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**MEXICAN DRAG CULTURE: AN ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY
OF CONTESTED BELONGING**

Master's Thesis

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Tartu 2024

Table of Content

Introduction	3
1. LGBT+ community and Drag History in Mexico	6
1.1. LGBT+ community	6
1.2. Mexican Drag	7
1.3. Drag contests in Mexico	8
1.4. La Más Draga	9
2. Theoretical Frameworks of Drag Performance and the Politics of Belonging.	12
3. Research Methodologies	16
3.1. Online Ethnography	17
3.2. Interviews	20
4. Contested belonging of the La Más Draga community	23
4.1. Politics of Belonging	24
4.2. Sense of Belonging	27
4.3. Contested Belonging	30
Conclusion	31
References	32
Resümee	35
Appendix 1	37
Appendix 2	38
Appendix 3	41
Appendix 4	43
Appendix 5	44

Introduction

In December 2020 I started watching *La Más Draga*, a reality competition show featuring Mexican drag queens¹ that welcomed me from afar and made me feel part of a community as a Mexican living in Estonia. It first aired in May 2018, and although distant geographically, this community felt close through its online presence and the warmth of the Mexican folklore it depicted. I felt closer to home. I began watching the third season and then went back to watch the second and first seasons in that order, since the newest seasons tend to have a bigger budget and therefore better production value. I also started watching other reality competition shows from the United States that inspired the Mexican one, such as *RuPaul Drag Race*. Although initially just a form of entertainment, I became fascinated by the celebration of Mexican culture through challenges that incorporate elements of regional and national traditions. This piqued my curiosity about the participants, their backgrounds, their drag personas, the audience who were following the show, and how much of the show's content was seeping into the dominant mainstream culture.

The basic structure of the show is as follows. First, there is the introduction of the participants called queens and the greeting from the host, the amount of participants is usually around ten, the fifth season had 12 participants. Second, the host presents either a mini challenge or a maxi challenge for the participants, and a brief explanation of it and the rules involved, in which the queens will have to perform their best to get a high score. Third, the host will present the category of the runway where the queens will have to walk their best catwalk, again to get the highest score. Fourth, the panel of judges will provide feedback to the queens, they will call the top queen of that episode who will get a cash prize, and the bottom queens will have to lip sync (perform) on stage. Fifth, after the bottom queens perform, the winner will remain in the competition and the loser will have to leave, and this dynamic continues until there are only the finalists which is usually four queens.

As I delved deeper into the show, I became increasingly captivated by the ways in which it highlighted the vibrant and diverse Mexican cultural landscape, showcasing the richness of the country's traditions, art forms, and the talents of its people. The

¹ A person, often a gay man, who dresses in highly decorated women's clothes, wigs (= artificial hair), jewelry, make-up, etc., as a costume and performs as a woman for entertainment. (Cambridge Dictionary 2023) In the context of my research, Drag means any person who performs gender in an exaggerated way aiming to entertain, not taking into consideration their sex or gender.

challenges and performances on the show not only entertained but also educated me about the nuances and complexities of Mexican identity, fostering a deeper appreciation for the country's cultural heritage. I wondered if such online show could build a sense of belonging in its audience, and how viewers without access to Queer² representations in their home cities or safe spaces where to express their authentic selves, could find a welcoming online community where they could feel at peace, entertained, and seen.

I decided to carry out an online ethnography as a research project for my thesis, because I found value in the way in which this type of visual depiction in the reality competition series can also translate into resources for the LGBT+³ community. My research focused on following the online show during its fifth season, because it was the last season to be aired, and after the fact that the fourth season finale counted with sponsorship of Moschino, an international high- end fashion brand, the breakthrough of the show was imminent, as well as an increase on its audience. I conducted an online ethnography from September 2022 until December 2022, studying both, the show and its audience through different social media platforms, such as YouTube, where the show is being broadcasted, as well as Facebook and Twitter, where I collected data related to specific on-screen depictions and conversations around trending topics that had created significant engagement within the community during the broadcast of the fifth season.

The overarching goal of this research is to gain a deeper understanding of the impact that the show *La Más Draga*, has on the audience's sense of belonging to the Mexican drag queen phenomenon. Employing a digital ethnographic approach and theoretical analysis of the empirical data collected through methods such as interviews, the study aims to explore how the relationships initially forged online subsequently manifest in tangible spaces as resources for the LGBTQ+ community. The central research question on my thesis asks how the online connections around the *La Más Draga* show are generated, bifurcated, and transformed into real-world support systems for the LGBTQ+ community.

In chapter one, I delve into the Mexican history of the LGBT+ community as well as the drag culture in the country and its evolution to what it has become, the shows and competitions around drag queens, both online and *in situ*, and I give an account of *La Más Draga*. In chapter two, I discuss the theories that informed my

² In the context of this thesis, the term Queer is used as an umbrella term where non-heteronormative identifications fall into. (“Queer Theory” 2017, 7)

³ Abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. An umbrella term used to refer to the community as a whole. (University of California San Francisco, n.d.)

research, namely, Nira Yuval-Davis' theories around sense of "*Belonging and politics of belonging*" (2006); my supervisor Terje Toomistu and her Phd thesis "*Embodied lives, imagined reaches: Gendered subjectivity and aspirations for belonging among waria in Indonesia*" (2019), on transgender and belonging; and Judith Butler's account on gender, performativity and drag queens based on her work "*Bodies that Matter*" (2003). The closest finding on prior research similar to my study topic is David Tenorio's research "*Broken records: Materiality, temporality and Queer Belonging in Mexican Drag Cabaret Performance*" (2019). While Tenorio and I both engage with questions of queer belonging, my research is specific for its focus on online depictions and belonging within the online realm and its mobility to the tangible world.

1. LGBT+ community and Drag History in Mexico

In this section, I aim to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the origins of the Mexican drag culture, exploring its ethos, evolution, and impact on visibility and discourses around gender, sexuality, diversity, belonging, and identity in Latin America. To fully understand this phenomenon, we must first examine the historical context and current status of the LGBT+ community in Mexico.

1.1. LGBT+ community

The movement for LGBT+ rights in Mexico began in the early 1970s with the creation of the Frente de Liberación Homosexual, led by Nancy Cárdenas and José Ramón Enríquez, who were a theater director and playwright, respectively. In 1978, these intellectuals marched together with gays and lesbians under the name of the Frente Homosexual de Acción Revolucionaria, marking a significant moment in the history of the country. This led to the formation of support groups that later marched in Mexico City, with the aim of eradicating violence and fostering an environment of respect and tolerance. Over the decades, the LGBT+ movement in Mexico has evolved, resulting in legislative changes such as the legalization of same-sex civil unions in Mexico City in 2007 and the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage in 2015 (Caldelas Garatachia 2022, 141).

The aforementioned social movements at the international level, as well as those carried out in Mexico City during the 1990s, have been a watershed for the LGBT+ community, allowing them to gain recognition and participate more actively in the political affairs of the country. This has strengthened their political rights (Ibid).

Finally, the struggle for the recognition of the human rights of LGBT+ people is as important as the struggle for the rights of all people, regardless of their social, economic, gender identity, sexual orientation, or political ideology. The Mexican drag queen phenomenon has emerged as a powerful vehicle for representing the experiences and challenges faced by the LGBT+ community in Mexico.

LGBT+ people have political, economic, social, and cultural rights, just like the rest of the citizenry. To this end, it has been constitutionally decreed that public servants must ensure the protection of human rights in accordance with their specific duties: to

prevent, punish and repair; and under their general obligations: to respect, protect, guarantee, and promote. It is important to highlight that, in electoral processes, members of the LGBT+ community have played a fundamental role giving representation of the community in the political realm and giving visibility of a secluded community that never had a voice from within. Today, they are recognized as active members of society, not as groups in a situation of vulnerability or disadvantage compared to the rest of the citizens. This indicates that discrimination must be eradicated to ensure their full political participation, including the right to run for public office in the federal administration. Thus, the constant construction of an inclusive democracy is reinforced by the recognition of the exercise of the human rights of all people, from the institutions of the State, with the purpose of achieving social development in Mexico (Ibid, 132).

