



Association of Mexican American Educators Journal

A peer-reviewed, open access journal

Volume 20 Issue I

2026

AMAE Special Double Issue

Muxerista Pedagogies and Praxis:

Art, Activism, and Scholarship as Resistance and Restoration

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¡Mi Mamá Me Enseñó a Luchar!: Muxerista Mothering Pedagogy

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Abstract

This article examines how working-class Mexican and Chicana mothers teach Muxerista and feminist values in the home. I argue that Muxerista mothering is a praxis—a living pedagogy rooted in memory, political commitment, and queer chosen kinship. Drawing on six testimonios I collected, I center the voices of mothers and their hijxs who identify their maternal figures as their first teachers of feminisms. I introduce a model of Muxerista mothering I developed by highlighting thematic intersections in the testimonios of hijxs and mothers. Muxerista mothering teaches emancipatory belonging, accountability, visionary imagination, multidimensional lucha, and enacting transformative justice. I ground my project in Muxerista pedagogy, identity, and politics. Through the stories of mothers like Del, Juana, and Blanca, I show how Muxerista teachings are passed down and used to inform the radical visions hijxs carry into our organizing, scholarship, and everyday life. This article contributes to Chicana and Latina feminist scholarship by documenting how feminisms are formed not only in classrooms and public movements but also within the intimate space of the home.

Keywords: Muxerista mothering, jotería politics, Chicana/Latina feminisms, pedagogies of the home, testimonio

¡Mi Mamá Me Enseñó a Luchar!: Muxerista Mothering Pedagogy

I grew up hearing the women in my family who are from rural Northern Mexico proudly refer to themselves as *luchadoras/luchonas*, *fregonas*, *peleadoras*, y *fuertes*, but they did not identify themselves as feminists then. I first heard a Chicana college student self-identify as a feminist and explain what feminism meant during an organizing meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. I was 16 years old. I immediately thought of the women in my family as my reference point for my feminism. My mother, my grandmothers, and my aunties had filled my life with their stories of survival, resistance, and self-determination.

Several years later, in a Chicana Feminisms class taught by Dr. Anita Tijerina Revilla, I named that my mother and maternal figures were my first teachers of feminism and Muxerismo, and my Latinx¹ activist friends and women's studies peers erupted with enthusiastic agreement. In that class, I began gathering mother-*hijx*² coupled *testimonios*, including *hijxs* who identified their mothers as their teachers of Muxerismo and their mothers' *testimonios*, and I continued gathering *testimonios* after that class. Grounded in Chicana and Latina feminist epistemologies, characterized by an attentiveness to the correspondence between knowledge, social location, embodiment, and identity, I saw *testimonio* as the most fitting method for this project. I gathered *testimonios* as an undergraduate in Las Vegas and later as a graduate student.

Chicana and Latina feminists and queer and trans historians use *testimonios* to actively resist the erasure of our histories. As queer Salvadoran oral historian Horacio Roque Ramirez (2005) argues, *testimonios* are a critical form of documentation, as they stand “against the detached and monumental over-shadowing of national and institutional histories” (p. 132). For this project in specific, I chose *testimonio* because it acknowledges that the mothers in my study are epistemic agents (active thinkers and knowers who generate knowledge and critiques of

¹ I use Latinx (pronounced Latin-ex) to refer to people who were born in Latin America or who descend from people born in Latin America and may now reside in the United States. Here I am following the lead of non-binary, queer, and transgender activists who created the term as they organize across and build coalitions with South American, Caribbean, Central American, and North American peoples with distinct racial, ethnic, linguistic, national, and indigenous identities.

