of town)
hours a day spraying pesticide on milpa\(^{91}\), one of the region’s main exports. Additionally, he runs his own hair and nail salon business from his home on the weekends. When I first met Téo, he disclosed to me that he was 25 years old and identified as Gay. He has lived in Nuevo Fernandez all of his life, but periodically spends a few weeks living in Tenochtitlan with his partner. When I told him about the project, he became ecstatic, “¡Claro que si amigo! ¡Cuentas conmigo!\(^{92}\),” 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.” Téo 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 Fernandez.

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 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

\(^{91}\) Corn plants

\(^{92}\) Of course, my friend! You can count on me!
nomas me gustan los hombres y ya." 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.

Jack-Watson

I met Jack-Watson (as he chose to be called) back in 2013 during Nuevo Fernandez’s annual fiestas patrias. He was from La Milpilla and was rumored to sleep with men around the time I met (according to my cousin Adrian 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 boyfriend on the cheek. He private messaged me saying, “Estamos en las mismas.” 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. He then expressed interest to be part of the project over a video chat plática. At the time, he was 25 years old and

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93 No, I just like guys and that’s it.
94 Fiestas that take place annually in ranchos and pueblos to commemorate their anniversary.
95 Festival
96 We are on the same boat
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, “*mas o menos les digo que soy*.97” Meaning that he more or less communicates to other men that he has interest for them without actually subscribing to an identity label. We had a few *pláticas* over Instagram video chat where he disclosed more details about his life as an MSM in *La Milpilla*.

**Analyzing Las Pláticas**

Drawing from the *pláticas* I had with Alex, Trevi, Juan Gabriel, Neto, Jack-Watson, Chavelo, Ricky, Ignacio, Daniel, and Téo and the literature in chapters 1 through 3, I constructed themes to answer RQ1 and RQ2. Some of the themes that arose also had sub-themes that fell under those overarching themes. The three tables below quantify the main themes of this study, which I will further unpack within a narrative form in order to prioritize my voice which is one within this community. I have assigned specific codes to each theme and sub-theme in the form of in-text citations which I will refer to within the narrative. In the final two chapters (4 & 5), I will answer (RQ 1) and (RQ 2).

97 I somewhat let them know
Table 1: Reflexiones: Duality of how men who have sex with men view their identities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The rural as habitable: How men who have sex with men's identities are destigmatized (RH) | RH1) Maintaining a (Queer) Familial Unit  
RH2) Communal Support  
RH3) Secular Community Engagement  
RH4) Religious Community Engagement |
| The rural as uninhabitable: “Pueblo chico, infierno grande” struggles of men who have sex with men in the rancho (RI) | RI1) Not many economic opportunities  
RI2) Prohibitions and restrictions on sexual expression  
RI3) Community punishment (i.e.: silent treatment, bullying, harassment, disdain – Further analyzed in relation to Mexican history) |

Table 2: Moments of Mexican history linked to hegemonic ideology perpetrated in the rural as inhabitable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imposed ideologies with historical roots in particular events (IHR)</th>
<th>Identified forms of Internalization / Proxy perpetuation (PP)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) 19th-20th century imposition of virility through military punishment (The 41)</td>
<td>PP1) Father as virile masculinizer (family domestic violence &amp; abuse)</td>
<td>1) Belonging to social groups and clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) 20th century virile rhetoric as justification for immense hate of male femininity (Nation building discourse)</td>
<td>PP2) Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance (Chisme)</td>
<td>2) Body language: “la mirada”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) 20th century pathologization of MSM (Influence from medical discourse)</td>
<td>PP3) Essentializing by community members (they must all be like that) (i.e.: They must all be femme because of the false notion of “femininity equals homosexuality”)</td>
<td>3) Secret/Open Friendships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Resistance Strategies against hegemonic rhetoric in the rural

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resistance Strategies (RS)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RS1) Resistance through enclaves</td>
<td>1) Belonging to social groups and clubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS2) Resistance through coded language</td>
<td>2) Body language: “la mirada”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS3) Comradery as a form of resistance</td>
<td>3) Secret/Open Friendships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflexiones: Duality of How Men Who Have Sex With Men View Their Identities

I was inspired to center this study on the duality of how MSM view their identities as some expressed both seeing the rural experience simultaneously as a heaven and as a hell. Participants expressed this duality as a way to honor their home, yet at the same time being critical as a preamble to statements in which they shared forms in which they engaged in resistance and ways in which they fight against hegemonic discourse.

In general, most of the contributors of this project not only felt comfortable with their sexuality, but also felt empowered through their own expressions of resistance. Alex stated, “A unos si les caemos bien y a otros no. Y pues nos da igual. Mientras nosotros nos sintamos a gusto con nosotros mismos la gente que diga lo que diga.” (RS10, RS11, PP2) Juan Gabriel, who comes from another

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98 There are some that do like us while others do not. We do not care. As long as we are happy with ourselves, people can say what they want.
generation, mirrored the same feelings as Alex. With religious implications (RS4), he also expressed that MSM are a beautiful work of god:

Si dios me dijera o dará la oportunidad para la reencarnación o si me preguntaba que quieres ser (homosexual o heterosexual) yo le diría que lo miso (homosexual). Yo no me importa lo de que dirán. No me importa. ¿Por qué? Por que yo así soy, qué bueno quien me quiera aceptar como soy de mis amistades que me acepte. Y el que no, a la chingada así de fácil. [ser homosexual] Es una cosa muy muy muy especial. 99 (RS4)

Many MSM echoed these feelings of not paying mind to what others think. Also, loving themselves for how they are. “Las opiniones de las personas no cuentan. Simplemente eres tú, y después quererte a ti mismo. (luego viene) el resto del mundo. Realmente te sientes solo, pero realmente no lo estas simplemente no te das cuenta,” said Téo (RS10). “Al igual a mi pues también no mi importa el qué diga la gente. Yo me siento a gusto conmigo mismo y mi interior. Para mí, las palabras de la gente me salen sobrando.” Trevi stated (RS10). “O si vivo mi vida abiertamente Gay. Eso de las parejas he vivido como si nada,” Neto divulged (RS11). “El grado de aceptación que tú tienes también depende de la importancia que le des. Si a ti te vale lo que piense la gente y andas bien con tu mismo, no hay ningún problema,” Ignacio suggested (RS10).

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99 If God were to reincarnate me and ask, “would you like to be heterosexual or homosexual?” I would answer homosexual. I do not care what they think. Do not care. Why? Because I know who will accept me. Those who do not can go to hell. Being homosexual is something special.
One characteristic the contributors had in common is that many of them referenced la gente\textsuperscript{100}. By this, they mean the tight-knit communities where they live. I argue that this has to do with ancestral surveillance, a method of upholding hegemonic ideologies (guided by exclusionist nation-state rhetoric) through the form of societal gossip (Grosfoguel, 2005). I will discuss ancestral surveillance in chapter 5.

One response from the pláticas that slightly differed was Ricky’s. Though he also felt strongly against what la gente thought of him, he did express that he always valued and sought after his family’s approval:

\textit{Yo nunca me he cuidado del que dirán. Siempre he sido la idea que, si en mi casa me aceptan, a no me importa lo que diga “Juanito”, “Pedrito”, ni mis vecinos. Yo no como de la gente. Para mi, mi lucha fue que me acepten en mi casa nada más. Se daba el caso que en mi casa mi hermano ere bien chantajista. Mi hermano les daba dinero. Yo no les quise dar nada. Yo les dije que ellos me quieran por lo que soy no por lo que les doy. Siempre fue una luchita que yo les daba nada. En familia estuve en una luchita para que me aceptaran como soy. Hasta ahorita nunca he ocultado lo que soy. Ahora sí que a la mejor vas creciendo vas agarrando amistades y eso a la mejor te empiezas a destapar un poquito más o te enlocas más ya andando con todos los amigos y eso pero de}

\textsuperscript{100} The residents or the people.
This emphasis on *la gente* and *familia* ultimately led me to ask the question about where the identities of MSM fit in their communities (RQ2). To address this complexity, it is necessary to unpack the “Rural as habitable” and how MSM identities are destigmatized in everyday life experiences.

The Rural as Habitable: How Men Who Have Sex With Men’s Identities Are Destigmatized

From the *pláticas* in both *los ranchos* and *los pueblos* the subthemes that arose were essentially the answer to RQ2: where and how do the identities of MSM fit into the fabric of Southern Mexican rural society in contemporary times? Based on the *pláticas*, some of the possible places where identities fit in both the *ranchos* and *pueblos* are the maintaining a queer family unit, (RH1) communal support, (RH2) secular community engagement, (RH3) religious community engagement (RH4).

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101 I have never protected myself from “what will they say?” attitudes. I only care that my family accepts me. Not my neighbors or any other person. I do not eat off of those people. By biggest battle was for my family to accept me. My brother was a blackmailer. He would win over my parents with money. I told them I would not give them anything. I told them they must love me for what I am and not for what I can offer to give them. Up until now, I have never hid what I am. Maybe when you grow up you start to get a little crazy and rebellious with your friends, but to pretend to be a whole different person in front of society, no! I have always been myself.

102 Family

103 The Ranches

104 The Town
Maintain a (Queer) Familial Unit (RH1)

As mentioned in chapter 2, one of the pillars of virile rhetoric of 20th century nation-building was the ability to procreate (Ruvalcaba, 2007). Thus, 20th century rhetoric pushed for the creation and maintenance of a familial unit. In one of the pláticas I had with Juan Gabriel, he expressed how being homosexual has positioned him to be the perfect caretaker for his mom. This is because when his siblings married and had their own families, they had to leave Juan Gabriel’s household and maintain their new family units (a contradiction of the family unit system because one will eventually leave their original unit).

“Uno, así como es, puede ayudar a su familia. Simplemente yo dure 14 años con mi mami cambiándola, bañándola, llevándola al doctor, acostándola, levantándola, pastilla, comida todo eso. Entonces, yo me siento a gusto y feliz con lo que soy,” Juan Gabriel stated (RH1 & RS8). I argue that this is a Queer familial unit because it subverts the 20th century nationalist logic (IHR) that everyone must reproduce (Ruvalcaba, 2016). It is within an alternative familial unit model where MSM have a place. Although a Western term, I use Queer here because Ruvalcaba argues that Queer is a critical thought process that deconstructs system of gender by questioning the fundamentals of nation-state (Ruvalcaba, 2007). Queer is essentially a decolonization of sex that redefines the norms of bodies in question; a process that requires a liberation of sexual

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105 One, being how we are, we can help our families. I spent 14 years with my mom taking care of her, bathing her, taking her to the doctor, taking her to bed, waking her up, medication, food, and all of that stuff. Then, I feel comfortable and happy with what I am.
practices under the limits of colonial law. Queer is another decolonization and
dismantlement of colonial norms. In short, Queer is a decolonial methodology
that must be translated to the experiences and histographies of the sexual
minorities living in the nation-state in question.

Even after his mom passed away, Juan Gabriel continued to follow this
queer familial unit model. He mentioned that at the age of 64 it is more critical
now than ever to have a partner to look after him:

_Mi familia me ha tolerado todo porque yo vengo de una buena mujer._

_Ellos siempre me aceptaron tal y como soy. Tengo 2 hermanas y es lo
mismo. Para ellas soy un dios. ¿Por qué? Porque siempre me gusta
respetar. Cuando me junté con mi pareja del rancho, yo le dije a mis
hermanas ‘¿saben que? Yo tengo una nueva pareja.’ Me dijeron, ‘esta
bien hermano, haz tu vida, nomas una vez se vive, tonto si no lo haces.
Sabes por qué me toleran? Para que no esté solo. Una enfermedad que
me pegue, olvídate. Mi pareja me ayuda._¹⁰⁶ (RH1 & RS8)

Juan Gabriel also revealed to me that during his younger years, he was
under the false assumption his family did not accepted him at first. This is why
during his younger days, he left to the United States as a way to hide his
sexuality from them. He talked to me about a conversation he had with his mom

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¹⁰⁶ My family has tolerated me because I come from a great woman. They have always accepted
me like I am. I have to sisters and it is the same situation. For them, I am a god. Why? Because I
like to respect. When I got with my partner in the ranch, I said to my sisters, “you know what? I
have a partner now.” They responded with “It is okay brother! Live your life. You only live once.
You would be dumb not to.” Do you know why they tolerate me? So I will not be alone. If I ever
get sick, my partner can help me.
before she died where she indirectly revealed that she always knew about his sexual orientation. In fact, she did whatever she could to protect him:

¡Tengo 64 años, pero bien vividos! Bien perrones. Yo desde la edad de 14 o menos, crucé la frontera para que mis padres no supieran lo que yo era, pero ya sabían. ¡Se ve hijo! ¿¡Para que se hagan pendejos!? Pero los padres de uno que no hacen para cubrir a uno. Como mi mama me decía, ‘no andes por los chiribitales. Tienes tu casa.’

Téo, Alex, and Trevi who are also from Nuevo Fernandez also shared Juan Gabriel’s sentiments regarding this queer familial unit. Many of them shared positive experiences with their family members when se destaparon. “Mi familia me sigue tratando igual, no hay diferencia con los demás. De hecho, siento que hay más afecto. Me la llevo mejor con todos y nunca he recibido ningún maltrato (de mi familia). No hubo ninguna reacción (cuando me destape), nomás dijeron ‘qué bueno.’” Téo stated. (RH1, RS8).

Trevi suggested that he had the same positive experience with his family:

107 I am 64 years old and very well lived. Very badass. Since I was 14 years old or younger, I crossed the border so my parents would not find out my sexuality, but they already knew. They can tell son! Why do some parents play dumb? At what lengths do our parents go to cover for us? My mom used to tell me, “do not be out there in the streets. You have your home.”
108 Revealed themselves as MSM
109 There was no reaction when I came out. They just said, “that’s great!”
110 When I told my dad, he told me “you know what? You are my son and I will not throw you on the street. Just be careful! Be careful who you mess around with.”
También igual a mí me dijeron lo mismo. No me dijeron que me iban a echar a la calle. Pues soy su hijo y les dolía más que nada. ¿No me van a dar a la calle por ciertas circunstancias que uno vino así o se hizo o nació al igual, no? Al fin de cuentas, Dios es el que nos va a juzgar, no uno. Dios es el que nos va a juzgar a todos. Dice en La Biblia que nació el hombre para la mujer y vice-versa, pero sintiéndose uno a gusto como es, no hay que darle explicaciones a nadie.\footnote{My parents told me the same thing. They did not tell me they were going to throw me on the street. I’m their son and it would hurt them more than anything. They are not going to throw me on the street for certain circumstances of how I am, how I came to be, or how I was born (his sexuality). In the end, god is the one who will judge us. God is the one who will judge all of us. It says in the Bible that man was meant to love a woman and vice-versa, but one being comfortable in one’s own skin is all that matters. There is no need to explain things to anyone.} (RH1, RS4, & RS8)

MSM from el pueblo Tenochtitlan further confirmed this familial unit dynamic.

Ricky stated:

Mi familia no trata de ‘protegerse ante la sociedad.’ Así como somos en casa, somos los mismos allá afuera siempre y cuando con respeto porque no le faltamos el respeto a nadie. Con decir con ningún apodo ni nada. Hay aprecio pues. Pos con ti más que nosotros somos tan conocidos.

Entonces me dicen “Teresa y Teresa.” Normal pues. Igual, si me ven en la calle (mi familia) me gritan. ‘tía!’ o ‘tío!’ ‘Teresa.’ Normal. Ni la gente voltea. Como nunca he tratado de ocultar lo que soy o ocultar lo que soy.

En mi caso, la gente lo ve normal. En otros casos no se. Mis padres
Neto agreed with Ricky by saying:

_Cuando llegué a estar cercas de mis papas, les dije y lo aceptaron súper bien. Mis hermanas ya sabían desde cuando y me apoyaban. Todos me apoyan, pero no es así como “te apoyo porque eres Gay, hijo” pero simplemente las cosas están como normales ‘te acepto y ya es tu pedo.’_  

_He visto amigos que los rechazan y digo ‘que horror’ cómo será pasar por eso, pero eso no me toco a mi gracias a Dios. Me tocó suerte._

As Neto stated, there are many MSM in both _los pueblos_ and _ranchos_ who end up being rejected because of that same 20\textsuperscript{th} century virile rhetoric and homophobia that stems from the logic of coloniality. (IHR, PP1, PP5) Daniel, for instance, was kicked out of his house after refusing to participate in activities that his parents believed would “cure him.” Though Ricky is now accepted by his family, he also confessed to me that he at first clashed with his father over his identity. I will discuss Ricky’s conflict in the “father as masculinizer” (PP1) section.

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\textsuperscript{112} My family does not try to “protect themselves from society.” Just like we are at home, we are the same on the street, but with much respect. With much appreciation. When people see in the streets, they yell to me “uncle!” “aunt!” or “Teresa!” (his nickname) like it is normal. The people do not even turn their heads. Because I have never tried to hide what I am, the people see me like normal. In other cases, I am not sure. My parents have always understood me since I told them.  