1.2. Mexican Drag

Mexican drag culture has its origins in transvestism, an artistic expression that was well-developed within the LGBTQ+ community in environments such as bars, parties, and cultural events during the 70's. The primary distinction between transvestism and drag is that transvestism was often focused on impersonating international artists or serving as hostesses in bars, while drag came with a stronger emphasis on political activism and exaggeration. Drag has since evolved into various subgenres, including spooky, camp, comedy queens, pageant, and fashion queens, among others (Dragička 2023).

The primary reference in Mexico is Francisco del Carmen García Escalante, known as Francis. He is recognized as the pioneer of transvestism and the drag movement in Mexico. During the 1980s and 1990s, after leaving the transvestite group "Las Femmes," a troupe of entertainers who would hold shows in cabarets, Francis created a show called "El show de Francis." In this show, he sang, danced, acted, performed impersonations, and had a stand-up comedy routine, which lasted for fifteen years at El Teatro Blanquita in Mexico City. Francis toured the country, the United States, and Latin America, and his comedy show was recognized for its quality, being compared to Las Vegas shows. He consistently sold out all his performances during this period. Between the 1990s and the 2000s, he also participated in several movies, musicals, and soap operas. Additionally, he had his own show called "Hasta en las

Mejores Familias," a Mexican comedy talk show broadcasted on Televisa, a major Mexican multimedia mass media company (Faudoa and López 2023).

Inspired by Francis, the Vampire Sisters, formed by La Supermana, La Superperra, and Sergio Alazcuaga, decided to start their show in the mid-90s, drawing inspiration from the Mexican cabaret tradition. Through their performances, which employed violent, classist, and discriminatory language, they sought to expose the normalized attitudes in society and raise awareness about the country's social problems. This theater troupe was the home of the first Drag Queen show in Mexico and Latin America. Due to the success of this type of show, in 2002, Horacio Villalobos, an actor and TV host, created the program "Desde Gayola" which aired on Telehit, a Mexican cable/satellite television network. The main programming was focused on music and music videos, providing a platform for performers such as Francis, La Supermana, La Roña, La Maniguis, and other renowned vedettes from Mexico City's cabaret scene, to perform their own comedy. (Izquierdo 2023).

1.3. Drag contests in Mexico

In the last decade, the growth of drag contests has increased significantly, gaining more spaces and performers. In 2014, La Carrera Drag de la Ciudad de México was born in the country's capital, which, inspired by the U.S. reality competition show RuPaul's Drag Race, has allowed diverse drag queens to compete at venues like El Teatro Garibaldi and other locations. The impact of this event has been substantial, exposing the public to the artistry, creativity, and political activism often associated with drag performance (Faudoa and López 2023).

Paris Bang Bang, the creator of La Carrera Drag, is also considered one of the most relevant Drag Queens in the history of the Mexican Drag Movement. Two years later, in 2016, Mama Bree created the Regias del Drag contest in Monterrey. Its alumni count among some of the most important Drag Queens in the region. Since then, there have been several drag shows across the country, such as Next Top Drag Queen with a venue in Estado de Mexico, La Drag Queen Soy yo on YouTube, Versus Drag on YouTube, Durango Drag Project on YouTube, and Iconic Drag Fashion Week on YouTube (Ibid).

The agenda of the Mexican drag scene currently seeks to dignify the salaries and working conditions of drag performers, as well as promote the idea that drag is not

limited to bars and nightlife. Consequently, new projects have emerged, such as BreeCon, a drag convention in Mexico; La Dragademia, a singing and dancing competition created by Miss Diamond; and opportunities for drag queens to become content creators on social media, and activists, reveindicating a social cause. These initiatives, as well as La Más Draga, aim to expand the visibility and recognition of drag as an art form beyond its traditional association with lowbrow entertainment venues (Ibid).

1.4. La Más Draga

In 2017, La Más Draga was born, a reality competition show produced by Bruno Olvez and Carlo Villarreal. It has five seasons, and an open call for the sixth season is ongoing. La Más Draga is a project targeted at the Spanish-speaking audience to consume a show inspired by Mexican culture. The show has been of immense importance for the drag scene in the country. It has allowed the scene to grow exponentially and has helped to formalize the working conditions, such as ensuring that drag performers are paid a proper salary rather than just receiving alcohol or spotlight as compensation. Some of the most well-known drag performers who have participated in this show are Deborah La Grande, La Morra Lisa, Alexis 3XL, Aviesc Who, PaperCut, Rebel Mork, Gvajardo, Fifi Estah, and C-Pher, who comes from Chile.

The impact of La Más Draga extends beyond the entertainment value. Participants have reported through social media, that the show has promoted greater acceptance and understanding of the LGBTQ+ community, challenging societal prejudices, especially because the show has reached the mainstream and part of the cast has been invited to different mainstream media outlets such as Pinky Promise, Cuéntamelo Ya!, radio programs like La Saga with Adela Micha, and have their own show produced by Telehit called Sin Atacarse (Comunicación Editorial 2023).

La Más Draga is exclusively broadcast on YouTube. Making it accessible to a wider audience around the globe. The participating Drag Queens compete to win each episode, a challenge that brings them closer to the finale. Each challenge is related to Mexican culture. For example, the first challenge of the fourth season was La Más Folklórica, where the participants had to walk the runway in custom-inspired traditional folk dance costumes from the Mexican region of their selection. In each episode, the panel of judges provide feedback to the contestants and select the top and bottom

performers based on their scores from the runway walk. The two queens with the lowest scores must then engage in a lip-sync battle, where the winner continues in the competition, and the loser is eliminated from the show. The panel of judges consists on Yari Mejia, a designer, stylist, singer and model, Bernardo Vázquez "Letal", a makeup artist and drag queen; from season one to three, Johnny Carmona, a communication specialist and college professor, was part of the panel, but he left after the fandom harassed him on social media and accused him of being too woke for the show; on season four Ricky Lips, a famous impersonator, joined the panel of judges and from the fifth and sixth season, Raquel Martinez, a transgender Spanish-born actress and singer has been part of the official panel of judges. The panel also has guest judges every episode, they all are from a diverse background: actors, singers, artists, influencers, musicians and TV / internet personalities.



Cast and judges of La Más Draga season five.

The format of La Más Draga is based on RuPaul's Drag Race. In 2022, World of Wonder⁴, the production company behind RuPaul's Drag Race, announced plans to release new franchise versions in Latin America, including Mexico and Brazil. This announcement caused considerable excitement within the Mexican drag fan community, as there has been a significant increase in the consumption of drag content in the country across various formats, indicating there is a profitable business opportunity and a large market that consumes these types of products. The news became a trending topic on Twitter and reached national news coverage across various TV and media channels. (Comunicación Editorial 2023)

The success of La Más Draga has also led to the emergence of other drag-focused television programs in Mexico, such as Versus Drag, which have further expanded the reach and visibility of drag performers and catapulted them to other bigger platforms.

⁴ Is the pioneering international entertainment company and creator of groundbreaking Emmy Award-winning feature and television programming.

2. Theoretical Frameworks of Drag Performance and the Politics of Belonging.

In this section, I define the concepts and theories, as well as the authors I have used to make sense of the data collected through the research methodologies described in the following chapter.

Judith Butler's "*Gender trouble*" (1990) is a seminal work in gender theory that challenges traditional notions of gender identity, performativity and expression. Central to Butler's argument is the concept of performativity, which suggests that gender is not an inherent identity but rather a series of actions and behaviors that are socially performed (Butler 1990, 15). According to Butler, these performances create and reinforce what is considered "normal" or normative in society. Anything that falls outside these normative boundaries can be considered the "abject," or that which is excluded or marginalized (Butler, 1993, 104).