² “*Hijx*”/ “*hijxs*” is Spanish for child/children. *Hijx(s)* is an adaptation of *hija*, *hijo*, *hijos*. An “x” replaces the traditional gendering of nouns in Spanish that denotes either a feminine or masculine gender using an -a/-o. This spelling choice is made to be inclusive of gender non-binary participants and the choice of the Spanish term is to avoid suggesting that participants are young, (e.g. “child” being associated with childhood). *Hijx* is used in Spanish across age groups, is not infantilizing, and signals a relationship to a parent more than anything else.

their experiences) and teachers despite their exclusion from the historical record as such. I collected a total of 28 *testimonios* during my dissertation research, and I drew on six *testimonios* for this article. The *testimoniante*s I feature in this article are the following *hijx*-mother(s) sets: 1) Anita, daughter of Del, 2) Adan, son of Juana, 3) Xuanito, *hijx* of Blanca, and grandchild of Mari (paternal grandmother, not interviewed). I selected these six *testimoniante*s from my larger study because their *testimonios* most clearly exemplified the themes developed in this article. The research I am drawing from was collected in person over a period of ten years, from 2007-2017. I met with *testimoniante*s individually in informal settings that offered *testimoniante*s comfort as they shared their stories aloud, such as their patio or living room. *Hijxs* played a major role in helping me arrange meetings with their mothers. As a queer *hijx* myself, I intentionally prioritized including *hijxs* of all genders and those who identified as Jotería (four out of six *testimoniante*s featured here identify as queer, lesbian, gay, or bisexual). For those ten years of research collection, I was in personal, organizing, and movement-based relationships with the *testimoniante hijxs*. I met every mother previously as well, attending life celebrations, family dinners, marches, demonstrations and cultural events together.

In what follows, I provide definitions of Muxerista-Jotería politics, Muxerista identity and Muxerista pedagogy as they relate to this project. I propose a Muxerista mothering framework that understands mothering as a living pedagogy through which emancipatory belonging, accountability, visionary imagination, multidimensional *lucha*, and transformative justice are taught, modeled, and lived. This model was developed by highlighting thematic intersections in the *testimonios* of *hijxs* and mothers in my larger study.

Feminist and Muxerista Identity

Revilla's (2010) trailblazing participatory action research with the student organization Raza Womyn de UCLA and Las Vegas' feminist and queer immigrant youth activists informed her development of this definition of Muxerista, "A Muxerista is a person whose identity is rooted in a Chicana/Latina feminist vision for social change committed to ending all forms of oppression, including but not limited to racism, classism, sexism, homophobia, and citizenism" (p. 56). My research originated amongst the feminist, queer, and immigrant rights activist community, where I was a youth organizer at the time of Revilla's research in Las Vegas. Our organizing work and community building resulted in relationships across our families in some

cases. Among my *testimoniales* are Anita and her mother, Del (I refer to Revilla as Anita when discussing the *testimonio* I documented and as Revilla when engaging her scholarship). This article contributes to Muxerista, Chicana, and Latina feminist scholarship by documenting how feminisms are formed not only in classrooms and public movements but also within the intimate relationships and interactions rooted in home-based practices. I understand “the home” as extending beyond a single physical locality, carried in acts of mothering that persist across nation-states, borders, and prison walls.

Muxerista and Jotería (queerness) are deeply interlinked politics and identities; they both undo Eurocentric norms of gender and sexuality, heteropatriarchal control, racism, and settler colonialism (Jotería politics, as defined by Xamuel Bañales, 2014, p. 159). In our co-authored article, “Radical Jotería-Muxerista Love in the Classroom,” my co-authors and I deliberately joined “Jotería-Muxerista” with a hyphen to signal that these politics must be practiced together if we are to create social justice in schools as educators. Michael Hames Garcia (2014) documents the intertwined development and praxis of Jotería and Muxerista politics, highlighting how Chican@ and Latin@ Jotería studies scholars were trained and nurtured by the labor and care of feminist women of color (p.138). As I will demonstrate throughout, Muxerista mothers also enact both politics when they labor to abolish heteropatriarchal white supremacy and domination with their everyday actions and teachings in the home, constructing queered forms of belonging and kinship.

