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Peche Politics: HIV/AIDS and LGBT Rights in Peru's Upper Amazon

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in Anthropology

by

Justin Perez

Dissertation Committee:
Professor Tom Boellstorff, Chair
Professor Victoria Bernal
Professor Susan Coutin

2017

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this project to my family and friends, both in the United States and in Peru. I could not have made it without the love and support of my family: Glen, Antoinette, Mary, Glen, Anna, and Charlie. I owe so much to you all!

My friends were a true support system. Daina helped me make it through the tough times and can always make me laugh. Simone and Sean had room at the inn when I needed to stay in Irvine. Natali is a true dynamic woman and prepared me for everything that came my way. Nate is absolutely brilliant. Heather entertained my whims of going on walks. Kyrstin got me out of Irvine from time to time. Joao was a true partner in crime. I also would like to dedicate this to my dear friends.

And to Enrique, who left us too early and who I will hold dearly in my memory.

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"Word Play, Ritual Insult, and Volleyball in Peru." *Journal of Homosexuality* 58(6-7): 834-847, 2011.

"Virtual Hagiography and Sexual Rights: The Case of Daniel Zamudio." Martin Jaime, ed. Sexual Diversity and Religious Systems: Transnational Dialogues in the Contemporary World, 249-263. Lima, Peru: CMP Flora Tristan/UNMSM, 2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Peche Politics: HIV/AIDS and LGBT Rights in Peru's Upper Amazon

By

Justin Perez

Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor Tom Boellstorff, Chair

What novel political spaces emerge at the intersections of global HIV/AIDS interventions and LGBT rights movements? As discrimination and stigma become the targets of global health initiatives, how do communities affected by HIV/AIDS position themselves towards notions of rights? And what is the social and political afterlife of rights-based initiatives after they are defunded or cease to exist? These are the central research questions posed in the dissertation. To address them, I conducted six months of preliminary fieldwork and fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in 2012-2015 among gay and transgender communities in the upper Amazonian state of San Martín in Peru. Through data collection techniques that included participant observation and interviews, I examined the social and political effects of a rights-based HIV/AIDS intervention for gay and transgender communities in the region. Among these communities, I found the peche concept to be particularly meaningful. The peche referred to the small gifts that gay and transgender people exchanged for the company, affection, and sex with heterosexual men. While sometimes construed as either a risky sexual practice in HIV/AIDS-related research or considered disempowering by LGBT activists, I found that the peche had historical depth

and social extension. I problematize these narratives by developing the concept of peche politics to analyze the political practices that emerged in San Martín among the communities I studied. I situate these practices, such as addressing discrimination and homophobia through formal grievances or recounting and transmitting stories of the internal armed conflict, at the confluence of local myths about sexuality, national histories of violence and human rights, and global health initiatives. In my conclusion, I rethink the local, national, and global scales of this research and propose a hemispheric imaginary to open new analytical possibilities, especially in the moments when global structures of HIV/AIDS initiatives and LGBT rights recede.

INTRODUCTION

"I am proud to be present with each one of you this marvelous afternoon. The second-place prize is for the team representing the salon 'Titanic Coiffure.' It is very well deserved. The mayor of our municipality of Morales, Carlos Philco, would like to recognize this team. As a representative of the municipality, we give this prize to Titanic Coiffure, to communicate to all the members of this community that the municipality is opening its doors for support and inclusion. It is true that we have been working with every one of them, supporting them in what is necessary. The municipality does not discriminate against anybody and we are here, present, at this sports event."

Standing in front of a crowd of around 300 people, a representative from the municipal government of Morales, a district of the city of Tarapoto, Peru, awarded an envelope of prize money to Jennifer with this speech. Jennifer was a young transgender woman who had been the captain and the top-scorer for a soccer team in the Campeonato Machomenos, a gay and transgender soccer tournament. Jennifer stood at the stage not just as a representative of her team but, as the municipal representative suggested as she presented Jennifer the prize, as a representative of the gay and transgender community of Morales ("this community"). The mayor of Morales was, at that time, undergoing investigation for corruption, and had chosen this particular event to perform a public display of patronage and goodwill.

The Campeonato Machomenos was a soccer tournament organized by Pablo and Ramón, two young gay men from the Morales district of Tarapoto. It took place every Sunday afternoon for four weeks in August and September of 2015 in a large field owned by Wilmer, a well-known gay hairstylist in Tarapoto, and his family. Such tournaments, which were played

primarily by gay men and transgender women, were in fact common in the upper Amazonian region of Peru. In cities throughout this region, enterprising individuals, politicians, or musical groups often organized sporting spectacles, generally soccer, volleyball, or boxing, played entirely by gay and transgender athletes for purposes that ranged from raising money, garnering votes or support before an election, or gaining popularity and renown by organizing a successful and well-attended event. In Spanish, *machomenos* is a play-on word: On the one hand, it means "less macho" or "less manly." But it also sounds like the phrase "*más o menos*," which means "more or less." It has a humorous tone, though, and for the general public of Tarapoto, the announcement of a machomenos sports tournament meant that it was going to be an entertaining and enjoyable afternoon to watch a game and hang out with family and friends over food and beer. And for nearly everyone I talked to, ranging from the gay and transgender people who competed in the event to people from the Tarapoto community who had simply gone to watch as atmosphere and excitement of the activity were enjoyable.

As an anthropologist studying gay and transgender communities in Tarapoto, I followed the event closely. This entailed hanging out with Pablo and Ramón as they were planning the tournament, observing the activities each Sunday, and participating and playing in some of the ancillary sports activities, such as volleyball games, at the end of each day when the soccer matches had concluded. I was also asked to *colaborar*, or collaborate, with the organizers of the event. Collaboration was a way for Pablo and Ramón to solicit donations, which were used at the prize money for the teams that won first, second, and third place in the tournament. I gave S./ 300, which was approximately $100, and this was used as a prize for one of the divisions of the tournament. The other prizes were donated by the mayor of the municipality of Morales, the Diversidad San Martinense LGBT community-based organization, and Wilmer, who had also

offered his family-owned field for the activity to take place. At various times throughout the event, Jaqueline, who provided commentary and jokes about the soccer games over the loudspeaker, would announce the *agradecimientos*, or thank yous, to the sponsors. So, several times a day I heard, "Thank you to anthropologist Justin Perez Altamirano" alongside the public recognition of the mayor and other individuals and entities that had collaborated with the organizers of the event.

This particular Campeonato Machomenos was just one of multiple large, public events that centered around the performances of gay and transgender individuals that I observed in 2014-2015 while conducting ethnographic fieldwork in and around the city of Tarapoto. Yet, in many ways, this opening scene incorporates many of the key questions addressed in this research project. How did a soccer tournament that featured almost entirely gay and transgender players become an ideal site in this town in Peru for the mayor's political performance? Did this mean that Tarapoto, and the Amazonian region of Peru where it is located, was an open and liberated community where sexual diversity was universally recognized and celebrated? In a culture where gay and transgender spectacles were not just visible in everyday life, but are also significant sites for engaging in local and regional politics, what role do global HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights initiatives play in shaping and transforming gay and transgender communities in the region?

Throughout this dissertation, I argue that global HIV/AIDS initiatives and concomitant notions of LGBT rights, particularly efforts to address discrimination and stigma on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, have had a paradoxical effect for gay and transgender communities in Peru's upper Amazonian region. On the one hand, these initiatives have opened new spaces for gay and transgender communities to seek recognition and rights. Yet, as I trace the effects of antidiscrimination initiatives and capacity-building workshops, I show how they

also impose limits to political possibilities. The dissertation thus explores the ways gay and transgender people work within and outside of the boundaries of these global interventions.

Before proceeding to a description of the history of HIV/AIDS interventions in Peru and the growing significance of LGBT rights initiatives as integral aspects of these interventions, I first provide a brief explanation about the use of the terms gay and transgender to describe the research subjects. In his discussion of the appropriate title to choose for a queer anthropology review piece, Boellstorff (2007) pointed out that anthropological work of non-normative sexual identities and subjectivities often struggles with the "logic of enumeration." This is the idea that "political or theoretical efficacy can exist only through naming each category of selfhood and experience" (Boellstorff 2007, 19). In other words, this is the logic behind the ever-expanding list of letters forming the acronym for LGBTQ and so on. Boellstorff argues that this logic "presumes that concepts name preexisting entities and relations, rather than asking how the social is produced and sustained through acts of representation, including scholarly and activist representation." (2007, 19). My research follows precisely this question posed by Boellstorff: what are the roles of scientific and activists forms of representation in shaping gay and transgender discrimination, stigma, risk, and rights? Consequently, my decision to use "gay and transgender" is first and foremost because the HIV/AIDS initiatives and LGBT rights efforts I studied conceptualized and represented the communities through these categories. Even though the rights efforts, especially the antidiscrimination efforts sponsored by NGOs in Lima, were described as LGBT, during my fieldwork in Tarapoto, the individuals convoked to attend or participate in the workshops and meetings were almost always gay or transgender.

Second, while the HIV/AIDS initiatives specifically targeted gay men, male to female transgender women, and men who have sex with men but do not identify as gay (MSM), again, it

was primarily gay and transgender people who participated publically in the events and activities that I studied. In addition to the existing arguments that question MSM as a useful analytical or conceptual tool (Boellstorff 2011; Cáceres and Mendoza 2009), the paucity of ethnographic material on MSM subjects in this research project is also related to my own limits as an ethnographer in being able to negotiate rapport with MSM as a gay person who always hung around other gay and transgender people in the community as well as to receive their consent to document their lives in this study. And finally, I use the term transgender instead of the term travesti. In South America, particularly in Amazonian countries like Peru and Brazil, the travesti term has been the subject of previous research about transgender women (Campuzano, Abalo, and Batista 2011; Kulick 1998; Mitchell 2016). During my fieldwork I found that people rarely presented themselves as travesti to me but rather as a *chica trans* or *mujer transgénero* (transgender young woman or woman). While people might call others travesti and in doing so claim their own travesti selfhood (Sívori 2004), the term was often offensive or disparaging when used to talk (or write) about others when they were not present. Consequently, transgender was, for me, an ethnographically appropriate term for the context of this research.

II. The Global Fund in the Context of Post-Conflict Peru

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, or simply The Global Fund, has been the primary foreign financing entity for addressing HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis in Peru since 2004. The Global Fund was created in 2002 and is a partnership between governments, non-governmental organizations, and private entities. One of the core ideas behind The Global Fund is that a country takes ownership of its own efforts at addressing the three diseases and is a partner with, as opposed to solely a recipient of, The Global Fund's financing. It provides

funding in “rounds” and when a round of funding is announced, countries are invited to submit proposals for funding in those rounds. In order for a country to submit a funding application to The Global Fund, it must create a Country Coordinating Mechanism. This was a national committee responsible primarily for developing the funding proposal and selecting the principal recipient. The principal recipient was NGO responsible for carrying out the program. The Global Fund requires this committee to include the “sectors” that would be relevant to addressing the diseases: “multilateral and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, faith-based organization, the private sector and—especially—people living with the disease” (The Global Fund 2017). In August 2002, Peru established its country coordinating mechanism. It was called La Coordinadora Nacional Multisectorial de Salud (CONAMUSA) and included representatives from state ministries, religious groups, international development organizations, and representatives from universities and academic institutions in the country (Sprungli 2007).

That same year when the CONAMUSA was formed, Peru submitted its first proposal to The Global Fund. It was developed by the Ministry of Health, without the consultation or participation of other sectors, and was unsuccessful. Since then, the country has submitted successful proposals for Rounds 2, 5, 6, and 10 and an unsuccessful proposal to Round 8 (Cáceres et al. 2013). Combined, these rounds of funding have generated over $80 million of HIV/AIDS funding in Peru over the past fifteen years, making Peru the largest recipient of The Global Fund funding in South America and the second largest in the Latin American and Caribbean region (The Global Fund 2017). While these opportunities have increased the participation of communities of vulnerable populations in elaborating the national response to the country, particularly gay and transgender individuals and people living with HIV/AIDS, the

projects and proposals have also been subject to a number of critiques. One of these critiques has been that because of the increased democratization of the process, the technical aspects of proposal development and project implementation such as developing appropriate indicators and monitoring and evaluation procedures have decreased in quality (Cáceres et al. 2013).

In recounting the history of the formation of the CONAMUSA and Peru's efforts at securing funding from The Global Fund, it is important to note the major historical and political processes that were occurring simultaneously in the country at the time. In 2000, President Alberto Fujimori fled Peru after ten years of ruling the country since 1990. His presidency marked the end of the internal armed conflict in the country. In 2001 the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established to examine the political violence that had occurred throughout the 1980s and 1990s. It was a way for the country to symbolically mark an end to the conflict, but also a regime change: civil society, democratization, and human rights were charged concepts in this context that was also meant to produce a history of the recent past and separate it from a vision of the present and future. In other words, as Milton (2007) describes the Commission, it is "a site of production of historical sources about the past" (4). In Chapter 2, I provide more analysis of this history and how it continues to shape the politics and lives of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. Only two years after the end of Fujimori's authoritarian rule, and one year after the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the CONAMUSA was created. Given these historical overlaps, the development and history of The Global Fund in Peru has thus been intimately tied to broader political processes and contestations that have characterized post-conflict Peru. The role of human rights and LGBT rights in the process of addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic must be understood within the context of what human rights has come to mean in the Peruvian context.

Despite the efforts of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, there was never a widely accepted and shared narrative about the conflict. Given the fact that political violence lasted for decades in the Andean region and parts of the Amazonian region, but only was really felt in Lima for a few years in the early 1990s, there are vastly different narratives and experiences in Peru about the conflict. Nevertheless, as Milton (2014) observes, these narratives can be divided into two main camps: the "salvation memory" camp and the "human rights memory" camp. The "salvation memory" perspective tends to view Alberto Fujimori's heavy hand as a necessary tool for putting an end to the Shining Path and Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, the two armed insurgent groups during the conflict. His actions, such as dissolving Congress, while drastic, offered political, national, and economic salvation to Peru. The "human rights memory," on the other hand, "situates the violence as an extension of ongoing legacies of social and political inequalities of which the Shining Path was a symptom" (Milton 2014, 10). This narrative emphasizes the human rights violations Fujimori committed and sees both the state and the Shining Path as actors responsible for the violence. Furthermore, the human rights memory narrative points to how, even though Fujimori efforts may have contributed to the demise of the Shining Path, the root causes of the unrest relating to social, economic, and political inequality, were never truly addressed. While this may be a reductive characterization, it is important to understand that this division in Peru means that the invocation of "human rights," or to describe or characterize something as relating to "human rights," such as a HIV/AIDS intervention, automatically positions it in a contentious debate with staunch advocates and opponents.

Despite this reductive synthesis of complex notions of the past, it is possible to see how this division has played out in how social scientists have characterized the history of HIV/AIDS,

LGBT rights, and The Global Fund in Peru. While there has been a shared consensus on the periodization of this history, each period has been assessed and evaluated differently. These differences reflect precisely this division between salvation memory and human rights memory. The first period, from 1983 when the first case of HIV was diagnosed in the country to the mid-1990s, has been characterized as one of weak planning and little outreach (Goicochea and Montoya 2014, 253). The next period, from the mid-1990s to 2000 refers to the efforts under the Fujimori regime to develop a national plan to address the epidemic and support the affected populations. Descriptions of precisely this period have varied significantly. While some have characterized this period as particularly strong and effective, as well as enabling the development of a mulitsectorial framework that included participation of civil society and the affected populations (Goicochea and Montoya 2014), others characterize it as weak in terms of protecting the human rights of vulnerable populations. For example, Cáceres and Mendoza (2009) argue that, "no steps were taken, however, to develop a human rights framework for HIV work, with a focus on stigma and discrimination, and inclusive view of sexuality, and to develop strategies for access to ART (in contrast with other countries in the region)" (62). Finally, the third period has been the period from 2001 to the present. This period was inaugurated by the creation of the CONAMUSA and is characterized by Peru's efforts at applying for and carrying out The Global Fund's multiple rounds of funding. While some have characterized the creation of the CONAMUSA as a weakening of the national strategy for addressing the epidemic, others characterize it as a more comprehensive strategy that ensured universal access to antiretroviral therapy and began to incorporate human rights issues. Through the introduction of human rights, the story goes, Peru's response to HIV/AIDS has matured alongside Peruvian society as the Fujimori regime ended and Peru transitioned into a post-conflict society.

In 2010, the CONAMUSA began to prepare its application for Round 10 of The Global Fund. That same year, the call for proposals went out and for the HIV/AIDS component, the CONAMUSA received and evaluated proposals from five NGOs. They selected the Instituto Peruano de Paternidad Responsable (Inppares) non-governmental organization as the principal receptor for Round 10. Set to operate from July 2011 until June 2016, the Round 10 proposal was titled "Building social capital for the prevention of HIV and access to comprehensive healthcare of the transsexual (sic), gay and MSM population in Peru." Given the concentration of the epidemic among these populations in Peru, this proposal was specifically addressed at targeting this population through a human rights-based framework. It was to extend previous rounds of The Global Fund, which had emphasized access to ensuring access to antiretroviral therapy, increasing the participation of state ministries and civil society in the response to HIV/AIDS, and mandating the state's commitment to funding antiretroviral therapy. However, this extension was to be accomplished primarily through rights: by fortifying the human rights of gay and transgender people, the initiative would decrease homophobic discrimination and stigma.

In Peru's proposal for the 10th Round of funding from The Global Fund, AIDS-related and homophobic discrimination and stigma were the main targets intervention. To do this, the CONAMUSA proposed bolstering the infrastructure of gay and transgender community-based organizations (CBO) throughout the country as the primary way of combating discrimination and stigma. As the proposal itself stated:

> The rationale for the proposal understands that improving the social environment and strengthening the transsexual (sic) and gay/MSM organizations will improve their access

> to comprehensive healthcare and decrease the stigma and discrimination they face, in a cycle wherein there will be a reduced number of HIV cases in the country's vulnerable population.[1]

Thus, the way to address the discrimination and stigma was to strengthen to network of local gay and trans community-based organizations. Enculturating the members of these organizations into the technical practices of tracking indicators, evaluating projects, and evidencing objectives, the proposal suggested, would ultimately result in a more robust and functioning gay and transgender NGO and CBO infrastructure throughout the country and ultimately lead to a decreased incidence of HIV among the populations in which it was most concentrated. One of the key projects to be implemented was a "System of Community Vigilance," which was designed to help community-based organizations identify and formally address instances of discrimination. The overall proposal framed the network of trans and gay community-based organizations as too weak to effectively address the epidemic especially in the provincial regions of the country outside of Lima: they had poorly trained staff, no sense of financial management, no social capital, and, certainly, insufficient political presence in the regional political landscape to advocate for any political or legal change to address discrimination and stigma. Capacity-building workshops, technical trainings were thus central activities and their success was measured in how many formal grievances were filed in the project's archives. In Chapter 4, I explore the social effects of the implementation of the System of Community Vigilance in Tarapoto and analyze the political consequences of the shift towards addressing discrimination and stigma among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

[1] Peru's proposals for funding to The Global Fund were retrieved from https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/portfolio/country/?k=6a5d3eb0-0d70-4b68-a767-12ce2b302bbd&loc=PER

Geographically, the proposal for the 10th Round encompassed eight different departments, or states, in Peru. These departments were selected because they exhibited the highest number of cases of HIV and AIDS. Five were on Peru's coast and three were in Peru's Amazonian region. For the implementation of the project, the departments were divided into two macro-regions: the coastal region and the Amazonian region. In the Amazonian region, this encompassed the departments of San Martín, Loreto, and Ucayali. Tarapoto is the largest and principal economic city of San Martín, Iquitos is the capital city of Loreto, and Pucallpa the capital city of Ucayali. The Centro de Desarrollo e Investigación de la Selva Alta (Cedisa) NGO, based in Tarapoto, was selected to oversee the Amazonian component of the 10th Round. In Tarapoto, Diversidad San Martinense (Disam) and Las Amazonas were the community-based organization recipients.

Figure 1.1 Map of Peru indicating Tarapoto, Pucallpa, and Iquitos Source: Google Maps

The CONAMUSA terminated its contract with the original principal recipient in 2014 and published a second call for proposals for the second phase of Round 10. The Inppares NGO thus concluded its activities coordinating the program in March 2014 and then, in April 2014, the Parsalud organization began coordinating the intervention. Parsalud, however, was woefully inefficient at initiating the planned activities and following through with the second phase of the proposal. Nearly a year after the second phase had commenced, and the Parsalud organization had been receiving the financial disbursements from The Global Fund, The Global Fund eventually determined that Parsalud was ineligible to have been selected in the first place as the principal recipient because it was a state entity directly affiliated with and staffed by members of the Ministry of Health. So, in January 2015, the CONAMUSA decided to terminate Round 10 entirely and, eventually, hold another convocation for a new principal receptor to manage the project. Thus, from January 2015 – December 2015, the rights-based HIV/AIDS interventions that I had set out to study were temporarily defunded and terminated.