The concept of performativity, as articulated by Judith Butler in "*Gender Trouble*", provides a critical framework for understanding the construction of gender norms and the marginalization of identities that deviate from these norms. Butler argues that gender is not a fixed attribute but rather an ongoing performance, a set of repeated acts that produce the appearance of a stable gender identity. This notion of performativity implies that societal norms around gender are not natural or inevitable but are continuously created and reinforced through everyday actions and discourses (Butler, 1990, 43).

In the context of drag queens, the idea of performativity takes on a unique and subversive dimension. Drag queens, through their exaggerated performances of femininity, highlight the constructed nature of gender roles. They reveal that what society considers "natural" or "normal" gender expressions are, in fact, performative acts that can be imitated, exaggerated, and even parodied. Drag performances expose the arbitrariness of gender norms and challenge the binary framework that defines "male" and "female" as mutually exclusive categories (Butler, 1993, 236).

Social media drag queens, particularly on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, offer a rich site for exploring these dynamics. These digital spaces not only serve as platforms for performance but also as sites for community building, identity exploration, and the negotiation of what it means to be "authentic." Through these

performances, drag queens often highlight the fluidity and multiplicity of gender, questioning the rigid norms that dictate what is considered acceptable or real. In doing so, they reveal how the normative framework of gender excludes and marginalizes those who do not conform—what Butler refers to as the "abject." (Butler, 1993, 235-236)

The abject, in this context, refers to identities and expressions that are cast out of the realm of social legitimacy because they do not align with dominant gender norms. Drag queens, through their performances and online presence, often inhabit this space of abjection, challenging the boundaries of what is considered normal or acceptable. They confront the viewer with the artificiality of gender norms and invite a rethinking of the categories that define identity.

In "*Broken Records: Materiality, Temporality, and Queer Belonging in Mexican Drag Cabaret Performance*" (2019), David Tenorio explores the role of disruptive gender depictions in Mexican drag cabaret and how these performances can foster a sense of belonging and community among queer individuals. Tenorio argues that these performances, by challenging conventional gender norms, not only subvert societal expectations but also create spaces where queer identities can be celebrated and validated.

Disruptive gender depictions in drag cabaret performances can indeed create a sense of belonging and build community. According to Tenorio, these performances challenge the rigid binary understanding of gender by showcasing a wide range of gender expressions that defy normative expectations. By doing so, they create a counterpublic space where marginalized identities can be expressed and acknowledged. This act of subversion is not merely a form of resistance but also a means of constructing a communal identity among performers and audiences alike. The shared experience of witnessing and participating in these performances fosters a sense of solidarity and belonging, particularly among those who may feel alienated by mainstream society's gender norms (Tenorio 2019, 56-59).

Tenorio emphasizes that the materiality and temporality of these performances play a crucial role in this community-building process. The ephemeral nature of drag cabaret—existing in a specific time and place—creates a sense of immediacy and intimacy among participants. Tenorio describes the bonds formed through shared experiences of gender nonconformity and resistance, as a way of belonging; this temporary yet recurring gathering of like-minded individuals allows for the formation of a queer kinship. This sense of kinship extends beyond the performances themselves,

fostering ongoing relationships and support networks within the queer community (Ibid, 72).

Moreover, the material aspects of drag—such as costumes, makeup, and music—serve as powerful tools for expressing and negotiating identities. These elements allow performers to play with and subvert gender norms in creative ways, further emphasizing the fluidity and multiplicity of gender. By doing so, they not only challenge the dominant gender discourse but also offer alternative ways of understanding and experiencing gender. This act of creative expression becomes a communal activity, as audiences engage with and validate these performances, creating a collective sense of belonging and affirmation (Ibid, 59-60).

The distinction between Tenorio's analysis and the focus of this study lies in the different methodologies and online community formation and its transit to the physical world. While Tenorio examines the temporal and material aspects of live drag cabaret, my research is specific for its use of online ethnography to explore depictions like the La Más Draga to give account of how belonging it's contested within the online community and its mobility to the tangible world facilitating the organization and mobilization of the queer community. Online spaces provide a practical set of examples where media has enabled an organized community to come together, share experiences, and advocate for their rights. Unlike the ephemeral nature of live performances, online platforms offer a more permanent and accessible venue for community engagement and activism. Through social media, digital forums, and virtual performances, queer individuals can connect, share resources, and collectively demand recognition and equality in ways that extend beyond the limitations of physical space and time.

Yuval-Davis differentiates between "belonging" and "the politics of belonging" by emphasizing that belonging is an emotional and intimate experience, characterized by a feeling of being "at home" and accepted within a group (Yuval-Davis 2006, 197).

On the other hand, "the politics of belonging" refers to the socio-political mechanisms and power structures that define and regulate the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion within any given community. This concept addresses the criteria by which individuals are deemed to "belong" or not, and who has the authority to make these determinations (Ibid, 205). In the context of drag queens and the La Más Draga, the sense of belonging emerges as performers and audiences share a collective experience that validates and celebrates diverse gender expressions. These performances create a supportive and inclusive environment where individuals can express their

identities without fear of judgment, thus fostering a strong emotional attachment and solidarity among participants. Within the framework of drag queens and queer spaces, the politics of belonging can manifest in various ways, such as the gatekeeping of who can participate in these performances, who is celebrated or marginalized within the community, and how societal norms and expectations shape the identities that are considered legitimate or authentic.

For instance, while the sense of belonging in drag communities can be profound, the politics of belonging can sometimes create tensions, especially when intersecting with issues of race, class, and sexuality. Yuval-Davis's analysis helps us understand that while these spaces can offer refuge and solidarity, they are also sites of negotiation and contestation. The recognition and visibility gained through drag performances do not merely stem from personal expression but are deeply entangled with broader social and political discourses that determine who is included and who is excluded from the narrative of belonging.

While Tenorio's exploration of drag cabaret highlights the creation of a supportive community through shared experiences, Yuval-Davis's distinction between belonging and the politics of belonging offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved. The emotional sense of belonging in these spaces contrasts with the political processes that govern inclusion and exclusion, underscoring the importance of addressing both to fully comprehend the dynamics of community and identity formation within queer spaces.

3. Research Methodologies

In this chapter I describe the process I followed when conducting my participant online ethnography of La Más Draga. I immersed myself in its digital presence across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter between September and December 2022. This approach was guided by a comprehensive methodological framework that drew upon the works of Christine Hine (2000), Annette N. Markham (2013), and Chi Wui Ng (2018). Inspired by Hine's concept of virtual ethnography, I embraced the fluidity and contextual nature of these digital spaces. Rather than seeking a comprehensive or definitive representation of the show's online community, I focused on understanding how reality and identities are constructed and experienced within these specific online contexts. This involved observing the dynamic interactions between fans, participants, and content creators as well as the show's portrayal and its reception, by taking notes on my fieldwork diary, keeping a visual record with screen shots, and way too many saved posts from social media.

Annette N. Markham's work on fieldwork in social media informed my approach to engaging with these digital spaces. Markham emphasizes the importance of reflexivity and understanding the affordances of the medium (Markham 2013). I actively participated in the La Más Draga community by engaging in discussions, sharing and liking posts, and commenting on various content pieces. This allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of fan culture, the discourses surrounding the show, and the ways in which the show impacts and resonates with its audience. For example, I noted the ways in which fans used humor, critique, and support in their interactions, often reflecting broader social and cultural conversations.