While collecting *testimonios*, I listened closely to discern why my participants identified their mothers and maternal figures as Muxeristas; they made this determination based on the values their mothers used to make decisions, the practices they enacted, and the lessons they taught. They experienced Muxerismo as relational, as pedagogical, as rooted in praxis. Grandmothers, mothers, and aunts are recognized as feminists and Muxeristas because they resisted heteropatriarchal expectations and norms in their homes, carried families forward, taught others how to survive and outlive heteropatriarchal and systemic violence, and protected one another and fought back, ultimately transforming each other’s futures.

Muxerista Pedagogy

Revilla states, “At the root of a Muxerista identity is the need to educate self and others for the purpose of social change” (2025, p.2). Revilla (2004) defines Muxerista pedagogy in accordance with the practices she observed members of Raza Womyn engage in,

Muxerista Pedagogy involves dialogue, praxis (theory and action), and dialectical exchange between participants... The common factor that brings participants together is a commitment to creating social change through Chicana/Latina resistance to subordination, and this goal is coupled with warmth, love, and fun (p.83).

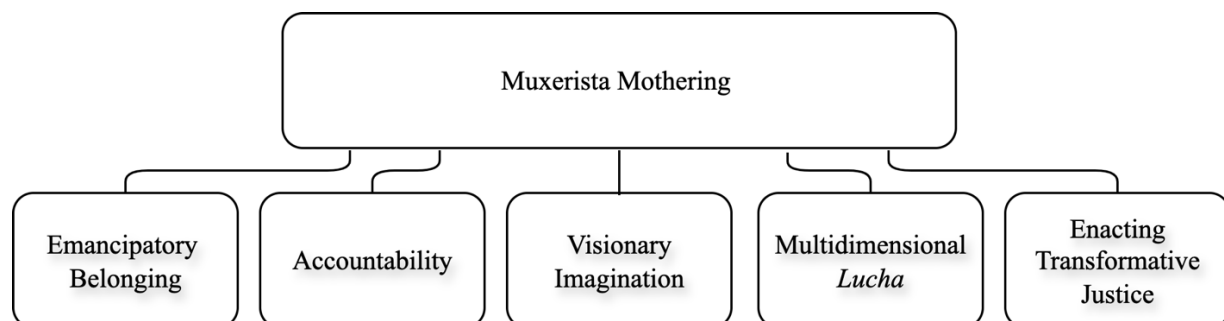
She includes that a culture of care in Raza Womyn created a safe space and queer space where belonging and connection were a constant for those who were marginalized in other spaces for being women, feminist, queer, or too radical. Raza Womyn remained a “safe space” because they constantly recreated that safety through education and dialogue (p. 84).

The *testimonios* I collected from working-class feminist and Muxerista Mexican and Chicana mothers and their *hijxs* reveal an expansive repertoire of Muxerista epistemologies and teaching practices that mothers have cultivated and practiced in their homes for multiple generations. Daughters, sons, and genderqueer/non-binary *hijxs* self-identify as feminists and Muxeristas because they credit the mothers of their families for teaching them to be Muxeristas. Their crediting acknowledges that a transmission of Muxerista knowledge and teachings occurred within their families. Often, the source of a Muxerista value in a family reaches further back than two or three generations. When I interviewed mothers for my research, they, too, shared stories about their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts. This intergenerational remembering reflects what Black feminist novelist Toni Cade Bambara (1982) described when asked about the visionary nature of her work, “It has to do with memory, with what I know is possible because it has already happened” (22:15). I contend that the mothering and pedagogies of working-class Muxerista Mexican and Chicana mothers are revolutionary and transformative because we remember them as such—because Mexican and Chicana motherwork has already shown us it can remake futures.