\textsuperscript{113} When I came to be close to my parents, I told them, and they accepted it well. My sisters knew for so long and they supported me. However, it is not a matter of “I accept you because you are Gay.” It is more like “I accept you, but it is your business.” I have friends whose parents rejected them, and I think to myself “what horror.” I guess I got lucky.
During my time in Nuevo Fernandez I was told by family and friends of a young man his compas\textsuperscript{114} called Miguelito. Miguelito tragically committed suicide after facing rejection from his parents after se destapo\textsuperscript{115}. My prima Liz informed me that Miguelito’s father (also Liz’s godfather) knew about his sexual orientation and would force him to have female partners. (RI2, PP1 & PP5) I remember sobbing in bed when she texted me his story because it was right after an argument I had with my immediate family over a similar problem:

\textit{Le voy a contar una historia que sucedió en La Laja… Mi padrino era igual y pensaba igual que mi tío… El tenía un hijo así… Y el lo hacía que tuviera novias hasta estuvo a punto de casarlo. Por su machismo primo. Llegó un día que mi amigo [Miguelito] decidió enfrentarlo y decirle lo que él sentía. Mi padrino padre de ese muchacho [de Miguelito] le dijo muchas cosas de las cuales hoy estoy segura se arrepiente. Le dijo groserías y así y él no soporto eso y se quito la vida en la cocina de su casa. Se ahorco. Y lo peor de todo fue que ellos lo miraron allí colgado. Pero pa’ ese entonces ya era muy tarde primo. A becés no medimos la fuerza de las palabras que podemos herir corazones. Yo sé que es difícil, pero ellos no deberían preocuparse por eso. Así naciste. Así eres feliz. Y eso es lo que les tiene que importar a ellos. No el que dirán ni el nada de eso. Deberían de ver que así eres feliz y hoy en día es algo normal.}\textsuperscript{116} (RI2, PP1, & PP5)

\textsuperscript{114} Friends or companions.
\textsuperscript{115} Revealed he was MSM
\textsuperscript{116} I am going to tell you a story about something that happened in La Laja. My godfather used to think the same way as my uncle. He had a son like that (MSM). He would make him have
Miguelito’s story is an example of the violence some MSM endure when certain families seek to follow the blueprint 20th century compulsive virility rhetoric then proposed; specifically, one that requires strict rules for procreation. A model guided by the imposed logic of coloniality with complete disregard for what was organic and natural (Dussel, 2020). Though there are many cases of rejection, the majority of my contributors demonstrated that there is a degree of familial acceptance in the rural (RH1). As I explain in the next sub-theme, MSM also suggested receiving support from community members (RH2).

Communal Support (RH2)

In el rancho¹¹⁷, many of the contributors suggested that many of their fellow community members demonstrated solidarity with them. Juan Gabriel stated that in his younger days, people used to see MSM as a phenomenon that was foreign or out of this world, but now there is a greater degree of tolerance and/or acceptance:

Antes era más tranquilo todo. Ahora ya no. Es más público [abierto].

Ahora te puedes poner zapatillas y lentes y ni quien te diga nada. En mis

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¹¹⁷ The ranch
tiempos, no toleraban a alguien así porque se les hacía cosa de otro mundo y esa no es cosa de otro mundo. Es cosa que Dios hace; nada más. Aquí la gente es a todo dar. Aquí la gente no se escama. Escamaba cuando yo era joven y bello, pero ahora ya no se escama porque en sus casas los tienen [a los MSM]. Tienen lesbianas y jotos y muchas otras cosas que tienen. Hasta prostitutas.118 (RH2)

Téo exhibited love for his community because he has rarely encountered any conflicts. “Si está a gusto allí en el rancho. Cómodo, sí porque es un lugar muy tranquilo y a gusto. Y si te llevas bien con las personas, ellas se llevan bien contigo. No hay tanto conflicto con las personas. Si me iría, sería nomas para conocer otras partes.”119 (RH2)

Alex shared that he feels so much support from Nuevo Fernandez community members, that he never sees himself leaving Nuevo Fernandez. “La comunidad nos ha tratado bien. Una que otra gente si nos ve mal, [pero] nos sentimos a gusto por gente que nos hecha la mano, nos apoya, y pos le doy

118 Before it was more calm. Not anymore. It is more public being out. Now you can put on slippers and glasses and nobody will tell you anything. In my day, nobody tolerated somebody like that because it was something out of this world to them. However, it is something that god made! That’s it. Here the people are amazing. Here the people do not discriminate. They discriminated when I was young and pretty, but now they do not because they have them in their houses (MSM). They have lesbians, Gays, and many other things that they have. They even have prostitutes!

119 Yeah, I am comfortable here in the ranch. Comfortable, yeah because it is a tranquil and satisfying place. If you get along with people, they will get along with you. There is not as much conflict with people. If I were to leave it would just be to get to know more places (not because I hate it).
gracias a Dios por eso. A mí toda la gente me ve bien y pues me quieren mucho.\textsuperscript{120} “Alex divulged (RH2, RS4, & RS10).

Trevi shared the same sentiments:

*Ahora 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.*\textsuperscript{121} (RH1 & RS4)

In *Tenochtitlan*, MSM del pueblo shared these feelings of community support and solidarity in their town (RH1). Ricky stated that “*La gente esta actualmente mas cómoda con el tema aquí en Tenochtitlan.*\textsuperscript{122}” (RH1 & RS10)

Neto also revealed that there are fake allies and genuine allies. He further stated that he can draw a clear distinction between the two by their behavior towards him. Specifically, in situations where the allies are in position to defend him

\textsuperscript{120} The community has treated us well. A few here and there that see us, but we feel comfortable because of the people who give us a hand and support us. For that I thank god. In my case, everyone sees me well and loves me very much.

\textsuperscript{121} Right now thank God, everything has gone well with my family and I have not had to complain about anything. I honestly do not feel the need to move to another place. I do not feel like I would have to leave because I am not happy here. Right now I am satisfied in my house right here in my house with my partner and until now I have not needed anything else thank god. I think that if things remain the same, I will continue being comfortable here.

\textsuperscript{122} People are comfortable with the topic (of MSM) right now.
whenever he is harassed: “Hay gente que si aunque no sean Gays te defienden a capa y espada que meten las manos al fuego por ti. Y te lo demuestran porque hay gente que finge que te defienden poquito y después andan hablando de ti,” Neto stated (RH1, RI3, & RS10).

Daniel noted that his experience was different because in his hometown of El Grucho, community members were apprehensive towards having MSM in their town. It was not until he arrived to Tenochtitlan that he finally found a non-cosmopolitan place where he could be himself:

La experiencia que tengo aquí (en Tenochtitlan) es más libre. En El Grucho no podía ser libre por mi papá. Allá en El Grucho uno tiene que ser más discreto, más por mi papá. Como mi papá es maestro, yo tenía que ver por su como te diré, su perfil de él. Porque luego si yo digo ‘yo soy Gay,’ al rato lo iban a atacar a él. Iban a decir ‘¿cómo un maestro puede tener un hijo Gay?’ ‘¿cómo un maestro tiene alguien así? Más que nada porque él no era mi papá biológico si no mi papá adoptivo. No quería que se malinterpretaran las cosas y que digan, ‘vive [su papá adoptivo] con su pareja no su hijo.’ Sin embargo, llegué aquí a Tenochtitlan. Conocí a Ricky y todo y ya uno puede decir ‘¿sabes qué? soy Gay’ y la gente te ve normal que, sí te murmuran y sí te señalan y todo, pero ya vives tranquilamente pues más a gusto sabiendo que

123 There are people that even though you are Gay, they defend you with cape and sword and put their hands in the fire for you. They demonstrate it compared to other people who defend you a little then later end up talking behind your back.
puedes decir ‘¿sabes qué? Sí, soy Gay.’ Me puedo vestir como quiera, me puedo pintar el pelo como quiera, puedo andar en tacones y vestido como yo quiera y ya es más libre [en Tenochtitlan]. Si fue mucho el cambio [del Grucho a Tenochtitlan]. Mis experiencias sí han cambiado mucho y he aprendido de ellas. Hasta la fecha sí, sí estoy a gusto y contento. Más que todo por las personas que están a mi alrededor que siempre me han apoyado. Que si yo me metía en un problema ellos daban la cara por mí. Me ven como su hermano y por eso estoy a gusto. Aunque sí se extraña a veces la familia. De que dejé todo a la mejor por nada, pero cuando vives una experiencia, así como esta de que ves el respaldo que tienes y el apoyo es cuando dices, sí, sí valió la pena hacer el cambio. Ya lo demás te adaptas\textsuperscript{124}. (RH1, RH2, RI2, RI3, PP2, PP3, PP5, RS8, & RS10)

Gruzkiniski (2003) stated that MSM utilized nicknames such as “La Cotita,” “La Lolita,” etc. as a means to refer to one another in secret. Ricky stated that

\textsuperscript{124} The experience in Tenochtitlan is more free. In El Grucho I could not be free because of my dad. In El Grucho I had to be more discrete. I had to do it to not mess up his image. If I had said, “I am Gay,” they would have attacked him. They would have said “How can a teacher have a Gay son?” More because he was my adopted father. I did not want people to misinterpret things and say “(the teacher) lives with his partner.” In fact, I arrived to Tenochtitlan, I met Ricky and everything and one can say “you know what I am Gay (openly)” and the people see it as normal. Some do murmur some words and single you out, but one lives comfortably knowing “you know what? I am Gay.” I can dress however I want! I can color my hair, put on a dress, wear high heels, and overall it is more free (in Tenochtitlan). It was a big change moving from El Grucho. My experiences have changed, and I have learned from them. Up to this day I feel happy. Mostly because of the people around me that support me. If I am to get into problems, they stick up for me. They see me like their brother and that is why I am comfortable. Sometimes I do miss my family. Perhaps I left everything for nothing, but when you live an experience like this where you find the support you were looking for, I say, yes, it’s worth making a change in my life. As for the rest, you just adapt.
this practice has continued in the rural. Essentially, this practice of calling MSM by their nicknames has been partially repurposed as communal support. This is because some community members play along to with their transgressions of the local gender regime through the use of female nicknames. He stated that many of his friends refer to each other with nicknames such as “Juanita.” Ricky also emphasized that they do this in a playful manner to poke fun at one another. For instance, one of his friends whom has a reputation of sleeping around with many men in Tenochtitlan, is referred to as “Juanita la putita.” Ricky also stated that the Tenochtitlan community (including bugas) also call him by his own female nickname. He revealed that he also goes by the female nickname, Teresa. “En mi caso sí. Quien sea todo mundo me conocen como Teresa. Pero no para faltarme de respeto. Curiosamente, pasa un señor que pasa vendiendo gorditas y me dice ‘¿Teresa hora no vas a querer gorditas?’ Y me habla por la bocina, he mentioned (RH2).

Clearly, these pláticas regarding communal support demonstrate that there is indeed an epistemology other than that closet (Howard, 1999). One where elaborate sex cultures are nurtured by communities whilst still sustaining their social and political conformity where they tell stories of love and sex in their homeland (Halberstam, 2005). Alex and Trevi further evidenced this when they

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125 Juanita the whore.
126 In my case, yes. To the entire community I am known as Teresa. However, it is not with the intention to disrespect me. Curiously, there is a man who goes by selling bread and he tells me through he loudspeaker, “Teresa, are you going to want bread today?”
disclosed to me that they have a history of having multiple lovers. In addition, they convey their love for men openly and cross-dress. “Aquí la que no es puta, no disfruta. Y Aquí la que es perra…,”127 said Trevi. “…. No prospera…”128 Alex responded while laughing with Trevi (RS11).

Trevi also suggested that he feels the freedom to do what he wants in the rancho:

Mas que nada no hallo la diferencia porque aquí mi rancho si es mi rancho y me visto y ando, actuó como yo quiero, como a mi se me antoja, que no lo haría en otro rancho. Al igual aquí y allá será lo mismo. Porque aquí me he llegado de vestir de mujer, de tacones, equis cosa. Me beso en la calle con mi esposo. Me beso en el bar [en Micky’s Wings], en el antro, equis cosa. ¿Por qué no lo haría en otras partes si estoy más libre que aquí? O sea, yo para mí sería la misma cosa porque estoy acostumbrado al rancho como estoy y como soy. Y pienso que en otro rancho sería liberal todavía. Porque estoy liberado aquí en mi rancho cuanto mas allá.129 (RS9 & RS11)

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127 Here who isn’t a whore, does not enjoy. (Rhymes in Spanish)
128 And here, the one who isn’t a bitch, never prospers. (Rhymes in Spanish)
129 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. I would do the same thing in other ranches. It would be the same case anywhere. Here I have come to dress as a woman with high heels an everything. Why wouldn’t I do it in other places is 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.
Though many community members support those particular actions Alex and Trevi mentioned, there are still some that see it as vulgar and as a lack of *respeto* (IHR, R12, R13, PP4, & PP5). I will discuss why that is in the next chapter. Nonetheless, this level of community acceptance has led to a degree of reciprocal community engagement (RH3).

Secular Community Engagement (RH3)

This level of community support has led MSM to participate in community engagement efforts. In the rancho, Téo and Juan Gabriel both divulged that they get involved by being active in the committee for organizing the annual *Nuevo Fernandez fiesta*\(^{130}\) (RH3, RS4, & RS8). Alex and Trevi, also contribute by organizing the crowd sourcing efforts to fund the *fiesta* (RH3, RS4, & RS8). Unfortunately, in the case of *el rancho*, the community does not reciprocate by celebrating or recognizing their efforts to the community. This, however, is not the case in the *pueblo Tenochtitlan*.

As life-long residents, Neto, Ignacio, and Ricky both professed to me that they are involved in community engagement efforts in *Tenochtitlan* one way or another. For instance, Neto assists the owner of *Imperial* in organizing stronghold competitions against gyms in other *pueblos* (RH3, RS4, & RS8). Ignacio and Ricky are actively involved in the organization of *Tenochtitlan*’s annual fiesta. A phenomenon that stuck out to me, though, was that the community reciprocates

\(^{130}\) Nuevo Fernandez Festival
their efforts by organizing a *certamen de belleza*¹³¹ in honor of LGBTQI+ in their pueblo (RH2 & RH3)

This *certamen* features *vestidas*¹³² from *Tenochtitlan* all competing for the Miss *Belleza*¹³³ *Gay Tenochtitlan* crown. This *certamen* follows a basic beauty pageant format where participants are given the platform to showcase their talents and followed by a Q&A session (usually comedic in nature). Neto expressed that although there is no place for MSM to congregate in Tenochtitlan, this is the one event that provides a space for MSM visibility:

*Aquí hay un programa que se llama nuestra belleza Tototlan [para los Gays]. ¿Si tenemos un espacio para sentirnos apoyados? No. Pero sí tenemos ese evento.*¹³⁴ (RH2 & RH3)

Ricky expressed how the arrival of the *certamen* was a sign of growing respect for MSM. Additionally, it represented a paradigm shift towards inclusion considering that entire families show up to support:

*Siempre ha habido Gays, pero como que se empezó a respetar más ese tema de cuando se empezó hacer el certamen aquí. De allí para acá, ya la gente tiene otra visión. Ya no están ni tan burlesca ni tan criticones ni te ven como gente rara. Ya te ven como más normal. Un certamen es un show de belleza, pero con Gays vestidos. Se corona como si fuera la*
reina del pueblo. Son Gays vestidos de mujer. Hacen sus pasaderas con
trajes de baño y todo. Mucha gente que escucha, en vez de criticar esas
personas, es de admirar. Como un hombre se puede transformar en una
mujer y a becés hasta mejor que una mujer. Tienen más delicadez y más
paciencia para arreglarse que una mujer. Más porte y todo para caminar
con tacones. Porque tengo amigas y muy pendejas para caminar con
tacones y ellos las veras con sus taconzotes y caminando muy bien. Se
hace en octubre en Tenochtitlan el certamen. El más grande de la región
es el de Pozatlan. Lo más bonito de estos eventos es que son eventos
familiares. Es como de ir a ver a la reina del pueblo ¡Van familias
completas! Hay muchos que van vestidos de mujeres. Bien bonitos
espectáculos. Es un evento sano. Todo muy a gusto.135 (RH2 & RH3)

Ignacio, for the most part, spoke negatively about the event for most of our
plática (I will cover this in internalizing as resistance [RS7]). However, even he
admitted that the Tenochtitlan community (including himself) have great respect
for the certamen participants:

135 There have always been Gays, but when the topic began to be more accepted they started
doing the Gay beauty pageant. From that day forward, people began to have a different vision of
Gays. They do not laugh at you, they are less critical, nor do they see you as a weird person.
They see you as normal now. A certamen de belleza is a beauty pageant, but with drag queens.
They are crowned as they were the queen of the town. They are Gays dressed as women. They
walk down the runway with their swimsuits and everything. Most people who listen respect them.
They admire how a man can transform into a woman and sometimes even better than a woman.
They are more delicateand patient when fixing themselves up than a woman. More technique and
everything to walk with high heels. I have a ton of (girl) friends who suck at walking in high heels,
but they (the drag queens) walk just fine. We hold the certamen in October. The biggest one in
the region is in Pozatlan. The most beautiful thing of these events is that they are family oriented.
It is like going to see the queen of the town. Entire families go! There are even guys that go in
drag dressed as women. Such big shows! It is a healthy event. Everything so relaxed.
Apoya la comunidad de Tenochtitlan ese tipo de eventos [como El Certamen]. Sí, es como todo. Escucho comentarios buenos y malos, pero más que nada buenos. Todos decimos que los admiramos por animarse a hacer eso. Yo no me animaría porque me falta este… no se motivación.