Furthermore, I applied Chi Wui Ng's critical multimodal discourse analysis to unpack the layered meaning-making processes occurring in these digital interactions (Ng 2018). This approach was particularly relevant when analyzing the show's YouTube videos, where a combination of visual performances, verbal commentary, and audience reactions creates a rich tapestry of meaning. I examined and revisited my notes and previously saved posts, to analyze the content of the videos and the visual aesthetics, body language, and symbolic elements that contribute to the narratives constructed around the contestants and the show in order to get a wider picture. Additionally, I analyzed the comments and discussions on YouTube and other platforms, identifying

how different audiences interpret and engage with the content, often bringing their own cultural and personal perspectives to the table.

Throughout my research, I remained acutely aware of the ethical considerations inherent in online ethnography. Ensuring the anonymity of participants was paramount, especially given the public nature of the platforms. While direct engagement in public forums can blur the lines of consent, I took steps to inform community members of my research intentions when directly interacting with them. This involved transparently disclosing my role as a researcher and ensuring that my presence did not disrupt the natural flow of conversations. Reflexivity was another critical component, as I constantly reflected on my position as both a participant and observer. I acknowledged my potential influence on the field and strove to maintain objectivity and integrity in interpreting the data.

This ethnographic study not only sheds light on the complex and multi-layered interactions within the La Más Draga community but also illustrates the broader implications of digital ethnography as a research method. It underscores the necessity of adapting traditional ethnographic methodologies to the nuances of online environments and highlights the potential for rich, context-specific insights that can be gained from studying digital cultures. Through this exploration, I have gained a nuanced understanding of La Más Draga's impact on its audience and the vibrant, often contentious, discussions that it sparks across multiple platforms.

3.1. Online Ethnography

I opted to employ online ethnography as the primary research methodology for data collection and active engagement with the audience of La Más Draga. This approach enabled a comprehensive examination of audience reactions and meta-discourse surrounding the show. I began by designing a detailed research map⁵, outlining the various components of the study, including data collection, fieldwork, methodological considerations, platforms of interest, and analytical strategies. The map was a great tool to get a better understanding of what would be the approach of the research and have a clearer idea of how to organize the fieldwork, making a decisions of which platforms to use, how the data was going to be collected, the possible topics that

⁵ Appendix 1

were already on my head and how they make more sense to study within the chosen platforms. The focus was primarily on gathering and analyzing audience reactions through multimodal analysis, particularly before, during, and after each episode.

The starting point for this investigation was the observation of the drag queen phenomenon within the context of *La Más Draga*, a reality competition show broadcast on YouTube every Tuesday at 9 pm (GMT-6). The research concentrated on the program's fifth season, from its premiere on September 27th to its finale on December 13th, 2022, while also taking into account elements from previous seasons. My research included attending the season finale at Arena Mexico in Mexico City and viewing various supplementary YouTube content, such as *Detrás de LMD*⁶, *Día de Muertas*⁷, *Tú las Traes*⁸, *El Velatorio*⁹, *El Salseo*¹⁰, *Espacio LMD*¹¹, *Lo que No Se Vio*¹², *A Calzón Quitado*¹³, *Entre Huerquillas*¹⁴, *El Aferrafter*¹⁵, *Una Revisión Más*¹⁶, and *Trás la Verdrag*¹⁷. Additionally, I conducted a follow-up analysis of trending topics on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, specifically within the official *La Grupa* group), and YouTube, which provided insights into the public discourse and reception of the show. The follow-up analysis consisted of following the conversation on Twitter, for example, with the use of hashtags after an episode ended, to track the peak in the conversation, the “buzz” around specific dynamics that happened during that week / episode. Twitter would be the best place to look right after the episode ended because of the convenience of hashtags to track the topics and the drag queens or users creating threads around it, once it settled down a little bit after a few days, there would be posts in *La Grupa*, either re-telling the topics from Twitter, or creating new narratives and speculating about whatever happened. In that sense, Twitter was better due to its immediacy, but Facebook would be better to hear the echo of the community in an enclosed environment such as *La Grupa*.

⁶ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8KAtrjB_XFWIvOi-22Rl-r

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbXvnnU9W6I&t=1617s>

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8LPNayMRXoBBMUF-VDnXxQQ>

⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8ICaOINk0oOuv4bw2Cjnqqv>

¹⁰ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8IQZDZ_5X-Pht82GsTERgl_

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8J0ACq78kpYpM9S2TZ8-J6X>

¹² <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLgHNO20Y5S8KPrucRf4jlfYXS4bxXFwt>

¹³ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=a+calzon+quitado+

¹⁴ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=entre+huerquillas+

¹⁵ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=el+aferrafter+john+eliu

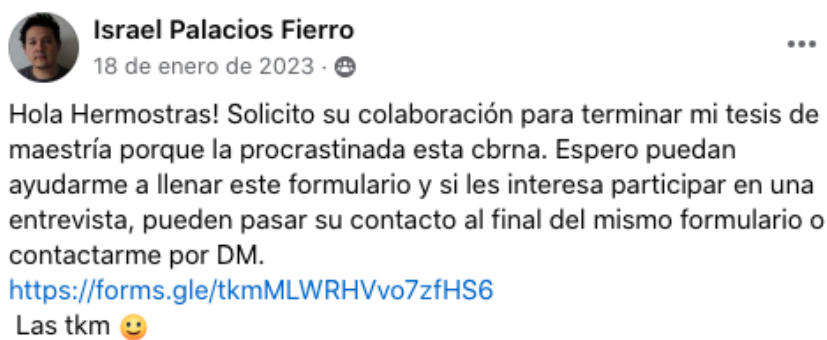
¹⁶ https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=una+revisi%C3%B3n+m%C3%A1s+

¹⁷ https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLnMDmzuky9wrwpVIRvDlo_TgncQPtx1yh

La Grupa is a private Facebook group created (this version) on October 21st, 2021. I mention this version because it was taken down a couple of times. The group was created to discuss topics around RuPaul's Drag Race and La Más Draga after its creation in 2018. The latter became a more popular topic because of its depictions of Mexican culture and the relatability that the audience had with the queens because of the state of origin or just because they could actually go to a bar and see them perform. Nowadays La Grupa is a platform for any member to discuss any topic, although most of the posts include entertainment for the LGBT+ community or the involvement of an LGBT+ character. Anyone can make a post within the group, but it will be approved by the two moderators or the four administrators. The average posting is 50 per day, depending if there is an ongoing season or not.

One of the challenges encountered during this research was managing the time difference and the sheer volume of information generated in real-time, which required constant monitoring and filtering to keep track of the evolving conversation. This complexity underscores the importance of reflexivity and adaptability in digital ethnographic research, as outlined by scholars such as Christine Hine (2000) and Annette N. Markham (2013). The use of multimodal discourse analysis, following Chi Wui Ng's framework, was particularly instrumental in navigating these challenges, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the multi-layered and often rapid exchanges across different platforms (Ng 2018).

3.2. Interviews



Post of the questionnaire made in La Grupa.

In addition to thorough online ethnography, I also conducted a survey and seven interviews among the members of the La Más Draga audience. I developed a comprehensive questionnaire in Spanish¹⁸ using Google Forms, which was subsequently shared in the Facebook groups La Grupa Oficial and La Más Draga. I left the questionnaire all-time open, but the last response I received was 10 days after I posted it. I shared it on January 18th, 2023, after attending the season finale in Mexico City in December 2022.

These groups are central hubs for fans and participants, making them ideal for reaching a diverse audience. The primary objective of the questionnaire was to get a general idea of who the audience are, how they identify themselves, what they feel in regards to the LGBT+ community, where do they live, in Mexico or abroad, what's their relationship with drag and what is it that they like. I wanted to get a better idea of what

¹⁸ Appendix 2

could be the ideal interview guide based on their responses, the information taken from the fieldwork and the attendance to the finale. The response was not robust, with 43 individuals completing the form taking into consideration that just in La Grupa, there are 61,000 members, after categorizing the responses and narrow down the pool of potential interviewees based on their experiences, perspectives, and responses 16 people were willing to participate in an interview, but when I contacted them via social media and email with an invitation to the interview, only 9 of them responded and 7 actually attended the interview.