This decision had detrimental effects for the transgender and gay community-based organizations throughout the country who had been relying on funding from the 10th Round to support the activities and infrastructure of their organizations. The organizations were unable to pay the rent on the office space that they had acquired for this round and were faced either with indebting themselves with their local landlords, evacuating the office space, or figuring out ways to raise the money to pay the rent for the office space. Throughout the country, different organizations took different strategies. The president of the Alma Chiclayo community-based organization in Chiclayo explained to me in an interview that, at first, he tried to organize fundraisers like “polladas,” events in which one pre-sells tickets for a piece of chicken and then those who buy the chicken come on a later date to collect it, and collaborations with the local gay

discos. However, none of these events were successfully able to raise the money for the rent and he was forced to evacuate the space. Likewise, in Callao, the president of the Corazones Chalacos community-based organization organized volleyball tournaments and raised rent money by selling food and alcohol to the spectators of the events. These tournaments were a temporary solution to the problem, as they were of a very high level and some of the participants came from Peru's professional volleyball league, however, they were not enough to sustain the space and the organization was also forced to leave the office. And in Pucallpa, after a month of not paying rent, the landlord of the space of the LGBT community-based organization put a lock on the door, seizing the computers and office equipment inside until they were able to come up with the money to pay the rent.

In Tarapoto, there were two community-based organizations receiving funding from the 10th Round of The Global Fund. Diversidad San Martinense (Disam) was an LGBT community-based organization and Las Amazonas was a transgender women's community-based organization. Norma, the president of Las Amazonas, had based the office in her house in the Morales district, so she did not have the issue with rent and was able to continue using the office supplies as in the past. Disam, however, had rented a large space on the centrally-located Jimenez Pimentel road, and the board of the organization immediately decided to evacuate the space. They sold a television to pay for a moving truck and moved the computers, chairs, electronics, and office supplies to the house of the current president. They did this out of concern that what had happened in Pucallpa, in which the landlord seized the equipment, would happen as well. Since Disam continued to be the recipient of additional international development and LGBT rights projects, activities continued but were based out of the president's house in the Tarapoto district.

The dissertation's starting point then is the question of what happens when gay and transgender communities seek to advance their rights, but the funding they had counted on for this disappears. As global health and international development initiatives, like The Global Fund, have increasingly shifted towards rights-based frameworks as a way to respond to the concentration of HIV/AIDS among gay and transgender populations, what are the consequences for the gay and transgender communities who both carry out these initiatives and have been the targets of these interventions? What is the social afterlife of global health efforts to created legally visible and politically viable LGBT citizens through human rights, particularly in moments when the international funding for these initiatives disappears? How does this novel convergence of human rights and HIV/AIDS rights create new political possibilities to demand rights and seek recognition for gay and transgender communities in Peru? And, finally, what does telling an ethnographic story of global HIV/AIDS initiatives among gay and transgender communities in the Amazonian region of the country illustrate about broader political processes regarding post-conflict Peru and LGBT rights globally?

Throughout the dissertation, I situate gay and transgender communities at the intersections of the ongoing legacies of political violence and the contemporary HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights initiatives. As I have argued in this introduction, the story of HIV/AIDS initiatives in Peru cannot be divorced from the parallel trajectory of human rights in the country or the continued reverberations of the internal armed conflict. Thus, I contend that the confluence of these broader social trajectories creates novel spaces and strategies for gay and transgender people to engage in the local community as politicized gay and transgender subjects, but often in ways unintended or unanticipated by the activists and NGO workers managing and executing the initiatives. The practices that emerged at this intersection I analyze as *peche politics*. The peche,

a concept I ethnographically examine in the second and third chapters, draws attention to sexual practices that have come under increased scrutiny among HIV/AIDS researchers and LGBT activists because they represented either an inevitably risky practice or an un-empowered, non-egalitarian sexual subjectivity. Yet, as I illustrate in the following chapters, the peche had both historical depth and social extension. It was, for example, a way for gay and transgender people to position themselves to the past in Tarapoto. Consequently, I invoke the concept to point to the political spaces that were both shaped by and exceeded the limits of global HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights initiatives.

III. Research Methods

The dissertation draws from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the San Martín department of Peru, principally within the city of Tarapoto, from October 2014 until December 2015. Within its three municipal districts, Morales, Banda de Shilcayo, and Tarapoto, the city had a population of approximately 143,000 inhabitants in the year 2015 (INEI 2017). In addition to the fieldwork conducted in 2014 and 2015, I carried out exploratory and preliminary fieldwork in Peru, conducting fieldwork feasibility analysis in the cities of Lima, Chiclayo, Tarapoto, and Iquitos, for three months in 2012 and three months in 2013. While I have studied both the Spanish and Quechua languages, including participating in a three-month intensive Quechua language immersion program in Cusco in 2008, the research was conducted entirely in the Spanish language.

The primary method of data collection was long-term participation among gay and transgender people. From October 2014 until January 2015, I primarily focused my participant observation at the office of the Diversidad San Martinense community-based organization in

Tarapoto. This organization was selected to carry out the day-to-day activities of the 10th Round of The Global Fund's intervention among gay, transgender, and MSM populations in San Martín. While this organization continued to exist after the withdrawal of The Global Fund's 10th Round, it no longer was able to afford an office. During this period, I attended five workshops and training sessions in Disam relating to the The Global Fund's activities in the region. From February 2015 – December 2015, my day-to-day participant observation varied between spending the mornings in salons owned by gay and transgender people, at the Las Amazonas transgender women's community-based organization, and at other NGOs in Tarapoto that were willing to let me use the internet and office space. In these spaces, I participated in ten LGBT rights workshops and trainings sponsored by the Ministry of Labor, the Ministry of Health, the Defensoria del Pueblo, the Cesar Vallejo University, and the international development organization Hivos.

In the afternoons and evenings, I tended to leave these organizational spaces to hang out with gay and transgender people who were not directly working with or contracted by the community-based or non-governmental organizations working on HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights initiatives in Tarapoto. The primary space for this was afternoon volleyball games, which took place daily in all three municipal districts of Tarapoto. These games, which were played by gay and transgender people, drew spectators ranging from children from the neighborhood to adults passing by after work. Enterprising women from the neighborhood sold snacks and drinks, which were popular among the players and the spectators. While I was sometimes invited to play volleyball in low-stakes games or if there were not enough people to field two teams, I generally participated as a spectator during these games. Meetings and workshops at the Las Amazonas organization were generally held in the evenings, as were special events such as transgender

beauty contests and dance shows. Weekends were especially busy in terms of social events, as sports competitions and fund raising events were held during the day while shows at nightclubs were, of course, popular at night. Ultimately, my presence at these afternoon and evening social spaces was important for helping me negotiate rapport with gay and transgender people as well as offer an ethnographic vantage point to analyze the effects of the HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights interventions I sought to study.

I conducted thirty semi-structured and life history interviews in Tarapoto. The majority of these were recorded and transcribed from June 2015 until December 2015. I had established rapport with informants by this time and could draw on the previous experiences that I had shared with them. These interviews were conducted with gay men and transgender women over the age of 18 in Tarapoto who I had met through my involvement with the Diversidad San Martinense and Las Amazonas, my participation in gay and transgender capacity building workshops, or simply because I had been hanging around the community long enough and gay and transgender people knew of my presence in Tarapoto. Some common themes that we discussed during the interviews included experiences of discrimination, experiences organizing or participating in community events, childhood and youth experiences, and stories that I had heard in other situations but did not have the chance to record. I also asked for their perspective on events or workshops that I knew we had both attended or participated in, which supplemented my own participant observation of an activity or event with additional perspectives.

To complement the fieldwork I conducted in Tarapoto, I also included brief visits to the coastal cities of Lima and Chiclayo as well as to the Amazonian cities of Pucallpa, Iquitos, and Juanjui. While I did not carry out systematic or long-term participant observation among the gay and transgender communities in these cities, I attended workshops and meetings as well as

conducted interviews in these cities. I carried out five interviews in Lima. These interviews were with LGBT rights activists and/or workers at various non-governmental organizations. They were all personally familiar with The Global Fund's interventions in Peru or other LGBT rights projects in the country and provided a perspective from Lima. Several were involved in other initiatives, such as creating the LGBT Chamber of Commerce in Peru, representing LGBT victims of discrimination as a lawyer, or organizing a project to document cases and experiences of LGBT discrimination in Lima. Interviews in Chiclayo, Iquitos, Pucallpa, and Juanjui were with gay and transgender individuals who had been involved with The Global Fund's projects and offered a comparative perspective for understanding the effects of the intervention in Tarapoto.

The research was approved by the University of California, Irvine Institutional Review Board under the protocol number HS# 2014 – 1285. Approval was originally granted for August 2014 – August 2015 and was subsequently approved for a three-year extension for July 2015 until July 2018.

IV. Overview of Dissertation Chapters

Following the introductory chapter is the first chapter, "The Activo/Pasivo Legacy and Sexualities in Amazonian Peru." In this chapter, I review the longstanding history and debates within the field of anthropology on male same-sex sexualities in Latin America and the implications that these debates have in contemporary interdisciplinary conversations on LGBT and queer studies in the region.

In the second chapter, "Queering Postmemory: Accounts of Political Violence at the Intersections of HIV/AIDS and Human Rights," I provide an analysis of the intersections of

LGBT rights, political violence, and HIV/AIDS in Peru. I describe the personal narratives about the experience of the internal armed conflict that I collected through interviews and participant observation in Tarapoto. I then juxtapose these with narratives about transactional sex that I have identified through a literature review of epidemiological and AIDS-related research about gay and transgender populations. I draw attention to the ways in which notions of transactional sex, called "peches" by informants, were central to how gay and transgender people recounted the past, established the legitimacy of their perspectives, and transmitted their stories to subsequent generations of gay and transgender people. I problematize the scientific narrative that transactional sex is an inevitably risky behavior that necessitates rights-based empowerment. Instead of conceptualizing gay and transgender people as duped out of food, money, clothing, or alcohol by their manipulative heterosexual lovers, I show how these exchanges were a powerful way to generate intimate knowledge about the past and claim a privileged historical memory of the conflict.

The third chapter, "Cultures of Denouncement and the Discrimination Grievance Paradox," offers a close examination of one of the key issues taken up by HIV/AIDS, LGBT rights, and international development projects in Peru: antidiscrimination. Tarapoto was an ideal location to analyze the effects of antidiscrimination efforts because the regional and municipal government of Tarapoto approved antidiscrimination ordinances that included sexual orientation and gender identity. Tarapoto was thus one of a few municipal and regional governments to do this throughout Peru. In the chapter, I first examine the notion of a culture of denouncement. This was the shared idea among LGBT rights activists and NGO workers based in Lima that LGBT people outside of Lima lacked a culture of denouncing discrimination. The consequence of the culture of denouncement notion was the implementation of workshops that would teach

and enable LGBT people to file formal grievances. I then examine these workshops and the effects they had among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. Specifically, this chapter tracks two different cases of discrimination, both as they came up in these workshops and in everyday life. One involves a municipal cemetery that buried those alleged to have died of complications with AIDS in a separate section of the cemetery and the other involves a transgender woman who was denied entry into a nightclub. I argue that gay and transgender people did not lack a culture of denouncement. Rather, this discourse effaces the reality that filing a formal discrimination grievance requires significant time and labor and not all instances of discrimination can be pursued by NGOs through formal legal mechanisms.

And finally, the fourth chapter proposes a new direction for conceptualizing the community I studied by taking into account the circuits of migration and remittances between gay and transgender people in Tarapoto with those in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Titled "Percy's Dance and Salomé's Curse: Towards a Queer Hemispheric Ethnography," I argue that a hemispheric imaginary offers both a complex and necessary perspective for understanding the effects (and limits) of globalizing process like HIV/AIDS initiatives and LGBT rights activism. Precisely in the period when The Global Fund's initiatives faded from Tarapoto, gay and transgender people shifted their attention to Argentina. I argue that informants' hemispheric imaginary draws analytical attention to how the circulation of symbols, practices, people, and capital not based on a Global North to Global South trajectory made possible and meaningful the subjectivities and some of the community activities of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

CHAPTER 1

THE ACTIVO/PASIVO LEGACY: ETHNOGRAPHIC ENGAGAMENTS OF SEXUALITY IN PERU'S UPPER AMAZON

I. Introduction: Popular Representations of Sexuality in Peru's Upper Amazon

Peruvians popularly conceptualize the country to be divided into three regions: the coast, the sierra, and the jungle. These three regions generally coincide with the environmental features that define the geography of the country: the Pacific ocean, the Andean highlands, and the Amazonian basin. This understanding of Peru provides the foundation for popular conceptualizations of the regions that make up the state and the cultures that constitute the nation. The anthropological record in Peru has followed this tripartite categorization. On the one hand, there has been a longstanding ethnographic and ethnohistorical engagement of the indigenous Andean and Amazonian region.[2] Recently, there has been a growth in urban ethnographic research in Lima, the coastal capital of the country and home to around 30% of the country's entire population (Aguirre and Walker 2017; Gandolfo 2009; Greene 2016).

The city of Tarapoto, and the department of San Martín where it is located, is not easily locatable in this ethnographic record. Popular cultural conceptualizations of Peru, limited to coast, highland, and jungle, would place it as part of the "jungle." The proposal for the 10th Round of The Global Fund in Peru is an excellent example of this cultural conceptualization, as it grouped the cities of Pucallpa, Iquitos, and Tarapoto together as the "Amazonian macro-region" and selected Tarapoto to be the base city for the intervention. Ecologically and geographically, however, Tarapoto and San Martín are distinct than the rest of the Amazonian basin. The region is known as "la ceja de selva," or the upper Amazon and is located between the

[2] See Starn 1991 for an analysis of these ethnographic traditions in Peru.

eastern slopes of the Andes mountains and the western edges of Amazon river basin. This distinction is also based on several other factors, including an elevation typically between 100 – 300 m.

The historical vision of the Peruvian state towards the entire Amazonian region of the country has played a significant role in shaping the contemporary processes of resource extraction, conflict, international development, and narcotrafficking that characterize official state visions and popular representations of the region. Since the nineteenth century, different efforts for incorporating the region, ranging from "whitening" the race by drawing European migrants to selling tracts of land to corporations to pay for debts incurred by wars have consistently been based on short-term solutions to address the problems facing the country's coastal and Andean regions (Walker 1987). Historically, then, there has never been a consistent long-term investment or concerted effort to develop the infrastructure and effectively incorporate the region into the state. Ethnographic research specifically in Peru's upper Amazonian region has focused on the contemporary resonances of precisely these processes, paying attention to their effects among rural indigenous communities, mestizo urban cities, and among the diverse itinerant peoples who transverse the rivers and roads that connect the region to the Andes mountains and the Amazonian basin (Dean 2004, 2009; Kernaghan 2009, 2012; Romero Dianderas 2015).

In the past twenty years, the introduction of new agricultural products that thrive in the ecological conditions of the upper Amazon, like palm oil, cacao, or coffee, have transformed the ecological and economic landscape of the region (Barrantes et al. 2016; Dammert 2013). The success of these economic development initiatives in the department of San Martín has led to the international circulation of a narrative called the "San Martín Miracle." This is a narrative that

portrays economic development in the region, driven by the transition from the unregulated cultivation of coca to the regulated and corporate cultivation of alternative projects, as the primary factor in ending political violence in the region and explanation for the region's strong performance on international development indicators such as the poverty index and gross domestic product (Cabieses 2013; Villarán de la Puente et al., n.d.). An assessment of the accuracy of the "San Martín Miracle" narrative of alternative development, or whether these efforts are perhaps new instantiations of the short-term vision that Walker (1987) has shown to characterize how the state has historically approached developing the region, is outside of the purview of this research. However, my review demonstrates the construction of the upper Amazon as a distinct region. This has been the result of ecological, historical (colonial and extractive), and political processes and its ethnographic representation as a distinct region with particular historical and cultural characteristics, both in this ethnographic research and others, is made possible through these longstanding forms of representation.

One aspect that has not been closely examined in ethnographic research, but was a key element in the cultural distinctions made among Peruvians, is the notion that gay and transgender people are not just visible but more prominent and numerous throughout the upper Amazonian region. This notion, and its popular dissemination throughout Peru, has been strongly influenced by a genre of televised journalistic reports on the lives of gay and transgender people in San Martín transmitted throughout the country. For example, the popular journalist Beto Ortiz produced a series of reports about gay and transgender people in Tarapoto on his late-night television show *Enemigos Intimos*. The reports emphasized the humorous and exaggerated aspects of the subjects. For instance, "Los Pimpollos de Tarapoto" featured three young gay and transgender people from Tarapoto and explored how, as early as 14 or 15 years old, they began

to participate in beauty pageants, play volleyball in the streets, and wear makeup (Ortiz 2010). Another report was filmed in the city of Juanjui, about 85 miles south of Tarapoto. Titled "Juanjui: La Ciudad Más Tolerante de la Selva," or "Juanjui: The Most Tolerant City of the Jungle," it was transmitted on the Saturday evening news show *Al Sexto Día (*Bayro 2013). The report provides a montage of scenes profiling the working conditions of gay and transgender people in the city of Juanjui: a transgender woman singing a Gloria Trevi song in a dimly-lit karaoke bar, a young gay man teaching English in a primary school, and a gay chef working in a kitchen. The reporter concluded that the visibility of these gay and transgender people in Juanjui indicates a level of tolerance in the upper Amazonian region that is not evident in the rest of the country.

This conceptualization of the Amazonian region, and particularly in the cities in the upper Amazonian department of San Martín, as more tolerant was expressed to me by many people in Peru. It was a sentiment primarily voiced by those in Lima who either had viewed this genre of television reports or had visited a city like Tarapoto. For example, when I explained to Peruvians outside of Tarapoto (or historians or other anthropologists who study in Peru) that I was studying HIV/AIDS and LGBT rights in Tarapoto, I was often asked if I thought there was less discrimination or more acceptance and openness to LGBT people than in other parts of the country. In interviews, I often asked this same question. In one interview, an activist who had been working on creating the Peruvian LGBT Chamber of Commerce explained to me that in the Amazonian region, that people are more *libre*, or open, when it comes to LGBT issues. This was historical, he explained, because the Incas were not homophobic. When the Spaniards came and conquered the Incas, they brought with them religion and being gay became a sin. But since neither the Incas nor the Spaniards ever conquered and contained the peoples of the Amazonian

region, there still remains, to this day, an openness towards LGBT people and less homophobia then in the Andean and coastal regions of the country. The supposed prevalence of gay and transgender people in the region, and its popular representation in the media, also works to produce the upper Amazon as a culturally distinct region of Peru with distinctive characteristics unseen in the rest of the country.

In San Martín, I did not find the tolerance narrative voiced frequently during fieldwork. People throughout the region, though, often expressed popular myths regarding homosexuality. These were regional myths that served both as popular explanations for the cause of homosexuality and a humorous starting point for a joke or a story. One of these myths was that eating the aguaje fruit makes one gay or transgender. *Mauritia flexuosa*, or aguaje as it is called in Peru, is a palm tree that grows in a few places of the upper Amazonian region and so it is closely associated with it. When I asked Norma, a transgender woman, about these myths in an interview, she explained to me that they are part of the *costumbres*, or customs, of the region:

> It is now a custom, it is a myth that the everyone here knows. If you drink aguaje juice, it will make you a maricón, they say. It is a saying that has been patented by the general public…they know this commentary and they say to you, for example, when they see you eating aguaje they say "look out, you will become a maricón." People cannot let go of this because it is an ingrained concept.

Norma's comment highlighted the everyday quality of these myths. They were not necessarily taken at face value by the people of the region but rather constituted a shared repertoire from which one could create symbolically meaningful off-hand comments, insults, and jokes. In some contexts this worked to the advantage of a gay and transgender person, who may be able to creatively craft a story to share. Other times, it was at their expense and interpreted as hurtful or

derogatory. For example, another myth was that drinking the water in the small town of Tabalosos, located about 20 miles west of Tarapoto, turns someone gay. Axel recounted the following story to me in an interview about when a reference to this myth came up among his family:

> My dad joked with me in front of my friends. For example, one time, we were at home and I asked him, "Dad, where are you coming from?" "From your town," he said to me. "From where?" I asked and he said "From Tabalosos." And HA HA HA all of my classmates were laughing, that was how he would joke with me.

By the time I had interviewed Axel, he recounted this story fondly. He liked how his father would joke like that with him and his friends all thought his father was funny. When he was a teenager, though, it affected him more and he would get upset.

While the circulation of these myths merit further analysis, for the context of this chapter, their existence among the general population throughout San Martín indicates a sense among the people of the region that there was something distinct about the way homosexuality was socially manifested and the relative visibility of gay and transgender people compared to other parts of the country. Another note for further analysis is that these myths, as popularly conceived, are not related to female same-sex sexuality or lesbianism nor are they related to bisexuality or the figure of the *mapero*. Sedgwick (1990) saw theoretical questions of homosexual ontogeny, that is, the question of the "cause" of homosexuality as particularly dangerous. She questioned "the ability of even the most scrupulously gay-affirmative thinkers to divorce these terms…from the essentially gay-genocidal nexuses of thought through which they have developed" (Sedgwick 1990, 40). However, in Tarapoto, these questions emerged not out of efforts to eradicate aguaje or water from the region, and consequently homosexuality, but rather provided a shared

background knowledge to recount a story or tell a joke. Unlike Lancaster's (1987) comparisons about the distinction between the oral and the anal as the symbolic reservoir for joking and insulting, these jokes were based on disembodied objects associated with the region. Ultimately, the circulation of these myths about the dynamics of same-sex sexuality became a way through which people from San Martín themselves constructed a collective representation of the upper Amazon as a distinct cultural region.

II. The Legacy of the Activo/Pasivo Framework for Anthropological Research in Latin America

If, as the previous section illustrated, people in the upper Amazonian region of Peru conceptualized their region as distinct through shared myths about the cause of homosexuality, the terms through which gay and transgender people themselves used ranged from localized terms understood only by those from the region, terms used throughout Latin America, and the globalized terms of LGBT rights and HIV prevention. In this section, I explore the legacy of ethnographic research on the Latin American terms and introduce some of the significant terms specific to the gay and transgender community in Tarapoto.

