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Muxerista Pedagogies and Praxis:

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***Transnacionalizando y Transfronterizando: Arte, Expresiones e
Iniciativas de la Jotería desde abajo del Globo Sur en México***

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Transnacionalizando y Transfronterizando: Arte, Expresiones e Iniciativas de la Jotería desde abajo del Globo Sur en México

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Abstract

This article offers a response to the asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and Global South (Dussel, 1993). We affirm that the future of Jotería Studies depends on the inclusion, visibility, and theoretical recognition of Jotería projects desde abajo, or from the subaltern, the pueblos, and the rural communities of the Global South. We ask the following question: How can Jotería Studies engage a transnational relationship with Global South Jotería scholars, activists, and artists? We offer several narratives of art, activism, and scholarship from Mexico as living examples of Jotería projects from the Global South that bridge dialogue with Jotería from the Global North. Furthermore, we use a Muxerista–Jotería framework to show how these projects operate as the nagueal across borders, a transformative and shape-shifting force that traverses geopolitical, linguistic, theoretical, and epistemic boundaries to create horizontal spaces of exchange and solidarity.

Keywords: rurality, Muxerista–Jotería, Global South, Jotería Studies, transnational

Introduction

Jotería is a movement, a consciousness, and a mode of world-making that refuses coloniality in all its forms (Bañales, 2014). With its emergence in Chicanx/Latinx studies, queer and trans studies, and a particular focus on Chicana Latina feminism, Jotería Studies serves as a decolonial site that challenges and transcends “histories, identities, scholarly works, and artistic and activist practices of queer Chicanx and Latinx peoples” (Alvarez Jr. & Estrada, 2019, p. 864). Additionally, scholars and activists have turned to Jotería Studies, as an individual and political identity (Revilla & Santillana, 2014), epistemology (Pérez, 2014), and a praxis (Alvarez Jr., 2014) that brings together art, activism, and scholarship to create spaces of healing, resistance, and collective transformation (Alvarez Jr. & Estrada, 2019; Orozco, 2021; Revilla, 2014). Extending the work of Jotería Studies and the many scholars, activists, and artists, we assert that its institutionalization in the Global North has sometimes reproduced hemispheric hierarchies that privilege Northern academic discourses over Southern community knowledges. Therefore, we ask the following question: How can Jotería Studies engage a transnational relationship with Global South Jotería scholars, activists, and artists?

This article offers a response to the asymmetrical power relations between the Global North and Global South (Dussel, 1993). We affirm that the future of Jotería Studies depends on the inclusion, visibility, and theoretical recognition of Jotería projects *desde abajo*¹, or from the subaltern, the pueblos, and the rural communities of the Global South. We offer several narratives of art, activism, and scholarship from Mexico as living examples of Jotería projects from the Global South that bridge dialogue with Jotería from the Global North. Furthermore, we use a Muxerista–Jotería framework to show how these projects operate as the *nagual*² across borders, a transformative and shape-shifting force that traverses geopolitical, linguistic, theoretical, and epistemic boundaries to create horizontal spaces of exchange and solidarity.

We first begin by naming our communion with a Muxerista–Jotería epistemology, taking our learnings from Muxerista practices to how we engage our Jotería projects. We then provide our own *jotería-historias* (Revilla & Santillana, 2014) to situate how we come to this work and the ways we continue to enact it in our praxis. Following this, we provide several

¹ Defined by Bañales (2017) as Jotería activism from below as decolonial praxis.

² Anzaldúa (1987) defines *nagual* as a shape-shifting power to transform themselves and their reality, often representing the psychic, animal, and indigenous self, moving between worlds.

examples of Jotería projects desde abajo, asserting the many ways that the Global South, in particular Mexico, builds on the field of Jotería Studies. We end by providing final reflections and asking critical questions for scholars, artists, and activists that want to engage in intentional and relational responsibility with Jotería desde el Globo Sur.