From the collected data, it was notable that 23.3% of respondents had engaged in drag themselves, while 59.5% had attended a drag show in person. This demographic information was crucial for understanding the participants' level of involvement and experience with the drag community. When asked about their favorite aspects of drag, many highlighted the creativity and artistry involved in crafting a drag persona. This indicates a deep appreciation for the performance and identity aspects of drag, which are central themes in La Más Draga. Interestingly, responses about what it means to be part of the drag community were varied and sometimes paradoxical; many participants emphasized that being part of the community involves actively building it and giving it visibility. This insight underscores the dynamic and evolving nature of the drag community, as well as its emphasis on inclusivity and representation.

After processing this first data set, I designed a list of topics¹⁹ for a semi-structured interview aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the participants' positions within the show's viewership and their interpretations of the drag culture depicted. I wanted to make bullet points as a guide for me to formulate questions based on the answers they were giving to build a conversation-like interview. From these pointers, I wanted to get to know what is belonging to the community for them, how they experience it in different settings, what's the dynamic with their family and how is it opposed or alike to belonging to the LGBT+ community. I had some very specific situations that happened within La Grupa y La Más Draga, such as the invitation as a guest judge to Yuri, a singer who has made homophobic comments, how did they feel in regards to that was interesting to ask since the producers, who are also gay, invited her to the show, does it feel right? Did it change the way they consume La Más Draga? The guest judges take a big part in how the community is going to react to that week's

¹⁹ Appendix 4

episode, since the producers release the poster with the guest judge one day before the episode airs, the audience will have the time to create buzz. The seven interviews were conducted using the platform MeetGeek, which facilitated the recording and provided AI-powered transcripts of the conversations. While this technology was generally helpful, it also posed challenges, such as poor internet connections that occasionally disrupted communication and I had to ask the question again for them to hear it, or ask the answer again. These issues underscore some inherent limitations of conducting online interviews, which can present technical barriers and affect the flow of conversation—challenges less prevalent in face-to-face interactions. I also have a theory about the willingness of interviewees to participate based on the online medium. I believe they would have felt more comfortable in real life and unfortunately this could have been a good question to ask in order to understand the limitations of online mediums / tools and the perception of participants.

During the interviews, I experienced moments of introspection, as I confronted the complexities of my own relationship with the drag community. There were instances where I felt distanced, realizing that my position as a researcher sometimes made me an outsider to the community's lived experiences. This duality was compounded by the normalization of certain empirical knowledge, which sometimes rendered the unique aspects of drag culture invisible to me. This experience highlighted the importance of reflexivity in ethnographic research, as it reminded me of the layers of ignorance—both in terms of unexamined assumptions and the lack of awareness of one's own biases. This reflexive awareness is crucial for maintaining a critical and empathetic perspective throughout the research process.

A constant answer from the interviews in regards to the consumption and attendance to drag shows, was the fact that they feel they can be their true selves when they are in those settings, they would rather attend a gay bar with a show before attending a bar targeted to straight people. All of them who have attended mentioned feeling safer and with less possibilities of being harassed or experiencing any type of violence.

4. Contested belonging of the La Más Draga community

In this chapter, I present the ethnographic findings from my study of the community built around La Más Draga, focusing on the intricate relationship between the politics of belonging and the sense of belonging within. La Más Draga transcends its role as a showcase of exceptional drag artistry, emerging as a significant cultural artifact that engages with broader socio-political issues and cultivates a sense of community among its participants and audience.

The politics of belonging, as delineated by Nira Yuval-Davis (2006, 205), refers to the imaginary borders through which individuals and groups negotiate their positions within social hierarchies and contest exclusionary practices. In this context, La Más Draga serves as a powerful case study, offering a platform for the articulation of gender diversity, sexual identity, and cultural pride. By subverting conventional norms, the show empowers participants and audiences to assert visibility and claim recognition in a society that frequently marginalizes these identities.

David Tenorio's (2022) exploration of disruptive gender depictions in Mexican drag cabaret further illustrates how performances that challenge normative gender frameworks can foster a sense of belonging. He argues that these performances not only subvert societal expectations but also create spaces where marginalized identities can be celebrated and validated. Similarly, La Más Draga enables its participants and fans to challenge exclusionary practices and establish their place within the broader social hierarchy.

The sense of belonging, as discussed by Yuval-Davis, encompasses the emotional and intimate connections individuals feel within a community. This sense of belonging is cultivated through shared experiences and mutual support. Judith Butler's (1990) notion of performativity, which posits that gender is an ongoing performance rather than a fixed attribute, is particularly relevant here. The performances on La Más Draga exemplify Butler's theory, as participants continuously enact and re-enact their identities, thereby creating and reinforcing their sense of belonging within the drag and queer communities.

Moreover, the sense of belonging fostered by La Más Draga extends into both virtual and physical realms, creating inclusive and supportive communities. Terje Toomistu's (2019) study of waria in Indonesia highlights how gender nonconforming

individuals navigate their identities within complex social landscapes. Toomistu emphasizes the importance of both embodied practices and imagined connections in cultivating a sense of belonging. Similarly, La Más Draga enables fans and contestants to form meaningful connections through shared experiences, fostering a collective identity that transcends the boundaries of the show. These interactions highlight the show's role in promoting inclusivity and solidarity, reinforcing the importance of representation and community.

By analyzing the experiences and interactions surrounding La Más Draga, this chapter aims to shed light on the complex interplay between media, culture, and the politics of belonging. It underscores the transformative potential of popular culture in creating spaces where marginalized voices are heard, identities are affirmed, and a profound sense of belonging is nurtured. As Butler (1993) discusses the abject as those identities excluded from the realm of social legitimacy, La Más Draga reclaims these abject identities and places them at the center of its narrative, thus challenging societal norms and expanding the boundaries of belonging.

4.1. Politics of Belonging

La Grupa can be a democratizing space, where the voice of its participants will be heard as long as they don't replicate, promote or perpetuate hate speech. The posts within the group vary from claiming social justice when a member of the LGBT+ community is being attacked online and inviting La Grupa participants to go to the victims posts and show support, to posting theories about who the winners for the upcoming episode will be. The topics are as broad and diverse as the participants in this group, but for the sake of this section, I'll focus on two examples that caught my attention.

The first one is about the Besotón, a kissing marathon that happened at Six Flags, an amusement park located in Mexico City. The park was embroiled in controversy after one of its employees kicked out of the line two men who kissed while waiting to enter one of the rides. On December 29th, a Twitter user, friend of the victims, posted about the incident, making a trending topic with the hashtags #SixFlagsDiscrimina and #SixFlagsHomofobico. The park manager's argument was that the action "violated" Six Flags' rules, as the park's policies included a rule that prohibited affectionate displays among visitors. Nevertheless, other users on Twitter started re-posting pictures of straight couples kissing at the park and calling the manager

out because of his double standards. The news were so big that users on Twitter started organizing a pacific protest where dozens of people from the LGBT+ community gathered at the entrance of the park. The gathering was set on December 30th, where people arrived with megaphones, signs with information, flags representing sexual diversity, and a willingness to kiss their partners. The peaceful demonstration was organized in solidarity with the victims, an action that many online users on Twitter and La Grupa labeled as homophobic. In addition to kissing and showing affection in front of the park, the protesters also danced, performed, and chanted various slogans to combat homophobia and fighting for sexual and reproductive rights. All the logistics and of the protest happened within a day after the first Tweet, thanks to active users sharing and commenting on social media. During my research, I wasn't able to follow this news on Twitter because I didn't even know it happened, until the invitation to attend the protest was posted on La Grupa. This is how this Facebook community has ramifications on other social media, where its participants will post topics that are not necessarily related to La Más Draga, but they are to the right of the LGBT+ community. The way information travels from different social media can be understood better thanks to the multimodal analysis, communication in different social media can evolve distinctively, for example, on Twitter, it's easier to follow-up a trending topic that has been constantly re-tweeted, whereas on Facebook, a more consistent dialogue can be kept, since there are no character restriction maximum unlike on Twitter.