Indigenous, Black and mestiza women, like the working class, immigrant Mexican and Chicana mothers whose *testimonios* I draw from, have long been marginalized and overlooked in mainstream white feminist scholarship and movements. It is the work of Chicana/ Latina/ x feminists and Muxerista scholars and activists that has refuted deficit narratives about Mexican and Chicana mothers and asserted that they embody and impart transformational knowledge in their homes and communities. My work draws upon and contributes to the work of Chicana and Latina feminists and critical race scholars in education that theorizes Chicana/Latina mothers as carriers and transmitters of cultural wealth (Yosso, 2006), pedagogies of the home (Bernal, 2001), educational success (Bernal, 2001; Flores, 2022), leadership (Oliva & Alemán, 2019), homemade theories (Levins Morales, 2001), organic knowledge (Levins Morales, 2001), Chicana motherwork (Téllez, 2011; Caballero et al., 2019), and feminisms (Villenas & Moreno, 2001; Téllez, 2011; Duran, 2019; Spears-Rico, 2019). The sections that follow are organized as a sequence of interrelated lessons and testimonios that clarify the themes that inform the Muxerista mothering framework I articulate (Figure 1). I begin with emancipatory belonging, as it is the pedagogical foundation through which accountability, visionary imagination, multidimensional *lucha*, and transformative justice are made possible.

Figure 1

Muxerista Mothering



Muxerista Mothering is Emancipatory Be-longing

I begin with Del's *testimonio*, recorded in 2016, when she was in her early 60s. Del, mother of Anita, became a single mother to three young children after her husband's death at 31. A proud *Tejana*, Del fought for her and her children's survival navigating working motherhood, extreme poverty, and disability. Del grew up in a conservative household in San

Antonio, Texas. She was forced by her parents to attend a Catholic school where she was abused and discriminated against for being *Tejana* and Mexican. She described her childhood as one in which her parents never believed her, forcing her to constantly fight and stand up for herself.

I made myself pensar por mi misma. Feminist. Porque mi 'ama hacía lo que decía su 'ama o mi 'apa. Yo cuando estaba creciendo, a mí nunca me gustó eso que me mandaran o que me dijeran que hiciera. I didn't think that was right y todavía hasta la fecha yo pienso así. Que el hombre te diga como vivas tu vida o tus abuelos que te digan, "Tienes que hacer esto o 'l otro." Yo nunca hacía caso. 'Cause decía, "Yo no voy a andar haciendo lo que a mi no me gusta y no me van a hacer que lo haga." ...Aunque mi 'ama decía y mi 'apa que yo era cabeza dura porque yo no hacía lo que ellos me mandaban hacer.

(I made myself think for myself. Feminist. Because my mom would do as her mom said or as my dad said. Me, when I was growing up, I never liked being bossed around or told what to do. I didn't think that was right. To this day, I think like that. That a man tells you how to live or your grandparents tell you, "You have to do this and that." I would never abide. Cause I would say, "I'm not going be doing what I don't like, and they're not going to make me do it." ...Even if my mom and my dad said that I was hardheaded because I would not do what they told me to.)

As a child, Del was surrounded by people who were loyal to patriarchy and Catholicism. Her resolve to think for herself and be a feminist and Muxerista came from deep within her. Her parents were financial providers, stable caretakers, and "responsible parents," but they were socializing her and disciplining her into heteropatriarchal ideologies, something she adamantly rejected and resisted. Her organic Muxerista intellect oriented her towards nurturing a different way of being, a relationality with herself and with others that emancipated, and principally informed her mothering. This type of conscious, purposeful and critical nurturing/mothering in the face of dehumanization is the type of mothering I am concerned with.