In the field of queer anthropology, the Latin American ethnographic record has historically been synonymous with what has been called the activo/pasivo framework.[3] This research emerged in the 1970s and 1980s and generally argued that the activo/pasivo framework was a central cultural logic that framed male homosexual subcultures in Latin America. This framework followed a distinction made by Freud about the differences between sexual object choice and sexual aim. The idea was essentially that the logic of sexual object choice, associated with North American or Northern European contexts, dictated that the biological sex of the

[3] This ethnographic record has historically focused on gay male and male to female transgender communities. There is still a wide gap in the anthropological literature regarding lesbian and female to male transgender communities in Latin America.

person with whom sexual activity was directed determined who was considered homosexual. On the other hand, the logic of sexual aim, associated with Latin America, dictated that homosexual stigma depended on the role one performed in the sexual act. Consequently, the activo, or active partner was not stigmatized as homosexual while the pasivo, or passive partner, was stigmatized. This research tended to emphasize the incompatibility of the two systems. As Almaguer (1993) noted, "ethnographic research by Joseph Carrier, Roger N. Lancaster, Richard Parker, Barry D. Adam, and Clark L. Taylor has documented the inapplicability of Western European and Northern American categories of sexual meaning in the Latin American context" (256). Lancaster's (1987) article "Subject Honor and Object Shame: The Construction of Male Homosexuality and Stigma in Nicaragua" was a particularly influential piece that generated debate in the years following its publication (Arboleda 1997; Kutsche 1998; Lancaster 1998). In descriptions and critiques of the activo/pasivo literature, this piece also tends to stand in for the broader conversations about the activo/pasivo framework (Clark et al. 2013; Decena 2011; Nesvig 2001; Vidal-Ortiz et al. 2010). Readings of this article, however, tend to miss some of the key theoretical insight produced through the activo/pasivo framework. Subsequent interpretations often reduced his argument to the typologies that constituted his data. While it was the case that ethnographically he found a strong cultural distinction between the pasivos and activos, his argument was not just this. In other words, It was not just the discovery that some people were stigmatized as homosexual and others not, but rather that this distinction fittingly illuminated the contours of sex and power in Nicaragua. To make this argument, Lancaster used a grammatical metaphor: the subject and the object. Men, the subjects, maintained their honor and demonstrated masculine vigor through their sexual use of objects (i.e., women and feminine men). Thus, to perform the activo role in same-sex sexual activity was within the normative

sexual practices of ordinary men because it was to be a subject and use the object. Because any same-sex sexual activity in the sexual object choice framework was considered non-normative, Lancaster argued that the pasivo in Nicaragua was ontologically different than the homosexual of North America: He was produced in a system in which he was "the object to machismo's subjectivity" while the homosexual was "positioned outside the operational rules of normative (hetero)sexuality" (Lancaster 1988, 124). The argument was not that this rule merely exists, nor that the rule was predictive of actual sexual practices, but rather that the rule indicated a sex-power system that produced masculine subjects through hetero- and homo- sexual practices. Most of the subsequent critiques of the activo/pasivo literature have misdirected their criticism towards the descriptive aspects of the literature, missing almost entirely its theoretical thrust. One of the most common arguments has been to point to the ways that the framework was not predictive of actual sexual practices and that homosexuality was more complicated than the rigid bifurcation of activos and pasivos. This was a point that Lancaster addressed, even in his original formulations, noting:

> The actual range of sexual practices employed by cochones may be wide than sexual ideology would suggest. Many tell me that they are only really comfortable in the anal-passive position. Others alternate between active and passive roles, depending on whether they are having relations with an hombre-hombre (always passive) or with another cochón. (Lancaster 1988, 112)

Likewise, Carrier's research has also been cast as overly-rigid because of his association with the activo/pasivo framework. Carrier's ethnographic monograph *De Los Otros* (1995), was based on a long-term ethnographic engagement in lower-class communities in the outskirts of Guadalajara, Mexico. The ethnography is both transnational, in that he follows his informants as

they cross national boundaries back and forth between the United States and Mexico, and also trans-historical, in that it follows informants pre-AIDS and throughout the HIV/AIDS epidemic. And even though the four informants Carrier (1995) profiles at length were all socially categorized as homosexuals, and thus presumably pasivos, there were moments in each of their lives in which they played an activo role in sex. Carrier, in fact, meticulously detailed the ebb and flow of his informant's sexualities throughout a long period of time, offering a portrait of each informant's sexual life history that evidenced forms of intimacies and sexual practices beyond the activo/pasivo dichotomy.

Like the myths circulated among the people of San Martín about the causes of homosexuality, the activo/pasivo framework provided a shared basis for dialogue in the emerging field of ethnographic inquiry of male same-sex sexuality in Latin America. With the onset of the AIDS epidemic, the introduction of new technologies of globalization, and generations of migrations between Latin America and the United States, the argument that the two logics, sexual aim and sexual object choice, were discrete and distinct from each other became an impossibility. Following Boellstorff's "dubbing" concept, it has become much more appropriate to consider the ways in which globalization "hold(s) together cultural logics without resolving them into a unitary whole" (2005:58). At the historical moment when I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Peru, it was a matter of fact that gay and transgender people drew from both global and local registers to give meaning to their sexual practices and social lives. The realities of globalization, whether through popular media, the Internet, HIV/AIDS initiatives, or LGBT rights movements makes the discrete distinctions between "Western European and North American" sexual systems and "Latin American" sexual systems so intensely debated by this generation of anthropologists nearly inconceivable today. However,

this does not invalidate the insight and theoretical conversations of this generation and the legacy this work still has.

The role-based distinctions developed in this classic anthropological research continues to influence HIV/AIDS research in Peru. For example, a recently published article in an epidemiological journal about HIV risk among men who have sex with men in Peru begins, "Role-based sexual identities structure male same-sex partnerships and influence HIV/STI epidemiology among MSM in Latin America" (Clark et al. 2013, 1313). The authors of this paper sought to identify the social factors and risk-taking behaviors that could explain the significant differences in HIV rates between activos and pasivos in Peru (Sanchez et al. 2007; Tabet et al. 2002). The authors argue that, on the one hand, sex role (activo or pasivo) was associated with risk taking behavior such as reporting unprotected receptive anal intercourse or engaging in sex with a higher number of partners. But risk, for the authors, was not just related to the sexual role itself, but the emotional responses that sexual role distinctions engendered: "While pasivo participants often hopes for love and intimacy in their relationships with activo partners, the activo MSM interviewed typically considered their sexual contacts with men as incidental events without ties of intimacy or commitment" (Clark et al. 2013, 1325). This narrative about the "un-empowered" pasivo participant being duped by the activo participant had consequences in Peru because it informed the way HIV/AIDS preventions activities were developed in the country. While in the next chapter I problematize this narrative, I introduce it here to demonstrate that the activo/pasivo distinction continues to be relevant in HIV/AIDS-related social scientific and scientific research in Peru and Latin America.

III. The Symbolic Terrain of the Activo/Pasivo Dynamic in Tarapoto

The distinctions between activos and pasivos were socially relevant for gay and transgender people throughout San Martín. However, conceptualizations of the distinction as a rigid typology did not reflect how gay and transgender people understood it and used it to make their relationships and sexuality socially meaningful. They tended to view the distinction as dynamic and, among themselves, often debated the relevance of the distinction. A point about the activo/pasivo framework that has been less discussed in subsequent critiques is how descriptions of the metaphor are often expressed in the passive voice: the pasivo is stigmatized and is considered gay, whereas the activo is considered normative. In subsequent chapters, my point of departure from the activo/pasivo framework is to rather frame the question in the active voice: Who is doing the discrimination and stigmatization? What are the everyday social manifestations of stigmatization and how do gay and transgender people themselves experience it? How do LGBT activists and NGO workers represent stigmatization and how do they respond to it? These questions, which I address in subsequent chapters of the dissertation, are meant to productively extend the legacy of ethnographic research on sexuality in Latin America. This is a significant departure from some recent literature on Latin American and Latino male same-sex sexualities, which has tended to predicate theoretical intervention on descriptions that proved that the "rules" of the activo/pasivo framework were often broken or more complicated in everyday life. To do this, however, in this section, I outline how the activo/pasivo dynamic was socially meaningful for gay and transgender people in Tarapoto and provide further background to the concepts and figures that were integral to their understanding of the dynamic.

The first concept that informed the activo/pasivo dynamic in Tarapoto was *maricón*. Often translated as "faggot," *maricón* is a pan-Latin American word frequently used as an insult to refer to effeminate gay men. In Tarapoto, however, *maricón* could refer to an effeminate gay

man or a transgender woman. Since the word "gay" has become more popular, gay was often used to stand in for what the *maricón* concept previously had meant. For example, "Miss Gay San Juan" was a transgender woman's beauty contest or a "Boxeo Gay" boxing spectacle would typically feature gay and transgender participants. A *maricón*, whether gay or transgender, was socially inferred or expected to be pasivo. Likewise, the myths that people popularly held and circulated about homosexuality were about *maricones*. The story was not just that eating aguaje fruit or drinking the water from Tabalosos was the cause of one engaging in homosexual practices, but rather in turning one into the socially recognizable category of *maricón*.

The second concept that contributed to the particularities of the activo/pasivo dynamic in Peru's Amazonian region was *mapero*. A *mapero* was, as many of my informants insisted, a heterosexual man who accompanied or had sex with a *maricón*. One day, when getting my hair cut and styled by Brenda at her salon, I asked her why some men were called *maperos* and where the word came from. She explained to me that it was a polite term that people from the region had come up with to refer to the people who perform the penetrative role in anal sex. Instead of referring to them as "*cacaneros*," or "shit eaters," which she said sounded vulgar, they replaced "*caca*" for "*mapa*," which meant "snot." In another example, in an interview, I asked Benedicto what a *mapero* was and he explained that it meant a "guy who goes from gay to gay, he likes to have sex with gays but is not gay." Another significant aspect to the *mapero* was that there was a sense that *maperismo* could be transmitted from generation to generation. For example, Axel and Anderson frequently made comments to me about how certain families could be known for having *maperos*. They shared this notion that if a father was a *mapero*, then his brothers or sons would also be *maperos*. Likewise, if they discovered someone to be a *mapero*, then they would frequently comment that his brothers, father, or uncles would likely also be *maperos*. This was

not the case for *maricones*. There was no sense that it was hereditary or practiced within certain families.

A third important concept was the *peche*. This concept referred to the things, such a food, money, clothing, or alcohol, that a gay or transgender person gifted to a *mapero* in exchange for his company or for sexual favors. The *peche* was different than the gifting practices that Kulick (1997) found among Brazilian travesti sex workers in that *maperos* were not necessarily boyfriends and it was both gay and transgender people who gifted *peches*. In the case of Peru, research on the *peche* has primarily been in HIV/AIDS and public health research. For example, Fernandez-Davila et al. (2009) proposed a compensation framework to understand the sexual relationships between *maperos*, on the one hand, and homosexual men on the other. Through interviews and focus groups, they found that sex between heterosexual men, or *maperos*, and homosexual men, meaning gay and transgender, was compensated. As the authors explained, this compensation was lexicalized as a *peche* among homosexual men: "*Pechar* is the term used in the language of homosexual men to refer to the 'purchase' of company or sexual favors in exchange for some type of economic or material compensation (e.g., money, clothes, shoes, food, or alcohol). *Pechar* literally refers to breastfeeding" (Fernandez-Davila et al. 2009: 358). The authors further described *maperos* as tricksters, who, as they grew older, learned to manipulate homosexuals emotionally as a way to receive enhanced benefits. The homosexuals, in this description, were duped into the relationship: Some recognized this and were resigned to its artifice, but others never acknowledge that the *maperos* were only interested in receiving *peches* and making money off of them.

The *peche* always had an implicit element of public performance to it and this is an aspect that Fernandez-Davila et al.'s compensation framework does not incorporate. It was not

necessarily sex or even affection that a *maricón* bought into when gifting cash, clothing, or alcohol. For example, while hanging around the movie theater waiting for the movie we were going to see start, Axel and I decided to walk to a late-night food market to eat something to pass the time. On the walk over, we passed a young man and Axel said "*buses*" to me, which was a word that meant to signal or alert that he was about to say something relating to being gay.[4] He then explained that he had a friend who arranged informal sexual encounters, over the Whatsapp text messaging application, with students from the local military college or the local technical college. For S./ 20, approximately $7, he went on, a *maricón* could pay for sexual encounters with these men. He explained to me, "It is much easier and more direct than with a *mapero*. With a *mapero,* you have to pay for beer at *La Mega* or *La Granja*[5] and buy them the things that they ask for. The guys from the military school love *La Mega*." If it was so easy, I asked, "why did *gays* continue to provide *peches* to *maperos*?" "How do you think all these gays can have these men? It is because they give *peches* so that the rest can see them together with jealousy." This conversation with Axel showed how the public company of a *mapero*, at a disco, bar, or restaurant, was also a significant aspect of the *peche* exchange.

The social consequences of a *peche* sometimes extended beyond the relationship between a *maricón* and a *mapero*, and could involve broader familial social relations. "I have seen parents who lend out their son when he is a *mapero*," Axel explained to me during an interview. He gave an example of a man named Carlos from his village. Axel's father always told him to be careful around Carlos because, as Axel explained, his father told him that he "ruins young men." Carlos, Axel explained, was with a schoolmate of his for many years starting from when they were in

[4] *Buses*, or simply *bu*, would also refer to HIV. For example, when individuals gossiped about the status of others, they might say "*él tiene la bu*," or "he has HIV."
[5] These are the names of two popular working-class nightclubs in Tarapoto. See Chapter 4 for ethnographic analysis of the nightclub space.

high school. His schoolmates' parents accepted Carlos because, since he owned property and had money to spend, he would spend it not just on their son, but also to the family as a unit. He brought food for the family. Now, the young man was grown up, married, and with children, but his family still received Carlos and his gifts. This however, made his wife uncomfortable, and Axel sympathized with her as he explained the situation: "His wife gets uncomfortable when Carlos is around. How could the family be willing to do this because that stage of his life has passed. And sometimes I see that the family prefers Carlos to his wife, but I think it is because he gifts *peches*." On the one hand, Axel's father disapproved of Carlos, warning him to avoid him. This aspect indicated the community knowledge about him and the young men with whom he associated. While some rejected the relationships that could be formed through his gifts, others welcomed them as supplements to their household income. The *peches* therefore often extended beyond the relationships between *gays* and *maperos*, intertwining with and affecting broader social relationships and expectations.

However, this did not mean that gay and transgender people themselves did not debate or police each other over the activo/pasivo dynamic and *peches*. One common context where I observed this was during informal conversations and interactions between LGBT activists from Lima and gay and transgender people from San Martín. One evening, when a group of LGBT activists arrived from Lima to conduct a workshop in Tarapoto, a group of us when to a bar to hang out. At one point, Brenda proudly proclaimed that she had never been an *activo* and then said that she did not understand how it was possible for a gay person to be with another gay person. Visibly frustrated by what they perhaps saw as Brenda' narrowmindedness, the Limeños did not address the comment until the next afternoon when we were at lunch after the workshop with only Anderson and me. One posed the question to the group, "How could Brenda be so

closed about the possibilities of pleasure? She should explore and be open to the fact that gays and transgender people might want to look for pleasure with each other, not just men who do not love them." Anderson, the only person from Tarapoto at the table, responded that they had to understand the dynamics in the Amazonian region and that they were different than in Lima. He also pointed to the regional myths about aguaje that contribute to these different dynamics. Anderson then turned to me and asked, "Justin, from the lens of an anthropologist who has been here in Tarapoto, what do you think?" I explained that it was how gay and transgender people narrated the activo/pasivo dynamic that was different, not actually what happens behind closed doors. A gay or transgender person could perform the activo role with a mapero, just like in Lima, but that was not how they would probably talk about it to their friends or in a survery. I then said that it was like the concept of *chala*: everyone said that every *mapero* they were with was *chala*, which meant that he was well-endowed. That was merely a shared expectation of how one narrated a sexual encounter, though. In Tarapoto, there was a shared assumption that narratives of sexual experiences with *maperos* were exaggerated in these ways. This exchange demonstrated the recognition on the part of some people in Tarapoto that the dynamics of the activo/pasivo framework were distinct in their region than in other parts of the country.

It did not, however, require the presence of Limeños to inspire a debate over the activo/pasivo dynamic and the practice of gifting *peches* to *maperos*. For instance, Walter explained to me in an interview that, unlike the rest of his friends, he did not gift *peches*. Unlike most of his friends, who were gay and transgender, he identified as bisexual. For him, to identify as bisexual meant that he did not participate in the same types of sexual relationships as his friends because he was not willing to give *peches* in the same way that his friends did:

> I don't share the same ideology as my friends. This mentality that they have of wanting to satisfy oneself with someone, that is, a *macho macho*, a man's man, and give *peches*. I don't understand their mentality, because I think that, at their age, they should be looking for a stable relationship. They are professionals, so they should be looking for an authentic relationship and not have to pay.

Walter considered himself as a rare case among his friends because most of them maintained relationships with *maperos* who insisted on cultivating their affection through the *peche* transaction. In the interview I conducted with him, Walter explained that he refused to participate in this relationship and criticized his friends for it. For him, the transaction rendered the relationship inauthentic and since his friends were professionals, they ought to be in authentic, stable, and monogamous relationships. Walter's resolute stance on the *peche* indicate how the validity of the *peche* transaction, and the degree to which it engenders an authentic or inauthentic relationship, is itself a question vigorously debated and defended among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. Walter's comments in our interview also show how the critiques found in some HIV/AIDS-related research in Peru about *peches*, primarily having to do with questioning the authenticity of relationships involving *peches*, were themselves part of the everyday debates and conversations that gay and transgender people

Not only was the validity of the activo/pasivo dynamic debated among communities themsleves, but also, as individuals recounted their life histories, I found that one could transition in and out of relationships based on the dynamic. Martín, throughout my fieldwork, had been what anthropologists refer to as a gatekeeper. He was charismatic, had been one of the longest participants in LGBT advocacy in the region, was quick to let me hang out with him, and

introduced me to new people for interviews. He worked for the municipal government of Tarapoto, organizing large events. Late one evening, after I accompanied him to a meeting to negotiate the location for an upcoming cultural event sponsored by the municipality, we went to one of his favorite restaurants that specialize in regional barbecue. Over a heaping portion of *tacacho*, Martín explained to me that being a *maricon* is like being Mary Magdalene from the Bible: "You will always be the other person for a man, weeping and crying like Mary Magdalene because it is impossible for him to truly be with you." He explained that because of this, he is no longer going to seek out heterosexual men (who he called "*macho machos*"), but rather other gays, from now on. To be with another gay was to have an equal relationship, but with a *hombre,* the relationship was never equal. Pitching this concept to me as if he needed to convince me otherwise, he said that what he had not realized this until recently, and that most of his friends do not understand him or why he would want a *gay* boyfriend. When I asked about what the impetus of this change was from, he replied that it was from personal experience. The important point to highlight from Martín's explanation was that the dynamic was not rigid or eternal: one moved in and out of it and understood that they could participate in a range of sexual and intimate relationships.

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter, I first analyzed the ways in which the upper Amazonian region of Peru has been construed as a distinct cultural region. While this has been the product, on the one hand, of historical, geographic, and ecological representations, I argue that representations of sexuality have also contributed to the production of the upper Amazon as a distinct cultural area. Then, I examined the legacies of the activo/pasivo framework. This framework developed out of the

ethnographic research and debates among the first generation of North American anthropologists who studied male same-sex sexuality in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s. It is ethnographically tempting to construct a typology of homosexual practices. As I encountered and learned about the different ways that gay and transgender people positioned themselves to and described their sexuality than what I had personally experienced, I also slowly learned that these patterns were themselves up for debate among the gay and transgender communities I studied. While I described some of the concepts that were important for the community, this description provides the foundation for the arguments I will develop in subsequent chapters.

The second generation of scholars interested in queer sexualities in Latin America emerged in the 1990s and 2000s. This generation of scholars tended to critique the activo/pasivo framework that they associated with the previous generation. To them, Latin American and Latino male same-sex sexualities were more complicated and complex than what the activo/pasivo framework reduced it to. They also argued that the framework emphasized gender and class over other vectors of power, like race and ethnicity (Cantú 2011; Vidal-Ortiz et al. 2010). In this chapter, I first showed that the activo/pasivo framework continues to influence HIV/AIDS-related research in Peru and is thus consequential to the lives of gay and transgender people in Peru and the global forces that shape them.