Es un evento pequeño.¹³⁶ (RH2, RH3, & RS7)

Many MSM revealed to me that their community engagement extends to one of the most influential institutions in los pueblos y ranchos¹³⁷ (yet the most unlikely of them), the catholic church. (RH4)

Religious Engagement (RH4)

One of the earliest instances when I witnessed MSM involvement in church affairs in el rancho was when my nephew did his first communion. Cobain and I attended the Mass in the local church of Nuevo Fernandez. During Mass, I noticed two tall men in their early 40s getting up to take turns reading the Psalms from the Bible. “Mirá, esos dos señores son Gay y están casados. Uno es maestro y su pareja vive aquí en el rancho,”¹³⁸ Cobain whispered to me (RH2, RH4, RS4, & RS8). Téo also disclosed to me that he is more heavily involved during the winter months of December. This is because he is in charge of

¹³⁶ The Tenochtitlan community supports these type of events (the beauty pageant). It’s like everything. I hear bad and good comments about it, but mostly good ones. We all said we admire them for being brave enough to dress up. I wouldn’t do it. I would need... motivation. It’s a very small event by the way.
¹³⁷ The ranches and towns.
¹³⁸ Look, those two men are Gay and they are married. One is a teacher and his partner lives here in the ranch.
organizing his neighborhood’s posada. Every year, he collaborates with the church to crowdsource funds for bolos\textsuperscript{139}. This money goes towards candy, treats, and toys for kids (as part of the posada tradition) (RH2, RH4, RS4, & RS8).

In our platica, Ricky also suggested that he had a history of being involved with the church and has recently become involved again:

\textit{Desde bien chico, siempre he andado en grupos pastorales de jóvenes, arreglos del templo, etc. Muy bien. Siempre he sido llegado al templo. A la mejor si hubo tiempo que uno se desvalga por la rebeldía. Si me aleje un tiempo porque yo bien Gay joto y bien del templo. Hay mucha gente del templo que si se fija en eso. Yo cuando empecé en el ambiente de tomar, de salir, y así, yo pos quise retirarme. Yo dije, yo no quiero vivir mi vida y dar una cierta imagen en el templo. Yo siempre he estado en contra de las doble vidas o doble imágenes. Por eso quise retirarme. Siempre hemos tenido la costumbre de ir a misa cada 8 días para empezar la semana bien. Como que yo siento que yendo a misa como ya estas tranquilo. Desde el año pasado empecé otra vez con el habito de ir a misa.}\textsuperscript{140}(RH2, RH4, RI2, PP2, PP3, PP5, RS4, RS6, RS8, RS9, & RS11)

\textsuperscript{139} Goodie bags kids get during the posada.

\textsuperscript{140} Since I was little, I was involved in pastoral youth groups, fixing up the church, etc. All good! Maybe there is a time in one’s life that we stray away because of the rebellious stage. For a while I did step away because I was both Gay and from the church. There are people who do pay attention to that. When I started drinking and partying, I voluntarily stepped away. I said, I do not want to live my life then give a fake image in church. I have always been against double lives and double images. We have always had the habit of going to church every eight days to start the week off well. I feel tranquil going to church. Last year, I began the habit of going to church again.
Though pathways towards visibility look promising, Neto stated that secular and religious community leaders are divided on accepting global notions of queerness or Gayness that we see in cosmopolitan spaces (e.g. pride parades, etc.). He stated that a woman in the presidency fought for LGBTQIA+ to have a pride parade and festival in Tenochtitlan, but the municipal president at the time refused:

_Había una de la presidencia que sí [apoyaba]. De hecho, ya la corrieron._

_Ella sí tenía muchos planes para la comunidad [LGBTQIA+] en el pueblo._

_Qería hacer una marcha incluso, pero el presidente le dijo que no. Igual de la propuesta le dijo que el pueblo no estaba para esas cosas o sea que la gente no lo iba aceptar. Lamentablemente [el presidente] tiene toda la razón._141 (RH2, RH3, RI2, RI3, PP2, PP3, PP4, & PP5)

These type of animosities leads to frustrations among MSM who seek complete acceptance. Many MSM I spoke to went into a state of duality when talking about their homelands. This is because many of them (especially some of the younger generation of contributors), want to stay in their homelands, but also want to leave because they are not fully free to engage in behaviors typically reserved for privileged _bugas_142 (e.g. holding hands in public, kissing, etc.) (RI2) (Ruvalcaba, 2016).

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141 There was one politician in the pueblo who did support. In fact, they already fired her. She had tons of plans for the LGBTQIA+ community in Tenochtitlan. In fact, she wanted to have a march, but the president of the town said no. He said that the town was not ready for those type of events. He believe the people would not accept it. Unfortunately, he is right.

142 Synonymous with heterosexual
The Rural As Uninhabitable: “Pueblo Chico, Infierno Grande” Struggles of Men Who Have Sex With Men in the Rancho (RI)

“Pueblo Chico, Infierno Grande,” was one of the common themes among MSM. It is a *dicho* that Ricky first told me during a casual chat. To Ricky, it meant the inability to live a peaceful life without being policed by the gossip of the Tenochtitlan residents (I will discuss this further in the ancestral surveillance section [PP2]). This *dicho* carries different interpretations among MSM, but another overarching theme surrounding that *dicho* I heard was social and economic restrictions (RI1). To some MSM, this was a saying used to voice their frustrations regarding occasional exclusion and/or discrimination in the rural.

Neto revealed that the social restrictions in place that limit certain actions such as kissing, hand holding, etc. to just *bugas* is one of the main reasons he was happier when he lived in Guadalajara (Ruvalcaba, 2016):

> Es buena la experiencia [en el pueblo] en general, porque esa gente buena pues te puedes radiar como amigos, familiares, pero hay gente que notas como te mira, mal, que te miran como un delincuente o un criminal y pues tú con tu pedo tu con tu vida y es porque hay gente que no entiende porque en un pueblo no se ve tanta cosa como la cuidad así que gente bien cerrada. Pues como dicen, pueblo chico, infierno grande, pero también hay gente buena y gente que fingir ser amable pero realmente

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143 Small town, big hell.
144 Saying
son una mierda. Con el tiempo me sirvió mucho irme a Guadalajara. En una cuidad la gente es distinta. Ni te voltean a ver. Todo mundo va en su pedo y es genial.¹⁴⁵ (IHR, RH2, RI2, RI3, PP2, PP3, & P5)

Daniel stated that he sometimes feels liberated in the city compared to rural areas:

En una cuidad estas mas libre para ser Gay porque hay mas liberalismo.

Por ejemplo, en Guadalajara que se hacen las marchas Gay. En un pueblo te limitas mucho por como dice el dicho ‘pueblo chico, infierno grande.’ Te limitas porque en un pueblito tienen las costumbres que si mi hijo es Gay entra el machismo y el rechazo. En una cuidad si puede ser mas libre que un pueblo.¹⁴⁶ (RI2, RI3, PP2, & PP5)

To Ignacio, pueblo chico, infierno grande means lack of opportunities because of the systemic classism within these rural communities. Also, the fact that this community has many of their resources extracted for the imperial north since most of their products are exported to the United States (dependency

¹⁴⁵ The experience in town is good in general. Mostly because you can surround yourself with good people such as friends and family, but there are people who do look at you like a delinquent or criminal. However, one just carries on with their everyday lives. People do not understand. There are many things you do not see in a small town that you do see in the city. Some people here are really closed minded. Like they say, small town, big hell. There are people who are genuinely nice, but also those who fake it and in reality, they are shit. With time, it did help to leave to Guadalajara. In a city people are different. They do not even turn to look at you and it’s amazing.

¹⁴⁶ In the city you are freer to be Gay because there is more liberalism. For example, in Guadalajara there are more Gay marches. In a small town you limit yourself because like they say, small town, big hell. In a small town you limit yourself because of the customs that “if my son is Gay” there comes the machismo and rejection. In the city you can be freer than in a small town.
theory) (Dussel, 1993). A result of the neo-liberalism Daniel referred to, Ignacio said:

¿Contento? ¿Feliz (de vivir aquí)? No! Bueno, es cómodo y la situación me hecho estar aquí porque mi trabajo hasta aquí no me ha ido mal. Estoy con mi familia, pero si me gustaría desenvolverme en un ambiente diferente. Aquí es un lugar tranquilo y cómodo. Los que estamos aquí estamos cómodos porque es un ...Económicamente y socialmente es un pueblo que no crece mucho. Al 100 no estoy feliz y tampoco son mis planes quedarme. No me quiero ir por situaciones sociales, si no porque no me quiero quedar cómodo en un trabajado, quiero seguir subiendo pa arriba. No me gusta la rutina.¹⁴⁷ (RI1)

I did not hear this dicho in the rancho, but many MSM in Nuevo Fernandez did vent some frustrations about social restrictions Neto mentioned. One of them was Juan Gabriel who recognized that he wishes the social climate in rural towns allowed for public affection between MSM (or just between men for that matter):

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¹⁴⁷ Am I happy to live here? No. Well, it's comfortable and my situation made me stay here because of my work. Up until now, things have gone well for me. I am with my family, but I would love to develop myself in a different environment. This place is peaceful and comfortable. The ones that are here are comfortable, but it is a place that does not grow socially and economically. I am not 100% happy and my plans are not to stay. I am not planning on leaving because of social reasons. The reason I want to leave is because I want to keep growing professionally and moving up. I do not like routines.
Es lo mismo, nomas que en el rancho es más difícil. Es difícil porque la gente no te tolera y tienes familia. Yo mi pareja que tengo ahorita es la primera que he tenido aquí en México.\textsuperscript{148} (RI2, RI3, & PP5)

Téo also expressed concern on whether his community would ever accept open romantic affection between MSM:

La gente de aquí realmente no está preparada para esto. Para que el sentimiento de la gente de aquí cambie, tiene que pasar mucho tiempo.\textsuperscript{149} (RI2, RI3, PP5, & RS10)

These restrictions MSM discussed stem from a legacy of colonialism, imperialism, exclusionist nation building, and the Eurocentric rhetoric of coloniality. Many of the experiences of MSM I spoke with show how repressive moments in Mexico’s history continue to inform and guide the social restrictions and discrimination MSM face contemporarily in rural spaces. In the next chapter, I will draw parallels between those repressive ideologies and the experiences of the contributors as well as resistance tactics.

\textsuperscript{148} It’s the same thing, but in the ranch it is harder. It is difficult because the people do not tolerate you, and you have family. The partner I have now is the first I have ever had her in Mexico because of that circumstance.

\textsuperscript{149} The people here are honestly not ready for that. For the sentiment of folks to change here, much time must pass.
Re-articulation of Coloniality, Hegemonic Ideology, and Rhetoric in the Rural that Stems from Repressive Moments in Mexican History

It is clear that coloniality has taken different waves and forms throughout Mexican history. From the pláticas, I drew connections between the experiences of the contributors and this perverse logic of coloniality. I did this through breaking down sub-themes that highlight these colonial legacies in Mexican history. These colonial legacies are re-articulated in the rural. These sub-themes include 19th-20th turn of the century imposition 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 MSM (influence of medical discourse) I also noticed some identified forms of internalizations/proxy perpetuations. The most prevalent ones include (PP) ongoing ancestral collective surveillance (PP2) and father as masculinizer (PP1).

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, Daniel also faced a similar punishment when se destapo\textsuperscript{150}. (IHR, RI2, PP1, & PP5) 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 (cuidad). En Cuernavaca es una cuidad muy grande y allá no puedes divulgar ‘soy Gay.’ Cuando mi papa biológico se entero 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 o sea 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 tu 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.\textsuperscript{151} (IHR, RI2, PP1, & PP5)

\textsuperscript{150} Revealed himself as MSM

\textsuperscript{151} I am originally from Cuernavaca. In Cuernavaca, it’s a big city and there you cannot divulge that you are Gay. When my biological dad found out I was Gay, he sent me away to the military. I was in the military service for one year because my parents thought my sexuality was a disease.
This sub-theme intersects with the “pathologization of MSM: 20th century medical discourse influence” sub-theme because not only was Daniel punished, but his sexuality was also categorized as *una enfermedad*\(^{152}\), an influence of 20th century nationalist medical discourses that 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 to fit the Mexican virile imaginary. This same compulsive virile ideology was another prominent sub-theme among the traumas the contributors faced. Specifically, the immense hate for male femininity. (IHR)

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 femininity was viewed 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

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152 A sickness

They assumed that being surrounded by strong men would cure me, but that was not the case. Being Gay is not a disease and is nothing bad. I have lived a little bit of everything like when I entered the military service because I didn’t’ think I would be able to handle it (being in the military) because it was a difficult situation. Mostly because in my case, they would wake us up at 5 in the morning to shower nude with other men. Me in my situation I had to pretty much enter abstinence because of my sexuality. Event when I was crushing on someone. It was a strong experience because for a long time I had to abstain. Machismo is a topic where you think that they will hit you, tell you something, or humiliate you.
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 primo¹⁵³ Beto, for example, often gets accused of being Gay because he exhibits mannerisms that many people code as feminine. Many of the MSM I spoke to also ask me “¿*Por qué no se destapa tu primo Beto? Sí se le nota*”¹⁵⁴ (IHR & PP3) Téo revealed to me that people of Nuevo Fernandez 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.* Simply si te gusta un chico, sigues siendo el mismo,”¹⁵⁵ he stated (IHR & PP3).

Ignacio and Ricky disclosed that they tend to identify MSM by their level of masculinity or femininity. “*Los detecto cuando son así bien afeminados,*”¹⁵⁶ Ignacio said (IHR & PP3). “*Hay unos que se ven bien torciditos desde chiquitos, pero ósea hay que saber como convivir con todos,*”¹⁵⁷ Hector stated (IHR & PP3). Neto added that this 20th century logic is still prevalent because some community members see MSM as criminals, “*hay gente que notas como te mira,*”

¹⁵³ Cousin
¹⁵⁴ Why does he not reveal himself? You can tell.
¹⁵⁵ Here they give us the label that because you are “like that,” you automatically have to be a drag queen and loose and it’s not like that. The fact that you are Gay does not mean that you are like that. Simply, if you like a guy, you are still the same person.
¹⁵⁶ I detect them by how femme they are.
¹⁵⁷ There are some that are very twisted since they are little.
mal, que te miran como un delinquente o un criminal,\textsuperscript{158} Neto stated (IHR, RI3, PP2, PP3, & PP5).

Another instance that shows how prevalent this virile exclusionist ideology continues to be in the rural is an experience I had with Alex and Trevi at Mickey’s Wings Bar. This experience is perhaps one of the most important in this project because it highlights how vital it is to use \textit{Pláticas} methodologies to decipher cultural-specific meanings that go overlooked when the knowledge of the contributors is not validated as legitimate. One night, I accompanied Alex and Trevi 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 Longhorns’ logo. The logo that stood 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 (Appendix B).

At first, I assumed that this LGBTQIA+ flag mural signified that the owner, Micky, had provided a safe space for MSM to congregate. I further theorized this was perhaps a sign of full community support and solidarity. I also believed that it was for convivence considering that Alex and Trevi were regulars at Micky’s Wings. Alex and Trevi, however, clarified that neither of those theories were completely the case. This was because Mickey purposely placed the “LGBTQIA+

\textsuperscript{158} There are people who see us like criminals or delinquents.
VIP section” in the bottom of a staircase (Mickey’s was a two-story bar); away from all his other regular customers; though Mickey still wanted Alex and Trevi’s business, he preferred that they be away from the virile, buga men.

Trevi expressed sentiments of rejection in his Testimonio:

_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 rechazamiento. (sic) No fue algo impuro que yo digo que yo fuera hecho si yo fuera el dueño a mi me vale que personas se metan, que tipo de persona entre. Consumiendo no importa que tipo de persona sea (si él 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 con las manos abiertas. Pienso que nos pusieron a la orilla por cuestiones de que dirá la gente o que dirán las personas que vengan porque tengo a estos [los Gays] enfrente. [A la mejor Mike piensa] No se vayan a querer pasar [los otro 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.\textsuperscript{159} (IHR, RI3, PP2, PP3, PP4, PP5, RS1, & RS10)

Alex felt the same way as Trevi regarding the VIP section. “A mi también se me hizo mal que nos hicieron a la orilla como si no valiéramos nada, pero igual nos da la misma,”\textsuperscript{160} Alex divulged (IHR, RI3, PP2, PP3, PP4, PP5, RS1, & RS10). 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” (IHR, PP4). He also stated that the type of behavior they exhibit should not be made in public. The equating of unapologetic male femininity to vulgarity was another pattern I noticed in both Nuevo Fernandez and Tenochtitlan.