Repeatedly, the mothers and *hijxs* who I listened to offered that it was not socially constructed notions of obligation or sacrifice that united them to one another. It was intentionality and a political commitment to one another's liberation, care, healing, and survival. Muxerista *familia* was chosen family, biological and non-biological. For example, Anita recalled that when an aunt, Del's little sister, came out in high school as a lesbian, Del did not hesitate to offer her home, defending her sister after she was kicked out and rejected by their mother. Anita, age 42 at the time of our meeting and a professor of gender and sexuality studies, remembers not understanding queerness yet, but being told by her mother "That's my sister. I love her, and she loves this girl. That's fine with me." Muxerista mothers did not shy away from cutting-off patriarchal family members, nor did they hesitate to adopt people as *hijxs*/family when someone needed to be mothered. I believe the decision for *hijxs* to remain in relation with their mothers beyond childhood is evidence of a constant recreation/rebuilding of belonging and safe space, much like the safe spaces built and rebuilt by Raza Womyn as described by Revilla (2004).

Queer studies scholar Elizabeth Freeman (2007) proposes there is a form of relationality and kinship that exceeds the attachments of heterosexual coupling, financial benefit, parent-child rearing, and "family" as we know it. This form of kinship is informed by a sense of "queer belonging." She defines Queer belonging as,

The longing to "be *long*" to endure in corporeal form over time, beyond procreation. ...To want to belong, let us say, is to long to be bigger not only spatially, but also temporally, to "hold out" a hand across time and touch the dead or those not born yet, to offer oneself beyond one's own time (p. 299).

Belonging to one another is an intentional decision, as is the Muxerista mothering done by Mexican and Chicana mothers. It is a reciprocation by their *hijxs* to belong queerly to their mothers and be Muxerista-Jotería family.

Visionary Imagination

In this section, I expand on the unique ways *hijxs* and mothers characterized their Muxerismo as visionary. Xuanito (he/him/ella pronouns) is a genderqueer Jota born in Aguascalientes, Mexico and *hijx testificante*. An educator and PhD student, Xuanito was 30

when I recorded ella's *testimonio*. He lived in Las Vegas, Nevada, the city his family immigrated to from Mexico. His mother, Blanca, also participated as a *testimoniante*. She was in her 50s at the time of our meeting in 2016; a mother of six and a full-time construction worker in the carpenters' union. Xuanito is her eldest *hijx*. During his *testimonio*, Xuanito recalled being raised by a community of women that included his mother, Blanca, his aunts, and his maternal and paternal grandmothers in Aguascalientes. Though Xuanito's father was physically abusive to Blanca and neglectful as a father to his children, Blanca formed a strong relationship with her mother-in-law, Mari. Mari was, in the words of Blanca, "*una mujer muy luchona*," a woman who was a real fighter; Mari was a single mother, a migrant worker, and a sexually liberated woman who had been politically involved most of her life. While Blanca was caught in a cycle of leaving and returning to her abusive partner, it was Mari who would ask Blanca to "open her eyes," to think critically about the future that awaited her if she stayed in Aguascalientes. With Mari's encouragement and Blanca's own mother's blessing, Blanca devised a plan and left for the U.S. to work and build a home for her three children while Mari and a community of women helped her raise her kids in Mexico. Once Blanca got settled in, Mari helped Blanca's kids cross the border, staying with Blanca afterward to support them through their transition. Blanca and Xuanito both believe Mari was central to their survival and to their understanding that no matter the systems and individuals that devalued, abused, and abandoned them, they were worthy of more care.

Blanca and her mother-in-law, Mari, modeled for their *hijxs* the power of interdependency, interbeing, and partnership. Black feminist theorist bell hooks (2004) argues that replacing dominator models like heteropatriarchal masculinity requires modeling interdependence as an organic part of the lives of all living beings (p. 117). For Xuanito, experiencing interdependence at the level that was created among the women of his community was transformative—it steered him away from heteropatriarchal masculinity and the violence normalized around him and took him beyond masculinity altogether. Xuanito's mother, Blanca, his grandmothers, and his aunts created women-centered sanctuaries where they regularly engaged one another through *platicas*, singing, and spiritual ceremony. They welcomed him in as witness and participant. His mothers and those spaces nurtured something in him that was already there, his genderqueer self. He says, in many ways, "they were training

me to be a strong woman. I think they were training me to be a new man. They were training me to be a genderqueer person without knowing—or I don't know, maybe they knew.” The visionary imagination cultivated within Xuanito's mother's community nurtured in him an expansive sense of self, unrestrained by toxic patriarchal expectations.