And finally, in this chapter, I set the stage for the subsequent chapters of the dissertation by describing some of the central elements of the symbolic terrain of the activo/pasivo dynamic for gay and transgender people in the upper Amazonian region. In the chapter's third section, I transitioned from "framework" to "dynamic." This conceptual transition, first and foremost, emerged from the ways that gay and transgender people themselves understood and interpreted the activo/pasivo distinction. Furthermore, to think in terms of a dynamic theoretically brings the

conversation away from the grammatical metaphors that scholars have tended to recur to theorize the activo/pasivo distinction. Lancaster's formulation of the activo/pasivo framework, for example, was derived from the grammatical relationship between the subject and object of a sentence. Likewise, subsequent critiques of the framework, such as Decena's (2011) "tacit subject" concept, again relied on static metaphors of grammar and verb conjugation. Ultimately, this chapter sets the stage to pose new research questions that extend the legacy of the activo/pasivo framework: How do gay and transgender people themselves understand and debate the activo/pasivo distinction? How are the elements, such as the *peche*, symbolically meaningful or political? If the activo/pasivo distinction theorized the cultural distribution of stigma in the passive voice, what might posing a question in the active voice tell us about discrimination towards gay and transgender people in the region? These questions will be addressed in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 2

QUEERING POSTMEMORY: ACCOUNTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

"I don't know if it will be of use for your research, but it is the topic that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recounts that May 31 is the Day Against Homophobia and that here in Tarapoto eight *travestis* died and I say it, and I am going to say it because I was alive in the era of terrorism, that it is totally false. In Tarapoto, they never killed eight *travestis*. I don't know how this news made it to the national press but they never killed eight *travestis*. Yes, they killed *travestis*. Yes, they killed homosexuals, but like how they say it, no, no."

This quote comes from an interview that I conducted with Martín, a gay man from the town of Tarapoto, Peru. In this quote, Martín referred to the Final Report of the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (PTRC), which documented the internal armed conflict that occurred in the country between 1980 and 1999. For LGBT activists and human rights advocates, the PTRC became a crucial document to make human rights claims because it included a section on "violence towards sexual minorities." In this particular section of the PTRC, the authors included testimonies collected in the town of Tarapoto regarding violence towards gay and transgender people during the conflict. Martín, however, challenged the truth of PTRC. According to him, there was never a night in Tarapoto when the terrorists, in this case, a reference to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) killed eight travestis.[6] And

[6] *Travesti* is a term used in Peru to refer to transgender women. Only in certain instances is it used by individuals to refer to their own identity or subject position, and spoken from a cisgender person, it can be offensive. Cisgender

Martín was not the only gay or transgender person in Tarapoto to problematize the PTRC. During my fieldwork, it was common to hear such challenges. Yet, the cases that gay and transgender informants reinterpreted in everyday life in Tarapoto represented a miniscule percentage of the total testimonies found in the PTRC. Likewise, the violence in the Amazonian region did not nearly reach the levels of violence in the country's Andean region. Nevertheless, inquiry into the unanticipated social life of these cases over fifteen years after they were originally collected by the PTRC and nearly thirty years after they occurred illuminates the complicated intersections and politics of human rights discourse, sexuality, and memory.

In this chapter, I start with the following question: what does queering postmemory do analytically and what are the consequences of a queer postmemory for gay and transgender communities located at the intersections of global health initiatives and human and LGBT rights movements? I address this question through two main interventions. The first intervention is my use of queer theory to extend research on human rights and the concept of postmemory. Scholars of violence and human rights have critiqued the use of the prefix "post," as it implies that there can be a clear line drawn between the historical moment of a conflict and then what happens after. However, as Victoria Bernal writes about terms like postconflict, and, I argue, postmemory, post draws attention to "the significance of conflict as the context of ongoing lives rather than as demarcating a break between a past crisis and the present" (2017:1). The concept of postmemory, as elaborated by scholars such as Marianne Hirsch (2012) and Yen-Le Espiritu (2014), describes the ways in which memories of violence persist, even into subsequent generations. As younger generations stitch together fragments of stories and silences of their parents and grand-parents, they are not necessarily "remembering" the past but rather creating,

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people often referred to *travestis* as their *compañeras* or as *chicas trans* and I will follow this by using "transgender women" in English. I will use *travesti*, however, if I am quoting or referencing something an informant said.

imagining, and projecting the past in contemporary contexts. I also queer postmemory by exploring how the intergenerational transmission of memories can occur outside the lines of the biological family unit and along the lines of alternative kinship relationships.

Queering postmemory leads me to my second intervention. I aim to reframe assumptions in HIV/AIDS research about transactional sex. In the large corpus of epidemiological and HIV/AIDS-related research among gay, transgender, and MSM populations in Peru, a question continues to perplex the researchers: why would gay and transgender people in Peru participate in transactional sex relationships, rigidly marked by distinctions between the stigmatized gay and transgender person, on the one hand, and the non-stigmatized MSM, on the other, particularly when, one, these relationships generate increased risk for contracting HIV and, two, they have at their disposal, a supposedly more "egalitarian" framework of "modern" gay identity and behavior? Here, I show how situating transactional sex, or what informants called *peches*, in a historical context of rights and postmemory reveals that much more was at stake than slight material gain or loss. From the perspective of the gay and transgender people, *peches* were not merely material objects manipulated or goaded out of them, but rather a powerful, symbolic way to remember and know about the past.

As many scholars have pointed out, the introduction of human rights does not simply mean an end to conflict. In many cases, states actively work against informing citizens of the atrocities of violence, especially since they may have been the primary perpetrators of violence (in the case of Argentina, see Jelin 2003; Taylor 1997). In the case of Peru, violence was committed both by the armed forces and armed insurgents.[7] And while the Peruvian state may have "won" the internal armed conflict, since then, it has found winning the post-conflict battles

[7] The PTRC determined that the Shining Path was responsible for 54% of the deaths and disappearances found in the testimonies they collected. The police and the armed forces were responsible for 37% of the reported deaths and disappearances.

for justice and memory much more elusive (Degregori 2015). Compared to countries of the neighboring Southern Cone like Chile and Argentina[8], there was never a strong and consistent effort on the part of the state to disseminate an idea of *nunca más*, or "never again" (Degregori 2015, 61). One reason, as Root (2009) has argued, was that human rights have always occupied a precarious position in the popular imaginary in Peru, especially since the prosecution of human rights violations on the part of state actors has been met with ambivalence by those who consider the armed forces the heroes of the conflict.[9] Still, as the country transitioned from Fujimori's semi-authoritarianism at the turn of the millennium, the human rights movement successfully advocated for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which, by 2003, released its final report documenting the countries internal armed conflict.

The PTRC certainly marked a pivotal moment in the study of Peru and its history. Placing transitional justice and collective memory on the national political agenda created new spaces and dialogues for research. While, as Starn (1991) observed, anthropologists of a prior generation may have "missed the revolution" by over-emphasizing the timelessness of Andean cultures, they certainly did not miss the conflict's aftermath in the 21st century. Several intellectuals who had been studying the internal armed conflict were key figures in the elaboration of PTRC, and anthropologists were certainly among them (Salazar Borja 2013, 280). Yet, playing roles in the elaboration of the PTRC did not preclude anthropologists from thinking critically about it. Anthropologists who were directly involved with the PTRC have since explored the limits of the truth commission, both inherent to its methodology and as a political

[8] Despite these differences, it can still be apt to consider Peru as part of what Villalón (2015) termed the second wave of truth, memory, and justice mobilizations in Latin America. If part of the impetus of the "second wave" has been the "remarkable persistence of processes of collective memory and justice" (Villalón 2015, 4), then this particular case of a collective interpretation of cases from PTRC among gay and transgender communities in Peru nearly 30 years after they transpired is certainly characteristic of broader trends in the region.

[9] During my fieldwork in Tarapoto, the sentiment that the actions on the part of the state were justified was often expressed. As my fieldwork coincided with presidential elections, and Alberto Fujimori's daughter Keiko was a front-runner, these sentiments were commonly expressed.

and historical process. Wendy Coxshall, an anthropologist who was also involved in the PTRC, highlighted one of the PTRC's principal methodological limits as an ethnographic project: its short-term nature did not allow for the prolonged participant observation fundamental to ethnography (Coxshall 2005). Kimberly Theidon further reflected on its analytical limits, such as the mandate to code for trauma. In the process of converting testimonies into evidence, understandings of local kinship ties were erased and "locally salient categories of affliction, which may reference radically different understandings of etiology, are coded as trauma" (Theidon 2013, 27). Despite its temporal and methodological limitations, the PTRC collected more testimonies than it had even anticipated at its outset (Degregori 2013).

Defining the legacies of violence and competing claims over the authorship of its contemporary meanings is a struggle that plays out in multiple scales and among different groups. Claims to this definition can be both exceptional and spectacular, such as in the form of monuments or museum, or in the published documents of the PTRC, as well as in everyday life. As Milton observed, "issues of representation and memory have come to the forefront of political and cultural analyses and debates about conflict and representation in Latin America" (2014, 2). In the case of Peru, some scholars have looked beyond the testimonies of the PTRC to look at how those affected by violence "control the shape and content of their narratives" not through providing testimony to the PTRC but through the circulation of everyday rumors and conspiracy theories (Yezer 2008, 287). Ranging from graphic novels, film, and traditional crafts, scholars in Peru have considered a wide range of artistic objects as important sources to find multiple voices in national debates about violence and its representation (Gonzalez 2011; Milton 2014; Vich 2015). Another source for investigation has been museums and monuments. For example, in his study of the ANFASEP Museum of Memory in Ayacucho, Feldman (2012)

found differences between, on the one hand, the interest of actual residents of Ayacucho on the museum and its representations of the violence and, on the other, the interests of the NGO workers, intellectuals, and tourists who came to visit the museum. An underlying concern to this research has been on teasing out different approaches to human rights and their meanings, particularly as these differences coincide with longstanding racial, class, ethnic, and gender divisions.

II. Accounts of Violence in the Era of Terrorism

In this chapter, it is important to distinguish the concepts of "testimonies" and "accounts." The testimonial has been a significant genre of Latin American literature and in the broader human rights movement as a way to bear witness to the atrocities and violations committed throughout the past century. In his explanation of testimonial literature in Latin America, George Yudice explained that, in the testimony, "emphasizing popular, oral discourse, the witness portrays his or her own experience as an agent (rather than a representative) of a collective memory and identity. Truth is summoned in the cause of denouncing a present situation of exploitation and oppression or in exorcising and setting aright official history" (Yudice 1991, 17). The testimony, thus, analytically encapsulates the genre of the stories that were collected by the PTRC: individuals who had experienced the violence were invited to "come forward" and provide their testimonies of the conflict so as to bear witness to the atrocities committed on the part of the armed forces and the armed insurgent groups. Therefore, that which was collected, analyzed, and archived by the PTRC is "testimony." While the stories about violence towards sexual minorities in Tarapoto found in the PTRC were based on testimonies, I consider the stories I collected during fieldwork to have a different character and

thus necessitated a different concept to describe them. I chose to call them accounts. I make this distinction in naming in order to draw attention to the differences between the two. First, there is a significant temporal difference. The PTRC collected testimonies for the Final Report nearly fifteen years before I first went to Tarapoto. Second, there was a quotidian quality to the accounts I collected. The accounts mostly emerged at evening gatherings between friends or in everyday conversations at salons. I later solicited further explanation in interviews, which was not the context in which they emerged. The testimonies collected for the PTRC, on the other hand, had a spectacular quality to them, especially those that were televised. And, the interpretations of the testimonies made by LGBT groups outside of Tarapoto, in the form of commemoration days or news conferences, were similarly spectacular in a way that differed from the everyday accounts made by gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

It was not until several months of fieldwork that I became confronted with the differences between how LGBT rights organizations and NGOs in Lima represented the violence towards transgender and gay communities in Tarapoto and how transgender and gay people in Tarapoto understood it. Having attended workshops on the topic of discrimination in Tarapoto which referenced the testimonies contained in the PTRC, I assumed that transgender and gay people in Tarapoto would draw attention to the historic discrimination and violence that their community faced. As my time in the field went on, and I was invited to social events outside of the formal events organized by NGOs from Lima or local community-based organizations, I found that people in Tarapoto tended to disagree with the interpretations they heard on the part of the LGBT movement about homophobic violence during the internal armed conflict.

One evening a group of informants and I were hanging out in Brenda's hair salon, drinking whiskey chilled by coconut water ice cubes. It had been several years since Brenda,

Martín, and Anderson had been able to hang out together. While the three of them had collectively founded Disam, one of the first gay and transgender collectives in the region about fifteen years prior, as time went on they went their separate paths and since then varied in their involvement with the organization. Martín worked for the regional municipality, planning and executing social events throughout the department of San Martín. In fact, his charisma and success at planning these events enabled him to retain his position in the municipality when a new *alcalde* was voted in, a rare occurrence in a regional political climate strongly characterized by clientelism and rigid affiliations to individuals and personalities. Anderson left Tarapoto to study law at a university in Iquitos and had only recently returned to Tarapoto. He had worked in jobs ranging from teaching reading and computer skills at a prison to managing and executing HIV/AIDS interventions throughout Peru's entire Amazonian region.

We had all gathered to celebrate Brenda and the inauguration of her new salon. After many years cultivating her own clients but laboring at someone else's salon and paying exorbitant fees for the workspace, Brenda had finally opened her own salon. Naming the salon after herself, she was finally able to open it with the help of a transgender *madrina*, or godmother, who had fled Tarapoto during the internal armed conflict to live in Italy. After explaining to her *madrina* the struggles she was facing at her old salon, her *madrina* sent her money to open her own.[10]

Brenda's new salon offered an intimate setting, both for her clients during the day and for small evening gatherings like the one happening that night. Consequently, Anderson and Martín brought along their *puntos*. *Puntos* were the heterosexual men who were the lovers of gay men and transgender women, but whose sexuality was generally considered normative. The *punto*

[10] The fictive kin networks that gay and transgender communities cultivate extend beyond Tarapoto and remittances frequently come from migrants. I explore this relationship in the final chapter of the dissertation.

Anderson had brought with him was from Spain, he was a soccer player who was in Peru to volunteer as a soccer coach to fulfill the requirements of his degree in physical education. Martín, not to be outdone by Anderson, had brought his *punto* as well, a chef from Chiclayo who had recently moved to Tarapoto to work in an upscale restaurant near the city's plaza. The *peches* of the night included several bottles of imported whiskey, which the *puntos* were content to nurse as Brenda, Martín, and Anderson began to converse about the testimonies collected by the PTRC about violence towards homosexuals during the internal armed conflict. Brenda and Martín concurred with each other. According to them, the testimonies in the PTRC were erroneous. This was not because the MRTA did not target gay and transgender people. Nor were they denying the fear that gay and transgender people experienced during the period of the conflict, as they recognized that many fled Tarapoto to go to Iquitos or Buenos Aires. However, they explained, the victims in the cases documented by the PTRC were involved in narcotrafficking.

Stumbling out of Brenda's salon that night, to continue the festivities at the Ibiza karaoke bar a couple of blocks down the street, Martín turned to berate me: "Why did you not bring your audio recorder out tonight? You should have recorded all of what we were saying for your investigation." Martín knew that I was studying discrimination and human rights, yet I had never specifically asked about the conflict as an aspect of my study up to this point. On the one hand, Martín, Brenda, and Anderson shared an assumption that these were precisely the stories that I was interested in for the investigation. After all, it was common for NGO workers, LGBT activists, or foreign journalists[11] to come to Tarapoto to create a report or a news article about violence towards sexual minorities during the armed conflict (e.g. León Almenara 2014, Meza

[11] All of who could, at one point or another, be considered *gringos*, as I was. In Tarapoto, *gringo* could refer to someone from the coast of Peru, particularly Lima, as well as someone from Europe or the United States.

2014). Yet informants, in this case, were not just sources of information. They actively directed the anthropologist's attention. Martín's comment specifically drew my attention to the everyday accounts of the conflict: those that emerged in intimate gatherings among long-time friends. While I followed up on this conversation in my interviews, Martín knew that the conversations that evening could not ever be reproduced. And perhaps, since I had contributed the most to buying the whiskey that served as the *peches* that night for the *puntos*, he was reprimanding me for not taking full advantage of this privileged access that the *peche* had gotten me. My ethnographic fieldnotes, and the ethnographic knowledge I was to produce, were intertwined with and a result of exchanges located in an economy of *peches*.

Following the exhortations of Martín, I pursued the investigation of transgender and gay experiences during the conflict in Tarapoto. This led me to two informants: Wilmer and Karla. As Martín explained to me, "They are from the same generation and have lived the experience, so they have good stories to tell." While Wilmer identifies as gay and Karla as transgender, both have taken similar paths: Both own and manage popular salons located near central plazas and both employ and train younger generations of gay and transgender people to work in their salons. Both are also actively involved in local social and civic life. This past year, for example, Wilmer sponsored a site for the patron saint celebration, which meant providing a space for a band to play every night for about two weeks and providing *uvachado*, a fermented alcoholic drink typical in the Amazonian region, for anyone and everyone who comes to celebrate. Karla, likewise, every year is the *madrina* for "Miss Gay San Juan," a transgender beauty pageant celebrated in honor of Saint John, the patron saint of the Amazonian region. As I collected accounts about the conflict during interviews and informal conversations with Martín, Brenda, Anderson, and other gay and transgender people in Tarapoto, a collective sense of fear was a

recurring theme that I found in how they talked about it with me.[12] The *toque de queda*, or forced curfew, enforced by the MRTA, was one source of fear. One afternoon while I was hanging out with Wilmer in his salon, located only a few blocks from a main plaza, Wilmer offered accounts of the conflict to me and a couple of the young gay and transgender hairstylists who were there apprenticing at his salon. A popular hairstylist who was also involved in initial efforts to form a LGBT collective in the region, Wilmer explained that after 6:00pm one could not enter certain neighborhoods unless they lived there. The *Huayco* neighborhood, for example, was considered *zona roja*, and was particularly restricted from those who were not living in the neighborhood at the time. A man came into his salon, asking Wilmer to make a house call to the *Huayco* neighborhood. As he approached the neighborhood, a man who knew him tried to scare him away so he would not enter. Although he considered leaving, he entered anyway. This was because he was well-known: "Me, the only hairstylist at the time, everybody knew me." As he arrived to the house, though, he immediately realized that he had been tricked. The woman that needed the haircut had actually needed a wig, because the MRTA had cut off her hair. Although the woman was in tears, he told her there was nothing he could do, and left immediately. One week later, two women came to his salon. His mother, who worked as the receptionist of the salon, received them. They asked what her son had been doing in the *Huayco* neighborhood the week before. His mother explained that he had been tricked and, upon realizing this, had left immediately. This satisfied the women, although they told his mother, "Tell your son to not return to the *Huayco* again." The *toque de queda*, and the temporal and spatial restrictions that it entailed, were a salient aspect to how people remember the fear they felt during the conflict in Tarapoto.

[12] Fear has been theorized and discussed in ethnographies on the internal armed conflict, particularly in the Andean region. Among Andean communities, the period was refered to as *manchay tiempo*, or the time of fear (Poole and Rénique 1992, 59).

In another account, Wilmer explained to me how, to understand the context of the conflict, I first needed to understand that Tarapoto was not nearly as large as it was then as it is now. It was a couple of small neighborhoods, not the three municipal districts, each with their own central plaza and church like today. As the previous story suggests, if you were from Tarapoto, like he was, you noticed if people walking were neighbors or from somewhere else. So Wilmer noticed when a mysterious man passed by the front of his salon every day for a week. One day, the man decided to walk in. "Do you sell cases of vials of placenta hair treatment?" he asked Wilmer, to which Wilmer replied that he did not sell them by the case, but by the individual vial, and that he could gift him a couple if he wanted. The man accepted the gift and, as Wilmer recalled, complimented him on his colorful, floral patterned shirts. He then informed Wilmer, "I have been watching you, and I would like to come visit you tonight." That night, when he came over, he told Wilmer, "I am part of the MRTA. I would like to spend the night with you tonight because tomorrow they are sending me off to another city." Before they turned off the lights that night, the man showed Wilmer his pistol. He said Wilmer could take it and hide it wherever he wanted, and he would ask for it in the morning. The next morning, as he was leaving, he asked for his pistol back and for a gift of one of Wilmer's shirts. "Where are you going?" Wilmer asked him, to which he replied, "I don't know, another city." This story also highlights the role of the *peche*. Through the gifts of hair treatment and clothing, Wilmer described how he came to posses the intimate knowledge that he now has about the conflict.

In an interview, Karla also drew attention to the role of the *peche*. Karla, a transgender woman from the same generation as Wilmer, was also recognized by younger generations of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto as both having knowledge of the conflict and as being a good mentor. Like Wilmer, Karla owned a salon and her salon was a space to train the younger

generations in the skills for running a salon. She told me a story about a *punto* who frequently visited her during the period of political violence. After a period of about a week of not passing by, he showed up at the salon asking if he could borrow a bicycle. After a couple of hours went by, and he never returned the bicycle, she was resigned to accepting that it was now gone. "This is what happens," she explained to me, "when a *punto* asks to borrow something, it means it is permanent." But then, three days later, he returned with the bike. "What did you do with it?" Karla inquired, to which he briefly replied "*cosas*," or, things. "Listen," he said to her, "I am sorry, but I am leaving Tarapoto and I am not going to be returning here." So he left, but, as Karla recounted, that was not the last time she heard about him. Two weeks later, she found out that he had been a chauffeur for a high-ranking member of the MRTA and that he had been captured by the police.

Karla and Wilmer both repeated the same reaction that I heard from Martín and Brenda earlier regarding the cases of violence documented in the Final Report: they were factually wrong and not motivated by homophobia. Wilmer and Karla claimed that the violence did not happen or that it had been justified, one way or another. But the details of those claims ended there. Rather, what they remember and what they vividly described to me was how they have come to occupy a position recount the past. They emphasized their intimacy with certain protagonists of the conflict and the way that they negotiated this through transactions that, today, would be called *peches*. The gifts that helped them access this knowledge, whether it was a vial of placenta hair treatment, a floral patterned shirt, or a bicycle, were central to their accounts and to authorizing their perspectives.