Many of my family members and Nuevo Fernandez community members referred to Trevi and Alex as vulgar because of their refusal to perform virile masculinity (IHR, PP4). One of these individuals was Juan Gabriel whom expressed that he did not approve of the way Trevi and Alex “exhibited themselves” in the way that they do (IHR, RI2, PP2, PP4, PP5, & RS7). Another

\textsuperscript{159} They made it (the space) exclusively for us. To me it was disrespectful (the space) because the threw us all the way to the corner. If he really wanted us there, he would have put the space in the center or upstairs center. However, he chose to put the space in the very corner. I see it as a form of rejection. If I were the owner of the bar, I could care less what types of people come in. Consuming alcohol is all that matters in bars. It should not matter who you are. It is like they threw us outside because they put the space way in the corner. I think they put us in the corner for reasons of “what will people think?” Specifically, “what would people think if Gays are seen front and center when customers walk in?” Perhaps Mickey is afraid that his customers who are supposedly “more men than us” will say “there are those faggots.” It was an act of rejection! I see that things are still in limbo and the people still do not understand.

\textsuperscript{160} I also felt that what they did was wrong. The threw us to the corner as if we are worth nothing. Still, I don’t give a shit.
individual who expressed his disdain for unapologetic, open male-femininity was Ignacio who revealed that although he has respect for the certamen performers in Tenochtitlan, he believes that they are extremely vulgar and need to have some level of respeto (I will discuss respeto in the resistance methods section) (IHR, RI2, PP3, PP4, RS4, & RS7).

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 MSM to stick up for themselves in Tenochtitlan (IHR, RI3, PP5, PP6, & RS11):

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 él que le importa? Después le grite, ‘¿le da envidia porque a usted ni quien se lo coja o que?’ O sea aquí les tienes que responder porque si te callas se van sobre ti. No se que tenga que pasar para que ellos entiendan. De
hecho, hay gente con familiares homosexuales y aun así son mamones.

Son mierda con nosotros. No se que tiene que pasar para que ellos entiendan.\(^{161}\) (IHR, RI3, PP5, PP6, & RS11)

Daniel also shared his experiences with these homophobic virile ideologies during his time in El Grucho and the pueblo of Ocuptlan. He suggested that the treatment he has received in Tenochtitlan was far better than the ones he received in El Grucho and Ocuptlan:

\[Es \ raro, \ si \ cambia \ mucho \ porque \ en \ el \ Grucho, \ por \ ejemplo, \ donde \ yo soy, \ no \ puedes \ decir, \ ‘Yo \ soy \ Gay’ \ porque \ la \ gente \ te \ empieza \ a discriminar. \ La \ gente \ empieza \ a señalar \ y \ decirte, \ ‘mira \ ese \ pinche \ jotito.’\]

\[Te \ dan \ un \ trato \ diferente \ como aquí te dan en comparación [a Tenochtitlan]. \ Este, una experiencia que te sirva. Estaba trabajando en Santinos [una pizzería en Ocuptlan] 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 Tenochtitlan].\(^{162}\) (IHR, RI2, RI3, PP3, PP5, PP6, & RS10)

\(^{161}\) The dudes are more like... they say things like “hey faggot,” but they do not say it with the intention to offend you, but there are others that do intend to and it hurts. There are so many hypocrites here. 30% of people here pretend they are supportive, but they throw shit at us. 20% that do accept us and see us well. 50% that yell insults like “joto” to us on the streets and make horrible fart noises on the street (Neto makes fart noise with his mouth to demonstrate in this part of the conversation). One time I went to go pick up a friend at the gas station. When he got into my car, a taxi driver yelled “Are you going to fuck now?” I mean, my friend and I were going to fuck, but what’s it to him? Afterwards, I yelled to the taxi driver, “You are just jealous because nobody wants to fuck you!” Here you have to yell back because then they come after you. I do not know what needs to happen for them to understand. In fact, there are people with homosexual family members and they are still assholes to us.

\(^{162}\) It is weird, things did change because in El Grucho, for example, where I am from, you cannot say “I am Gay” because people start to discriminate against you. The people start to signal to you
Ricky mocked the contradictions of this virile masculinity. Specifically, the homoeroticism that virile masculinity embodies (Irwin, 2003):


20th century virile homophobic discourses (IHR) were also 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.

**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,

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and say, "look at that fucking faggot." They give you a different treatment there compared to the one you get here in Tenochtitlan. I want to share an experience with you. I was working at a pizza parlor called Santino’s in Ocupitan. In came a couple, man and woman, and they started laughing at me. They said, “look at that fag.” That had never happened to me and it felt horrible. The treatment is completely different over there compared to here in Tenochtitlan.

163 Curiously, that is what I noticed. That us Gays ‘Gay out.’ However, the supposed straight men “Gay out” too. They start to grab each other’s asses and cocks and pass it off as a “game between men” when in reality we Gays do not do that kind of stuff. Maybe we do mess around verbally saying “hey girl,” but we are never grab each other.
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 being 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 enfermedad164 (IHR & PP3). 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 como afrentar esa situación._

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164 Disease
Porque siempre alguien detrás de uno que te va 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.165 (IHR, PP1, & PP5)

Neto also divulged that many community members he has come across with tend to pathologize MSM by putting them in the same category as child predators. “Nos tachan como si fuéramos violadores de niños, abusadores,”166 Neto stated (IHR). Téo also claimed that in el rancho, some community members see MSM 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 corruptar.”167 Téo said (IHR).

Like institutions policed MSM bodies in the 20th century, la gente, as Téo highlights, have their own method of policing MSM. They do this through

165 It was really scary because the pastor at my church had visions. When we went to church, I was the person who always sat in the back. I always tried to hide with the fear that the pastor would find out that I am Gay. My mom would tell me that I was sick and would take me to the pastor. In fact, she sometimes calls me and asks if “I am normal yet.” As a Gay man, one has a very suffering, painful life. A Gay person suffers more than someone who is not Gay because there comes the rejection, indirect insults, and we do suffer. One needs to learn how to confront the situation. You always have someone beside you who will help you keep moving forward. My family never thought I would receive my bachelor’s degree. Last time I talked to them I told them they should be proud I received my bachelor’s degree. I have lived a life of suffering, but simultaneously a happy one too.

166 They see us like we are pedophiles or rapists.

167 They do not respect Gay people. They are criticized and many false testimonies are raised against them. The people are not ready for those conversations and because of that, they feel affected. It is like we are the stink of the place. Like we are going to corrupt people.
chismes\textsuperscript{168} or las habladas\textsuperscript{169} (PP2). Essentially, it is an elaborate system of Ancestral Collective Surveillance.

Ongoing Ancestral Collective Surveillance (PP2)

In the “reflexión on how MSM see their identities” section, many of the contributors expressed their disdain for what people thought of them. My initial thoughts were, why did they mention la gente so much? (PP2 & RS10) Many MSM revealed to me that there is an elaborate system of surveillance in their pueblos and ranchos (PP2). This happens because there is a smaller population; meaning that there is less room for anonymity. In the case of Nuevo Fernandez, Tenochtitlan, and La Milpilla, it also has to do with familial ties and reputation. Meaning that your actions ultimately affect your family’s reputation as well.

Nonetheless, this system of ancestral surveillance is a means of policing MSM bodies.

Noriega agrees that men’s bodies are constantly under surveillance to ensure men perform virile masculinity (Noriega, 2014). One particular example is a personal experience of mine on a night I visited Trevi’s house. Trevi had invited Alex and me to a bonfire get-together in front of his house. Running around the bonfire was Trevi’s nephew, Cesar. Trevi began to encourage Cesar to dance like a belly dancer as a joke. Everyone, including Trevi’s mom Nicaela (also

\textsuperscript{168} Gossip
\textsuperscript{169} The talks.
Cesar’s grandma), laughed and clapped; encouraging his performance. There was also an instance during that night where Cesar stared at me and twinkled his eyes. Nicaela allowed and encouraged him by telling him, “¿Y esos ojitos? ¿Lo vas a soñar mijo?” Once he caught his breath, he stood up again, went up to Alex and jokingly said, “hola mamis” (one of Trevi’s favorite salutations when saluting fellow MSM).

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” (RI2, PP4, PP5). It turned out that another one of Cesar’s uncles had been watching us from two houses down (PP1, PP2, & PP5). 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 begins at a young age (Noriega, 2014). One detail that stuck out, though, was that Nicaela defended, encouraged, nurtured, and defended Cesar. Trevi stated that this was because his mom is extremely supportive and compassionate (RH1).

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. Trevi, Alex, Cobain, Téo, and my prima Liz all told me stories of how mayates sometimes film MSM giving them oral sex.

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170 What are those eyes? Are you going to dream of him?
171 Hey mums.
172 *Mayate is a pre-Gay category that persists on the margins of Gay culture, which I insist on calling hegemonic because of its central, legitimizing position. Mayate is another name for the
(without *mayates* showing their own faces/identities) (RI2, RI3, PP2, & PP5).

These videos are then circulated across *Nuevo Fernandez* via SMS such as Facebook and WhatsApp as a way to punish MSM by shaming them publicly.

Trevi concurred that ongoing ancestral surveillance through SMS is prevalent in *Nuevo Fernandez*. “Las personas más comunicativas del rancho corren la voz o con el Face o el WhatsApp. Esos de los mitotes si esta en el rancho que si se corren las cosas rápido. Que dices tu apenas de echaste un pedo pa’ cuando aquel guey ya lo huelo hasta la esquina,” he stated (PP2). Juan Gabriel agreed when he told me that “se corre la voz” (PP2) Neto and Ignacio concurred that ancestral surveillance also exists in *Tenochtitlan*. “La gente es bien mitotera aquí,” Neto said (PP2, RS10). “Tenochtitlan es un pueblo mitotero completamente,” Ignacio divulged (PP2).

I also remember one instance when Daniel and I traveled to *Atonlicho*, another nearby pueblo three times the size of *Tenochtitlan*. 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

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active member in the traditional homoerotic relationship, where the *joto* is the passive homosexual. The *mayate* does not identify as homosexual and therefore cannot be defined as Gay. He has sexual relations with women and justifies his sexual relations with jotos by asking them for favors or money in exchange for sex.” (Ruvalcaba, 2016)

173 The most communicative people in the ranch carry the voice. They also gossip through WhatsApp or Facebook. That of gossip is a thing in the ranch and gossip does travel fast. I guess you can put it this way, you have just farted when suddenly the guy in the corner already smelled it.

174 The voice travels.

175 The people are very gossipy here.

176 Tenochtitlan is a gossip town completely.
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 (PP2). Though Atonilcho 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 Fernandez 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\textsuperscript{177} in Atonilcho. When I returned, my mamá Teresa and my mom asked me “How was Atonilcho?” Shocked, I wondered how they managed to find out I had left Nuevo Fernandez 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\textsuperscript{178} Ruben whom told everyone in my family.

Father as Masculinizer (PP1)

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

\textsuperscript{177} Hook up
\textsuperscript{178} Uncle
body with beatings, cold showers, and verbal abuse as means 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 (Noreiga, 2014).

One example of how this occurs in the rancho is the story of Miguelito I mentioned previously. In an effort to masculinize him, his father forced him to have girlfriends. He went as far as arranging a marriage for him. Tragically, his father’s verbal abuse led to his eventual suicide because of his father’s obsession to make him virile (IHR, PP1, & PP5).

Ricky stated that although his family now accepts him, at one time his father was extremely 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 tuvieras 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 haz hecho.’¹⁷⁹ (IHR, PP1, PP5, & RS11)

¹⁷⁹ One day we had a fight and he told me. Well, I will never forget that what he told my friend Miguel. He told Miguel “If I had a faggot son, I would hang him from a branch, the tallest branch! I then came outside and told him, “and why have you not hung me if you know what you have?” Some say I have the same attitude as him. “The thing is that we are the same. That is why you have not done it.”
Clearly, hegemonic rhetoric that derives from the logic of colonality continues to justify the marginalization of MSM in the rural. MSM, however, 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, MSM have found ways to resist and survive at the face of colonial power. Though the logic of colonality continues to survive, so have the resistance tactics MSM have implemented for centuries.

Resistance Strategies Against Hegemonic Rhetoric (RS)

Since my initial encounter with Trevi and Alex back in 2017, I wondered how MSM co-existed, resisted, or navigated in rural settings. This led me to ask my next research question: (RQ1) How do the identities of MSM co-exist or navigate despite the repressive ideologies and the dehumanizing and punishing acts that are parallel to Mexican historical moments such as the colonial period, 19th century, and post-revolution? 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 (RS) include resistance through enclaves (RS1); resistance through coded language (RS2); comradery as a form of resistance (RS3); respeto, religious & social capital (RS4); Performing Virility (RS5); Subversive
Complicity (RS6); Resistance through internalizing (RS7); Negotiation (RS8); Disidentification (RS9); Homogenizing oppression by personification (RS10); and Overt defiance (RS11).

Resistance Through Enclaves (RS1)

Gruzinski (2003), stated that many MSM in the 17th century colonial period were able to navigate because of the organization of enclaves. The tradition of MSM standing in solidarity despite the repressive societal norms has been a resistance method that has transcended the sands of time. Contemporarily, many of the MSM 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 MSM 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 que también la gente viera porque aquí en_
Tenochtitlan nunca se había visto antes de eso que salieran libremente siendo Gay vistiéndote distintos a los demás.\(^{180}\) (RS1 & RS10)

Ricky agrees that visibility through enclaves is one of the reasons MSM are more widely accepted in Tenochtitlan contemporarily. “Ya es normal [ser Gay] aquí en Tenochtitlan. 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,\(^{181}\)” Ricky said (RH2 & RS1).

Alex and Trevi also organized enclaves in el rancho at Mickey’s Wings. While I was in Nuevo Fernandez, we would gather almost every weekend. Trevi, who is the more social one out of the two, invited MSM from different ranchos and pueblos from various municipalities in rural Southern Mexico. Though Mickey intended to hide away MSM underneath the staircase to preserve the virility in his business (while hypocritically still wanting the business of Alex and Trevi), Alex and Trevi always made sure that “VIP section” was always packed (RS1). Similar to the MSM enclaves of the 17\(^{th}\) century, contemporary MSM enclaves also share coded language.

\(^{180}\) When I was in my teenage years, I would hang out with a group of Gays. It was big because there was 16 of us. It was awesome because we started to give value to one another because there was many of us. From there we started to support on another and felt like we were not alone. We used to hang out in a corner. It was awesome, but the group disbanded. I left to Guadalajara and there began to be problems between them. Still, that was a mark in the history of Tenochtitlan because never before had open, Gays been so visible with attire different from the regular town folks.

\(^{181}\) It is normal to be Gay in Tenochtitlan now. The topic of being Gay was already normal. Before 13 of us would hang out and were visible from block to block.
Resistance Through Coded Language (RS2)

Many enclaves in the 17th century implemented coded language that often-involved double meanings (Gruzinski, 2003; Hernandez-Victoria, 2018). This facilitated the way MSM could find and identify one another. The legacy of coded language as a resistance method has carried over into contemporary times. Téo 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,” he stated (RS2). These formas that Téo discusses are the double meanings in words. One example he used was “caís muy bien” or “te estimo mucho.” Through the untrained ear, these may sound like common exchanges between friends, but the way they are disseminated can help MSM identify one another.

Macias-Gonzalez (2012) argued that many MSM during the Porfiriato era sometimes found one another through “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 Tenochtitlan, La Milpa, and Nuevo Fernandez, this phenomenon is translated into echando los ojos or la mirada. I first heard of la mirada from Cobain when he told me that a girl “le

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182 You can tell someone is Gay by the ways they express themselves and the type of comments they make.
183 ways
184 I like you.
185 I appreciate you.
186 Making eyes
187 The look
estaba echando los ojos/la mirada.” To the untrained eye, one might believe that la mirada is just the person imagining things. This is exactly 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 other MSM in El Grucho (where it was less acceptable to identify as Gay) with la mirada:

Antes yo soy de los que iba 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, la cruce de miradas. Por ejemplo, tu te le quedas mirando a una persona no se el instinto o bueno para mi 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 tu te sientas a un lado y el otro esta 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.188 (RS2)

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188Before I was one of those that would go to la plaza. If someone crossed eyes with mine, that is how I was able to tell. That is how someone says, “I like you” and you start to have a thing. That is the key, the crossing of looks. For example, you start looking at someone, I don’t know, I guess you can say it is instinct. My instinct tells me that one is Gay or has qualities that makes me believe they are Gay. You start looking at them and if they respond, that is how you know. That is, if there is chemistry. If there is chemistry, you just get to know each other. In el grucho there is...
Alex 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,” Alex said (RS2). Jack-Watson also confirmed the existence of *la mirada*, “Pues es que con los que yo ya estado ya no me dicen nada [cuando nos vemos]. Nomas con la mirada,” he disclosed (RS2). “cómo es esa mirada?” I asked. “Pues como te explico, más o menos así,” he said while winking his eye. Though there are those who resist through coded language, other MSM choose to subvert through the framework of friendship.