On that same day, the amusement park released a statement indicating that the policy prohibiting affectionate displays had been eliminated. "This policy was applied equally to all visitors, regardless of their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. However, based on feedback from our visitors, we have determined that it is unnecessary to have a policy regarding affectionate behavior, and we have removed it,"²⁰ the statement read. Meanwhile, the Council to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination in Mexico City (COPRED) announced on December 30th they had opened an investigation into the situation affecting the LGBT+ community: "A complaint has been opened regarding the case of discrimination that occurred at an amusement park; it will be addressed under the terms of the Law to Prevent and Eliminate Discrimination in Mexico City for reparations to the victims and measures to prevent recurrence,"²¹ as posted on Twitter.

²⁰ Taken from Six Flags' social media.

²¹ Taken from COPRED's Twitter account.

This is an example of how the online phenomenon leaves the online realm to become tangible within the society. We can put pressure on political actors to gain power as a community, gaining visibility and voice.

The second example I'm going to draw upon is the Rico Club scandal. The news started a little bit the same as with Besotón. A Twitter user shared that a group of his friends were out at night and one of them was getting robbed, when his other friends saw it, they came to his rescue but the robber ran away and hid inside Rico Club, a famous gay bar in Mexico City where they host drag shows. The people at Rico opened the doors for the robber and gave him shelter. A police car was parked nearby, but they did nothing. That's when several people, between 10 and 15 people, came out of Rico with sticks and stones to beat the group of friends. They were dispossessed of their money and mobile phones. The people at the nearby candy stalls, instead of helping, joined the beating, as did a taxi driver who grabbed one of the friends so the robbers could hit him when he tried to run away. This all happened while the robbers were yelling "FAGGOTS!" at them, which makes Twitter users think it was a mix of robbery and a hate crime. What's brutal is that Rico protects them. This isn't the first time we heard of violent incidents involving people from Rico. This thread was posted to pressure and demand that the government of Claudia Sheinbaum, the Head of Government of Mexico City, take a position on this matter, close the Club, untangle the Police corruption and the link between private Club owners and the Police, and to warn people to be careful with this Club. According to the tweet, the ambulance staff said this was the fourth incident of the day, and that it's a common problem in the area. Although they were planning on going to the proper authorities, they wanted to share it on social media to alert people. To be careful, and to take precautions, especially because a "safe place" for the LGBT+ community has harmfully abused its community by being connected to homophobic and violent people in their staff. After the Tweet became a trending topic, Rico Club made a post stating "At Rico Club, we do not support and categorically reject violence, discrimination, or any type of aggression that occurs within institutions."²² Fortunately, the Mayor of the Delegation where the Club is,

²² Taken from their Twitter.

decided to shut it down after the allegations and since it didn't have a valid license. After a month the Club opened back again following training for their staff and paying for the affected peoples' medical bills.

La Grupa in this case, became a medium to organize the community, to inform and to create awareness, and build and strengthen relationships to demand social justice.

4.2. Sense of Belonging

While conducting the online ethnography, navigating La Grupa was one of my favorite things to do. Starting from the fact that the name itself is not grammatically correct. El Grupo, is a masculine word, and as such, it should be used the masculine article "El", instead, its creators decided to subvert the world's gender with the feminine article "La" and adding the feminine ending "a" to "grupo". This might not seem as transcendental, but the reality is that in Mexico Gender-inclusive language is a growing focus, particularly in the context of addressing gender equality and recognizing non-binary identities. Changing the word's gender became a way of mockery within the LGBT+ community. Language, therefore, can be a way to reclaim our identities, for example with the word "joto". It's a word that has been used to put down the gay community for decades, however, the community has reappropriated the word to refer to any gay member in a familiar, yet sassy way. The origin of the word "joto" comes from the Lecumberri Prison in Mexico City, where the guards would place homosexual inmates in cells tagged with the letter J. "Jay" in Spanish translates to "jota," and the term has since been used without gender distinction as either "joto" or "jota.". This appropriation of a derogatory term is a testament to the resilience and agency of the LGBT+ community in Mexico, who have carved out spaces for self-expression and community-building despite societal prejudices.

With the creation of social media and online communities, moderators, developers, participants and members, have created rules and systems to avoid hate speech, either by reporting, banning or calling out people who are being rude. The word "joto" is one of those words which can get you banned. In La Grupa, nevertheless, the gay community has felt compelled to find new ways to communicate with their new reappropriated word without being banned, by using an umbrella emoji that resembles the J shape, demonstrating the resilience and agency of this community in carving out spaces for self-expression despite societal prejudices.

Building communities involves more than just finding common ground, like language as means of identity, within a certain community, it also means creating a strong bond, a strong feeling that fosters empathy toward the participants of said community. There are various levels of community-building, in my research, for example, those people who watch La Más Draga, do not necessarily feel they belong to the community, as stated by one of my interviewees (AARC). He opened up and talked about how the gay community can be very toxic and malicious. In his words, many gay men have the Regina George²³ complex because it's a defense mechanism to cope with the world we live in. He mentioned that he is not an active participant of La Grupa, although he is part of it, but he still enjoys watching La Más Draga as a means of entertainment with his partner, and he has even dragged himself when hanging with his friends at home. He doesn't want to go out in full drag because he is afraid he is going to be harassed or beaten, as he has mentioned that he doesn't like to go out to straight places or hanging with straight people.

An ideal place to hangout in full drag would be a gay club, where you would expect to feel supported by the staff, and the people who attend these places. Unfortunately, acceptance in these kinds of places is not necessarily a warranty. Another one of my interviewees, DG, experienced discrimination when he was at a gay club watching a drag show with his friends in Puerto Vallarta, a well known gay capital in México that brings a lot of tourism from the United States and Canada. He stated that the people at the club were mostly white, and at some point while he was dancing with a drink on hand, he was asked by another attendee if he was a worker at the club, which in his words, it's an odd thing to ask someone who is drinking and dancing. He later mentioned that he and his friends were asking for drinks and the bartenders were not paying attention to them, so they delayed serving them drinks and when they finally did, they were the only group given plastic cups for their drinks while everyone else got glass cups. He therefore continued talking about how having a darker skin color has been something that people have always discriminated against him, this was not new. He works at a Hotel in the same city and he has noticed how people talk to him in comparison with his lighter skinned co-workers. School was also a place where feeling safe was not warranted either, he mentioned that when he first came out of the closet when he was 14 years old, he had recently changed schools from a public highschool to

²³ Character from the movie "Mean Girls". The leader of the alpha group in high school, the beautiful and popular girl. She's mean, acid, strong and funny.

a private one thanks to a scholarship. He mentioned being beaten because of classism (coming from a public school), racism (being dark skinned), and homophobia (being gay). He was part of a sports team in that high school and in a competition outside the city, sleeping arrangements were divided by sex, since the students had to share beds, unfortunately, since he was gay, he was sent to sleep on the floor. One of the things that helped him at that time was being more “masculine” as a mechanism to be accepted, but a lot has changed since then, he doesn’t feel the need to perform masculinity for anyone, especially not when he is around people from the LGBT+ community.