In mediating speakers' intimate relationships with their heterosexual lovers and with those interested in hearing their stories, the *peche* became a way for Karla and Wilmer to co-

construct a shared narrative about human rights, the conflict, and its contemporary reverberations. As Karla, Wilmer, and others told their stories over and over again, whether to foreign journalists interested in the story, LGBT organizations in Lima, foreign anthropologists, or the young gay and transgender protégées they train in their salons, individual stories circulated and came to share similar features. The cases found in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, and subsequently editorialized by journalists and LGBT rights NGOs, were somehow wrong. "Queer" is thus a useful analytic, not because I am writing Wilmer and Karla as queer subjects, but because their stories deviate from and contest normative framings of human rights and LGBT rights in Peru. To take these stories as queer is, as Martín Manalansan argues, "to locate discomfort, dissonance, and disorder as necessary and grounded experiences in the queer everyday and not as heroic acts of exceptional people" (2014, 97). In other words, as queer postmemories, these narratives exhibit both a unique perspective on the conflict as they also cause discomfort and unease in that they contest a politically advantageous perspective of violence that reflects the point of view of the victims and of the human rights archive.

Wilmer and Karla's accounts both revolved around the *peche* transaction. The *peche*, which could range from gifts such as a bicycle or a shirt, opened access to knowledge about the conflict that very few others, back then and to this day, could possibly have. In the next section, I will examine how these stories are transmitted to younger generations of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto, and how members of this generation, who were either children or not alive during the conflict, have come to interpret and understand it.

Another salient characteristic in the accounts I collected was referring to the MRTA's use of the anonymous warning, or the *anónimo*. When referring to the violence towards gay and transgender[13] people, the *anónimo* was the primary mechanism through which the MRTA targeted an individual and to legitimize their murder. As was explained to me over and over again, the *anónimo* was left at a doorstep. It would inform an individual that they would have to leave Tarapoto and if they did not then they would be killed. An individual would receive three *anónimos* and, after the third, if they had not left, then the MRTA would kill them. While accounts of the conflict often included this element, there were divergent perspectives on whether the *anónimo* justified the violence. For example, Wilmer emphasized in a recorded interview with me that individuals were aware that the MRTA targeted them and could have left if they had chosen to:

Justin: All the victims who were murdered received an *anónimo*?

Wilmer: Yes, the *anónimo*. "This is how such a person dies," whether they were *maricones* or drug addicts.

Justin: But would everyone know?

Wilmer: They knew they were going to die. Why? Because the MRTA issued *anónimos*. They gave their first *anónimo*, then the second *anónimo*, and then the third one. When you finally received the third one, if you have not left Tarapoto, you died. But if you left, then no. That is simply how it was.

[13] While the LGBT movement used the testimonies of the PTRC as a way to draw attention to the historic and systematic violence against LGBT people, the testimonies in the PTRC only include cases of transgender and gay victims. In Tarapoto, on the other hand, there was less of an assumption that lesbian and bisexual people were "naturally" socially grouped alongside gay and transgender people. Thus, "homophobic violence," for those in Tarapoto, referred to violence towards gay and transgender victims, while "homophobic violence" for those in Lima and involved with LGBT rights, referred to violence towards lesbian, gay, transgender, and bisexual victims.

For Wilmer, the *anónimo* was simple. He had friends, he explained, who had received their *anonimos* and escaped to Iquitos or even fled the country. Even if one obeyed the MRTA, as he did when they told him to never return to the *Huayco*, there was still a sense of fear that at any moment an *anónimo* could arrive at your doorstep.

Jhefferson was a young gay activist in this late 20s at the time of my interview with him: he was thus born after the conflict's apex in Tarapoto. His mother told him that he had a gay cousin and transgender aunt. The MRTA issued an *anónimo* to his cousin: "If you do not want to wake up dead then you must leave." His cousin left and never returned to Tarapoto. His transgender aunt also faced threats from the MRTA and migrated to Italy. The perspectives on the *anónimo* point to the complicated terrain of collective memory of the violence. For some, the *anónimo* was a form of vigilante violence and was not by any means justice. However, for others, it was a justifiable measure that could be heeded or not.

Even for those who were not alive at the time, or were children, the sense of fear was palpable in their accounts. Even before one assumed a gay or transgender identity, one could be socially branded as a *maricón*. Brenda, for example, explained that stigma towards gay and transgender people was so pervasive when she was a child that even fellow schoolchildren had picked up on it to bully:

> In those days, I was ten or eleven years old, still very young. Even at school I had classmates that were involved in the MRTA and they told me, "You are going to die for being a *maricón*." I used to cry, I was so scared. Every time I saw this kid I was afraid.

While in school, Brenda had not assumed her feminine name Brenda, but rather went by a masculine name that she is still sometimes called. And even though she remembers the *toque de queda*, which meant she could not play volleyball outside in the evenings because of the curfew, school was the space where she vividly remembers the fear she felt. Martín also felt fear as a child during the conflict. In an interview, he said that his parents sent him to live with family in Lima during school vacations. His parents had the fear that something would happen to him because he was a *maricón*. Thus, the effects of the violence perpetrated by the MRTA towards gay and transgender people were distributed broadly and across generations. While those who were children did not fear that an *anónimo* would arrive on their doorstep, they still experienced fear as a result of the violence.

In this section, I explored everyday accounts among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto about violence towards their communities during the internal armed conflict. First, an analytical distinction between an account and a testimony enabled me to examine the contexts in which accounts of the conflict emerged among gay and transgender people during my fieldwork. I found that they, or those they knew, collectively experienced fear during the conflict because they were aware that they were considered *maricones*. Yet, they also challenged the document that explicitly contained cases that evidenced this fear. In general, they argued that in the specific cases detailed by the PTRC about violence towards gay and transgender people in Tarapoto, the victims were not killed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, but for other reasons. In the next section, I examine this apparent contradiction by showing that these challenges were less about criticizing human rights and more about legitimizing a collective orientation towards how to know about the conflict and how to experience same-sex sexuality.

IV. Peche Politics

While gay and transgender people in Tarapoto vividly remembered the fear they experienced during the internal armed conflict and in the face of the MRTA, they still consistently challenged the primary source that evidenced these fears: the final report of the PTRC. Making sense of this collective reinterpretation has been the focus of this chapter. In this section, I draw from Esther Newton's concept of the "erotic equation of fieldwork" (2003) to understand how the erotic operated in accounts of violence. Focusing specifically on Eduardo's accounts, I show how he drew from the conceptual toolkit of human rights in formulating his analysis of the nature of violence towards gay and transgender people during the internal armed conflict. Instead of assuming that Eduardo was denying the extent of the violence, and consequently assuming a position against human rights, I show that his claims were rather about asserting the legitimacy of a *peche* and the relationships it enabled with heterosexual men.

For nearly five years, Eduardo has been president of a local community-based organization in the region. Like in other cities throughout Peru, with the support of the Global Fund's multiple rounds in Peru, collectives and organizations became "community-based organizations" as a way to carry out the HIV/AIDS interventions at local levels. Eduardo had been involved in activism before assuming the role of president, although in a different organization. In addition to overseeing the day-to-day functioning of the HIV testing the organization offered, he was responsible for organizing the organization's signature events in Tarapoto. These were events that, at the behest of international NGOs to make their interventions locally sustainable, were financially co-sponsored by the regional government and included Tarapoto's LGBT pride march in July and the commemoration of violence towards sexual minorities during the internal armed conflict in May.

In contrast to others in Tarapoto, Eduardo frequently traveled to Lima, and other cities along the coast. Eduardo was an example of what human rights scholars have called an intermediary (Merry 2006). That is, as he navigated between the centralized administrative structures of various LGBT rights initiatives, global HIV/AIDS interventions, and his duties back in Tarapoto, he often did the work of translating ideas about discrimination, rights, and identity, as they played out in Tarapoto and in Lima-based and international NGOs. Like other intermediaries involved in human rights work, his ability to move between different contexts made him consistently the target to charges of corruption by gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. They saw the photographs of airplane travel and banquet lunches that he published on social media and felt that, given all these opportunities he had to advocate on their behalf, the results were minimal. Despite these charges, he insisted the he represented local accounts of violence during the internal armed conflict at such national levels, often contesting the use of the stories collected by the PTRC in Tarapoto. Consequently, this position made him particularly resented among human rights and LGBT rights movements in Lima. They saw him as taking a position against human rights and alleged that he was unqualified to be the president of a community-based organization that was supposed to be advancing the case for human rights. The case of Eduardo thus offers a unique perspective on the predicaments faced by the intermediaries of human rights. The work of translation can be dissatisfying to the multiple parties involved and as Merry observed, "translators are not always successful" (2006, 40). Likewise, if what was translated is not what broader human rights movement may wish to hear, than it can be handily dismissed.

In our casual conversations, Eduardo at first did not talk to me about the cases contained in the PTRC about homophobic violence during the era of terrorism in Tarapoto. It was not until

I conducted an interview with him that he discussed this subject. Unlike Martín, who insisted that I collect accounts about what happened during the period as part of my research, Eduardo was concerned that I would not want to hear his version. I informed him that I wanted to hear what he wanted to tell me, not what he thought I wanted to hear. He then explained that while he was not old enough to really remember the era of terrorism[14] and was alive only during the final stages of the MRTA's presence in Tarapoto, Karla, a transgender friend of his, had witnessed the violence.

Eduardo used the tools of human rights to analyze the violence, even as he made an allegation that the PTRC had erred in their interpretation of violence towards gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. In his analysis of what Karla has told him, he claimed that the MRTA was wrong for the violence that they committed. That they would assassinate or disappear individuals just because they saw them as immoral was unjust: "this obviously violates human rights, in a country like Peru, this should not happen." Despite this, he situated Karla in a context in which the terrorists, who were balancing their obligations both to the MRTA as *pistoleros*, and to their families, as fathers and husbands, were so overwhelmed by this effort to balance that their only moments of respite could be sought in *maricones* like Karla. The characters in his story thus reflected an idealized version of affection between Karla and her heterosexual lovers. As he explained in the following excerpt from our interview, this was because he believed Karla was a privileged informant, not because she claimed to be a victim of the violence, but precisely because of this intimate relationships she maintained with the members of the MRTA:

[14] Informants often talked about the period of political violence in Tarapoto as the *epoca de terrorismo*, or the "era of terrorism"

> Karla has very good stories to tell because she has lived the experience. The stories are good because she tells what really happened. So she told me, and I believe her, this it just so happens that she also had boyfriends who carried the pistols for the MRTA, and they walked around with the pistol, like this. "You know what, my love, today we killed three people," "Yes, my love, I will serve you dinner now." They would come over to rest, too, because they were her boyfriends.

In Eduardo's account of the violence in Tarapoto, the ethnographic informant was an "emic" category. Karla, who, in this case, was Eduardo's informant, was the source of his ability to know about the conflict and tell me about it. On the one hand, an emphasis on Karla as an informant, rather than what Karla's information can point to (e.g. systematic homophobia and discrimination on the part of the MRTA) suggests a different orientation to and analysis of the cases of violence contained in the PTRC about "violence towards sexual minorities" among LGBT rights organizations in Lima and communities in Tarapoto. As someone involved in the technical aspects of coordinating human rights and HIV/AIDS interventions at a community-based organization, Eduardo understood the strategic advantage to evidencing claims of discrimination through human rights. Yet, he foregrounded Karla's intimate relationships and how she was able to maintain them though gifts of dinner and respite.

The translation work that Eduardo did in his account was not just about translating over geographical and cultural divides. In other words, it was not just about mediating between the "up there" of NGOs and human rights and the "down here" of everyday life in Tarapoto. There was also a temporal aspect. For example, Eduardo further explained in the interview that because a *maricon*, like himself or like Karla, would be particularly astute at keeping a secret given the

nature of the discrete relationships they might maintain with heterosexual men, it made sense that they would be ideal receptors of "what really happened" during the internal armed conflict from the perpetrators of the violence:

> They told you because they needed to unburden themselves [*desahogar*], because they were not going to tell their family, so they told their *maricon*, who was not part of the family, they told them things but they had to be only the receptors of the story, nothing more.

He then went on to draw a connection to the present day, and the relationships that he and his friends work to cultivate with their heterosexual lovers:

> The same thing happens today, if they think that you have told your best friend, they are not going to come back [to have sex] with you. Well, before it was a little different, in the time of the conflict, not only did they not come back, but they came back but to kill you. Now they just do not come back. That is how it is for *maricones*.

Recognizing that the stakes were higher for the *maricones* during the conflict, and that it was different than today, Eduardo still collapsed the past and the present to make a point about the timelessness of the predicaments of the *maricon*: "That is how it is for *maricones*." To represent that nature of the conflict in the past was inevitably a comment on the present. Thus, Eduardo and others in Tarapoto interpreted the construal of the MRTA as homophobic as another effort at delegitimizing their romantic investments in heterosexual men. If the language of rights lacks the

ability to capture the relationships between those who possess a lexicalized subject position (e.g. *travesti*, transgender, gay) and those who they may desire precisely for their unmarked-ness as heterosexual males, then it followed that representations of the conflict emphasized the victimization of the former groups so as to draw attention to the contemporary forms of discrimination towards them. For Eduardo, though, contradicting the claims of the PTRC was not equivalent to posing a fundamental contradiction towards human rights, but rather about asserting the legitimacy of a particular configuration of sexuality in which the *maricón* fulfills a significant role in the lives of heterosexual men.

Eduardo's accounts of the conflict are an example of what scholars have called postmemory. Born after the conflict in Peru, he pieced together his understanding of what happened and the experiences of gay and transgender people through fragments of stories that those of the generation before him have told him. And it was precisely Karla's engagement in *peches* with the protagonists of the conflict that, for Eduardo, made her a privileged informant. She was, according to Eduardo, the receptor of stories that no one else could possibly know, not even the family members of those involved. If following Hirsch (2012), postmemory is about an affective link to the past, than to think about a queer postmemory is to think about the ways that such links to the past are created through non-normative sexualities. By comparing his own experience of gifting *peches* to his *puntos* with the experiences Karla and others, he was reactivating and embodying Karla's memories of the conflict in the present. Queering postmemory disrupted the heteronormative and biological assumptions of intergenerational transmission. In this case, queer kin patterns, such as transgender and gay *madrinas*, were the sources of the stories passed down to the next generation.

The legitimacy of the relationships that some gay and transgender people, like Karla, Eduardo, and Brenda, was precarious, from both social (or, emic) and academic (or, etic) perspectives. The communities with which I conducted fieldwork often had internal debates about whether one could truly love a heterosexual man, if he could love back, and if it was "real" if it was inaugurated by a *peche*.[15] Likewise, epidemiological and ethnographic research in Peru has explored this debate. In Peru, and in Latin America generally, research has pointed to how some men, particular "men who have sex with men but do not identify as gay," are not stigmatized for their homosexual activity if they are understood to have performed the active, or penetrating, role. In interviews conducted with these individuals, researchers have found that they often describe sex either as a way to relieve themselves, or *desahogar*, or simply for economic reasons (Fuller 2001; Fernandez Davila et al. 2008). Thus, some epidemiological research has concluded that, in these relationships, the "gay" is duped into paying for sex with otherwise heterosexual men (or, "MSM" in the epidemiological literature) who "manipulate their feelings to obtain some type of financial benefit" and whose interest in the *maricón* "does not imply genuine feelings, but rather only interest in financial gain" (Fernandez Davila et al. 2008, 360-361). Using the same concept of *desahogar*, Eduardo showed that, even if such relationships were compensatory, and that Karla had been transacting something (in this case, "dinner") for the company of men, the transaction was a two-way street. If her MRTA lovers got food or momentary relief out of Karla, then Karla got not just their company, and not just a validation of their relationship, but ultimately truth. The men were not just relieving themselves sexually; they were relieving themselves of the traumas that come with violence, penetrating the *pasivo* not just sexually, but also with a privileged truth about the conflict that only a *maricón* could know. Therefore, to make claims about what happened during the internal armed conflict for Eduardo

[15] These debates are examined in the previous chapter,

was also to analyze and describe the contours and possibilities of sexuality. The *peche* became a technology for producing intimate knowledge about the conflict, and, consequently, some food or petty cash was a small price to pay for truth in an era of human rights.

One important insight from queer anthropology has been to draw attention to the role of the erotic in the production of anthropological knowledge. This is what Newton (1993) called the "erotic equation in fieldwork." In this section, I extended this insight to the production of truth, particularly around the accounts of violence collected by the PTRC. The "erotic equation" can be a productive space to think about the relationship between Eduardo and Karla as similar to that of the fieldworker and the informant. If Karla was Eduardo's informant, then paying attention to the possibilities embraced by Karla and Eduardo reveals a collective version of truth about the nature of the conflict and its contemporary representations. Eduardo was convinced of what Karla told him because he was invested in the validity of the erotic possibilities in her account. If the PTRC generated the space for LGBT rights movements in Lima to point to historic violations of rights against LGBT communities throughout the country, then the PTRC equally generated the space for gay and transgender communities in Tarapoto to make different, though not contradictory, claims about what happened during the era of violence and to assert a stake in the contemporary politics of memory.

V. Conclusion

The project of human rights in Peru intentionally sought to overcome the deep and divisive gaps between its coastal, Andean, and Amazonian regions. The deep indifference towards the "Others" of Peru, separated by cultural and linguistic divides, could be overcome, as the story goes, by fomenting a collective memory of the violence. The PTRC was indeed a pivotal and significant moment in this broader project. In this chapter, I show how paying

attention to how a community of gay and transgender people who were not involved in the elaboration of the PTRC, who live in a place distant from the Andean epicenter of the violence and the coastal center of authorship of the PTRC, yet whose lives and identities are often represented in ways that draw from the PTRC's narrative and symbolic repertoire, offers tremendous insight into the persistence of these cultural divisions despite the introduction of human rights.

To pay attention to the *peche* elicits a new perspective to examine cultural difference in the context of human rights and memory in Peru. This is a quintessentially queer strategy. For queer anthropologists, underscoring the "erotic equation of fieldwork" helped mark what went unmarked about the fieldworker: that he was assumed to be white, male, and heterosexual (Newton 1993:4). In this case, the erotic possibilities for gay and transgender people in Tarapoto are configured in such a way that to make a claim to historic and systematic homophobia would invalidate a sexual subjectivity they work towards validating day in and day out. In the accounts of the conflict circulating among gay and transgender communities in Tarapoto, what was imminently at stake was the validity of their desire for their heterosexual lovers. This is not to construe my informants as hyper-sexualized subjects who think about sex more than anything else, but, rather, to show how the erotic dimension offers narrative space to socially circulate and collectively narrate history and everyday truths about political violence.

CHAPTER 3

CULTURES OF DENOUNCEMENT AND THE DISCRIMINATION GRIEVANCE PARADOX

I. Introduction

Discrimination and stigma have been long known as significant barrier towards advancing the rights of LGBT people around the world as well as improving access to healthcare for people living with HIV/AIDS. In this chapter, I analyze the effects of how non-governmental and community based organizations' implementation of the rights-based antidiscrimination efforts that were part of The Global Fund's HIV/AIDS interventions in Peru. I do this by tracing the trajectory of two specific instances of discrimination that I encountered at different points throughout my fieldwork in Tarapoto. One had to do with a municipal cemetery charging extra to bury gay and transgender people who were rumored to have died of AIDS, and the other involved a nightclub that refused entry to a transgender woman.

My focus is not on uncovering the facts of "what really happened" in these cases. Rather, through long-term participant observation, I analyze and connect ways that the cases circulated between everyday life in Tarapoto, NGOs, and the state. How did different individuals situate the instances of discrimination with regard to the available formal legal mechanisms? How did they manifest what what Merry (1990) calls "legal consciousness?" In examining these questions, I will highlight a paradox with regard to the phenomena of discrimination grievances as a site of HIV/AIDS intervention. Because the programming of the 10th Round of The Global Fund targeted rights, the primary focus of the LGBT activists at NGOs and CBOs involved in the project was to document discrimination. To justify the project and create benchmarks for future projects, as many cases as possible of discrimination towards gay and transgender people had to

be collected and compiled into technical reports. When confronted with ambivalence among gay and transgender people in provincial regions outside of Lima toward filing formal discrimination grievances, LGBT activists and NGO workers frame the reluctance in cultural terms. That is, they saw those outside of Lima as lacking a *cultura de denuncia*, or culture of denouncement. In other words, there was a cultural deficiency that inhibited them from seeking justice for the discrimination and stigma they experienced. The logical consequence, then, was to carry out capacity building and empowerment initiatives to instill the culture of denouncement. Yet, through the two cases I present in this chapter, I show that gay and transgender people did not lack a culture of denouncement. They were, in fact, eager to denounce discrimination throughout the region. Rather, the ambivalence stemmed from the reality that only a few cases of discrimination could ever be fully pursued by LGBT activists and NGO workers because of the amount of time and resources the process required. The culture of denouncement narrative effaced this paradox, rather than accurately describing the attitudes and beliefs of gay and transgender people outside of Lima.

The two specific cases I encountered at Tarapoto illustrate how this paradox played out. I show that in Tarapoto, there was certainly a culture of denouncement. When gay and transgender individuals were confronted with discrimination, they sincerely sought to rectify it. For example, I show how the case of discrimination at the nightclub garnered significant popular support on online message boards specific to news and events in the Tarapoto community. And finally, I show how this paradox reflects the history of human rights and broader assumptions about the law and formalization in Peru.