**Comradery as A Form of Resistance (RS3)**

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 MSM’s accessibility to sex in secret (Macias-Gonzalez, 2012). This homosocial bonding, however, was reframed

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a ton of that. If you go to the town square, there is a tremendous amount of people. If you sit somewhere across from the guy you are interested in, and you start looking at him flirtatiously, if he responds, that is key that he is Gay. Social media makes it easier, though.

189 I would get close to that person and if that person responded I would go for it. We would get to know each other and try it out.

190 I did not even have to tell the guys I have been with verbally to have sex. Just with the look I was able to tell them.

191 How is the look?

192 How do I explain it, something like this.
with homophobic limits in the 20th century in the aftermath of 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, MSM 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 MSM relationships in the rural are sheltered through the confines of friendship and channeled through the institution of friendship (Noreiga, 2014). Five of the participants in this project shared that they have to pass off their relationships as friendships around their community members. Téo, 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 (RS3 & RS6).

He also stated that although there are very few places for MSM to congregate, friendships with bugas¹⁹³ help create those spaces because they lower suspicions (RS3 & RS6).

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

¹⁹³ Heterosexuals
Ignacio agreed when he stated that he meets MSM 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,” he revealed (RS2 & RS6). 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. Trevi, Alex, Neto, Ricky, and Daniel, however, 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 Trevi kiss, hold hands, and hug their respective sexual and romantic partners without paying mind to what la gente 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 (RS4)

19th century masculinity entailed being un *hombre de bien* (Irwin, 2003).

This attribute carried over into the 20th century with “honorable” and “moral”

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194 The relationship has not been open. In part yes and partially no. You see, it is open around our social circles that we share. However, around strangers we introduce ourselves as friends. There is no place for Gays to congregate, but they go out with their Gay and non-Gay friends.  
195 I have had stable relationship. Coincidently, they have been through friendships.  
196 Man of good.
serving as part of 20th century 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”, MSM 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 to the rules that govern manliness in the spaces they occupy). *Respeto* is a form of social distinction between *joto* and “respected” MSM. It is also a social contract between MSM and their local rural communities. Those who do not follow this social contract are seen as not worthy 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 MSM enjoy being free of stigma, but still fear violence.

Noriega further argues that there is a type of reverse discourse in the rural where MSM who have gained respect have mastered homosocial dynamics and their contradictions. Those who “have gained respect” know how the homophobic dynamics work. They know how to pass homophobic violence because of masculine identity and 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

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197 Respect
harmless ways (e.g. *amor entre amigos*\(^{198}\), *compadres*\(^{199}\), etc.). MSM 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. Woman are at the bottom of the ladder one rung above the deviants” (p. 40). Thus, the social contract Noriega talks about is between the former, MSM, and the latter the aforementioned people in power.

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 Alex that took place in front of Juan Gabriel’s store. A day before our *plática*, Alex “fooled around” with an older man who looked visibly intoxicated. Alex grabbed the man’s genitals whilst the man and his friends

\(^{198}\) Love between friends.  
\(^{199}\) Comrades
laughed and joked at the fact that he dared to grab him in that manner (I will discuss this scenario in detail in the negotiation sub-theme). 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 ahora 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 Alex). 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.*

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200 They are the same ducks, just a tad different. Before, there was more respect, much more respect. With parents, people, and especially with partners. In our time, we knew how to respect. Now, not so much. There are many (Gays) who go public. Why do you need to go public? Why do you need more publicity than you already have? What are you a celebrity (referring to Alex)? There have been many great Gay men in Mexico like Juan Gabriel. They knew how to persevere! They were not dying in the streets because they had something to die on. They made a living. I make a living with my store. I have my business and a house. The people here love me and respect me because I treat them with kindness. If a kid or any other person comes to my place of business, I treat them with much respect. In my place of business there must be much respect. Respect for one’s self and respect for the other.
He continued by expressing disdain, yet concern for Alex’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 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 (Alex) 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.201 (RS4)

Clearly, Alex breaking the unspoken social contract of respeto placed him in the category of vulgar and ultimately stigmatized by fellow MSM Juan Gabriel (and Nuevo Fernandez community members who witnessed this event and many others Alex 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:

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201 During my time in the U.S., I was a waiter, bartender, and even a drag queen, but I always did my duties with much respect. Respect to those who surround me. Respect for my bosses, family, etc. With much respect! I am not roaming the streets showing my balls to anyone. Like the other day when that kid was grabbing that one guy’s balls. That is wrong. I see it as wrong because it took place in front of a public establishment. Alex should learn how to respect himself first. If he is like that, that is his problem, but he has to learn how to respect himself. We have to avoid transmitting diseases, always with precaution, we have to wear condoms.
Mis valores son respetarme a mi 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 esta mal. Ese [Alex] es un niño muy vulgar bien corriente. Yo de viejito como estoy, agarro más [hombres] que él. Ellos [Alex y Trevi] que están tiernitos y yo viejito, pero hasta allí yo si respeto. Yo nunca ando buscando 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 que dirán. si no por al respeto a si mismo.202

Alex, who is completely 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 mas respeto si no con mi papá y mi mamá. Ya en la calle me da igual me desato

202 My values are to respect myself and everyone else because a vulgar person is a parasite. A Gay, a homosexual, who is going from here and there is not good. Like that dumbass who was doing those things in front of you, that is not right. That Alex is a vulgar kid and super ghetto. As old as I am, I get more men than he does. Alex and Trevi are young and I am old, but I respect. I am never looking for guys on the street. I am also not holding people’s hands on the street; I do not tolerate that. It is just not about being homosexual, you also have to learn how to get along with people. You see that in my business there is always people. I am not going to be hitting on my customers. Why? There is a time and place to do that, but me to hit on someone here, no. Not because of what people would say, but because of respect to one’s self.
como todá una puta colombiana y pues sí. Alex stated (RS4 & RS11). Neto, who for the most part is unapologetic, expressed that he would not be so intimate with partners in front of the children of Tenochtitlan. “A mi 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,” Neto said (RS4 & RS11). 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 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 esta 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, tu 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,

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203 At home I try to hold more respect for my mom and dad. In the street I do not really give a shit. I untie myself like a Columbian whore.

204 I do not give a shit. I have had partners and have held their hands in the streets. I would give them kisses too. However, I would make sure there was no kids.
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 andar joteando y eso verdad. Ya si uno esta con sus amigos, jotear y vale madre. Ya hasta los amigos jotean.205 (RI2, RS4, & RS8)

Noreiga postulated that MSM who refuse to participate in this respeto social contract end up stigmatized and socially burned (Noriega, 2014). These views are heavily influenced by the pathologizing nature of 20th century rhetoric. 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 quemarse206 and reputaciones.207 If MSM refuse to follow

205 Look, how we talked the other day. The respect that you get is the one that you receive I have never been one of the problematic people. I have never liked getting into problems nor disrespecting people. I know when and where to “Gay out.” One knows who the places and the people one can Gay out around. Obviously, one will not be “Gaying out” in front of family. If you are with friends, you can Gay out all you want. The principal thing is respect. I have learned how to respect myself. I know how to respect! In whatever family that has a Gay son or lesbian daughter, the primary thing is for them to learn how to respect from home. Like they say, a son/daughter is like a well-made soup, they are cooked at home. If they teach to respect at home, you will know how to respect. The environment in which you are raised matters too. For example, I always with my brother and his friends. His friends knew what I was and I always respected them. I would never try to hit on them, take advantage of situations, spread rumors that I am romantically involved with then, nor touch their privates. We would go out as friends with much respect. I know where to Gay out and where I should not. I know what types of people I can Gay out around. With family one would not Gay out, but around (Gay) friends it is fair game.
206 Social burning
207 Reputations
respeto, they are considered by community members to be quemados. Simultaneously, their reputación is quemado 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 also run the risk of being socially burned through association.

I experienced this phenomenon of quemarse by association firsthand. One evening, I was having dinner with Alex and Trevi at the annual fiesta of Nuevo Fernandez. Suddenly, my mom and my tía Ruka stormed by and asked me to come with them. When I refused, they became so obsessed with getting me away from Trevi and Alex, that they nearly dragged me out of my chair. I told Alex and Trevi I would return after I had a talk with them. “¿Qué fachas son esas Luis!? ¿No te da vergüenza? 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 andar hablando la gente de ti y de nosotros [la familia]!” my tía Ruka said bitterly. “Ustedes son un par de colonizadas,” I said angrily as I stormed off in tears (RI2, RI3, PP1, PP2, PP3, PP4, PP5, & RS11). I later found

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208 Socially burned
209 Reputation
210 Socially burn
211 What ridiculousness is that Luis?! Have you no shame?
212 You should not be hanging out with those runts. Understand that they are already socially burned. Their reputations are already stained. If you keep talking to them, the people will start talking about you and us our family.
213 You two are a pair of colonizers.
out 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 Alex and Trevi). That night, I experienced a taste of the stigmatization Alex and Trevi experience in their daily lives.

Téo stated that before he met his partner, he refrained from sleeping with men in Nuevo Fernandez to avoid quemarse. “Experiencias [sexuales] aquí no he tenido ninguna, nomás con mi pareja en nuestro noviazgo, pero afuera nada que ver,” Téo stated (PP2 & RS9). This is because many mayates often expose MSM by filming them without their consent (without exposing themselves). SMS messenger apps has increased the dangers of MSM to be harassed and quemarse because the videos circulate among the Nuevo Fernandez community (RI2, RI3, PP2, PP5, PP6, & RS8). This typically happens when MSM perform oral sex on those filming them. Countless times, I received warnings from cousins to avoid hooking up with mayates from Nuevo Fernandez. Alex and Trevi, who typically do not pay mind to any kind of restrictions, but said they prefer to keep their hookups in Nuevo Refugio to a minimum. “En un rancho es más vulgar la gente mas chantajista y pos en un pueblo se ve de todo,” Said Trevi. “y más estúpida la gente [en un ranchito],” Alex added (RI2, RI3, PP2, PP5, & PP6).

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214 I have never had sexual experiences here. Just the ones with my current boyfriend.
215 In a ranch the people are more vulgar and blackmailers. In larger towns you can see more things.
216 (some) people are more stupid here too.
Juan Gabriel divulged that he refrains from associating himself with MSM quemados or irrespetuosos\(^{217}\) as a way 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,\(^{218}\) he stated (PP2, RS4, RS7, & RS8).

Many MSM 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,\(^{219}\)” Ignacio said (RS4). Working hard was one of the ways Ignacio has earned respeto. Of course, hard work is one of the characteristics of 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century virile masculinity (IHR). Many MSM choose to perform more than one attribute of virility as a way to earn respeto and to ultimately resist.

Performing Virility (RS5)

As a means to gain respeto while simultaneously resisting, MSM have also had (to a degree) perform attributes of 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century virility (IHR, RS4, & RS5). One of those tropes has been working class masculinity. Ignacio, for instance, likes to highlight his hard work as a way to justify that he fits one of the

\(^{217}\) Disrespectful
\(^{218}\) I do not associate myself with homosexuals. I only have 2 homosexual friends. Some of the La Mata and other from Tazula. However, the ones I do hang out with are of category and badasses.
\(^{219}\) Well, many people from town know my preferences and I have gained respect with my work and how I have handled my condition.
attributes of the virility. Juan Gabriel also performs virility by highlighting his hard work:

\[Yo siempre me he gustado ser número uno en los trabajos. No hay que comparar los trabajos con la putería. Que te ganes el dinero con el lomo con el trabajo no con mitotes. Si tengo mis patrones de Estados Unidos que me traen mis regalitos y dinerito ‘tenga mi Gabrielsito para tus perfumes, etc.,’ pero yo siempre para cosechar.\]^{220}(RS4 & RS5)

Téo and Hector are also well respected by their respective communities for their hard work and community engagement. For instance, Ricky works cutting fruits for his family’s fruit stand business despite his disability (RH3, RS4, & RS5). Téo is also well liked and respected because he works two jobs and still has time for organizing community engagement activities (RH3, RS4, & RS5).

Though Alex and Trevi work hard, community members do not see them as virile or with respeto. This is because they like to cross-dress in public, involve themselves in scandals, and (therefore) have reputaciones quemadas. However, Alex and Trevi pay no mind because they prefer to disidentify (I will discuss disidentification in the last sub-theme) (IHR, RI2, RI3, PP2, PP3, PP4, PP5, RS9, & RS11).

Similar to Noriega’s (2014) participant Miguel who wore the traditional cowboy attire as part of his virile performance, Ignacio also emphasized his attire

\[^{220}I have always loved to be number one at work. We cannot compare work with the fuckery. You must earn your money with hard work and not gossip. My old bosses from the United States bring me money, gifts, and perfumes (because of my hard work). I am always there to harvest (my rewards).\]
and discreetness serves part of his performance of hombre\textsuperscript{221} virile. He also mentioned that he only dates other men who prefer to be discrete:

\begin{quote}
Yo no soy la persona más discreta o masculina del mundo, pero sí estoy en la idea de describirme como femenino este respeto a las personas que lo hacen. Es un gusto pues. Yo soy más, me inclino más hacia no modismos, si no vestirme tal y como soy, hombre. Sí me gusta, … bueno nunca me he dado por maquillarme. Piens que depende del gusto más que nada. Al fin de cuentas, yo respeto ese tipo, esas situaciones.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Siempre he dejado el plan no relacionar con una pareja. O sea no los discrimino, pero no se como que aun si en algunas partes de la sociedad todavía les cuesta trabajo aceptarnos y chavos que cuestan aceptarse.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Siento como que tampoco o menos [nos/los aceptaran] si se visten.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Quizás digan [los mayates y Gays tapados] ‘es por culpa de ellos [que no nos aceptan] porque son afeminados. Es culpa de ellos que son afeminados’ Es un gusto y hasta allí no nos culpo o nada. Mi preferencia son hombres mas discretos.\textsuperscript{222}(RS5, RS6, & RS7)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{221} Man

\textsuperscript{222} I am not the most discrete or masculine person in the world, but I do have the idea of describing myself as feminine like in regard to other people who do it. It is a preference. I try not to cling onto idioms and try to dress like what I am, a man. I like to (be feminine) … but I have never wanted to put makeup on. It all depends on people’s preferences honestly. In the end, I respect those types of things and situations. I have, however tried not to tie that with having partners. I do not discriminate against them (femme guys), but I feel like in certain parts of society they still have trouble accepting them/us and themselves. I feel like they would accept them/us less if they start cross dressing. Maybe covered up Gays or mayates would say “It is their fault that they do not accept us because they are femme. It is their fault they are femme.” It is a preference and I do not blame them. My preference are men who prefer to be more discrete.
Even though Ignacio tries his hardest to pass as virile, it is nearly impossible to mask his effeminacy; something he even admits. Ignacio further noted that many of his friends perform virility by becoming *mayates*. That is, marrying women and continue to have sexual encounters with men in secret. He also notes that these friends often mask their encounters in the form of comradery:

*Tengo amigos que se han casado y son homosexuales. Se han casado queriendo formar una familia. Yo siempre digo, la felicidad no está en una pareja heterosexual. La felicidad está donde tú la encuentras. Si eres feliz soltero, adelante. Si tú eres feliz casado, adelante. El matrimonio se hizo pa todos. Todo depende de como lo vemos. No ligo por algo jaja.*

(RS5)

Neto stated that he often fights virility by turning its logic on itself. That is, he performs virility by turning to verbal and physical violence to defend himself. It was only then that the violence against him began to subside:

*De allí (cuando me fui a GDL) yo creo que fue que cambió todo y me valía madre. De allí dije a la verga quien me diga o algo de allí empecé a responderles o incluso una vez me peleé porque estaba bien borracho. Me quedé con el que no me dejaré. Si me fue mal físicamente, pero siento que puse un alto como de allí a la verga. Incluso sí cambiaron las...

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I have homosexual friends who have married. They got married trying to form a family. I told them that happiness is not being a heterosexual relationship. Happiness is where you find it. If you are happy single, go for it. If you are free married, go for it. Marriage was made for everyone. It all depends how we see it. I do not hook up for nothing jaja.
cosas. Siento que [después de la pelea] se bajaron muchos de esos gritos de joto y esas cosas por la calle. Es feo que tiene que ver agresiones físicas para que entiendan. Pero parece que así está la gente de aquí; es lo que conocen.224(RI2, RI3, PP2, PP5, PP6, RS5, RS6, RS7, & RS11)

Neto’s actions could also be coded as subversive complicity, another form of MSM resistance.