Accountable Muxerismo

Mother *testimoniantes* explicitly stated how they also felt freed and liberated by their *hijxs*, challenged to be accountable to them and to themselves, and to abandon the internalized heteropatriarchal and colonial domination they learned. When Anita came out as bisexual to her mother after starting college, Del was able to say, “You know that's good *mija*, I think I'm bi too... I only married your dad because I was expected to.” The relationship Del co-created with her daughters was a kind of Freirean space that allowed a daughter to be a teacher and a mother to name her queerness after learning from her daughter. Del's intentional family structure subverted a traditional hierarchal one where learning only occurs from top to bottom. One of the most compelling aspects of interviewing mothers was witnessing their reflexivity, their ability to reflect on their practices with the same critical consciousness they inspired in their children. As earnest teachers for liberation, they gained new insights by observing the impact of their practices and by dialoguing with their children. They defied hegemonic norms and hierarchies in parent-child relationships.

Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (2005) argues that in oppressive social structures such as white supremacy and heteropatriarchy, parents may internalize authoritarian patterns of domination, leading children to either rebel against or reproduce those same dynamics (pp. 154-155). Within this context, it is a radical *movida* for mothers to reject the authoritarianism expected of “good mothers”³ of color, and equally radical that *hijxs* came to see their mothers as teachers and partners in liberation rather than obstructers to their freedom.

Juana was a mother who continually moved me with her reflections on her mothering practices. Juana is a Mexican immigrant from Guanajuato, Mexico, who spent a significant part

³ Stacey Patton critiques norms that suggest that “good mothering” of Black children necessitates authoritarianism and corporeal punishment. She examines this idea alongside a larger history and culture that normalizes corporeal punishment of Black communities. see her book *Spare the Kids: Why Whipping Children Won't Save Black America* (2017).

of her life undocumented in the U.S. She is a single, disabled mother of three, Adan and two other sons, whom she raised in Phoenix, Arizona, and in Las Vegas, Nevada. She sustained them by working every type of job she could get, from factories to kitchens and domestic work. She was in her late 40s when she shared her *testimonio* with me. In 2015, Adan, who identifies as a Chicano Joto, was 26 and beginning his graduate studies in the Midwest. Adan saw Juana's intentional decision to teach her boys to do housework and care work as a Muxerista intervention. Juana identified the complexity in her decision making by reflecting on how being a single parent led her to feel anxious about having a clean home environment and motivated her decision-making. She taught her boys to clean, cook, do laundry, and sustain a home, and she expected them to keep up the work to provide order in their lives. She believed deeply that they should have those skills as boys and that they should reject gendered divisions of labor, but she questioned if she had been too harsh with her demands and put too much responsibility on them to quell her anxiety about having a "clean" home. She said when her sons all got older, she consciously decided not to require so much of them anymore. Not because they shouldn't contribute as men, but because she didn't want all their time to be spent cleaning. As Adan expressed, surviving abuse, working full-time, and living with several disabilities left Juana feeling drained. She chose to change her priorities. She prioritized disrupting notions of capitalist productivity and "order" and gendered and racialized expectations of "cleanliness." She wanted time with her sons to be centered around rest and joy.