In Communion with a Muxerista–Jotería Epistemology

We explicitly lean on a Muxerista–Jotería framework to guide how we present the different Jotería projects desde abajo, from the Global South. Revilla et al. (2022) name Muxerista–Jotería as an identity, thought, and politic that builds upon the legacy of Chicana/x and Latina/x feminism and contemporary works of Muxeristas (Santillana, 2011); and a Muxerista is defined as “a nonbinary, gender-fluid, gender-inclusive, trans, queer, and/or sexually inclusive Chicanx/Latinx (including people of Indigenx, African, and Asian ancestry) identity that honors our multiple, intersecting identities and communities while uplifting our radical commitment to activism, organizing, personal and collective liberation, and social transformation (Revilla et al., 2022, p. 24). A Muxerista–Jotería epistemology refuses the separation between theory and practice, insisting instead on their unity. In this spirit, we approach the Jotería narratives of the Global South as co-authored knowledges that embody what Muxerista love, care, and spirituality look like in *transfronterizo* action in communion. They teach us that the border, theoretically and physically, is not simply a line to be crossed but a living space of relation, contradiction, and creativity.

This commitment to relationality is why we invoke and name the *nagual* across borders. In Mesoamerican cosmology, the *nagual* is a shapeshifter, capable of traversing worlds and embodying multiple forms. As such, our Muxerista–Jotería communion becomes a *nagual* across borders, crossing national, linguistic, theoretical, and epistemic divides to foster understanding without assimilation. It translates without extracting, listens without consuming, and builds bridges that are reciprocal rather than exploitative. The Jotería artists and activists featured in this article embody this *nagual* energy through their creative and political labor, which reimagines what it means to organize, theorize, and love across hemispheres. In centering these narratives, this essay asserts that the most transformative work in Jotería Studies is already happening outside the metropolises of the North, in the rural collectives, drag stages, and community airwaves of the South. These are not peripheries of theory, but it's the beating heart. They remind us that the decolonial horizon of Jotería is not a distant goal, it is already

here, unfolding in the voices, bodies, and movements of Jotería who continue to teach us how to cross borders with love, accountability, and imagination.

Jotería-Historias

As we engage with a Muxerista–Jotería epistemology, it becomes essential to locate ourselves within the work. Our commitments to community, activism, and knowledge production are inseparable from our lived experiences and social positions. Recognizing our own roles within structures of privilege and marginalization allows us to practice the accountability that Muxerista praxis demands from each one of us. In the following, we present our individual and collective jotería-historias (Revilla & Santillana, 2014) to honor transparency, relationality, and the deep interconnection between who we are and the transformative work we carry out alongside our communities.

Luis grew up for part of his life in rural Tototlán and Ocotlán, Jalisco, where his ancestors have resided since the 1800s, according to birth records. While Luis is now mostly situated in the Global North, he has done his due diligence to maintain his familial, spiritual, and cultural connection to the Global South. They are Two-Spirit, Citizen of the N'de Apache Nation, Jotx, Chicanx, Transfronterizo. They are also a Professor of Queer Studies and Chicanx Studies at California State University, Northridge. Additionally, they are the co-founder of Toto-Diverso and Jotería Transfronteriza Rural, both rural collectives dedicated to organizing initiatives, marches, and protests across rural México. Luis acknowledges their privileges of holding a PhD, being a triple citizen, United States, México, and N'de Apache Nation, educated in the Global North, and (recently) forming part of the middle class (but was of a working-class background when they started working with fellow members of Jotería Transfronteriza Rural and Toto-Diverso). They also pledge to use their privileges to advance activist work in the Global South in a manner that embraces reciprocity, transactional exchange, and consistent accountability work. Luis's love for their Jotería community informs their activism in the Global South, a community they have been working with since 2018; pledge to use their social position and location to advance activist work in the Global South in a manner that embraces reciprocity, transactional exchange, and consistent accountability.

Geovani Temich is situated in the Global South. Originally from Veracruz and now living in Jalisco, they identify as Mexicanx, gay, activist, migratory, and as a co-founder of Radio Diversa, a radio program dedicated to theorizing and uplifting rural Jotería voices, as well as

Jotería Transfronteriza Rural. They are also an accomplished radiologist and health professional. Geovani recognizes the privilege that comes with being college-educated and commits to using that privilege and their access to university spaces to uplift their communities. Their dedication, love, and connection to Ocotlán deeply inform their activist praxis.

Mario Marín also resides in the Global South. Born and raised in Ocotlán, Jalisco, they identify as gender-fluid, Mexicanx, rural, and as an activist. They are a professor at the University of Guadalajara's Ocotlán campus and co-founder of Radio Diversa and Jotería Transfronteriza Rural. Holding a master's degree in psychology, they acknowledge the privilege of higher education and university affiliation. Their dedication, love, and connection to Ocotlán likewise shape their activist praxis.