Subversive Complicity (RS6)

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 MSM he knew from previous generations developed a *joteria ranchera*225 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,

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224 From the time I left for Guadalajara, that is when things started to change, and I began to not give a crap anymore. From there, I said fuck it. Whoever tells me something, I will respond back. One time, I even got into a fist fight when I was drunk. I started to have a “I will not back down” attitude. It did not end well physically, but from then on, I put a stop to that shit. Things did change. I feel like after the fight, the insults like “faggot” and things like that in the streets began to dwindle. It is horrible that there has to be physical aggressions for them to understand. It seems like that is how people are here; that is all they know.

225 Ranch Gay identity
Ignacio suggested that he engages in subversive complicity because he performs the image the community has of him. He stated that he comes from a recognized family in the pueblo who is well respected, well recognized, and holds “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 estable. 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 pa tu privacidad hay lugares. Una persona que esta 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 estaría con mi familia no haría eso con mi familia porque tampoco mi familia lo hace [intimidad pública]. Y si alguien así eso yo respeto.*

There are many instances where I was uncomfortable talking to Ignacio because of some of the derogatory, classist comments he would make towards

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226 The Gays from back then would dress like anyone else. They did it to follow the norm because during the week they would wear shirts like the ones construction workers wear, but on the weekends there were some people who would even dress like women. It was something weird, but we should respect that right? That is what I am asking about criticizing.

227 If I have a boyfriend, I do not hold his hand in public
working class *Tenochtitlan* community members (RS7). However, I later recognized that he did this as a way of resistance through internalization (RS7).

**Resistance Through Internalization (RS7)**

As a middle-class resident of Tenochtitlan, Ignacio was the most privileged of the contributors. In our *pláticas*, he often made comments entangled with classism, racism, and femmephobia. It is clear that he received an education that was Eurocentric, nationalist, and parallel to the rhetoric of the *gente decente*228 perpetuated in the 19th century (IHR). In one of our *pláticas*, Ignacio suggested that having more education (code word for eurocentrism) is the key to social acceptance for MSM:

> *No, es porque te desenvuelvas en un ambiente como con mas preparación, pero si eh al tener una educación diferente o un grado de educación mas alta, como que si abre muchos caminos. La manera de pensar de las personas [que estudiaron] es mas abierta. Pienso que una persona que se desenvuelve en entorno social con una educación mas básica, les toca mas trabajo aceptar. He tendido experiencias con comunidades que son de ranchitos como aquí y que les cuesta trabajo abrirse y que de hecho no se han abierto a sus familiares. Entonces, como la manera de ver las cosas y el entorno donde se desarrollan en sus trabajos lo vivían al diario pues. Pues no tuve ningún problema. Yo no*

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228 Decent people
era de amigos de aquí. Mis amigos son de la escuela o así. Volvemos a lo mismo, el grado académico que tienen. En mi caso, somos una familia muy conocida aquí en Tenochtitlan y si empiezan como el hijo del fulanito es (habla mierda). Pero igual mis papas nunca tomaron esos comentarios en cuenta.229 (RI13, PP2, PP5, PP6, RS7)

Ignacio’s classist remarks were not fully true; many of the MSM I spoke to have supportive families despite not have access to higher education. For instance, Trevi’s mom is extremely supportive of him (RH1). Neto, Téo, Ricky, and Alex also have supportive parents. Still, Ignacio uses his internalization, privilege, educational, and financial status as method of resistance against bugs who attempt to discriminate against him (RS7). Essentially, he uses his privilege as a weapon to defend himself from other forms of oppression such as machismo, homophobia, femmephobia, and other isms that lurk in the rural (RS7). I noticed this same weapon was also used by Juan Gabriel when he re-signified his internalization of Paz’s Chingador/Chingado230 dichotomy as a weapon to resist bugs, mayates, and MSM who attempt to take advantage of him:

229 No, it is because you grow up in an environment with more preparation, but they must have a higher. level of education, you open more doors. The way people who are educated see the world is more open. I feel like those who have less education have a harder time accepting. I have had experiences with communities from little ranches like this one that have had trouble opening up and in fact have not opened up to their families. Then, the way of looking at things in which were influences by their work environments are just things they live. I did not have a problem. I never had friends here. My friends are from school (university). We return to the same topic, the level of education they have. In my case, my family is very well known, but there are people who talk trash. However, because my parents are educated, they do not pay mind to that.

230 Fucker/Fucked one
Por si mi familia no tolera que yo tenga pareja, pues yo tengo pareja. Gracias a Dios yo tengo mi pareja yo nunca he estado solo. A mis sesenta algo años de vida mi ex tiene 27 años de vida y es maestro tiene su muy buen billete y a mi ningún pelado que sea hombre me ha estafado lo poquito que dios me ha dado. Me los he madreado. Yo nací pa fregar no para que me chinguen. Sabes el único pecado que yo reconozco? Es ser pendejo. Que otra persona te chingue. Como que ayúdame a conseguir equis persona, No. Si ellos (los bugas) quieren conseguir a una mujer que ellos lo hagan. Chinga su madre. Así es hijo.231 (RS5 & RS7)

When this weapon of internalization and privilege can become a threat is when it is utilized against folks who are even more marginalized than the ones holding it. Paulo Freire (1968) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* calls these individuals “sub-oppressors.” He stated that in their quest for liberation, some oppressed folks replicate the very hegemonic ideologies imposed onto them: “but almost always, during the initial stage of the struggle, the oppressed, instead of striving for liberation, tend themselves to become oppressors, or ‘sub-oppressors.’” The very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the

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231 If my family does not accept that I have a partner, I will not have a partner. Thank God I have a partner and I have never been alone. At my sixty something years of age, my ex is 27 years old and is a teacher and has tons of money and no moron who is a man has ever scammed out of me the little that God gave me. I have beat the shit out of them. I was born to fight and not to be fucked with. You know the only sin that I recognize? It is to be a dumbass. A dumbass that allows people to fuck with you. Like people who ask you to help you get with a woman. No. If straight men want to go after a woman, they can do it themselves. Fuck them. That’s right son.
contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they are shaped” (Freire, 1968, p. 24).

Ignacio sometimes turned into a sub-oppressor when he targeted subaltern MSM and working class MSM; specifically, when he critiqued the annual certamen as having a “lack of professionalism.” His critiques were also virile-centric because he referred to the performance of the drag queens as “vulgar:"

Ala mejor soy muy sangrón, pero pienso que les falta mucha preparación, profesionalismo, pero por algo se empieza. Los admiro porque no es fácil destaparse ante una comunidad como Tenochtitlan. Para hacerte más franco [el certamen] cay en vulgaridad. Te digo, yo no soy muy fan de las personas que se visten, travestis. Yo fui a ese evento hace 5 años y entre y salí como en unos 5 minutos. Era muy obsceno y los chavos bien lanzados. Ni les importa conocerte nomas están, así como ven a alguien y se le echan encima. Les falta presupuesto y profesionalismo preparación conocimiento. Y pues los que participan están representando a una comunidad. Creo que sí, por ejemplo, las mujeres defienden la belleza, en un certamen de belleza, nosotros con humildad debemos de elegir lo mejor de la comunidad. A las personas que lo organizan les falta preparación. A mi en lo personal no me gustaría que me representara una de las personas [del certamen]. ¿Que tipo de preparación? Primero que nada, mmm educación. Les hacen preguntas que ni al caso, nada de
cultura personal. Yo para que me represente alguien que se el mejor o igual que yo. Se supone que están [los participantes] representando a una comunidad y imagínate si dicen ‘¿así es esa persona de esa comunidad, como serán los demás?’ Pero igual ante todo respeto. Si he ido a eventos así en otros pueblos y entiendo que esos pueblos tienen mejor preparación y experiencia.\(^{232}\) (IHR, RI2, PP3, PP4, RS4, RS5, & RS7)

Though not middle class, Juan Gabriel also made classist comments against Alex and Trevi. These comments were mostly fueled by resentment because Trevi’s family owes Juan Gabriel thousands of pesos. Simultaneously, he showed concerned for those who prostitute themselves for money and get murdered:

_Hay personas como nosotros que les vale madre todo viven una vida bien arrastrada. Te voy a decir una cosa. Yo jótitos he mirado, pero jótitos corrientes. Hay que tener algo [de dinero] para el día que te vayas a

\(^{232}\) Maybe I am being mean, but I think that they (the folks who organize beauty pageant) need much preparation, professionalism, but we all have to start somewhere. I admire them because it is not easy to reveal themselves like that to a town like Tenochtitlan. To be perfectly honest, the beauty pageant is vulgar to me. I am telling you, I am not a fan of people who dress up, travesties. I went to that event 5 years ago and I went in and out in like 5 minutes. It was very obscene, and the guys threw themselves at you. The guys there did not even care to get to know you. They just see someone and go after them. They need professionalism, professionalism, and knowledge. The ones who are participating (the drag queens) need to understand that they are representing a community. For example, women define the beauty. In a beauty pageant, we must choose with humility, the best of the community. The people who organize the beauty pageant need preparation. In my personal opinion, I would not like someone from the beauty pageant to represent me. What type of preparation do they need? First and foremost, they need education. They ask the participants questions that have nothing to do with culture or personal experiences. Someone who represents me has to be the best or the same as me. It is implied that the participants must represent a community. Imagine if they say (about the Tenochtitlan community) “If that person from that community is like that, how are the rest of them?” Still, much respect. I have been to events like this in other towns and I can attest that those towns have more preparation and experience.
petatear. Siempre nunca debes de ser los de abajo. Hay muchachos que pobrecitos, dan lastima. Dan lastima, no tienen en que caerse muertos.

Cualquier guey se los lleva y los hace de ellos (concepto de sugar daddy, prostitución) y eso es malo. Porque cuantos muchachos no han hallado muertos y con palos en la cola y muchas otras cosas mas. Los violan y los hacen pedazos.\(^{233}\) (RS4, RS5, & RS7)

Despite being one of the most liberated MSM I interviewed, Trevi also occasionally acted as a sub-oppressor when he made some lesbian-phobic and transphobic remarks. Many of his arguments seemed to be guided by Paz’s chingar/chingado dichotomy:

\[ \text{Pues a mi la masculinidad en las mujeres se me hace un trans-genero como en pocas palabras estúpido por si un hombre y otro hombre tienen donde darse y tienen con que y pues en la mujer no miro tanto tanta posibilidad al menos que se compren una de plástico o pues no se cada quien le halla las maneras y equis cosa. Yo pienso que entre mujer y mujer no le hallo forma. Ni gusto por la forma de ‘¿como?’ [como pueden hacer sexo o atraerse entre ell@s]^{234} (IHR & RS7) \]

\(^{233}\) There are people like us who do not give a shit and live a very dragging life. Let me tell you something. I have seen Gays, but cheap Gays. You have to have some money for the day you die. You never should be the ones at the bottom. There are guys that you say poor them. I feel sorry for them. They do not have something to die on. Some random dude can take them away and do what they want with them and that is bad (he said this under the context of sugar daddies and male prostitution). How many guys have they found dead with sticks up their ass and many other things? They rape them and cut them into pieces.

\(^{234}\) For mi the masculinity in women is kind of crossing gender lines. In a few words, stupid because men have where (the body parts) to give and where to receive and with women I do not see the possibility unless they buy something made of plastic and they find their own way. I do not see how women can have sex with other women. Like how?
Ricky divulged that he has been targeted by sub-oppressors in both rural and cosmopolitan spaces. He shared with me his experiences of his interactions with upper-class, cosmopolitan Gays when he briefly moved to Guadalajara. “*Te miran para arriba y para abajo y si no estas ‘vestido bien’ te clasifican como naco,*” Ricky said (RS7). Like internalizing, MSM attempt to find other ways to subvert such as negotiating (RS8).

**Negotiation (RS8)**

Another way MSM 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* in other people’s homes. Especially when he is unsure if those individuals are accepting. He argues that every MSM in el rancho should *saber donde y cuando jotear:*

\[
\textit{Cuando me accidenté me hice muy vulnerable y inseguro. Si no lo hice antes [vestirme], ahora menos. Si payaseo y todo y todos andamos en tacones y mi mama viéndonos y todo aquí en la casa en lo privado, pero ya en si de grande no lo aria. Ósea soy Gay, so le que me gusta, pero nunca he tratado de ser una mujer ni quería ser mujer…. Osea tenemos}
\]

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235 They look at you up and down and if you are not “dressed well,” they classify you as lower-class scum.

236 Know when and where to “Gay out.”
que saber equilibrar y saber donde jotear. Para mí es la palabra adecuada
HAY QUE SABER DONDE JOTEAR. Por ejemplo, si tu 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] Amanda, allí si podemos decir ‘hay chula.\(^237\)’ (R12, RS4, RS8, & RS9)

Daniel negotiates his identity in a similar way. He stated that he is both destapado and tapado concurrently because se tapa in situations when he knows it is not safe to articulate his sexuality. We both jokingly said that he is el camaleón 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 [Tenochtitlan] soy destapado. ¿Por qué?
Porque saben lo que soy ya me conoce mucha gente. Pero si yo voy a Ocuptlan, 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

\(^237\) When I got into an accident, I became super vulnerable and insecure. If I did not do it before (drag), I would not do it now. I do mess around and everything and sometimes we [my friends and I] all are in high heels while my mom is watching us everything here at home in private, but in public at a big event [like the beauty pageant], I would not do it. In fact, I am Gay, I know what I like, but I have never tried nor ever wanted to be a woman…we have to know how to keep equilibrium. Know how and where to Gay out. For me it is the proper saying for this context KNOW WHERE TO GAY OUT. For example, if you invite me to your house, I would not come Gaying out. I would not get there all twisted with high heels. We have to learn how to behave. If we go to [my Gay friend] Erick’s house, we can Gay out and say “hey girl.”
problemas. Se puede decir que tengo dos vidas. Una que es siendo tapado y otra destapado, pero si siento que soy mas destapado. A final descuentas, estoy navegando. Puedo decir aquí soy yo y en otros lados tengo que ser discreto óseo lo mas hombre que se pueda. Si, si se ha batallado. [en otros lugares] uno tiene que ser mas 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.238 (RI2, RS3, RS6, & RS8)

Daniel also added that he had to negotiate his own happiness. He disclosed that he was better off economically before se destapo (RS8). He also expressed that he misses his family dearly since being kicked out from his home. He often juggles with thoughts of whether it was right decisions to destaparse, but then realizes that it was the right decision:

238 Right now, I am in a situation where I am both covered and uncovered (out and not out in the context of the closet). For example, here in this town (Tenochtitlan) I am uncovered (out of the closet). Why? Because everyone knows what I am, and most people know me. However, if I were to go to Ocutplan, I have to be covered (closeted) and super discrete for him [my adoptive dad because he lives there] or if I go to El Grúcho, I have to be completely covered because I cannot say I am Gay for the same reason that my adopted dad is a teacher and I do not want him to get into problems. I guess you could say I live to lives. One being covered and the other uncovered, but I do feel that I am more uncovered. In the end, I am navigating, I can say, here I am one person and in other places I have to be discrete or as manly as I can be. Yes, I have struggled. [In other places] one has to be masculine and you have to dress according to the situation one is in. For example, right now I can be with just pants and a shirt and nothing happens. If I go to a fiesta or to work, I have to go dressed well. For example, I was working at Nestle and there I had to wear a uniform with a tie. You have to dress differently than what you are accustomed to.
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 como era en realidad o ala mejor no fue un error o no se. Hasta ahorita no se que me motivo para decir ‘sabes que mama, sabes que papa, soy Gay’ sabiendo ahorita como estoy. Creo que hace 9 años estaba mas 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. Nomas tengo a mi papa [adoptivo] y es todo lo que tengo. Mi papa biológico no me acepta. Nomas 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 tenia nada, ellos (familia de Ricky) estuvieron allí por mi. 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.²³⁹ (RI2, RI3, PP1, PP5, & RS8)

²³⁹ With my brothers I do not get along well. To this day, I have not stopped receiving messages of them telling me that I am dead to them. The only person I could count on was a sister who died two months ago. When you think they are going to give you support, they turn their backs towards you and humiliate you. It was a complicated situation. Maybe my role was not to tell them how things were or maybe it was a mistake telling them [my sexuality] I don’t know. To this day, I do not know what motivated me to say, “You know what mom? You know what dad? I am Gay”
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 mas chico y me daba miedo defenderme que me fueran hacer algo.240

(RI2, RI3, PP5, PP6, & RS8)

Téo disclosed that his way of navigating is through maintaining positive relationships with his community members and ignoring the chisme:


One of the most compelling and complex narratives disclosed to me was the way Ricky navigates considering his intersectional identity of being Gay,

knowing how I am today. I think nine years ago I was better off because I had a mom, a dad, and brothers that gave me everything. They had me spoiled. It was a big change because one moment you have everything and then you lose it all basically. I just have one [adopted] dad and that is all I have. My biological dad does not accept me. I can only count on my adopted dad and the family I am staying with right now (Ricky’s family). My second family. I am extremely grateful because when I did not have anything, they (Ricky and his family) were there for me. They gave their face for me. Then I reflect and say “maybe it was the right move that I uncovered myself” because they (Ricky’s family) keep loving me and helping me and well I am happy here with them.