II. The Culture of Denouncement: Antidiscrimination Efforts in HIV/AIDS Initiatives

In this section, I introduce the *Sistema de Vigilancia Comunitaria*, or Community Vigilance System. This particular project was central to The Global Fund's 10th Round intervention in the Amazonian macro-region. Its objective was to train gay and transgender individuals to identify discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity and then initiate or file formal discrimination grievances with the appropriate state authority. I examine broader narratives in global health regarding the relationship between discrimination, stigma, and HIV/AIDS to contextualize why discrimination and rights would be included in an HIV/AIDS global health initative. Through examining how this program played out in Tarapoto, I then explore a paradox of this formalization gesture: on the one hand, the individuals involved in the NGO projects sought to collect and document as many cases of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and/or gender identity as possible, yet, on the other hand, the reality the NGOs face is that they can only follow through with a few exemplary cases. I conclude this section by describing a case of discrimination that had been documented and archived in Tarapoto through the community vigilance system. I argue that neoliberal assumptions about formalization and the law also informed the development and circulation of the culture of denouncement narrative, as opposed to it being an accurate description of the "un-empowered" gay and transgender communities in Tarapoto.

Framed as human rights issues, stigma and discrimination have long been known to be both important social factors influencing the lives of people with HIV/AIDS and have also been the targets of HIV/AIDS-related interventions around the world. In an influential article, Parker and Aggleton (2003) indicated some key misunderstandings in HIV/AIDS-related research and interventions regarding stigma and discrimination. They pointed out, on the one hand, that researchers on HIV/AIDS frequently misunderstood Goffman's conceptualizations of stigma and

failed to locate discrimination within any theoretical framework or tradition. And this, for the authors, is significant, because this theoretical deficiency influences the interventions that were subsequently carried out: "The vast majority of the interventions that have been developed and evaluated in the research literature in order to respond to stigma related to HIV and AIDS have been aimed at increasing 'tolerance' of people with AIDS on the part of different segments of the 'general population.'" (Parker and Aggleton 2003, 16). Parker and Aggleton argue that this conceptualization characterizes stigma as a static orientation that can be strategically adjusted, like a volume knob that can be turned up or down, thus adjusting the amount of discrimination that is put out into the world. Stigma and discrimination, however, ought rather to be framed as a social process related to broader global structures of power and inequality and not just "a thing which individuals impose on others" (Parker and Aggleton 2003, 19). Consequently, if stigma and discrimination are social processes, not just individual orientations, then, for Parker and Aggleton, "legal protections for people living with HIV and AIDS, together with appropriate reporting and enforcement mechanisms…have provided powerful and rapid means of mitigating the worst effects of the unequal power relations, social inequality and exclusion that lie at the heart of processes of HIV and AIDS-related stigmatization and discrimination" (2003, 22).

In reframing discrimination and stigma as a social process, Parker and Aggleton offer the law as the ideal site to address them. This legal conceptualization of stigma dominates AIDS-related research in Peru. The authors of a recently published article, for example, start their abstract with the line "HIV remains concentrated among men who have sex with men (MSM) in Peru, and homophobia and AIDS-related stigmas have kept the epidemic difficult to address" (Krueger et al. 2016, 1301). They found that "AIDS-related stigma presented a significant barrier to testing and conclude that AIDS interventions "must also address AIDS-related stigma

(Kreuger et al. 2016, 1301). In this research, again stigma is portrayed as a cultural phenomenon that can be adjusted. The consequence is then that legal discrimination grievances become a primary site for addressing the epidemic in Peru.

This understanding of the role of law in addressing processes of stigma and discrimination, laid out conceptually in Parker and Aggleton's article, reflects a collective legal consciousness within broader communities of global health and in global sexual rights advocacy movements. As early as the 1980s, even before anti-retroviral therapy emerged, HIV was characterized as an exceptional disease: it had a 100% mortality rate and there was an excessive backlash of rights violations and stigma towards people living with and communities affected by HIV. It was clear at the beginning that HIV required not just a medical response, but a legal and political one. Thus, a purely clinical and medical model was replaced by one favoring human rights and this model transferred to a global scale by the 1990s (Peterson 2016). As Scheper-Hughes observed, "AIDS was viewed as a crisis in human rights (that had some public health dimensions), rather than a crisis in public health that had some important human rights dimensions" (1994, 992). The unintended, and sometimes deleterious, consequences of the global emergence of rights-based approaches to addressing HIV/AIDS' exceptionalism has been analyzed historically situated by ethnographers in places throughout the world (e.g., Benton 2015, Biehl 2009, Nguyen 2010). Here, I refered to the Parker and Aggleton article at length because it stands in for broader conversations and shared understandings of discrimination, stigma, and HIV/AIDS that influence how global health initiatives and LGBT rights movements have intervened among gay and transgender communities throughout the developing world and certainly in the case of Peru.

Over and over again, in conversations with LGBT activists and NGO workers, primarily from Lima, I was told that the primary obstacle for addressing discrimination was to change the *cultura de denuncia*, or culture of denouncement, in provincial cities like Tarapoto. "There is no culture of denouncement here," Armando frankly proclaimed to me, when I asked him about the system of community vigilance. Armando was a LGBT rights activist and, in the past 10 years, had worked for several NGOs in Lima implementing The Global Fund's interventions. I heard this sentiment frequently in workshops I participated, and even some in Tarapoto concurred. For instance, Jhefferson repeated this to me in an interview:

> Part of the reason is that the personal individual situation is that one does not have the *costumbre de denuncia*… In the moment we might help someone go to the police commissary or the public ombudsman to file the grievance, but they do not carry out the follow-up, their own interest in wanting to solve it… it is that the culture of denouncement does not yet exists in Tarapoto yet.

Consequently, addressing discrimination and stigma through legal mechanisms was part of a broader discourse in global health initiatives. One way this notion actualized itself in Peru was through how certain individuals talked about the culture of denouncement. They framed it as a cultural deficit in certain parts of the country. The idea was that if individuals could be properly empowered or trained to legally denounce experiences of discrimination then it would be reduced. In other words, if global health and development projects could instill a culture of denouncement, then the effects of HIV/AIDS would be diminshed.

One way that discrimination was addressed among gay and transgender populations in the programming of the 10th Round of The Global Fund in Peru was through the implementation of what was called a community vigilance system. The idea behind the community vigilance system was to train gay and transgender individuals to identify instances of discrimination, narrate and properly provide evidence that discrimination had occurred, and then file a formal grievance with the appropriate state authority. *Vigilancia comunitaria* has connotations within the context of Peru given the historical significance of forms of community justice in the Andean region during the internal armed conflict.[16] In the Amazonian macro-region (encompassing the cities of Tarapoto, Iquitos, and Pucallpa), general workshops led by NGO workers from NGOs in Lima were held for the gay and transgender communities of these cities. Since the HIV/AIDS epidemic was concentrated on gay, transgender, and MSM populations in Peru, and gay and transgender individuals experienced discrimination, then, the logic of the program was that capacitating them to advocate for their rights and file formal discrimination grievances would decrease stigma and discrimination and, consequently, reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, specific individuals in each of the sites would be specially trained and tasked with collecting and compiling cases of discrimination occurring in their own communities. The Center for Amazonian Development was the NGO in Tarapoto assigned with orchestrating the implementation of the Amazonian portion of the program and managing the local community-based organizations throughout the region.

In an interview, Jhefferson, who had received this specialized training, explained to me what the program entailed and how he and a couple of others carried it out:

[16] See Starn (1999) and Degregori et al. (1996) for research on the *rondas campesinas* during the period of political violence.

> It was to create a database to register cases of rights violations. I had created an Excel that we submitted to the organizations [in Lima]. Basically, it was to register data like who was the victim, if one could identify an aggressor, if there were any witnesses, if a grievance had been filed and with what entities, and how the follow-up went. It is so that the organizations have databases of incidents against the LGBT community, which up to this point, had not existed. But this did not continue to be implemented, you see, because they only contracted as a consultation, so the work was limited to only teaching us the tools that were available to create the data, how to use the data, and the follow-up of only one case.

Jhefferson described the day-to-day realities of the program. There was a standardized form, with the information he listed, that he, and others, were trained through workshops in how to fill out. It included the necessary information to compose an effective narrative about a case of discrimination: the victim, the aggressor, and evidence of what had happened. From his perspective, the project was primarily about learning the skills to create and maintain the database. However, since it was just a temporary contract position, he only worked on it during the time of the contract. And, finally, the contract only allowed for the resources to follow up with one case.

Even though the point of the database was to compile the information about multiple cases of discrimination towards LGBT individuals, Jhefferson's explanation revealed a paradox. That is, despite the demand to evidence multiple cases of discrimination, there was also an understanding that only one case could really be followed through with because of the time and resources necessary to formally file a grievance. This emphasis on following through with one

exemplary case was made clear during a meeting I attended at the Center for Amazonian Development. Claudia, the director of the center, called the meeting in order to start to put together a proposal for a three-year grant from the United States Department of State for civil society organizations addressing discrimination among LGBTQI people. Claudia wanted to elaborate a grant proposal using the framework from the projects that had implemented during The Global Fund's programming. Since Anderson had been contracted to carry out this programming, Claudia sought his experience to help with the proposal. And since I was from the United States, and the grant was from the United States Department of State, Claudia invited me to the meeting. She proposed two activities from The Global Fund project to include again in this funding proposal: sensitivity trainings and the community vigilance system. The sensitivity trainings, as proposed, would be done through a community theater group and presented at secondary schools throughout the region throughout the three years and the community vigilance system would be for one year and take place in Tarapoto. As the group was discussing these objectives and the appropriate indicators, I asked, "Why is the community vigilance system only for one year?" The director responded, "It only lasts for one year because the point is to follow through with one case and set a precedent." Even though the efforts were to foment a culture of denouncement, among the gay and transgender community, the reality for the NGO workers like Claudia and Anderson, who work from project to project, was to focus on one specific case and transform it to become exemplary or precedential. In the precarious industry of human rights and development funding in Peru, exemplary cases of discrimination became speculative and could be used to apply for future projects and funding.

When The Global Fund withdrew from Peru, those involved in NGOs and CBOS that had continued to seek ways to implement some of the activities that had been part of the initiative.

Even sexual rights NGOs that were not part of the The Global Fund made use of the stories that were collected during The Global Fund's 10th Round. In an interview, Jhefferson explained how he, and his colleagues in Pucallpa and Iquitos, not only submitted the cases to Inppares, the principal receptor NGO for The Global Fund's 10th Round at the time, but also to other organizations in Lima. I asked Jhefferson if any NGOs followed up with the data he collected, to which he responded:

> Well, up to this point, I do not know. They have asked me for the data and I only have told them what has happened, that is all. In Iquitos, they collected newspaper articles [about discrimination towards gay and transgender people]. But we also send them to the organizations that collect the discrimination data. Sexual Rights Promotion Network creates an annual report about human rights and discrimination toward the LGBT community. Sometimes I look in the newspapers for cases, and send them so that I do not have to go all the way to Lima, but that is what the cases are for, for these reports, to show what rights were violated and the year that it happened.

Jhefferson explained how the cases of discrimination that were collected throughout the Amazonian region while carrying out the community vigilance system project were submitted to Inppares, in order to comply with the programming and receive payment. But they were also sent to the Sexual Rights Promotion Network NGO. Since they had already collected the cases and, the organization compiled an annual report documenting discrimination, when the Sexual Rights Promotion Network solicited this data, he forwarded it along. Even though The Global Fund's project ended, the training that it provided continued to be generative for other NGOs and the

technical data they produced. Jhefferson also noted, however, that neither he, nor his colleagues in Iquitos or Pucallpa, were ever acknowledged by Sexual Rights Promotion Network for their contributions, so he has since stopped sending them the discrimination cases he found in local periodicals.

After realizing that this paradox regarding, on the one hand, of encouraging gay and transgender people to file formal discrimination grievances, and, on the other hand, the reality that few of these cases could be or were actually be followed through with in any formal legal manner, I decided to take a closer look at the cases that had been collected by the Center for Amazonian Development in Tarapoto regarding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. Anderson, who had been primarily in Iquitos during The Global Fund's 10th Round projects, had completed the task of ordering into binders and then arranging into boxes the technical reports of the project. These reports were stored in the basement archives of the organization. Eager to help me with my research project, Anderson took me to the carefully boxed and packaged basement archive. The stored *informes technicos*, or technical reports, of the project in Tarapoto, Iquitos, and Pucallpa, primarily documented the project's human rights-based technical objectives: meetings held with municipal and regional government officials, training workshops conducted among vulnerable populations in the region, and, occasionally, a clipping from a local periodical regarding discrimination towards transgender or gay individuals. In other words, the denunciations were issing from these reports.

Thus, despite the overwhelming consensus among global health officials, LGBT activists, and NGO workers advancing sexual rights regarding stigma and discrimination towards gay and transgender populations, in the NGO archive in Tarapoto, which had for several years managed the anti-discrimination efforts of HIV/AIDS interventions, there were very few documented

cases of discrimination towards gay and transgender people. I found three cases documented through the community vigilance system form: one from Iquitos, one from Tarapoto, and the third was a "sample" form that had been filled out during a training workshop in Tarapoto. This did not mean that gay and transgender people were not victims of discrimination or were not stigmatized, but, rather indicated that the technical processes of compiling formal discrimination grievances appeared incommensurate with these experiences. This was different than what Valentine (2003) observed regarding the proliferation of representations of transgender violence in the United States context as another instantiation of violence. Rather, there appeared to be a lack of representation in Tarapoto.

The form documenting the case had been filled out by Ramón, who had been contracted, alongside Jhefferson, for a couple of months for this aspect of the project. According to the form, as the sister of a young man who had passed away went to the civil registry in Morales, one of three municipal districts in Tarapoto, to fill out the necessary paperwork, she was informed by a municipal employee that because her brother had died of "esa enfermedad," or "that disease," that they will have to prepare the plot with a thicker wall of concrete, and place it in a special zone apart from the rest of the cemetery, so as to not contaminate the air or the grounds of the cemetery. "That disease" was a tacit reference to HIV, which, in the entire form, was never explicitly mentioned. She said this could cost up to S./ 600 soles (approximately $200), but then said that they were willing to negotiate a special discount. The sister was never given any proof of this additional transaction, because, as the grievance narrative implied, the municipal employee framed this as an informal favor. The information on the form essentially ended there. While the form included a framework for subsequent actions that can be taken, such as bringing the form to the *Defensoria del Pueblo*, or public ombudsman, the rest of the form was left blank.

The case, however, does not end there. Subsequently in the chapter, this case will come back up as Ramón circulated it at different points in able to draw attention to it.

III. Discrimination at the La Mega Disco

Space and place have long been related to the formation of LGBT communities in both Western and no-Western contexts. As Boellstorff found argued, sexual subjectivities are, "shaped by spatial dimensions of domination, by the relationship between space and desire" (2005, 127). Certain spaces, like the disco and nightclub have been the subject of queer anthropological researcg, as well as long associated with LGBT sub-culture in communities around the world (Newton 1972). In Tarapoto, the nightclub space was particularly meaningful because of its recent history of political violence, in which nighttime curfews were strictly enforced by the armed terrorist groups and the possibility of a nightlife was only a dream for many. Today, most of the discos are located in the far western edges of the Morales district, about 20 minutes on a moto or moto-car from the plaza in Tarapoto. Discos became increasingly important after the conflict. It was common to see multiple generations of a family out together at a disco and it is an important space to inhabit for post-conflict Tarapoto.

The *ambiente* is a term used in many places throughout Latin America to refer to what in English might be called the "scene." In Peru, Angelica Motta (1999) published some of the first social scientific analyses of the *ambiente* based on research in Lima. She found that spaces like saunas, discos, and popular cruising spots were nodes of a network exclusive to homosexual men. This sense of exclusivity, however, did not exist in Tarapoto. The discos, for example, that were popular among gay and transgender people were not exclusive to them. The types of spatial exclusions characteristic of so-called gayborhoods, for example, were less marked in Tarapoto

and in the cities in the Amazonian region more generally. This is often confusing to lesbians and gays visiting Tarapoto from Lima, or from the larger coastal cities on the coast like Trujillo and Chiclayo, or from the United States and Europe. For example, one weekend, Franco and his boyfriend, Luis, visited Tarapoto. Franco was a successful lawyer and LGBT activist in Lima. He was a friend and mentor to Anderson and had decided to come to Tarapoto for a weekend vacation and to re-connect with Anderson. Anderson, unfortunately, was traveling that weekend, so he asked me if I could entertain Franco and Luis. While Franco, Luis, and I were at dinner, they asked me if there was an *ambiente* in Tarapoto and if I had any recommendations for a disco to go to that night. I recommended going to the Anaconda disco, explaining that it is the easiest to get to and was one of the most popular among gay Tarapotinos. The next day, when I asked them if they enjoyed Anaconda, they said they were only their briefly because it was not *ambiente* because of all of the "heteros" that were also there. Accustomed to the *ambiente* in Lima, which is based on exclusivity, they were shocked that I had even suggested Anaconda as a place for them to go.

Discos were the one space many different people accessed and where they spent their nights. While some were stratified into VIP zones and general admission zones, many people of different classes attended. Different discos in Tarapoto come and go, and asking anyone in a generation that has lived through multiple iterations of the nightclub scene will elicit nostalgic recollections of places like El Papillon or La Puma. During the period of my fieldwork, the disco Pachanga replaced Anaconda as the dominant and most popular disco, particularly among the regional elite. It was popular to arrive in a large pick-up truck, and then, in small groups, order bottle service. This typically entailed a bottle of Johnny Walker whisky, a bucket of ice, and

either Guaraná soda or coke. At nightclubs like Anaconda or Pachanga, this could cost about S./ 300 (approximately $100).

While everyone of all classes went to these discos, the discos La Mega and La Granja were much more popularly associated with the working classes. La Granja, in fact, only opened on Sunday afternoons, and with its ample parking, pool, and restaurant, was a place for working class families to spend a leisurely Sunday afternoon without having to venture into the more distant *recreos* popular among the elite. As Sunday afternoon turns into Sunday evening and night, the crowds at La Granja transition to La Mega. The La Mega disco is located furthest west from the Morales and Tarapoto plazas. It is notoriously divisive among the people of Tarapoto. Some either loathe it and would never venture that far out, considering it *sucio* (Vargas 2014). Others love it because it plays a great mix of Peruvian cumbia music and foreign dance and electronic music, has ample dance and bar space, and serves the cheapest beer of all of the large discos.

In addition to these reasons, La Mega disco was especially popular among gay and transgender people as a place to meet or go out with *puntos*, a word they often used to refer to *maperos*. This sentiment was reinforced by Veronica, a transgender hairstylist who was often asked to be the master of ceremony of events like volleyball tournaments and beauty pageants. One day while providing running color commentary for a volleyball tournament, Veronica, over the loudspeaker, chided one of the players for hitting the ball softly over the net: "Make *puntos* on the volleyball court, not only at La Mega." Tasked with describing the volleyball action going on the court, but also with providing lively entertainment so that people would stay around the volleyball tournament and buy beer to watch it, Veronica here accomplished both. *Punto* could mean "point," as in getting a point in volleyball by hitting the ball hard to the ground, or *punto*

could also mean the heterosexual lover of a transgender or gay person. The joke Veronica made drew on both of these meanings: if the player could make *puntos* at the La Mega disco, then he should also be making *puntos* on the volleyball court. This comment made explicit an understanding shared among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto that La Mega was a well-known social site for cultivating intimate relationships.

One Sunday evening, exhausted by the activities of what had been a blistering hot afternoon under the sun playing and watching volleyball, I stayed in at home, preferring to enjoy the night scene vicariously through scrolling on Facebook. I came across a post by Ramón, who had just published a note on the social media website about a case of discrimination that has just occurred at La Mega.

> Listen, listen, ladies, gentlemen, and the security guards at La Mega. A young trans woman Yesika wants to enter and they tell her no because her shorts were too short. She tells them that there are young women inside already with shorts and half of their butt cheeks are hanging out. And the security guard answers her, "She is a woman and you are not."

Within a day, Ramón's post spread around social media, as his friends and acquaintances "liked," "shared," and commented on the post. Another Facebook user wrote another version of the story on the popular Facebook message board called "Tarapoto News and Commentary," where it generated another debate among the users. Many of the reactions encouraged Ramón and Yesika to file a complaint. Others encouraged them to continue to publish the incident on Facebook, so that the owners of La Mega will be embarrassed by what had happened. Someone

else even suggested that in future online posts, that Ramón use the full name of the disco and put it in capital letters. Thus, in the immediate and popular reaction to Ramón's posting, his friends were divided between whether they should file a formal complaint about the incident or if they should let the social shame generated by the popular social media postings effectively address the incident.

Two days later, Ramón sent me a message asking if I could go to his store and meet with him. He said that after what had happened at La Mega a couple of nights ago and the reaction that it had generated on Facebook, that Yesika wanted to proceed with filing a complaint. They had received two types of advice and were still deciding how best to proceed. They could file a formal *denuncia*, or they could speak to the owner of La Mega first and try to resolve the issue. While he had learned about the formal process from workshops related to The Global Fund, he still needed the advice of a lawyer to file a formal grievance with the appropriate state entity. Nevertheless, there was an outpouring of support for Yesika on online message boards and forums related to local Tarapoto news and the consensus of this online support was that she had experienced discrimination and it should be rectified. This support not only encouraged Ramón and Yesika to move forward, but also indicated that there was a certainly a culture of denouncement among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

Several days later, over lunch with Anderson, I brought up the discrimination that had occurred at La Mega. Anderson was aware of what had happened and had even met with Ramón and Yesika. However, while they had received support and encouragement on social media to file a complaint, Anderson offered a more realistic assessment of the situation. "The problem is that they do not have any evidence," he explained to me, "they did not write in the *libro de reclamaciones* that night and there is no video evidence of what the security guard did."