The reality is that acceptance is difficult to get as a gay man, especially in Mexico, where the majority of the population is catholic, and many families use their beliefs to reject their children based on their sexual identity. Nowadays the catholic church is not against being gay, it is still not fully accepted within traditional Mexican households. Three of my interviews have experienced discrimination either at home or in a work setting based on religious statements. AARC mentioned that for him, as a highschool teacher in a private institution, his higher-ups called him out for being gay trying to sustain their hate speech under religious beliefs. Whereas DAAD tells how he has started a way of passive activism by teaching their religious community about the gay community, so little by little he has helped to build acceptance despite what beliefs would teach. He does admit it’s been a rocky path and having friction with some Priests, because they don’t want to see him and they have tried to stop him from being an active member of his church. He says he has always been respectful, and that’s one of the reasons he demands respect and other people from the religious community respect him and support him. Half of the participants say they have struggled with coming out of the closet with their family, either their nuclear family (mom/dad) or extended family, this type of rejection, participants say, is based on their families’ belief, although in the end they all have an okay relationship with their family, the type of dynamic in their relation is mostly don’t ask don’t tell, as a way to divert from the topic and not actually address it.

This is why it's said that gay people can choose their own family. As Johnny Carmona mentioned at the fifth season’s finale, let’s build community, let's get together at a bar for a viewing party of the show, let’s get to know each other and support each other. Viewing parties have become a way of self organization within La Grupa, and outside, to keep track of the show. For example, El Marrakesh, a gay bar in Mexico City, would host these viewing parties in order to bring people to their bar and stimulate

their economy, and this economy is not only monetary for the bar, it is also building strong connections within the community. They would advertise within La Grupa or on their official social media accounts. The situation is not as easy for people who live where there aren't any gay bars. That requires them to organize with friends, find someone who can host and live the experience of the show at home bringing snacks and soft drinks, or just watching by yourself at home, just like stated by HDCV, watching it online and being part of La Grupa is not a replacement to live the experience in living flesh, but it's nice knowing and seeing that there is people there whom you can relate, feel heard, seen and kinned.

4.3. Contested Belonging

One of the things that I have struggled the most is trying to understand the different nuances between sense of belonging and politics of belonging since there are overlapping features that explain the other. After analyzing the social phenomena and the excerpts from the interviews, my understanding of the dynamic of these two concepts is more grounded. The sense of belonging works in function of the politics of belonging, that is, whenever one of the interviewees had experienced some sort of discrimination, the feeling of rejection, exclusion or otherness from a certain group or community, would be the sense of belonging, or not belonging, whereas the politics of belonging are those systems that enabled the discrimination to happen. These systems are structural in the way in which the society is built, they are the principle and foundation of Mexican society, they are ingrained in us and sometimes it's even difficult to recognise them at all. This example of belonging draws upon the negative feelings that the community has experienced, but sense of belonging is also related to the positive ones that make people feel included, such as relatability, shared experience, and the systems that enable those feelings, the politics of belonging, support systems that build agency through inclusion, such as political structures that look after the wellbeing of the LGBT+ community, or an online community that allows everyone to have a voice of their own, to organize, plan and execute self-defense mechanisms to achieve a common goal. Exist.

Conclusion

The aim of this research was to gain a better understanding of the impact that a show such as La Más Draga has on the audience's sense of belonging to the Mexican drag queen phenomenon. The research question on my thesis was how the online connections around the La Más Draga show are generated, bifurcated, and transformed into real-world support systems for the LGBTQ+ community. I employed a digital ethnography, interviews, and attended the season finale to study how the relationships initially forged online subsequently manifest in tangible spaces as resources for the LGBTQ+ community.

The sense of belonging is in constant negotiation with its politics, the delimitation of those boundaries that subject the emotional connection with a group or a community that can be physical or digital, this negotiation develops into a continuous dynamic experience where each person is trying to find themselves and their place.

This is what happens when people find common ground, they build a community such as La Grupa. First created by drag depictions such as Rupaul's Drag Race, fueled and hyped by National drag queens from La Más Draga. Social media has the opportunity to create online spaces where people come together and find support. The stories and struggles of minorities often aren't heard, but social media can provide a platform to amplify and share them with millions of people across the country. This exposure helps share lived experiences about different forms of oppression directly from the underrepresented. The interviews showed me the willingness of the community to commit, to learn and to be vessels of knowledge, to open-up for me, to host and offer a place for me to stay whenever I go back home. Whereas the synergies found during the online ethnography gave account of my hypothesis. Although the community can be a toxic vicious place where sassy queens will read you to filth for no apparent reason, aka the Regina George effect, as stated by AARC, the sum of all the effort that the community as a whole put into helping each other, transcends the defense mechanisms that we have developed, fostered and brewed to get back to those who have done us wrong. La Más Draga as a cultural object is meant to be entertainment, but the community that it has created goes beyond an average fandom. It has shown its strength and how grown it is when it was needed during the organization of the Besotón. It transcended the barriers of the online world permeating the physical world.

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Resümee

Analüüs tööle: "Mehhiko drag-kultuur: vaidlustatud kuuluvuse veebietenograafia"

Töö pealkirjaga "Mehhiko drag-kultuur: vaidlustatud kuuluvuse veebietenograafia" uurib drag-kultuuri ristumiskohta Mehhiko kontekstis, keskendudes eelkõige veebiruumile ja selle mõjudele LGBTQ+ kogukonna kuuluvustunde suhtes. Uurimus analüüsib, kuidas Mehhiko drag, eelkõige tõsielusaate "La Más Draga" kaudu, soodustab kogukonna- ja kuuluvustunnet oma vaatajaskonna seas, eriti LGBTQ+ kogukonnas.

Uurimuse peamine eesmärk on mõista, kuidas Mehhiko drag-kultuur, eriti läbi "La Más Draga" veebisaate, aitab kaasa LGBTQ+ kogukonna kuuluvustundele. Eesmärk on uurida, kuidas vaatajate vahelised veebisuhted ja -koostöö muutuvad reaalse maailma toetus- ja kogukonnasuheteks. Samuti keskendub töö küsimusele, kuidas veebis esindatud Mehhiko drag-kultuur, just "La Más Draga" kaudu, loob kuuluvustunnet oma vaatajaskonna seas ning millised mehhanismid aitavad selle saate ümber kujunenud veebikontaktidel muutuda LGBTQ+ kogukonna jaoks käegakatsutavateks toetusstruktuurideks.

Töö tugineb mitmetele võtmelistele teoreetilistele kontseptsioonidele, sealhulgas Judith Butler'i performatiivsuse teorialele, mis on töö keskmes. Butler'i idee, et sugu on etendus, mitte kaasasündinud identiteet, on siin oluline analüüsid, kuidas drag-kultuur Mehhikos, nagu "La Más Draga" kujutamisel, seab kahtluse alla ja õõnestab traditsioonilisi soorolle. Nira Yuval-Davis'e kuuluvuspoliitika teooriat kasutatakse selleks, et uurida, kuidas LGBTQ+ kogukonna liikmed kogevad ja mõtestavad oma kuuluvust nii veebis kui ka realses elus. Uurimus vaatlleb, kuidas "La Más Draga" toimib kuuluvuse loomise ja vaidlustamise kohana Mehhiko kontekstis. Lisaks rakendab töö Terje Toomistu kontseptsioone teooriatest "Embodied Lives" ja "Imagined Reaches", et mõista osalejate ja vaatajaskonna soolist subjektiivsust ja kuuluvuspüüdlusi.