Juana had so many observations like this one. She transformed her approach to disciplining when she realized she was hurting her sons and herself in the process. Juana prioritized dialogue and healing as her children grew. I believe her response to Adan's coming out was also telling regarding her journey of healing her family. She sat down all three of her sons for a conversation when Adan came out as queer and asked them to commit to his safety and well-being in their home. She wanted Adan to live authentically, queerly, and as flamboyantly as he desired in their home. She joked about how Adan was her "*princesa*" after he came out, but she wanted Adan to know that his family would protect him and always step in if anyone threatened him. She knew Adan would only come to his family if he were ever in a situation of domestic violence like she was throughout her relationship with their father, if he was confident his sexuality would not be judged. In this way, she worked to close the cycle of

intimate partner violence in their family, so they could collectively heal. Juana modeled accountability and prioritized healing. I believe Juana's mothering was *medicina* to her family. She exemplifies how revolutionary mothers are accountable and reflexive.

Multidimensional *Lucha*

Mothers and *hijxs* understood oppression as simultaneous, interconnected, and compounding based on their race, class, genders, immigration statuses, sexualities, and disabilities, and as such, developed an intersectional political analysis that they translated into a multidimensional approach to *luchar*, or fight, against oppression. Prior to being introduced to frameworks of and activism that were recognized in the feminist/women's studies classroom, *hijxs* witnessed their mothers theorize and engage in fights with family members, doctors, teachers, administrators, and politicians over the systemic perpetuation of oppression. Adan remembered learning about the concept of intersectionality in his women's studies undergraduate class, "The first thing that I thought of were my mom's experiences... I was able to understand intersectionality in that way through her. And an understanding and questioning of power." *Hijxs* had to consider whether their mother's politics and *luchas* were their own, and if they would adopt the same politics and tactics. Through dialogue, questioning, and joining their mothers' *luchas*, many *hijxs* came to understand the "why" behind their mothers' fights and ultimately made those *luchas* their own. Multiple testimoniantes *hijxs*, including Xuanito and Anita, described their mothers as "fighters," and fighting as the foundation of their Muxerismo. Their mothers, and in Xuanito's case, his grandmother, are women who would initiate fights or fight back when they sensed an injustice; they are strong-willed, opinionated women who did not back down when they were disrespected or oppressed.

Anita described this impetus in Del as a "*guerrillera*" or warrior-woman mentality: "we were going to survive, and we were not going to get pushed around, nobody was going to tell us what to do." Anita said she adopted that "I'm a fighter" mentality modeled by her single mother during her childhood and youth, and observed it in her younger sister, who was six years younger than her. She described her as tiny in stature but with a fierce spirit. Though she is younger than her, she feels her sister always had a *brava* way to her. *Brava*, like *fiera*, are words that are often used to describe animals and women by association who are assumed to be wild, fierce, vicious, distrustful, untamable, or ferocious; traits that are believed to come

from within and expressed even without provocation. *Fiera* is a term that Anita adopted for herself and reclaimed, branding herself as *Mujer Fiera*, though she is critical of solely being identified as a fighter because she said, “I don’t want to constantly be fighting with people. I want to be on a healing journey.” She recognized, like Xuanito, that fighting was an integral part of how mothers, grandmothers, and sisters survived, resisted, and transformed their surroundings. Anita says of her sister, “I think what I learned from my sister was just like this incredible spirit of resilience, of resistance. It’s feminist, and race consciousness, and class consciousness, and disability consciousness. That multi-dimensional consciousness.” Some mothers from my study taught their *hijxs* a form of *Muxerismo*, a *brava* feminism that refused respectability, domination, and taming and did not shy away from confrontation.

Xuanito’s paternal grandmother Mari, taught him to question authority and be skeptical of those who claimed to represent the interests of the poor, while exploiting them and stealing from them. Xuanito recalled many stories of actions his grandmother took that conveyed her politics. He shared, “She loved raising hell. That was her thing. She would go to meetings. She would go to government shit, and she would just cuss people out. She would just go on her own sometimes and just fuck shit up.” He recalled that on one occasion, the mayor of Aguascalientes called a press conference to deny he was stealing from the municipal government. His grandma interrupted his press conference yelling, “¡*Pinche ratero!* (Fucking thief!) I know you stole the money. You piece of shit.”