Anderson, as a lawyer and LGBT activist, knew that they could not file a grievance with INDECOPI, the consumer protection agency, because they did not follow the protocol in the moment. When Ramón brought up another option, which was circulating an informal denouncement of La Mega with the local newspapers, Anderson strongly advised against it: "you do not want to create scandal, or worse, slander the owner." Furthermore, he explained, Yesika thought she would be entitled to compensation of some kind, however, the result of a grievance filed with INDECOPI would only be a fine to the business and not a direct payment to her.

The disjuncture between Ramón and Yesika's expectations, stoked by the overwhelming support expressed to them online, and Anderson's assessment of the situation, on the other, is illustrative of a varying legal consciousness among gay and transgender people in provincial regions of Peru, on the one hand, and those involved with some NGOs, on the other. Given the constant messaging from The Global Fund and LGBT rights organizations in Lima about the need to create a culture of complaint and file formal grievances that Ramon and Yesika had received in the past few years, it appeared as though they were doing exactly what they had been told to do. Yet, from the perspective of Ramón and Yesika, Anderson, the realistic LGBT rights activist and trained lawyer, came off as uninterested in the everyday discrimination of transgender women in Tarapoto. And while he was being realistic with his advice, Anderson, too, saw the case *escandaloso*, or scandalous, and thus was not entirely convinced that the case would become particularly exemplary or set strategic precedents in Tarapoto.

One week later, I saw Ramón and Yesika at an evening meeting at the community-based organiztaion Disam. The posts that Ramón and others had circulated on social media drew the attention of the owner of the La Mega disco, and the owner contacted to Ramón to have a meeting. When Ramón and Yesika arrived to the meeting, they were surprised by the fact that

the owner had also brought a lawyer and the manager of the disco to the meeting. Ramón explained that they offered Yesika the opportunity to come back to the disco, and she would not have to pay any cover charge and would be given *barra libre*, or open bar, that night. They also offered to fire the security guard that had made the discriminatory comment to her. Yesika, however, explained to me that she did not want to cause a scandal: "The security guard is a father of a family and for that reason I do not want him fired." Ramón then said that they want to ask for a public apology by the owner of La Mega, and for it to be directed to all of the *chicas trans* in Tarapoto so that they would be assured it would not happen again. Ramón suggested that it be disseminated to the local periodicals and that the apology be made at the upcoming Mr. Gay Morales beauty pageant.

Yesika, who had experienced the embarrassment and discrimination at the disco, however, was unsatisfied with what she had the feeling was going to be the conclusion of the incident. "Can't we sue La Mega for discrimination? One time, at the Gotica club in Lima, in Larco Mar, they discriminated a travesti and she was paid." Anderson, familiar with this exemplary case that had been propelled forward with the help of NGOs and activists, explained to Yesika how it was different: "They had charged her double for the entry to the disco, and then they made her walk in the back entrance, and they had the proof of it, the receipt and the video. You do not have the evidence." Exemplary cases, like the one Yesika referred to in this moment, were meant to be pedagogical for LGBT people around the country: they worked toward instilling a denouncement culture. However, the exemplary cases also obscured the enormous amounts of resources and financial commitments that make them such. For Yesika, to successfully denounce La Mega required the resources for a team of lawyers and a team of dedicated activists to draw attention to the case.

IV. Discrimination and Evidence at the Capacity Building Workshop

Several months after the incident at La Mega, I participated in a workshop in Tarapoto conducted by the Defensoria del Pueblo, or public ombudsman, to collect cases of discrimination from the region for a report they were elaborating on discrimination and homophobia. The Defensoria del Pueblo in Lima had contacted Anderson, who had recently taken a position in the Defensoria del Pueblos's office in Tarapoto, to get people to come to the workshop. Drawing on his long-term contacts with gay and transgender people in the towns surrounding Tarapoto, and using the final financial resources of a LGBT rights project sponsored by a European NGO, Anderson invited and arranged the travel of gay and transgender people from towns throughout the region. Some of these towns were as close as two hours away, like Sauce, while others were much further depending on a given town's proximity to the *Carratera Fernando Belaunde Terry*, which is one of only three longitudinal highways in the country and passes through Tarapoto. Thus, the workshop participants included gay and transgender individuals from Juanjuí, Nueva Cajamarca, Moyobamba, Bellavista, Sauce, and Tarapoto.

The workshop was run by Dr. Leguía, a representative from the Defensoria del Pueblo in Lima. Dr. Leguía was a young professional who proudly conversed with the group in his Lima slang, using terms like *broder* and *chévere* that strongly indexed his Lima origin for the workshop participants. It was common for licensed lawyers in Peru to be referred to with the honorific "doctor," and the participants of the workshop continued this custom. Dr. Leguía started the workshop explaining that the Defensoria was in the process of compiling an *informe*, or report, about discrimination towards LGBT communities in Peru. The report would have different chapters relating to, for example, health or identity, and that they were seeking for

specific cases of discrimination that could be included in each of these chapters. He then opened the floor to the participants, asking "Does anybody know of any cases?" One participant, Segundo, from a town about two hours from Tarapoto called Sauce, said that maybe he had a case that could be included in the "health" chapter. He explained that even though they have a medical post in Sauce that provides HIV testing and antiretroviral therapy, he and his friends do not want to go because the town is small and the medical staff gossip. Within hours, he said, the whole village can find out about a positive HIV test result because "*las mismas trabajadoras son chismosas*." In other words, the nurses and workers at the medical post will reveal confidential information to the rest of town through gossiping. Another participant, Kristina, from another town about two hours from Tarapoto called Nueva Cajamarca, added that even though the medical post in Nueva Cajamarca attends to "TS" (sex workers) and "LGBT," it is only on specific days each month. On the 5th of each month, she explained, sex workers can go, and on the 12th of each month, LGBT people can go for STI and HIV testing as well as for their check-ups to receive anti-retroviral therapy. When the 5th and 12th fall on certain days in the month, though, like Friday or Saturday, then there is no attention and people are unable to access their treatment.

As the workshop progressed, it became clear that Dr. Leguía's expectations that he would be able to collect specific cases with names, dates, and evidence were not the same as the expectations of what the gay and transgender people thought could be addressed in the workshop. Although Segundo and Kristina were clearly reporting systemic discrimination that was seriously affecting the health of LGBT people in their small towns, they did not present the cases to the Defensoria del Pueblo representative in a way that would be easy for him to collect the information for his report. Their stories did not have specific information about the identities

of individual victims, the names of the individual aggressors, and the types of evidence that would be needed for a formal discrimination grievance. Visibly frustrated with the participants, Dr. Leguía repeated, "But does anyone have any specific examples of discrimination? Why have you not filed a grievance about these cases?" Jhefferson then responded by explaining how, perhaps, individuals would not want to make a scandal out of the cases or draw attention to their families. This hypothesis did not satisfy the representative from the Defensoria, as he responded: "Well, what would be the big deal? If you are gay or a travesti, your parents and family already know?" "Parents do know," Jhefferson explained, "*las madres de familia siempre saben,*" but, perhaps they do not want to talk about it or make it explicit. And, speaking from an experience in which he had brought a case to the Defensoria in Tarapoto which they did not pursue, the formal grievance, and the perception of being scandalous that pursuing it brought about to the individual and their family, had been "*por gusto*," or "in vain."

Jhefferson elaborated a notion of gay and transgender identity that appeared similar to what Decena (2011) found among gay Dominican migrants in New York. Through the concept of "tacit subjects," Decena argued that for Spanish-speaking Latinos, "coming out may sometimes seem redundant. In other words, coming out can be a verbal declaration that is already understood or assumed—tacit—in an exchange" (Decena 2011, 19). The extent to which family knows about an individual's sexual orientation, and, I would argue in this case, HIV status, was a matter of "tacit knowledge." For Decena, the narrative that gay Latinos in New York were closeted or repressed because they did not openly come out to their families was inaccurate because subjectivity for this community was tacit. This narrative for Decena was also racist, because it was based on assumptions about language that do not necessarily exist in

Spanish like they do in English.[17] This exchange between Jhefferson and Dr. Leguía both reflected and complicated Decena's conceptual framework. On the one hand, Dr. Leguía's comments and frustration paralleled the assumptions about Latino LGBT communities in the United States that Decena's conceptual formulation is meant to challenge. Yet, on the other hand, both Jhefferson and Dr. Leguía are Spanish speakers, so it was not a distinction that was derived entirely from Spanish grammar. Nevertheless, tacit subjectivity helps conceptualize how, among gay and transgender people in Tarapoto, there could simultaneously be a culture of denouncement (that is, a desire to seriously address discrimination and stigma) but also an ambivalence towards the formalization of discrimination grievances. Segundo and Kristina wanted to "denounce" the discrimination, but in a way that maintained certain aspects of their (or their friend's) lives tacit, like HIV status.

Towards the end of the meeting, and, at this point, Dr. Leguía had more or less resigned to the fact that he was not going to collect the cases that he wanted for the report, then Ramón brought up both the case of discrimination at the La Mega disco and the cemetery in Morales. After explaining what had happened on that night at La Mega, Ramón described how mostly what he was able to do was to create *bulla*, or noise, about what had happened. He had even contacted a reporter from a local television station and they produced a short report on the incident, but it was canned by the television station because the owner of the television station was friends with the owner of La Mega. The activity and support on Facebook immediately following the incident made the owner scared, so he contacted them to set up a meeting. There, with his lawyer present, he and Yesika were told that they did not have the evidence. Dr. Leguía responded that since La Mega was a private business, and not a state entity, a grievance would be

[17] Decena, for example, argues that his formulation of tacit subjectivity draws from the tacit subject in Spanish grammar: "In Spanish grammar, the 'sujeto tácito' (tacit subject) is the subject that is not spoken but that can be ascertained through the conjugation of the verb used in a sentence" (Decena 2011, 19).

filed with INDECOPI, the consumer defense institute, and not the Defensoria del Pueblo. Ramón then brought up the case of discrimination at the cemetery in Morales: "In Morales, they have put all of the gays and travestis who died of HIV/AIDS in one part of the municipal cemetery together, apart from the general population." Dr. Leguía questioned him further, as this case seemed to spark some interest. He asked Ramón, "Well, did you go to the Defensoría here in Tarapoto?" to which Ramón replied in the affirmative. As he glanced at Dr. Fernandez, the director of the Defensoria del Pueblo office in Tarapoto, Dr. Fernandez added, "Well, we have a lot of cases right now of rights violations and we have been prioritizing cases in communities outside of Tarapoto. I apologize if we have not followed up with all of the cases, but the Defensoria cannot be seen as a panacea." After that exchange, the meeting winded down and we all took pictures to commemorate the event. The Defensoria del Pueblo even uploaded the picture to their own Facebook page.

Dr. Leguía's framing of the failure of the case of discrimination at La Mega and in the cemetery in Morales, not as the failure of the NGO and human rights apparatus to follow through with cases of discrimination, but as a pedagogical moment to rectify the failure on the part of Ramón, Yesika, and others for not properly executing a formal discrimination grievance, was indicative of broader social paradoxes between the Lima-centric NGO class and LGBT rights movement, on the one hand, and gay and transgender communities in provincial Amazonian Peru. "You all have cell phones, I see you using them now," Dr. Leguía explained and chided, "and it is not discrimination unless you have the evidence. A video recording and a written testimony in the *libro de reclamaciones* is what you need to prove that there was differentiated treatment. So next time you go to the disco, bring your friends along and have they can record from their cell phones." Despite all the pomp and circumstance NGOs have dedicated to the

imperative to file discrimination grievances, there was no explicit discourse around the reality that only a few exemplary cases could or would be followed through with. And for a case to become exemplary, it required particular forms of evidence (e.g., a video recording of the incident) and self- disclosures about identity, sexual orientation, and HIV status that can only be made possible with the support of costly legal and activist teams. The idea that Ramón and Yesika lacked a "culture of denouncement" did not actually explain why they were unable to convert their case into an exemplary case. Rather, the "denouncement culture" explanation obscures the structural realities of addressing discrimination through the law by shifting emphasis to an "un-empowered" subject lacking the capacity and drive to advocate for their rights.

After hearing Ramón bring up the case of the cemetery in Morales, I decided to follow up with him several days later following the workshop. He is a particularly beloved figure in Morales. Over the course of my fieldwork, I saw him organize weekly volleyball games between gay and transgender players that drew hundreds of spectators from Tarapoto and Morales to watch and bet on the matches, he organized a gay beauty contest sponsored by the Morales municipality to celebrate the town's anniversary, and he organized a month-long gay, transgender, and lesbian soccer tournament. It is common for enterprising gay and transgender individuals, like Ramón, to be known for organizing spectacles: those who gain a reputation of being able to convoke crowds are tapped by local politicians to help with their campaigns as well as contracted temporarily for development and health projects by NGOs that need groups of gay and transgender people to attend events and capacity building workshops. While the *Center for Amazonian Development* was implementing the Community Vigilance System, they briefly contracted Ramón to collect cases from Morales for their reports and archive. Just as Anderson

was called on to bring together the group for the previously described workshop with the state *Defensoria del Pueblo*, NGOs and state entities rely on the labor of convocation that enterprising gay and trans individuals have in their local communities.

When I asked him about the case, Ramón explained that he had originally been approached by the sister of the young man who passed away to organize a *pollada*, an informal economic activity for fundraising in which one pre-sells tickets for a piece of chicken which can then be claimed at a later date. It was in this process of organizing this *pollada* that Ramón found out what the municipal cemetery had been saying to the family. Since he was coincidentally tasked at that time with compiling cases of discrimination for the Community Vigilance System, he decided to initiate the formal discrimination grievance protocol with this woman in addition to assisting with the informal fundraising activity. However, after some time, the family decided they did not want to follow through with the grievance: they did not want to be identified and they did not want to identify their brother as a victim of HIV. Disclosure is often accomplished tacitly, among family and close friends, even as one's status may be gossiped about, references to HIV are masked through coded phrases like *esa enfermedad*. Even the original form coded disclosure and HIV status without ever explicitly mentioning it.

After following up with Ramón, we decided to visit the cemetery to see if, as some of Ramón's friends had commented to him, this was a practice that had been going on for several years. It was only a couple of blocks away and he said we could stop by the sister's house so she could tell us exactly where her brother was buried. She told Ramón that one of her brother's friend's was buried there, too, because he also had *esa enfermedad*. On the walk over, Ramón listed off the nicknames of gay and transgender people from the neighborhood who have passed away in the past few years. When we arrived to the cemetery, we found the row of thick, cement

plots. Everyone who Ramón listed off on the walk over was buried there. He turned to me and said, "*aun en la muerte están discriminados*," or, even in death they are discriminated.

V. Conclusion

What are the consequences of antidiscrimination efforts among gay and transgender communities? How do gay and transgender people continue these efforts even after the programs that supported them are defunded? In this chapter, I first contextualized the imperative to file a formal discrimination grievance within broader trends in global health regarding HIV/AIDS discrimination and stigma. This imperative was based on an orientation towards formalization and the law as the ideal way to empower LGBT people, reduce societal stigma, and reduce HIV/AIDS among gay and transgender communities. The consequence of this was a shared narrative among some NGOs about fomenting a culture of denouncement, which meant empowering and capacitating gay and transgender communities in provincial parts of the country to file formal discrimination grievances. The community vigilance system project in Tarapoto was one iteration of this. Through ethnographic fieldwork, I traced how two cases of discrimination circulated between everyday life, the NGO archive, and the broader apparatus of capacity-building workshops in Tarapoto. I found that while those involved in the NGO class that propagated the imperative to file formal grievances sincerely wanted to address discrimination, they also understood the realities of a slow and costly legal and bureaucratic system, and thus emphasized the need to follow-through with cases that could become exemplary or emblematic. The "denouncement culture" discourse obscured the broader incapacities of the NGO and global health apparatus by shifting focus to individual gay and transgender people.

My aim is not to merely point out that the state, The Global Fund, and NGOs get something wrong about the local context and the lives of transgender and gay communities in the Amazonian region. Even if the system of community vigilance was unsuccessful in stopping the discriminatory practice at the municipal cemetery, it ultimately offered the space to create a narrative about the case. After having written down this narrative for the archive, Ramón then circulated it at different moments: with a foreign anthropologist, with the Defensoria del Pueblo, and with local journalists. And Ramón learned how to narrate and circulate a case of discrimination through the training that he did have, and thus learned how to publicize and draw attention the case at La Mega on social media.

Theoretically, this chapter extends broader anthropological research that has sought to account for why informality persists despite explicit efforts of formalization. I argue that these two cases are in fact emblematic of broader neoliberal processes, both at the level of the state but also extends to global health initiatives and NGOs. The case reveals a paradox of the formalization gesture: the formal discrimination grievance depends on a disclosure that is anathema to the health of the population it was designed to help. As a consequence, informality becomes an essential mode of transaction between the state, NGOs, and gay and transgender people. Recall, for example, how the negotiations for the burial costs were framed as informal favors. Throughout Peru, there are people like Ramon and Anderson whose enterprising organizational talents, partly a product of local notions of appropriate economic activities for gay and transgender people, make possible the local implementation of global health initiatives and the collection of discrimination grievances compiled into NGO reports and recycled at different moments for more international development funding. Cases of discrimination that become emblematic or exemplary are also sought after for future value in the precarious world of

international development and global health grant funding. And finally, this case illustrates what is sometimes ineffable about discrimination towards transgender and gay people in Peru. Even in death, as Ramón pointed out to me, they are suspect of contagion and administrative structures seek to contain them. This case of discrimination at the municipal cemetery of Morales shows how this exclusion extends beyond life.

CHAPTER 4

PERCY'S DANCE AND SALOME'S CURSE: TOWARDS A QUEER HEMISPHERIC ETHNOGRAPHY

I. Introduction

The Carnvaval Tarapoton was to be held in the central Suchiche park of Tarapoto. On the Sundays in the month leading up to the beginning of the Lenten season, the forty days preceding Easter, it was customary in Tarapoto for children and youth to "play Carnaval" by throwing buckets of water and water balloons at each other and anyone they encountered wandering around town. In an effort to curtail the potential chaos, the municipality of Tarapoto sponsored the Carnaval Tarapoton, marked off a space near the Suchiche park for youth to play, and provided live music and entertainment to make it a family-friendly environment. Because it was sponsored by the office that Martín worked for in the Tarapoto municipal government, he told me to go a little early and hang out with him and his friends Anderson and Bruno. Martín, a gay man now in his late 30s who worked for the Tarapoto municipality in the Office of Social Inclusion, had achieved his position through organizing successful and popular events nearly his whole life. And Bruno was an up-and-coming star of the national LGBT rights movement: in his early 30s, he was one of a few gay and out elected officials in Peru during my fieldwork. In Tarapoto, he was the *teniente alcalde*, or deputy mayor. Unlike Martín, and many others who I have profiled throughout the dissertation, he did not secure this position through event organizing. He studied business administration and worked as a business assistant to a very successful local businessman who eventually ran for mayor and included Bruno as *teniente alcalde* on his ticket.

With Martín occupied with making sure the many aspects of the event were in place, Bruno, Anderson, and I took a moment to sit on a bench and chat. Anderson and Bruno wanted to talk strategy, especially regarding the future of the Diversidad San Martinense organization. This was only a few months after the withdraw of The Global Fund from Peru, which had been the primary source of funding for the organization: the remaining sources of funding from various international development organizations, were ending soon as well. Like LGBT community-based organization activists throughout the country, Anderson and Bruno, committed to the longevity of the organization, were thus forced to come up with ways to generate funding if they wanted to continue to have the space and services for addressing HIV/AIDS and human-rights related issues among the LGBT population. Bruno, who had not known much about the history of LGBT activism in the region, began to ask Anderson, one of the original founders of the Diversidad San Martinense, about the history of the organization and how it operated before the introduction of the global health initiatives. While Anderson and Martín started the organization primarily by organizing events such as *polladas,* soccer and volleyball tournaments, and beauty contests, these activities in the past ten years no longer became central to the organization.[18] "Well, we could organize a *pollada* to raise funds," Bruno suggested to Anderson. Anderson agreed, and, taking advantage of the fact that I was there, indirectly asked me for money. He also remarked that they would benefit from the *voluntad*, or goodwill, of the gay and transgender community members currently living abroad, particularly those in Argentina who may be able to temporarily support the organization.

[18] A *pollada* is an informal fundraising activity common throughout Peru. One sells tickets for a piece of chicken in advance, and then whoever buys the ticket can come on the day of the *pollada* to pick it up. If there is music or entertainment going on, then others may stay and buy beer to watch, which provides another source of money.