240 At first, I would hide it. Right now, I see kids who come out at 12 years old and I get so jealous and think how beautiful! Because I did not get to do that. Before it was worse because maybe I permitted things to fly because I was younger. I was afraid to defend myself for fear of retaliation.

241 It is not so much about hiding it, it is more about ignoring people. Getting along with people is key and independent to whether you are Gay or hetero. That [being Gay] does not affect anything.
afeminado\textsuperscript{242}, and discapacitado\textsuperscript{243} 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:

\begin{quote}
Tienen que pasar a huevo las cosas para agarrar mas. Por ejemplo, yo me accidenté, perdí me mano y eso. A baso de eso [mi familia y yo] nos unimos mas... hubo mas 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 ahora. 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 da mas vergüenza a mi 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 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...
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{242} Effeminate \\
\textsuperscript{243} Disabled
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, ‘tu no sirves, eres diferente.’ Yo le dije... ‘¡Yo soy igual que tu, hasta puedo ser mejor que tu! 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 como amarrarme 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 mi mismo para que yo mismo me levante y me enseñe. Nunca me vas a dejar ser. Si faltas tu dios no lo quiera, que va ser de mi? Yo tengo que valerme por mi 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.244 (RI3, PP3, PP5, & RS8)

244 Things have to happen forcibly sometimes to gain more. For example, I got into an accident, and lost my arm. As a result, our family became closer... there was more communication. Since then I said, if something catastrophic like this, for instance, losing my other arm, has to happen again to be in good standing and to be united with my siblings, I would do it again. After my
Trevi suggested that he negotiates to hook up with men. For instance, to avoid ancestral surveillance, he travels to other pueblos where nobody knows or recognized him:

Para pareja siempre buscaba las localidades grandes de trabajo y pues mas que nada allí encontraba uno que otro (MSM) 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.245 (RS8 & RS11)

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accident, everything started to fall into place. I would go out with my dad, my siblings, and everything was very comfortable. I have a good relationship up until now with them. Everything that happens, I have the confidence to tell them. In fact, my mom has the confidence to tell me, “look son, I saw a handsome guy just right for you.” Sometimes I get embarrassed and say, “Oh my god mom shut up.” There are so many things that happen to a cut person. Your mentality changes and your point of view. It messed me up because in my own mind, I made myself believe that “nobody would like me because I was cut.” Even so, there are many men who are materialists, focused on bodies and with that I got traumatized. Nobody would tell me, “Look here comes the cut one!” They were just things I would put in my head. I then changed my chip and said that I would change. A year and a half later, I returned to work. I then started to have problems because the owner would say that I was worth nothing. He also told me, “You are not worth anything, you are different.” I told him… “I am just like you, and I could even be better than you! Do not let your guard down because I could end up taking your place and honestly that is a promise.” The owner would have me from one place to another, but I still go the job done. Now thank god, I know how to tie my shoes and cut my nails. I know how to do many things. My mom wanted to have me like one gets when they get sick [spoiled]. She wanted to bathe me and everything and I would tell her, “leave me.” She would respond, “I do not want you to hurt yourself.” I told her, “Let me trip on myself so I can learn how to sand up on my own. You will never let me be. If you are no longer here, god forbid, what will be of me? I have to value myself.” Now, five years after my accident, I feel like I am adapting to society. I feel like I can do everything comfortably honestly. I have much strength of will and self-esteem. I do not let myself fall.

245 To look for a partner I always looked for big workplaces and more than anything, I would find one or more MSM. One would familiarize themselves with how they talked and everything. I would analyze their ways of being and ways of thinking and then come to the conclusion of, okay he is just like me. I am going to go after him and if it works, it works.
Alex said that he also tries his best to avoid ancestral surveillance by hooking up in *pueblos*. “Aquí en el rancho casi no hay pero igual nos íbamos para Tenochtitlan putiabamos y como allí miraban que éramos unas mariquitas bravas pues se nos arrimaban y todo y pues allí coqueteábamos y todo,⁴⁶” he claimed (RS8 & RS11).

When I traveled to *Atonilcho* to *ligear* a year after the study, I noticed my hookup also had to negotiate around ancestral surveillance even though *Atonilcho* is a big *pueblo*. One of the ways he negotiated was by arranging to pick me up in a crowded zone of the *pueblo*. He then picked me up on his motorcycle and left me on a street located a few blocks from his house. “*Mi casa es una amarilla a tres cuadras de aquí. Hazte como si me viniste a visitar.*⁴⁷” At first, I did not understand why he wanted me to go through all that trouble, but I later realized it was to avoid the ongoing ancestral surveillance in his neighborhood (PP2 & RS8).

Another negotiation tactic certain MSM I spoke to use to (consensually) *ligear* is through situations involving alcohol. Noriega postulates that the policing and restrictions on the male body become lax when alcohol is involved (Noriega, 2014). This statement is especially true when *ligeando* with *mayates*. Jack Watson mentioned that most of his sexual encounters have involved both (or multiple) parties consuming lots of alcohol. “*Pues es que casi la mayoría es*

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⁴⁶ Here in the ranch there are hardly any places, but we would go to Tenochtitlan and “hoe out.” When the guys would see that we were raging ladybugs, they would come to us and we would start flirting with them.

⁴⁷ My house is a yellow one about 3 blocks from here. Pretend you are going to visit me.
cuenta andan borrachos. Se les nota [que son mayates o Gays] y ya,²⁴⁸ he stated (R8 & R11).

Alex divulged that he often gets involved with married mayates. “Yo tengo una amante que esta casado y pues a el no le importa el ni a mi no se detiene para tener pareja como yo tengo,”²⁴⁹ he stated. There were a couple situations where I witnessed Alex get involved with bugas. One of them was with Téo’s buga older brother. One Saturday, I went to Micky’s Bar with my prima Liz. After a night of drinking, I accidently walked into Alex and Téo’s brother kissing in the upstairs patio (RS8 & RS11).

Another instance was the penis-grabbing scenario I mentioned earlier in the respeto and social capital section. I was in the middle of a platía with Juan Gabriel when Alex showed up to purchase some chips. Outside of Juan Gabriel’s store were a group of older men drinking beers they had purchased at Juan Gabriel’s store. “Oye Alex, ven pa acá,”²⁵⁰ said Roy, one of the older men in the group. Juan Gabriel’s store is small and consists of a few refrigerators and a wooden counter located in the front. Right outside, there is a bench for all of the borachos²⁵¹ to congregate. From the counter, you can hear and see everything that happens outside. Both Juan Gabriel and I could hear the men laughing at Alex.

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²⁴⁸ I have mostly been with guys when they are drunk. You can tell they are [Gays or men who get involved with Gays].
²⁴⁹ I have a lover who is married and both of us do not stop ourselves from having separate partners.
²⁵⁰ Hey Alex, come here.
²⁵¹ Drunk guys
Alex was grabbing Roy’s penis in front of all the other men. The rest of the men jokingly said “agárraselo otra vez” and “agárraselo a este otro guey.” Roy noticed that Juan Gabriel and I were watching. “Mira, se va aguitar tu amigo si te ve hacienda esto,” Roy said. “Yo no me aguito. Cada quien tiene sus gustos” I responded. The men continued to joke about Alex’s advances until everyone noticed that Roy’s penis became aroused. As soon as this happened, he pushed Alex off and said, “hazte pa allá joto!” Clearly, Alex’s advances were initially treated as a game between men and a method for them to solidify their manhood through mocking un hombre afeminado like Alex. Alcohol also allowed this event to transpire because the limits of feme/masc and closed/open binaries were rearranged (Noriega, 2012). Roy’s arousal, though, was where the line was drawn because it publicly threatened his virility (IHR, RI2, RI3, PP2, PP4, PP5, PP6, RS8, & RS11).

Alex responded to Roy’s derogatory response by snapping his fingers and strutting away confidently like a Ru Paul’s Drag Race queen. “Me vale verga,” he said as he strutted away. Alex’s performance is an example of disidentification, another resistance method (RS9 & RS11).

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252 Grab him again
253 Grab that other guy’s
254 Hey, your friend will get upset if he sees you doing that.
255 I will not get upset. Everyone has their own tastes.
256 Get away faggot!
257 A game between men
258 I don’t give a shit.
Disidentification (RS9)

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 dominant ideology. Chavelo and Jack Watson both disidentify because they refuse to identify themselves using global labels of identification. They essentially refuse narrow, static, and fixed minority labels prescribed by liberal multi-cultural discourses which white-wash complexities of intersectionality (Muñoz, 1999, Crenshaw, 1989). For instance, Chavelo state that “nomas me gustan los hombres” whilst Jack Watson said that “mas o menos les digo que soy” (RS9)

Téo and Juan Gabriel argued that they disidentify with global, cosmopolitan aesthetics by dressing in the aesthetic of el joto de rancho. 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,” Juan Gabriel stated (RS9).

As another means of disidentification, many of the contributors also transformed cultural logic from within by removing their hegemonic interlockings and highlighting multiplicity (Muñoz, 1999). In essence, they implemented

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259 I just like men.
260 I more or less tell them what I am.
261 Gay of the ranch
262 Here in the ranch, they taught us to use shorts, hats, boots, pants. The great way of dressing. A good Texas cowboy hat. That is how I liked it when I was young and beautiful, now I do not give a shit how I dress haha.
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 MSM 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 *joteria ranchera*\(^{263}\) and *joteria de pueblo*\(^{264}\) (Bhaba, 1994). This is similar to Dussel's transmodernity theory which states that we must also take from the non-hegemonic moments of modernity.

Alex and Trevi embodied this *joteria 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* and *band*. *Corridos* and *banda bailes* are some the rituals of manhood linked to performance of virility. Every year in the fiesta of *Nuevo Fernandez*, 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 (with the exception of when *bugas* ask their family members to dance). Every year, I am

\(^{263}\) *Ranch Gayness*

\(^{264}\) *Town Gayness*
galvanized by how Alex and Trevi outperform their buga counterparts on the dance floor. “Asi de jotos como nos vez les ponemos la muestra,” Trevi stated (RS9).

Another dimension of MSM dis-identification in Nuevo Fernandez 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, Alex and Trevi disidentify with their performance of hombre afeminado and vestida. They do this by transgressing the imposed gender regime. Trevi suggested that he feels liberated when se viste. In fact, he proudly goes out into public with clothing an attitude of una mujer empoderada (RS9). 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 mi 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

265 Being Gay, we show the how it is done.
266 Dresses like a woman
267 An empowered woman
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 al las persona. Mas que nada no escondo en la calle lo que soy aquí en la casa. Soy igual aquí y afuera.  

While preforming down the runway of Trevi’s living room in stylish red heels, Alex shared that se viste to “mess around” and only does it in private spaces:

Si de primer si [me daba pena usar ropa de mujer], pero después agarras confiansita y te vale madre (at this point of the platica Alex starts snapping his 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

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268 Well, when I found out I liked high heels and dresses, I said, “If I like them, who cares what people think.” I felt liberated in the way I dressed and how I dress and using high heels and I am never looking at what people think or their opinions. I feel comfortable on way or another. I do not fit the fold of masc or femme. If I go out dressed as a woman, it is the same thing as I were to go out dresses as a man. Yes, the people do look at you funny, but it is better that they see you so that they can get used to it. I am in the same in the street as I am at home. I use the same vocabulary; I am the same. I treat people the same. More than anything, I do not hide what I am when I am at home. I am the same inside and out.

269 Dresses up
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 mi 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,” he revealed (RS4, RS8, & RS9).

Ricky stated that he also enjoys visteándose, 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 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 sí de grande no lo aria. (RS4, RS8, & RS9)

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270 At first [I was embarrassed to use women’s clothing, but afterwards I started to get confidence and I did not give a shit (snaps) and there you are hoeing around comfortable with high heels and everything. (puts on the high heels at his point of the platica). Well, I do not care what people think. Let’s give them a cat to eat so they can have something to talk about. People are stupid and I don’t care (starts performing walking with the high heels). I like to be both femme and masc. To dress like a woman, I like to do it just to mess around, but I would not do it in public.

271 I used to love to dress like a woman when I was in the United States. I used to have more than 90 wigs, beautiful wigs worth more than 500 dollars. I used to go down the runway with a big dress. I love the craziness.

272 I have never competed, but as a spectator I admire. I have messed around. In private parties, I have dressed up in private parties between friends and we would do small contests between...
Ricky further expressed that his identity is unique because he is *un Gay de pueblo*\(^{273}\). 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 *liguar*. 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 esta de acuerdo con las redes sociales. Incluso yo con Daniel fue lo que le dije. El día que tu y yo quieres que funcionemos como pareja, ocupo que te retires de las redes sociales. Entran muchas dudas y el diablo donde quiera esta 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 aho...*  

\(^{273}\) A Gay of town

\(^{274}\) I am Gay, but not the crazy kind. I am a Gay of town. I have more values and more old school I guess you can say. I feel like I am that way. I am one of the few left that is not okay with social media. In fact, that is what I told my friend David. The day that one wants to get into a committed relationship with me, they have to leave social media. There are many doubts that one gets, and the devil is always putting his ass everywhere. Social media is just too much temptation. I am not okay with that. I have met people on social media and everything, but things did not go well. It is better to meet people in person. Grinder I worst! They just send photos to each other. Hell no! I am in divorce with social media right now.
Homogenizing Oppression by Personification (RS10)

MSM also resisted by placing communities that discriminate against them into one single category, *la gente*. For instance, Alex and Trevi would often say “*A mi vale lo que dice la gente, yo voy a ser como yo este a gusto*” (R10 & R11).

Overt Defiance (R11)

Many participants such as Neto, Alex and Trevi would express disregard for people's opinions and thoughts about them. They even disregarded the *respeto* social contract. For example, Neto stated that he did not care if people saw him holding hands in public (R11). Alex and Trevi also said that they would kiss and hold hands with their respective partners in public (R11).

The complexities of the narratives in the *pláticas* reveal that there is a greater complex epistemology rather than the closet: resistance. The resistance strategies the contributors and I encountered include resistance through enclaves; resistance through coded language; comradery as a form of resistance; *respeto* & social capital; performing virility; subversive complicity; resistance through internalizing; negotiation, and disidentification. These strategies go unnoticed by MEWCCCUS eyes and discourses because of their dehumanizing centrist methodologies. It is clear that these strategies must be recognized, honored, celebrated, and validated by Queer genealogies.

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275 I do not care what people say. I am going to be the way I feel comfortable.
Limitations

One of the limitations of this project was the small sample size. Though the ten 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 MSM contributors from more municipalities across southern Mexico could have been included. Furthermore, though pláticas methodology is effective, it can sometimes lead to contributors telling me what I want to hear. For instance, my cousin Luis Miguel told me a few traumatic things Alex went through destapando that he did not disclose to me. Furthermore, I might have internalized certain lenses by living in the United States and attending a U.S. university. Finally, the pláticas are 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 that are reflective of their own internalizations.

Conclusion

It is clear that MEWCCUS have done little to recognize the experiences of MSM in queer scholarship. I proposed the inclusion of MSM in rural southern Mexico to shed light on the discourses that are escaping the MEWCCUS eye. The main discourse of this project was on the resistance strategies MSM have implemented to combat the hegemonic ideologies that stem from the perverse logic of coloniality (Fanon). Through a historical lens, I analyzed different eras of domination and repression which included the colonial period, 19th century
Porfiriato, 20th century revolutionary period. I then examined the resistance methods MSM of each era implemented to navigate and subvert the best they can. Furthermore, I analyzed how MSM’s identities co-exist contemporarily. The result was maintaining a (Queer) familial unit, communal support, secular community engagement, religious community engagement. Contributors shared that co-existence is sometimes met restrictions and discrimination that make the rural inhabitable such as not many economic opportunities, prohibitions and restrictions on sexual expression, and community punishment.

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 MSM (influence from medical discourse). I found that similar resistance methods implemented by MSM throughout history such as resistance through enclaves; resistance through coded language; comradery as a form of resistance; respeto, religious & social capital; performing virility; subversive complicity; resistance through internalizing; negotiation; disidentification; homogenizing oppression by personification; and overt defiance. These resistance strategies were essentially inherited, repurposed, recreated, and implemented in response to hegemonic rhetoric. MSM continue to transform their communities with their own methods of
resistance. Methods that should be honored and celebrated. ¡Qué viva la Jotería Ranchera! ¡Qué viva la Jotería del pueblo!

Future Research

Future research should include women who have sex with women, lesbianas, marimachas\textsuperscript{276}, Trans, and Travesti prospectives on their experiences in the rural, and it should also extend to other rural regions of Mexico. Furthermore, indigenous epistemologies on sexuality and gender could be another direction to take research on rurality. 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. Finally, a study centered around colonial era impositions and resistance can also be formulated.