Blanca, Xuanito’s mother, related that Mari also spearheaded efforts to institutionalize social welfare policies targeted at assisting poor mothers and children in their town. Blanca and Xuanito accompanied her to gather signatures and speak to the community on numerous occasions. The lessons Mari taught Xuanito on engaging in multidimensional struggle were many,

She taught me not to be afraid to contest, to respond. *Mi abuela me dio el regalo de la lengua, de defenderme* (My grandmother gave me the gift of language, of defending myself). ...She was not afraid to be verbal or physical. She stood in her power. She stood very strongly in her power, and she was unmovable. She was a very intense woman, very fucking intense. She was very hard to have an argument with, but she also taught me a lot of emotional wealth because she was

not afraid to cry. She was not afraid to show emotions; she was not afraid to be angry. She taught me that.

Mari's tactics and responses to injustice were raw, uncensored, and reflective of her anti-capitalist and revolutionary politics. She demonstrated that emotional vulnerability did not make her less radical.

The *testimonios* of *hijxs* demonstrate that they were initiated and immersed in learning about multidimensional forms of *lucha* since childhood. Witnessing was instructional but understanding the reasoning and intersectional politics behind their mother's *brava* feminisms and direct-action tactics ultimately led *hijxs* to consciously participate in struggles. All of the *hijxs* I interviewed for my larger study, including the ones featured here, became feminist organizers, activists, and teachers; they have continued building upon the legacy of their mother's struggles for transformational justice and liberation.

Conclusion

Against a capitalist landscape that sees no value in poor people of color, women, and queers, Muxerista mothers insist on the survival and liberation of their children, families, and communities. Mothering while marginalized requires vision, creativity, interdependence, and love—a radical visionary imagination. As Toni Cade Bambara (1982) suggested of artists, this article asserts that working-class feminist and Muxerista Mexican and Chicana mothers labor to create worlds that are more just, more beautiful, and more livable. By centering practices such as teaching accountability and enacting transformation, I have shown that Muxerista mothering is an abolitionist, world-making practice grounded not in reaction only, but in what else is possible.

This article has traced Muxerista mothering as a living pedagogy through which emancipatory belonging, accountability, visionary imagination, multidimensional *lucha*, and transformative justice are taught, modeled, and lived. I contribute to and expand upon existing scholarship on pedagogies of the home (Bernal 2001) and Muxerista/feminist mothering by insisting on using a *Jotería*-Muxerista lens that treats these politics as inseparable.

Muxerista pedagogy has been largely theorized through studying practices within organizations, classrooms, and activist collectives. In this article, I theorize that Muxerista

mothering is itself a pedagogy. The teachings and lessons I study are carried through memory, lineage, and queer chosen kinship rather than confined to formal classrooms or institutional spaces. I argue that there is much more fluidity between “home” and what we have historically understood as spaces of social transformation. What happens in activist collectives certainly informs how we navigate home and build our intimate lives, as Revilla’s (2009) work demonstrated, and as is intended in feminist organizing where “the personal is political” is a common slogan. But Muxerista mothering *also* moves beyond home as a fixed place, extending beyond a single physical location, carried with us across generations, borders, institutions, and conditions of constraint. Amid the generational wounds our communities carry, I find purpose in witnessing how Muxerismo is carried forward through intentional Muxerista practice.

Black feminist poet and scholar Alexis Pauline Gumbs (2016) asks, “What would it mean for us to take the word ‘mother’ less as a gendered identity and more as a possible action, a technology of transformation that those people who do the most mothering labor are teaching us right now?” (pp. 22–23). I sit with this question all the time as someone who only recently became a mother and as a lifetime student of feminist and queer mothering. I invite all Muxeristas to consider how they will be guided by the radical, visionary imagination of Muxerista mothers in their given and chosen lineages, and to use those teachings to further the legacies of Muxerista political struggle.

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