Lastly, José Ramón Ramírez Vega lives and is situated in the Global South town of Poncitlán, Jalisco, but working in Ocotlán, Jalisco. They identify as gender-fluid, Mexicanx, shaman, and activist. As a physical fitness instructor at Misiones Cultural Rurales and co-founder of Jotería Transfronteriza Rural, they also recognize the privilege that comes with holding a bachelor's degree and participating in university spaces. Their dedication, love, and connection to Ocotlán continue to inform their activist praxis.

Building upon our shared commitments to activism, education, and community transformation in Ocotlán and beyond, the collective work of Jotería Transfronteriza Rural emerges as ways of being and doing with Jotería in the Global South. Rooted in the lived experiences of rural queer and trans communities in western Mexico, this project bridges academic inquiry, artistic expression, and grassroots organizing. It represents an ongoing dialogue between local realities and transnational networks of resistance. The following section traces the evolution of these efforts and situates them as liberatory and social justice examples that respond to our question at the beginning of this article.

La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural: Activismos, Transformismo, y Conocimiento al Aire

In 2023, I, Luis joined the Toto-Diverso committee and helped to organize the first Pride *Marcha* in Tototlán's history that same summer. It was through Toto-Diverso that I met José, a member of Poncitlán Diverso, the organizing committee for the neighboring municipalities *marcha* de Poncitlán. As José and I found, enclave tactics are pervasive across

Official Banner for the GDL Pride 2025 Float



2026 GDL Parade Float



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horizontal knowledge production by transcending various borders including chronemic borders, municipal borders, cosmopolitan/rurales borders, state borders, nation-state borders, internacionales, and ultimately, bridging and horizontalizing the unequal axis of the Global North and Global South border in the context of Jotería activism. This has led to forming alliances with rural collectives in Veracruz and Oaxaca, hoping to further extend the coalition of *marchas* across rural México.

Figure 3

La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural Logo



As a collective, we have organized various initiatives across rural Mexico . Our main objective is to support each other when organizing our *marchas*. However, we have also formulated other projects and initiatives that go beyond Pride Month. These initiatives are one way that we center Jotería as a practice of occupying space in rural México. In the following, we share several intimate reflections of our projects that contribute to the broader engagement of La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural. For example, in 2024, one of our committee members, Jessica, became the CEO of El VIP, a Drag and *transformista* bar in rural Poncitlán, Jalisco.

El VIP as CounterStory Space of Resistance as told by José Ramón Ramírez

El VIP is a drag and *transformista* bar that hosts drag shows, *transformismos* and *certámenes* every weekend since its opening in 2021. *El VIP* is also the space where the planning for the first *marcha* of Poncitlán took place. The uniqueness of this space is brought to life because the pueblo of Poncitlán is very small. In fact, Ocotlán has more resources and a larger population than Poncitlán, yet Ocotlán has yet to open an queer and trans friendly space. Due to the advocacy of Jessica, a committee member of La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural, and José, one of the authors of this article, *El VIP* was able to serve the community of Poncitlán. José shares,

El escenario VIP que es este un bar que también se abrió hace apenas poco aquí en Poncitlán, y es un espacio dedicado a dar shows. Es como para las personas que no podíamos asistir allá en Guadalajara. La creadora de este bar, como que dijo, Bueno, luego [necesitamos un bar LGBTQIA+] aquí en Poncitlán. Y fíjate que pegó muy bien, o sea, imagínate que había tanta necesidad. Se lo volvió un lugar muy icónico. De repente, todos nos reunimos. Ahí invitaron a muchas drag queens y organizaron este concurso de drag. Y fíjate que algo bien curioso de este concurso que, por cierto, gané a este fue que cuando sale, o sea, lo publica la convocatoria. Me ha tocado ver parejas heterosexuales, estando ahí por entre, por irse a divertir parejas lesbi lésbicas, parejas homosexuales.

José reflection of what *El VIP* has become for Poncitlán speaks to the way Jotería practices transcend across the municipality. What makes *El VIP* even more special is that it is now Jotería-owned, as Jessica recently purchased it, and became the first Trans CEO, and re-inaugurated it the same day as Tototlán's second Pride *Marcha*. The space serves as a site of resistance like the performances of drag and transformismo cultural production co-organized and funded by members of the collective. Figure 4 shows the inside of the bar as an example of a Jotería space in rural México, namely, Poncitlán.