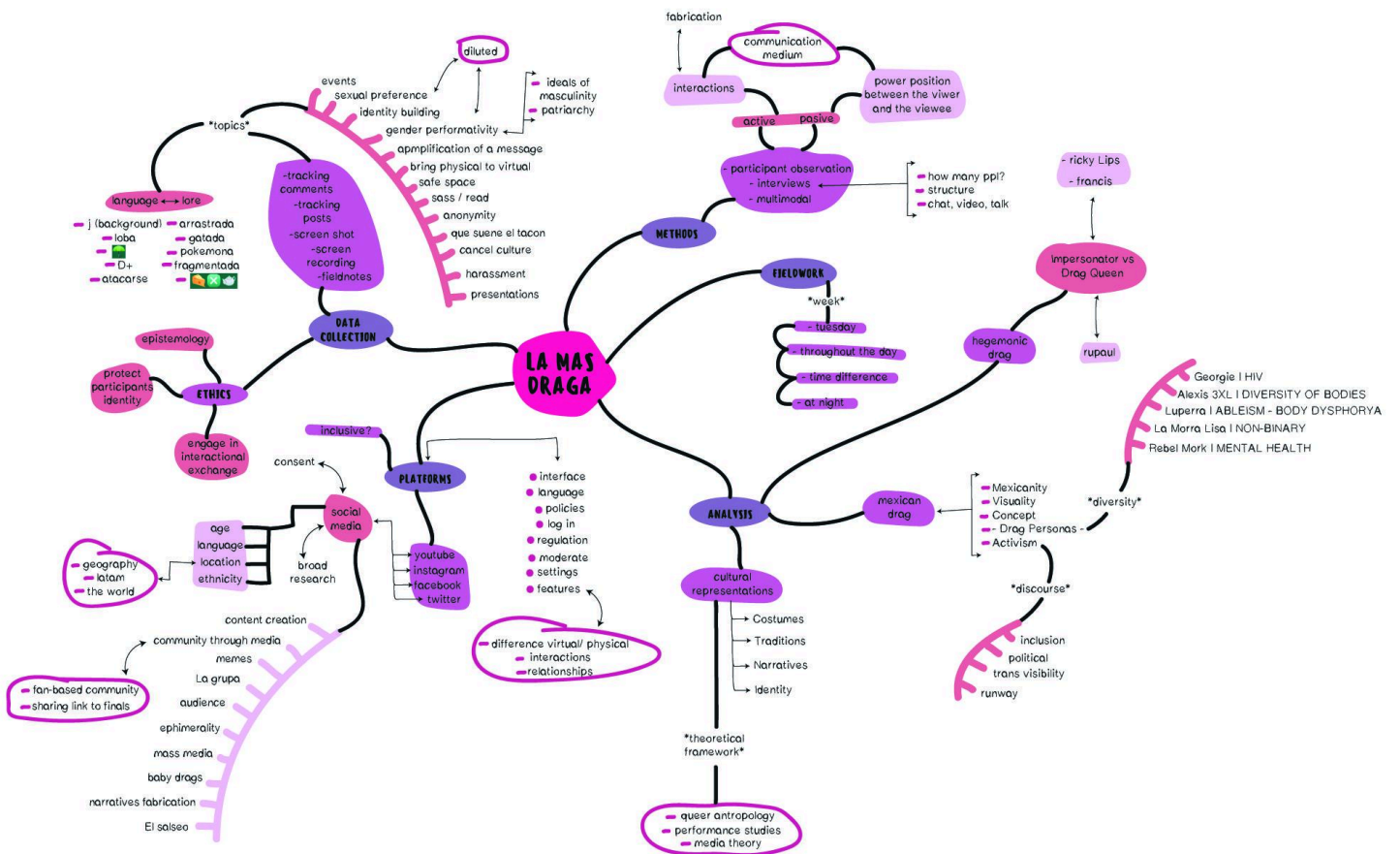
Empiiriline alus sellele tööle põhineb veebietenograafial, mis viidi läbi 2022. aasta septembrist detsembrini, keskendudes "La Más Draga" viiendale hooajale. Andmeid koguti mitmetelt sotsiaalmeedia platvormidelt, sealhulgas YouTube, Facebook ja Twitter, kus saadet edastati ja arutati. Lisaks hõlmab uurimus intervjuusid vaatajatega

ja osalejatega, et saada sügavamaid teadmisi nende kogemustest ja saate poolt loodud kogukonnatunnetusest.

Uurimus järeldeb, et "La Más Draga" oluliselt suurendab LGBTQ+ kogukonna nähtavust Mehhikos ja soodustab tugeva kuuluvustunde teket vaatajaskonna seas. Saade toimib platvormina, kus tähistatakse Mehhiko kultuuri ja LGBTQ+ identiteete, luues vaatajatele ruumi ühendamiseks ja kogukonna leidmiseks alternatiivsetes veebiruumides nagu La Grupa. Uuring näitab, et La Grupa sees loodud veebikontaktid laienevad sageli reaalsesse maailma toetusvõrgustikeks, pakkudes ressursse ja kogukonnatunnet neile, kellel võib oma kohalikes keskkondades puududa juurdepääs queer-ruumidele.

Appendix 1

Research Map



Appendix 2

Questionnaire posted on facebook group to get possible interviewees. ESP (original).

Drag Mexicano

Hola Hermostra! El objeto de este formulario es recabar información a manera de trabajo de campo para mi tesis de Maestría. Si te interesa participar en una entrevista, deja tus datos al final.

1. Alguna vez has hecho Drag?

Marca solo un óvalo.

Sí

No

2. Has visto shows de Dragas en vivo?

Marca solo un óvalo.

Si

No

3. Qué es lo que más te gusta del Drag?

4. Qué opinas del Drag Mexicano en comparación con otro tipo de Drag alrededor del Mundo?

5. Te consideras parte de la Comunidad LGBT+?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Sí
 No
 Aliado/a

6. Qué consideras que significa formar parte de la comunidad? (Ser activista, ser vocal, salir del closet, etc.)

7. Cómo te identificas?

Marca solo un óvalo.

- Chico
 Chica
 No binario/a
 No me importa

8. En qué país vives?

9. Te gustaría participar en una entrevista? (Vía Zoom)

Marca solo un óvalo.

Si

No

10. Deja tu información de contacto (Facebook, Instagram WhatsApp o Correo Electrónico)

Appendix 3

Questionnaire posted on facebook group to get possible interviewees. ENG (translation.

Title: Mexican Drag

Introduction:

Hello Beautiful! The purpose of this form is to collect information for fieldwork for my Master's thesis. If you are interested in participating in an interview, leave your contact details at the end.

Questions:

1.- Have you ever done Drag?

Yes

No

2.- Have you seen live Drag shows?

Yes

No

3.- What do you like most about Drag?

4.- What do you think of Mexican Drag compared to other types of Drag around the world?

5.- Do you consider yourself part of the LGBT+ Community?

Yes

No

Ally

6.- What do you think it means to be part of the community? (Being an activist, being vocal, coming out, etc.)

7.- How do you identify?

Male

Female

Non-binary

Doesn't matter

8.- In which country do you live?

9.- Would you like to participate in an interview? (Via Zoom)

Yes

No

10.- Leave your contact information (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Email)

Appendix 4

List of topics for interview.

- Self-identification. Belonging.
- LGBT+ places. Safety.
- Drag, and its depictions, affinity? entertainment? activism?
- La Más Draga, highlights, why?
- Yuri gate, Veneno gate, Six Flags gate.
- Comments, cancel culture.
- Who belongs, who doesn't.
- Trans, misogyny.
- Wendy & Raquel
- Drag influencers, who? how? Voice and accountability.
- Belonging to the community.

Appendix 5

Interviewees chart.

Pseudonym	Age	Date	Duration	Attended a drag show	Performed as a drag	Gender	Location
AARC	27	2023-02-26	32:10 min	Yes	Yes	cis/male	Mexico City
DAAD	24	2023-02-21	31:45 min	Yes	No	cis/male	Monterrey
HDCV	21	2023-02-26	26:36 min	No	No	x/male	Estado de Mexico
AT	32	2023-02-21	31:16 min	Yes	No	cis/male	Guerrero
VB	28	2023-02-20	41:53 min	Yes	No	cis/male	Veracruz
DG	29	2023-02-20	48:47 min	Yes	No	cis/male	Oaxaca
MALV	27	2023-02-20	34:21 nib	Yes	No	cis/male	Tabasco

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MEXICAN DRAG CULTURE: AN ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY OF CONTESTED BELONGING

supervised by Dr. Terje Toomistu

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13/08/2024