\textsuperscript{276} Another way to say lesbian
Ignacio (RS7):

No, es porque te desenvuelvas en un ambiente como con mas preparación, pero si
reh al tener una educación diferente o un grado de educación mas alta, como que
si abre muchos caminos. La manera de pensar de las personas [que estudiaron]
es mas abierta. Pienso que una persona que se desenvuelve en entorno social con
una educación mas básica, les toca mas trabajo aceptar. He tendido experiencias
con comunidades que son de ranchitos como aqui y que les cuesta trabajo abrirse
y que de hecho no se han abierto a sus familiares. ¿Por qué? Pues por el temor
que existe en su comunidad, con su familia quizás hay mucho machismo y son
creados en una manera muy diferente. Con mi familia no me costo trabajo porque
son tienen un nivel de educación un poco mas alto. Entonces, como la manera de ver
las cosas y el entorno donde se desarrollan en sus trabajos lo vivían al diario
pués. Pues no tuve ningún problema. De hecho, al principio pensé... porque
somos dos hermanos. Pensé que con mi hermano iba tener mas problemas o
diferencias que le iba llegar a dar pena o algo así, pero después me di cuenta que
no era así. Somos iguales y que mi mama y mi papa tienen la misma manera de
pensar. Con ellos no tuve problemas porque ellos me dieron la confianza. Ya
incluso cuando yo les dije nosotros. Pues a mi papá le toco un poco mas trabajo a
asimilarse a la situación porque esperan otras cosas de ti, pero no tuve ningún problema. Estuvimos en el psicólogo, pero no porque no quisieron aceptar si no porque quisieron entender el tema. Pues nos ayudó bastante como familia. No tuve ningún problema ni ningún rechazo. En el entorno social, empecé a decirles a mis amigos y tampoco tuve ningún problema. Yo no era de amigos de aquí. Mis amigos son de la escuela o así. Volvemos a lo mismo, el grado académico que tienen. Yo se los comenté y no tuve ningún problema. Su familia de ellos tampoco.

En mi caso, somos una familia muy conocida aquí en Tenochtitlan y si empiezan como el hijo del fulanito es (habla mierda). Pero igual mis papas nunca tomaron esos comentarios en cuenta.

Ricky (RS8):

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277 No, it is because of the of those are raised in an environment with more (academic) preparation. Having a different education, or a higher education opens more pathways. The way of thinking of people who studies is more open. I feel like someone who is raised in an environment with basic education have more trouble being accepted. I have had experiences with people that are from ranches that have trouble opening up and opening up (and have not opened up) to their family members. Why? Because of the fear in their community and in their families. Maybe there is machismo and they are raised differently. With my family there were no issues because they have an education that is higher. Then the way of seeing the world in the environment that they are raised, which is their work environment that they live every day. I did not have any problems. In fact, I thought because I have a brother. I thought that I would have more problems with my brother because of differences or that I he would be ashamed of me, but that was not the case. We are the same and my mom and dad have the same way of thinking. With them I did not have problems because I had faith in them. My dad had a little more trouble adjusting because they expected other things of me, but I did not have problems. We went to the psychologist, but not because they did not accept me, but because they wanted to understand the topic. It helped us a ton. I did not have problems or rejection. In my social environment, I began to tell my friends and I did not have problems with them either, I did not like to have friends here. My friends are all from school (University). We return to the same topic, the level of education one has. I told them (my academic friends), and they had no problems with it. Their families did not have problems either. In my case, we are a very well-known family here in Tenochtitlan, but that his its downside because then people start saying "the son of that person is Gay." Essentially, talking trash. My parents never take comments like that into account.
Si tenía rocíos con mi papa, pero como circunstancias de la vida. 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. Fue un cambio muy notorio. Una vez yo platique con el [mi papa] y los dos lloramos los dos. Tenemos muchos roces también con mi hermano.

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 fíjate mijo que vi a un muchacho bien guapo para ti.’ Hasta me da mas vergüenza a mi y le digo ‘hay ma ya cállate la boca.’ Abecés hay chavos negritos allí por las calles y yo les dije que yo quería un negrito.

Después cada vez que mis familiares se topaban con uno decían ‘Para llevarlo a Teresa [el negrito].’ De traerme un negrito pues. Pero es payaseada. Dicen ‘Vimos un negrito para ti’ o ‘vi un muchacho guapo que me gusta para ti,’ pero normal pues... basiladas sanas.

Todos mis amigos me dicen, ‘tienes unos papas bien alivianados,’ ¿por qué? Se toman a tomar mis padres con nosotros. Hacemos carne asada y se vienen.

Tenemos otra forma de verlos porque vivimos juntos, pero las amistades dicen ‘que lindos son tus padres. ¡Son bien alivianados!’
Pasan muchas cosas a una persona mocha. Cambia tu mentalidad y punto de vista. Entonces, yo y mi ex no salimos de acuerdo y dure 2 años sin relación. Son mis traumas mías. No es que me las hayan dicho la verdad. Porque la gente me aceptado muy bien porque nunca le ha hecho de esconder mi mano. Las cosas pasan porque tienen que pasar. No fue por mi gusto fue un accidente por eso estoy así.

Desde que salí del hospital diario me veras así, pero al principio si me frustré yo de que nadie me va querer. Conocí al muchacho y pensé que se iban a dar las cosas porque el si me hizo caso. Yo esperaba un mundo de caramelito donde íbamos a ser felices para siempre, pero para mi eso no existe. Si me perjudico porque mi misma cabecita me hice creer que 'nadie te va querer porque estas mocho.' Igual hay muchos hombres que son bien materialistas, enfocados en los cuerpos y con eso me traume. Especialmente después de todo del accidente. Todo lo que tenia planeado lo tronqué porque dije, ‘¿a que le voy a tirar yo mocho sin dinero? No tengo carera ni nada. ¿Quién me va querer?’ Son cosas que yo me cuestionaba a mi mismo. Ósea, nadie me decía, ‘¡mira hay va el mocho! Son puras cosas que yo me metía a la cabeza. Si conozco amistades que me dicen que ni se me nota porque me veo normal, pero si tengo esos traumas porque yo mismo me he impuesto que nadie me va querer. Hasta que cambia mi chip de eso, quizás voy a cambiar. Yo no soy de andar conquistando ni citando. Soy más de los que nos conocemos y a ver que sale.
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, ‘tu no sirves, eres diferente.’ Yo le dije... ‘¡Yo soy igual que tu, hasta puedo ser mejor que tu! 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 nomás estas buscando como le haces. En mi caso, pos empecé de ceros mi vida cambio. El encargado mi traía para un lado a otro, pero así con una mano le sacaba el trabajo.

Ahorita bendito dios se como amararme las cintas, se cortarme las uñas. Se hacer muchas cosas que mucha gente que esta completa en apariencia me pregunta, ‘¿como le haces?’ Y yo les contesto ‘pués normal.’ Yo tengo que esforzar mi mente para hacer las 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 mi mismo para que yo mismo me levante y me enseñe. Nunca me vas a dejar ser. Si faltas tu dios no lo quiera, que va ser de mi? Yo tengo que valerme por mi mismo.’ Después dijo ‘A bueno, no se diga mas. Hasta bolas.’ Ya ahora ya me deja cocinar y todo porque fue algo que yo les pedí. Que no me hicieran inútil. Yo me quería valerme por mi mismo. Yo quería salir adelante por mis propios medios. No he dejado ni me han dejado deprimirme. Nunca me han hecho sentir como un inútil. Al contrario, en ves de decir ‘no puedes hacer algo’ yo me digo ‘ponte hacerlo.’ Mi familia no me ve como al ‘que le falta la mano.’ Soy un
miembro más de la familia porque así lo quise yo. Ya no me preguntan si lo puedes hacer ya mejor me dicen ‘lo vas a hacer’ y lo hago.

Yo barro desde el poste hasta acá. Muchas señoras se paran y me dicen ‘¿eres maravilloso! ¿Cómo tienes la habilidad de barrer? No se te dificulta nada.’ Es que todo está en la mente. Uno mismo busca. De primero fue de amararme las cintas, después cortarme las uñas.

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. Muchos me dicen “si me vieras pasado lo que te paso a ti; me muero” Yo les digo, ¡pues yo no! Ala mejor con una pierna esta peor por las muletas, pero con una no.

El otro día vi que un señor se le mocho su pie y con los tubos de su ferretería, se hizo su propia prótesis. Esta en que uno quiera. Yo me enseñé a trabajar así sin prótesis, pero en mi otro trabajo si me conseguí una. Era de armar y desarmarla todo el tiempo entonces la prótesis no me servía. Así que yo me enseñe a trabajar así. Si me ponía pedir para mi prótesis, yo la conseguirá, pero no la quiero. Si dios me quito la mano fue por algo. ¿para que me voy a poner una prótesis si dios no quiso que tuviera mano? ¡Hago de todo que este a mi alcance, lo hago! La superación fue conmigo mismo. Yo mismo me pongo pruebas y retos.278

278 I did have dews with my dad, but those were just circumstance of life. Things have to happen forcibly sometimes to gain more. For example, I got into an accident, and lost my arm. As a result, our family became closer… there was more communication. Since then I said, if something catastrophic like this, for instance, losing my other arm, has to happen again to be in good standing and to be united with my siblings, I would do it again. It was a noticeable change. One time I talked to my dad and we both cried. We have much friction with my brother too. After my
accident, everything started to fall into place. I would go out with my dad, my siblings, and
everything was very comfortable. I have a good relationship up until now with them. Everything
that happens, I have the confidence to tell them. In fact, my mom has the confidence to tell me,
"look son, I saw a handsome guy just right for you." Sometimes I get embarrassed and say, "Oh
my god mom shut up." Sometimes there are black guys in the streets, and I tell them that I want a
black guy. Afterwards, every time my family would run into a black guy they would say, "Look we
can take him [the black guy] to Teresa." They would say they would bring me the black guy. Just
joking, though. They would say, "We saw a black guy for you" or "I saw a handsome guy that I
like for you," normal stuff…healthy jokes. All of my friends tell me, "you have chill parents" why?
They drink with us. We do barbecues and they come by. We have another way of looking at them
because we live together, but the friends say, "How beautiful are your parents. They are so chill!!!"
There are so many things that happen to a cut person. Your mentality changes and your point of
view. Back then, me and my ex did not end well, and I spent two years without a relationship.
They are my traumas. They are not traumas that were told to me. People accepted me well
because I never did anything to hide my arm. Things happen because they have to happen. It
was not because I wanted this to happen, it was an accident and that is why I am like this. Since I
left the hospital, you would always see me like this, but at the beginning I did get frustrated and
believed that nobody would like me. I met a guy and I thought he would like me because he paid
attention to me. I envisioned a Candyland where we would end up happily ever after, but for me
that does not exist. It messed me up because in my own mind, I made myself believe that
"nobody would like me because I was cut." Even so, there are many men who are materialists,
focused on bodies and with that I got traumatized. Especially with everything regarding the
accident. Everything I had planned was ruined because I would tell myself, "what am I going to
aim for without money? I do not have a career or anything. Who will love me?" Those are things I
would question myself with. Nobody would tell me, "Look here comes the cut one!" They were just
things I would put in my head. There are friends that tell me that you cannot even tell because I
look normal, but I do have those traumas because I myself self-imposed the idea that nobody
would like me. I then changed my chip and said that I would change. I am not the type that is for
conquests or for dates. I am the type that meets people and gets to know them and see what
comes of it. A year and a half later, I returned to work. I then started to have problems because
the owner would say that I was worth nothing. He also told me, "You are not worth anything, you
are different." I told him… "I am just like you, and I could even be better than you! Do not let your
guard down because I could end up taking your place and honestly that is a promise." When you
lose a part of your body, you start looking at how you will function. In my case, I started from zero
and my life changed. The owner would have me from one place to another, but I still got the job
done. Now thank god, I know how to tie my shoes and cut my nails. I know how to do many
things that many people that look complete in appearance tell me "How do you do it?" and I tell
them, "well, normal." I have to work my mind to do things. My mom wanted to have me like one
gets when they get sick [spoiled]. She wanted to bathe me and everything and I would tell her,
"leave me." She would respond, "I do not want you to hurt yourself." I told her, "Let me trip on
myself so I can learn how to sand up on my own. You will never let me be. If you are no longer
here, god forbid, what will be of me? I have to value myself." She then said, "say no more." Now
she lets me cook and everything because it is something I asked for. That they do not make me
useless. I wanted to recognize my self-worth. I wanted to keep moving forward on my own
accords. I have not let anybody, nor have I let myself get me depressed. I have never let anyone
make me feel like I am useless. On the contrary, instead of saying "you cannot do it," I tell myself,
"go do it." My family does not see me as "the ones who is missing an arm." I am just another
member of the family because that is how I wanted it. They do not ask me if I can do things. Now
they tell me "you are going to do this" and I do it. I sweep from the post up to here. Many women
stop and say, "you are amazing! How do you have the ability to sweep? It does not look you
struggle with it." Everything is in the mind. One finds a way. First, I learned how to tie my shoes,
then cut my nails. Now, 5 years after my accident, I feel like I am adapting to society. I feel like I
Trevi suggested that he negotiates to hook up with men. For instance, to avoid ancestral surveillance, he travels to other pueblos where nobody knows or recognized him:

Para pareja siempre buscaba las localidades grandes de trabajo y pues mas que nada allí encontraba uno que otro (MSM) 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. Siempre las localidades grandes de los ranchos y los pueblos hay buscarlos porque en tu ranchito no lo vas a hallar.  

Ricky (R9):

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 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 can do everything comfortably honestly. I have much strength of will and self-esteem. I do not let myself fall. Many tell me, “If the same thing were to happen to me, I would die.” I tell them, “well I do not! May losing a leg is worse because of the crutches, but not really.” The other day, I saw a guy who lost his leg and with the tubes he sold at his tool store, he made his own prosthetic leg. It is honestly about what one wants. I learned how to work without a prosthetic arm, but in my last job I did manage to get one. I always had to put it together and take it apart, so it honestly was not worth it to me. So, I learned how to work without it. If I were to go around asking for donations for another prosthetic arm, I would do it, but I do not want one. If god took my arm away, it was for a reason, why am I going to put on a prosthetic arm if god did not want me to have an arm? I do everything that is in my reach, I do it! My perseverance was within myself. I set my own tests and challenges.

To look for a partner I always looked for big workplaces and more than anything, I would find one or more MSM. One would familiarize themselves with how they talked and everything. I would analyze their ways of being and ways of thinking and then come to the conclusion of, okay he is just like me. I am going to go after him and if it works, it works. One has to look big locales in ranches and towns because in one’s little ranch, you will not find them.
mama viéndonos y todo aquí en la casa en lo privado, pero ya en si de grande no
lo aria. Ósea soy Gay, soy lo que me gusta, pero nunca he tratado de ser una
mujer ni quería ser mujer. Igual mis preferencias, quisiera un hombre. Uno que
no parezca mujer. Un muchacho que no se ve tan femenino mas masculino.
Estandard. Hay muchos Gays que quieren andar apretados con sus camisas. Yo
no, yo soy de chores, camisas tenis. A mi me gusta la comodidad. Si me pinto el
pelo y payaseo con el pelo, pero igual ya me lo corto y todo vuelve a la
normalidad. Pero ya de vestirme de mujer la verdad no. Yo siento que de mujer
no me vería bonita la verdad.  

Figure 1: Deleted Impactful Pláticas

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280 I have never competed, but as a spectator I admire. I have messed around. In private parties.
I have dressed up in private parties between friends and we would do small contests between
friends, but to compete in the beauty pageant, I do not think I would do it. When I got into my
accident, I became very vulnerable and insecure. If I did not do it before the accident, I would not
do it now. I do mess around and everything and we are all in high heels and my mom watches us
at the house in private, but in a big stage, I would not do it. I am Gay, but I know what I like, but I
have never tried to be a woman or have ever wanted to be a woman. I know my preferences; I
want a man. One that does not look like a woman. A man that does not look too feminine, but
more masculine. Standard. There are many Gays that want to have tight shirts. Not me, I am one
to wear shorts, shirts, and tennis shoes. Dress comfortably. I do mess around when I dye my hair,
but I end up cutting it and everything goes back to normal. But to dress as a woman, no. I feel
that like as I woman I would not look pretty honestly.
APPENDIX A:
NORIEGA’S PORTRAIT OF TWO MEN HOLDING HANDS
(Noriega, 2014)
APPENDIX B:
VIP MURAL FROM MICKY’S WINGS BAR
APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL
### IRB-FY2019-85

**Desde La Periferia de La Hija, Lo Urbano, y La Ciudad de Las Estrellas: A Comparative Study of MH/In Las Municiones de Toluca, Arroyos, The Inland Empire, and Los Angeles**

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**Organization:**
- Users loaded with unauthorized Organization affiliation
- CA: Communications
- Current Policy: Pre 2019 Rule

**Key Contacts**

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