Figure 4

El escenario dentro de EL VIP



Radio Diversa

The second initiative we highlight is Radio Diversa, a radio show launched by founders and hosts Geovani Temich and Mario Marín, see Figure 5. Radio Diversa is housed at Radio Universidad de Guadalajara on the Ocotlán, Jalisco campus. The purpose of this radio show is to make knowledge accessible to communities across rural zones of Los Altos De Jalisco. Every Friday, Geovani and Mario invite artists, activists, and academics from across Mexico to share their experiences and conocimiento on their show. This is done through the

embrace of Jotería vernaculars and modes of communication such as chisme (Gutierrez-Perez, 2017; Gonzalez et al., 2023). When asking them about their experience as co-hosts and founders, Geovani and Mario reflected on the following,

Radio Diversa para mí, Geovani, significa el fin y el inicio de una nueva historia, desde el interior de mi alma y desde los sueños que tenía aquel Geovani de 6 años de edad, que quería ser actor, bailarín, locutor... Quería ser una estrella y salir en la radio y la televisión. Hoy, a casi un año de ser uno de los locutores de un programa de radio enfocado a la diversidad sexual en la región ciénega, me siento muy orgulloso y muy contento de todo lo que se ha logrado con la incidencia y de los resultados que hemos tenido al tener tantos contactos, con tantas colectivas de la región ciénega y de la zona metropolitana de Guadalajara, Tlajomulco de Zúñiga. Solo quiero agradecer el apoyo que me ha brindado mi familia, mi esposo, y sobre todo por el apoyo que nos ha brindado la maestra Claudia Contreras, Directora de la Radio UDG Ocotlán. Y agradecimiento en especial a mi compañero de esta lucha, a mi manina, al gran Mario Marín.

Mario Marín goes on to share,

El significado que para mí, Mario Marín, ha tenido este programa, el cual, busca incidir en materia de las poblaciones de la diversidad sexogenérica, "Radio Diversa" se ha convertido en un lugar seguro, un lugar donde he encontrado un sentido de pertenencia, un lugar que hizo que recobrara la confianza, el poder y la autoestima en mi persona, sé que puede llegar a parecer superfluo, esto que narro para algunas personas, pero el hecho de haber cumplido este sueño que durante mi infancia, adolescencia, y parte de mi adultez temprana tuve, me hizo saber que los objetivos son alcanzables, y gracias a ellos hoy me siento imparable. Radio Diversa se ha convertido en un referente dentro de nuestra comunidad, donde hemos tejido grandes redes de apoyo para así sostenernos y entendernos, Radio Diversa cómo su eslogan lo dice, *"Es un lugar donde todas las voces son escuchadas y valoradas"*.

As highlighted in their reflections, Geovani and Mario created a space for Jotería communities in rural México to have their realities and narratives represented via a more accessible communication medium that reaches across time and space.

Figure 5

Pictures from Radio Diversa/Jotería Transfronteriza Rural Collective 2024



Radio as a Decolonial Bridge: Rumbo al Norte and Transfronteriza Dialogue

In the aftermath of the *marcha*, Professor of Journalism and Radio Universidad de Guadalajara's director, Dra. Claudia Contreras, invited members of the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS), to guest star on her show *Rumbo Hacia el Norte*. This program aired across Guadalajara and rural zones of Jalisco, reaching some of the most vulnerable and subaltern communities in Mexico, which highlighted the relationship between Jotería of the Global North and Global South.

As part of La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural's ongoing effort to transfronterizar knowledge and expand accessible communication channels, the relationship with AJAAS and Radio Universidad de Guadalajara has become a vital bridge connecting academic and community-based Jotería work. This partnership has been nurtured through *confianza* and a shared commitment to amplifying Jotería voces *desde abajo*. Dra. Claudia Contreras continuously reminds us that radio, when guided by love and community care, can become a decolonial practice of listening. Her solidarity and belief in accessible communication have inspired many of our projects that bridge academic and community spaces.

More recently, La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural collaborated with Radio Universidad de Guadalajara to host a special live broadcast of *Rumbo Hacia el Norte*, see Figure 6. This was a two-part episode titled, "*Jotería Transfronteriza, Sanación, Arte y Resistencia*" (Episodes 119–120), to brought together members of La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural and the Association for Jotería Arts, Activism, and Scholarship (AJAAS) for a public conversation about the future of Jotería Studies and the importance of rural Jotería in México. This program aired across

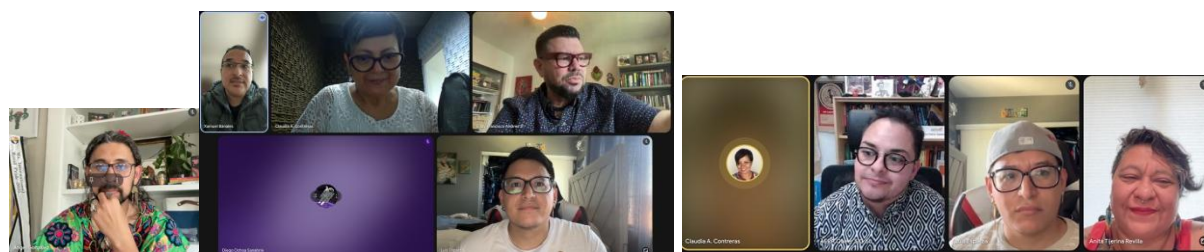
Ocotlán and Guadalajara, Jalisco, serving as both a literal and symbolic platform for cross-border dialogue between the Global North and the Global South.

The two-part episode featured several foundational scholars of Jotería Studies and long-time board members of AJAAS, including Dr. Anita Revilla-Tijerina, Professor of Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies at California State University, Los Angeles, Dr. Xamuel Bañales, Professor of Ethnic Studies at California State University, Stanislaus, Dr. Eddy Alvarez, Chair of Chicana/o Studies at California State University, Fullerton, Dr. Ángel González, Assistant Professor of Higher Education Administration and Leadership at Fresno State University, and Dr. Omi Salas-SantaCruz, Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Utah. Together, these Jotería scholars and activists engaged in a heartfelt discussion about art, organizing, and pedagogy as interconnected forms of liberation. The panel highlighted how Jotería Studies continues to evolve as a transnational project that connects and is accountable to communities across hemispheres.

Beyond its symbolic importance, *Rumbo Hacia el Norte* exemplifies how radio functions as an accessible and decolonial medium of knowledge production. In regions where academic institutions remain geographically or linguistically distant, radio provides a horizontal platform for Jotería voices to circulate beyond the paywalls of the university. Radio becomes both a tool and a metaphor for Muxerista–Jotería praxis: it transmits across boundaries, amplifies silenced voices, and connects those on the peripheries to a wider network of care and consciousness. It is, in essence, the nagual across frequencies, carrying stories and theory from the pueblos of the South to the academic spaces of the North, and back again.

Figure 6

AJAAS Members on Rumbo Hacia el Norte



Jotería Reflexiones

The Muxerista ethos guiding these projects demands that knowledge production be accountable, relational, and loving. It requires scholars and organizers alike to ask what they

know and how their knowing transforms their communities. This ethical commitment also means acknowledging privilege, linguistic, academic, and geopolitical, and using it to open pathways for others. The members of La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural actualize this through their dedication to reciprocal exchange with Jotería in rural México. This praxis reminds us that solidarity is not symbolic; it is built through daily acts of accompaniment, translation, and shared labor.

In this article, we have shared how La Jotería Transfronteriza Rural has initiated different projects to highlight the stories, activism, and organizing of Jotería in rural México. As demonstrated in *El VIP*, *Radio Diversa*, and the collaborative work with AJAAS and *Rumbo Hacia el Norte*, these projects and relationships move beyond theorizing about decolonization; toward enacting it. Through collective organizing, artistic expression, and community-centered media, these projects demonstrate that Jotería knowledge is conceptual, embodied, and circulated across hemispheres. In doing so, they bridge the epistemic divide between the Global North and the Global South, establishing a horizontal dialogue in which both regions produce and share *conocimiento* as equal sites of theorizing.

Furthermore, it is clear that Jotería Studies offers possibilities to transform into a transnational project that can bridge discourses between Global North and Global South. The continued evolution of Jotería Studies depends on a collective willingness to engage in reciprocal dialogue that honors the epistemic labor of marginalized communities. The praxis-based initiatives highlighted in this work, particularly those emerging from rural Mexico, demonstrate that theory and activism are most powerful when they are co-created through love, accountability, and community care. By following the guiding spirit of Muxerista ethics and the transformative energy of the *nagual*, Jotería Studies can move beyond institutional boundaries and become a living practice of transnational solidarity. This approach bridges hemispheric divides and also reimagines what it means to produce knowledge *con corazón*, affirming that liberation is both an intellectual and communal endeavor.

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