Bruno then asked Anderson, "Is it true that Martín worked as a *travesti* when he was in Buenos Aires?"[19] Bruno knew that Martín had spent time in Argentina and now wanted to know more about what he had done while he was there. This comment surprised me: I thought that Bruno and Martín were closer and he would have known that. But also because Martín was a master storyteller and had a handful of stories about his time in Argentina that I had heard, at that point, at least ten times at parties, meetings, and workshops. Martín's stories, which he circulated over and over again at these settings, were characteristically humorous and pedagogical. They tended to involve Martín finding his way into a desperate situation, generally the result of some misstep or miscalculation about a potential *punto*, or man, and then, by sheer luck, finding a way out of it. "You have not heard Martín's story about the Ecuadorian *travesti*?" Anderson exclaimed to Bruno, also apparently shocked Bruno had never told the story. Anderson then proceeded to recount the story to the best of his ability, although not with the dramatic intonations and gestures that always accompanied Martín's re-tellings:

> Martín, also known as Xuxa as a *travesti*, worked alongside other *travestis* in Buenos Aires. One night, there was a group of four of them on the street. Martín was pretty, but did not have the body like the *morena*, or dark-skinned woman, from Ecuador, who had silicon injections. She was pretty, with long hair extensions and wore the highest heels. A car pulled up with three men inside and they motioned Martín to come over. Just as Martín goes over to the car, the *morena* pushes him away. Martín cursed her as she walked right over him and over to the car. As she approached the car, the men rolled down the windows. She bent down and just as she was about to say something, they

[19] In Spanish, the verb *travestirse* would be to make oneself a *travesti*. My translation of Bruno's question in this ethnographic vignette is meant to contextualize the temporal elements implicit in his question.

pepper sprayed her and drove off. The *morena* screamed in pain and told Martín that it was because of his *maldición*, or curse, and because that pepper spray was supposed to be for him.

Martín's story has taken on a life of its own in Tarapoto. Whether or not it actually happened as Martín re-tells it, this story, or the other ones he told, always livened up a party or workshop and caused those listening to laugh. A curse, just like the one in this vignette, can have serious consequences and its effects can be felt across space. While I had heard this particular story multiple times, and even from others, I was interested in Anderson's decision to tell the story to Bruno at this moment. Precisely as Bruno and Anderson were confronted with the consequences of the abrupt collapse of The Global Fund's initiatives in Peru, they turned their attention towards Argentina and the extension of Tarapoto's gay and transgender community there as a possible solution.

Much of this ethnography has emphasized the local: Tarapoto is not known to be a global city nor is the upper Amazonian region particularly extensive when compared to the Andean or Amazonian regions it is sandwiched between. But the contours of gay and transgender social life are shaped by global political economic forces and imaginaries that extend beyond the local. This chapter thus examines the consequences and analytical possibilities of the temporary breakdown of the forces traditionally considered as globalizing in queer anthropological research. How might this breakdown reveal differing boundaries of gay and transgender social life in Tarapoto? Following the conversation I had with Bruno and Anderson, this chapter examines the new boundaries created through relationships between gay and transgender

immigrants in Argentina and those back home in Tarapoto. Consequently, in this chapter I outline a proposal for the analytical value of a queer hemispheric imaginary.

The disappearance of The Global Fund's programming in Tarapoto, and the Amazonian region in general, was an impactful moment for LGBT activists at community-based organizations. The political and economic forces most associated with globalization in queer anthropology, HIV/AIDS funding and transnational LGBT activism, became latent. What happens, then, when the global becomes de-funded? To answer this question, I argue that first there is analytical value of conceptualizing the gay and transgender communities through a queer hemispheric imaginary. I observe how a hemispheric imaginary, which extended beyond the local, regional, and national, but was not quite the same as the global, became increasingly meaningful when The Global Fund disappeared. The cases I present in this chapter gesture towards the analytical possibilities of this hemispheric imaginary. I aim to contribute to what queer studies scholars in Asia and South East Asia have considered a critical regionality, but in this case with respect to Latin America (Boellstorff 2007; Johnson et al. 2010). Thus, I show how a hemispheric scale draws attention to how a circulation of symbols, practices, people, and capital not based on a Global North to Global South trajectory shaped the subjectivities and some of the community activities of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

I outline my argument for the significance of the hemispheric scale in the following three sections. First, I review how the field of queer anthropology has conceptualized local, national, regional, global scales. Attention to these scales, I argue, has enabled queer anthropologists to re-shape dominant narratives in queer theory about the relationship between LGBT identities and globalization. I then extend queer anthropology's intervention in these discussions through the analysis of two ethnographic examples. These examples illustrate how the contours of social life

for gay and transgender people in Tarapoto were shaped through interaction and association with community members who traveled to or migrated Buenos Aires, Argentina. Through these examples, I argue that a hemispheric imaginary opens new and complementary analytical possibilities for queer anthropology.

II. Nested Scales in Queer Anthropology: Local, National, Regional, and Global

Some anthropological scholarship refers to nested scalar logics to demarcate the boundaries of the field. In other words, the local is subsumed by the national, which is subsumed by the regional, which is then subsumed by the global. Other scholarship refers to non-nested scales, like networks and diasporas. Recently, as Briggs (2004) observed, anthropological scholarship has challenged the ways in which previous scholarship has reified the global and the local binary, and have thus shifted towards processual terms like globalizing and localizing. Both nested and non-nested logics could be used to locate cultural processes that extend beyond the limits of the nation state but are not fully globalizing. World regions, such as Latin America, have been produced through historical and political processes. As Lewis and Wigen observed, the term itself, "was deliberately coined by French scholars in the middle nineteenth century as a way to refer simultaneously to the Spanish-, Portuguese-, and French-speaking portions of the Americas" (1997, 181). In this chapter, I emphasize a nested logic, focusing specifically on the hemispheric because that emerged through the ethnographic work.

In the field of queer anthropology, the processes through which notions of LGBT identity and non-normative sexual practices have likewise been understood at the intersections of local, national, and global scales. In a foundational article about gay identity and globalization, Dennis Altman responded to conversations that arose throughout the 1990s in different parts of the

world, though especially in Asia and Latin America, over the "emergence of a western-style politicized homosexuality in Asia, and about the usefulness of the concepts of 'gay' and 'Asia' in these debates" (Altman 1997, 417). Altman's article can be read, on the one hand, as a response to a growing trend within US-based queer theory which, at the time, tended to conceptualize political claims of "gay" or "lesbian" in non-Western contexts as an imposition that was not applicable to historical specificities or non-Western cultural contexts. Through a series of examples and encounters, Altman demonstrates how gay and lesbians throughout the world often see themselves as part of a global community and "'modern' gay world" (Altman 1997, 418). Despite the specificities of local institutions and histories, Altman argues that, because of globalization, there are more similarities that tie the experiences of gay and lesbian people around the world than what anthropologists and queer theorists tended to acknowledge.

Altman further pointed to the significance of the HIV/AIDs epidemic in globalizing gay identity:

> It is impossible to know how far the dispersal of western-style gay identities would have occurred without AIDS, which has opened up both space and resources for gay organizing and increased western influence through surveillance, objectification, and shaping sexuality. Consider the large numbers of western or western-trained epidemiologists, anthropologists, and psychologists who have used HIV/AIDS as a reason to investigate sexual behaviors across the world, and by so doing have changed the ways in which participants themselves understand what they are doing. (Altman 1997, 425).

Altman's insight about the effects of the epidemic on the emergence of politicized homosexual identities has been observed in research throughout Latin America (de la Dehesa 2010; Parker 1999; Torres-Ruiz 2011; Wright 2000). For example, in his comparison on the emergence of gay marriage demands in Mexico, Argentina, and Chile, Díez (2015) argues that the politicized response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region laid the groundwork for subsequent political demands regarding marriage rights. In the context of Peru, after nearly 10 years of rights-based intervention on the part of The Global Fund to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic among gay, transgender, and MSM populations, it was, at the time of my fieldwork, impossible to know what the gay and transgender communities of Peru's San Martín state would look like otherwise because these interventions had become ubiquitous throughout the region. The presence, though, of The Global Fund and other rights-based interventions aimed at LGBT communities, did not mean that it was not the only vector for the circulation of global notions of gay and transgender subjectivities.

This chapter thus aims to disrupt a longstanding narrative in some queer research that presumes that circulation of symbols, capital, and people is always on a global scale and in the direction of the West to the non-West. While the HIV/AIDS interventions follow this direction, a hemispheric scale, I argue, illuminates other aspects of everyday life for the gay and transgender people I studied. The symbols, people, and capital tracked in this chapter came to the forefront of gay and transgender social life, particularly in the moments when "the global" (i.e., the HIV/AIDS interventions and LGBT development projects) recessed.

One of the most significant developments of queer anthropology over the past two and a half decades has been the transition from the dominance of the "ethnocartography" of non-Western non-normative sexualities towards a focus on the local and national consequences of the

globalization of western LGBT identities and the global HIV/AIDS epidemic outside of the West (Boellstorff 2007; Weston 1993). Anthropologists became increasingly confronted with these globalizing forces in their fieldsites and interested in their consequences. However, as Boellstorff (2005) observed, research on globalization and nonnormative sexualities tends to coalesce around a series of rather reductive narratives. These include the narrative that LGBT identities outside of the West emerged as a direct result of transnational activism and thus only cosmopolitan elites can possibly inhabit them or the trope that romanticized local or regional homosexual practices are traditional and authentic and those who consider themselves LGBT are dupes of Western imperialism. Furthermore, these narratives rely on a binary of spatial scales: "nonnormative sexualities and genders outside of the West are seen as foundationally local phenomena (altered or not by globalization), or as foundationally global phenomena (altered or not by local contexts)" (Boellstorff 2005, 27). In his analysis of *gay* and *lesbi* Indonesians, Boellstorff challenged these narratives about globalization by showing how Indonesians who considered themselves *gay* or *lesbi* understood themselves through an archipelagic metaphor. For Indonesians, being *gay* or *lesbi* did not mean becoming more westernized or less Indonesian, but rather inhabiting one "island" (the *gay* or *lesbi* world) while simultaneously inhabiting others, such as being heterosexually married and having a family. This archipelagic metaphor was intimately tied to the rhetoric of the Indonesian nation, composed of an archipelago of islands yet still part of the same nation.

Boellstorff's intervention extended Altman's insight about the relationship between globalization and LGBT identities. Altman argued that globalization was, essentially, *sine qua non* to the emergence of LGBT identities throughout the world and that there existed more similarities to the politicized LGBT communities throughout the world than previously

imagined. The task of the anthropologists, for Altman, was not to critique these emergent formations, but "find a balance between the view of globalization as a new stage of imperialism and the triumphalist discourse of globalization as the creation of a new world society" (1997, 429). Instead of determining how similar or different *gay* and *lesbi* communities in Indonesia were or were not to Western ones, Boellstorff argued that queer ethnographic analysis of globalization ought not yield a measurement of similarity or difference, but rather illustrate "the transformation of the very yardsticks by which one decides whether something is the same or different in the first place" (2005, 29).

For Boellstorff, the question of how Westernized or not gay and lesbian identities were becoming missed the fact that, in Indonesia, these identities were articulated through the metaphor of the archipelagic nation. Following Boellstorff, this chapter departs from a line of questions and critiques concerned with determining the extent to which global influences shape local contexts by rather asking what other scales might be ethnographically meaningful and what these scales can offer analytically. In Indonesia, Boellstorff found the scale of the nation to be ethnographically relevant towards how his *gay* and *lesbi* interlocutors understood their sexual subjectivities. Likewise, economic conditions and the growth of national capitalisms in the post-World War II era have further shaped the emergence and development of queer communities and the significance of analysis at the scale of the nation (Jackson 2009.

In previous dissertation chapters I found it analytically productive to examine how global forces such as LGBT activism and HIV/AIDs interventions impacted local Amazonian contexts and I have previously argued that playing volleyball in public space was a way for gay and transgender Peruvians to assert national belonging (Perez 2011). However, in Peru, as countless historians and anthropologists of Peru have pointed out, national projects have consistently failed

to account for and imagine all Peruvians as equally a part of the nation (Larson 2004; Mayer 2009; Méndez 1996; Thurner 1995). And the Peruvian Amazon, perhaps more so than the Andean region, has figured precariously in the Peruvian national imagination and only in the short-term boom periods of resource exploitation (Walker 1987). Likewise, my proposal is a departure from the traditional activo/pasivo framework analyzed in a previous chapter. Anthropologists theorized the activo/pasivo framework as modular: it was a typology that could be picked up and used to describe multiple localities throughout Latin America. Here, my interest is not in developing a modular description but rather responding to the ways that the local itself was shaped by hemispheric flows of people and ideas.

What does the proposal for a hemispheric scale offer that is not already captured by the transnational concept for queer anthropology in Latin America? As Manalansan (2003) observed, globalization was either derided for obscuring the expansion of capitalism and cultural imperialism or celebrated as redemptive for those living under repression because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Consequently, queer studies shifted towards the notion of the transnational, which "recognizes the limitations of place-based queer politics and at the same time conveys the complications brought about by migration and travel of queer peoples and cultures" (Manalansan 2003, 5). Among the robust body of interdisciplinary literature addressing queer and LGBT Latinos and Latin Americans, the transnational perspective has tended to privilege travels and movements from Latin America to the Global North, and particularly the United States (Acosta 2013; Decena 2011; Peña 2013; Silva and Ornat 2014; Vasquez del Aguila 2013; Viteri 2014). This research tends to over-emphasize the travels and movements from the non-West to the West, and particularly those who migrated to large cosmopolitan cities like New York City. Likewise, critical literature on LGBT tourism often focuses on the relationship of

Western gay and lesbian tourists and the non-Westerners they encounter (Alexander 2005; McCormick 2011; Mitchell 2011; Murray 2007; Puar 2002; Stout 2014). Is there a way to consider global and transnational processes without assuming an a priori distinction between the native/non-native or westerner/non-westerner in the analysis of LGBT communities? What other circulations and relationships might exist outside of this binary?

Finally, this chapter also draws on an ethnographic approach Ochoa (2014) calls queer diasporic ethnography. Ochoa's ethnographic research in Venezuela was a product of a series of migrations in her own family and life history. As she explains, "As a '1.5' generation immigrant, I had not grown up with a strong sense of Colombian identity, community, or nation, but I did know that histories and displacements of the region had produced my own migration" (Ochoa 2014, 11). A queer diasporic ethnographic approach, then, recognizes how the histories of displacement and migration produce not just queer subjects but also diasporic queer anthropologists. Like Ochoa, my own family and life history, marked by migrations from the Philippines and Mexico to the United States, played a role in shaping my ability to inhabit a queer subject position in the United States and also how I was able to carry out my ethnographic research. If, as Ochoa observes, a queer diasporic ethnography, "attends to the perverse and uneven transits that create unexpected opportunities to witness such processes," (2014, 14) then it is important to acknowledge that the Pacific migrations of my grandparents from the Philippines to San Francisco, on one side, and from Mexico to San Francisco, on the other, followed by the internal migration of my parents from San Francisco's Mission district to the suburbs of Sacramento, created opportunities for me to be able to transit between cities and across borders that many of my informants in Tarapoto perhaps may never be in the position to. Nevertheless, the hemispheric circulation of symbols, people, and experiences tracked in this

chapter emerged not as a result of my presence in the fieldsite, nor as the direct result of global HIV/AIDS interventions or LGBT rights activism, but rather as a community in which gay and transgender people imagined themselves to be a part.

II. Percy's Dance and Argentina's Entrepreneurial Possibilities

One way that gay and transgender people actualized a hemispheric imaginary was through travel and migration. The concept of sexual migration has helped scholars understand how sexuality can be a significant factor for understanding how and why people migrate. The concept, as described by Howe, Zaraysky, and Lorentzen challenges reductive economic frameworks by showing how "sexual and economic migratory motives are intimately intertwined" and "emphasizes sexual desire and life goals related to sexuality" (2008, 32). For Cantú (2009), the concept draws attention to the ways "sexuality, as a dimension of power, shapes and organizes processes of migration and modes of incorporation" (2009, 21). Attention to the many dimensions of sexual migration furthermore challenges the heteronormative assumptions in conceptualizations of citizenship, family, and migration (Carrillo 2004; Manalansan 2006). Sexual migration, in many ways, offers a way to understand the relationship between transgender and gay Peruvians from Tarapoto and the surrounding Amazonian region migrate to Argentina. Argentina, for many, represented a place to live a more fully actualized transgender or gay self. The concept, however, did not fully encompass Percy's motivations for migrating. A young, gay man in his early twenties from a middle-class family in Tarapoto, Percy's motivations for traveling to Argentina were not related to his sexuality, but rather toward cultivating his identity as a businessman and entrepreneur. When I first met Percy in 2012 during my preliminary fieldwork, he had recently finished secondary school and was working from gig

to gig as a choreographer for *quinceñeras* and other events that his then-boyfriend Javier was contracted to organize and decorate. By the time I returned to Tarapoto in 2014 for my fieldwork, Percy had opened his own dance studio, "Percy Dance," and choreographed and managed a successful salsa and drag dance group that performed at nightclubs in Tarapoto and throughout the region. Through the course of my fieldwork, Percy left Tarapoto to go to Buenos Aires, Argentina to further study dance. In this section, I analyze how this experience in Argentina became significant for Percy.

During my first few months in Tarapoto, my daily routine involved walking down the busy Jimenez Pimentel road, a key artery of Tarapoto connecting the airport and the main plaza. My first apartment was a couple of blocks away from the office of the Diversidad San Martinense community-based organization. I passed a gas station, a motor-bike dealer, several motor-bike and car repair workshops, and a private Catholic primary school during this fifteen minute walk. The school, St. Anthony's, was *regia* according to Axel, when he explained to me the landscape of primary and secondary schools in Tarapoto. *Regia* meant fancy or regal, and, alongside the Our Lady of Sorrows primary and secondary School, St. Anthony's was the school that, as Axel explained to me, was where the elite and wealthy families in Tarapoto sent their children to study. I was surprised, then, on my walk, to see, hanging on the wall surrounding the school, a sign advertising an upcoming dance show sponsored by "Percy Dance." Percy Dance was the name of Percy's dance studio and he was planning a huge spectacle involving all of the students of his classes. Although he taught traditional classes like jazz and ballet, he also taught "sexy dance," a style of dance in heels that he adapted from watching videos on Youtube by the artist Kazaky. This at first appeared incongruous to me, given Axel's contextualization of St. Anthony's as a rigid, conservative institution. However, in Tarapoto, the religious institutions

that tended to outwardly project moral panic over homophobia tended to be evangelical Christian groups.[20]

Several months after the show, Percy explained the background of the event to me. He needed an auditorium that would be big enough to fit enough people, primarily the families of his young dance students, and St. Anthony's had the space to do it so he rented the facility. The reason for the show was, on the one hand, to provide a goal for his students to train towards and for the parents to see, but also to raise money for his three-month trip to Argentina. In an interview, he explained this as follows: "Before going to Argentina I organized a show here in Tarapoto with many participants, maybe a thousand or more people in the audience, and this financially helped me go on the trip, it was financial savings. It was a beautiful event." As I have described in previous chapters, enterprising gay and transgender people in Tarapoto were known to organize, plan, or decorate large events. These events were often informal fundraisers and could range from *polladas* to beauty contests. Percy drew on his community's expectation that he would plan and execute a spectacle to turn it into an investment for his growing business. In planning such an event he generated the money to fund his trip to Argentina. And, while such activities often generated controversy over charges of corruption and scandal, in explaining his trip as one of professional development, he was able to avoid controversy.

Having thus raised the money to fund his stay in Buenos Aires, as well as finally trained his staff to be able to run his studio while he was away, Percy embarked on his first trip outside of Peru to study dance in Argentina. "It was a beautiful experience, studying," he recounted to me, "I took courses in ballet, jazz, salsa, bachata, stretching, acrobatics. In other words, all of the courses I could possibly take." Having taken these seminars and master classes, of which Buenos

[20] For example, during my fieldwork, I saw that an evangelical Christian church brought a "former travesti" to give a seminar about gay conversion therapy. See Wilkinson (2013) for an analysis of the transnational ex-gay movement in Latin America and reparative therapeutic practices in Ecuador.

Aires offered ample opportunity, he was then able to come back to Tarapoto and teach them at his studio. This also offered a way to differentiate his studio from others in Tarapoto, for, as he explained, nobody else in Tarapoto offered classic ballet training. While he was in Buenos Aires, he consistently documented his training on social media. He explained that this was pedagogical for his students. He wanted them to learn to value persistence and timeliness like he did. For Percy, timeliness and hard-work were part and parcel to his *marca*, or brand, and the classes in Argentina served not only for gaining technical knowledge but also contributing to his brand and business.

The highlight of his time in Argentina, however, was when he competed on a televised dance reality competition and won first place. It was on a popular station and the program was called "Show Match." The consequences of his success, though, were not just personal. He was representing Tarapoto and the entire Amazonian region, he explained, and he wanted people in Argentina to know that they were talented in Tarapoto:

> I am going as Tarapoto. Tarapoto is present in international workshops and on television. I am representing the entire region and I have to demonstrate that we are not *desnivelados*[21] in dance. I can go to Argentina and compete at the same level as the rest. If someone were to come here to Tarapoto, they would find themselves at the same level: "That is where Percy is. Percy Dance is there. There is talent in Tarapoto."

Percy meant to challenge stereotypes of provincialism that existed not just among Peruvians in capital city Lima, but also among those in Buenos Aires. Percy's ability to be mobile and what this mobility accomplished for him was less about constructing a globalized and westernized gay

[21] *Desnivelado* meant not at the same skill level.

identity through affluence and consumption (Puar 2002), but rather about constructing and developing himself as a professional and an entrepreneur. His personal and professional growth, however, was not just limited to these opportunities.

Percy's perspective disrupted some contemporary queer scholarship on sexuality in Latin America, particularly related to scholarly efforts aiming to redefine the political purchase of the *loca* category. Throughout Latin America's gay and queer communities, *loca* is a category that "refer[s] to its boldest and most scandalous actors. The word is used to refer to effeminate gay men and also to *transformistas* and transgender women" (Ochoa 2008, 152). In transnational queer scholarship, *Loca* has been re-defined as an emancipatory transgression of dominant heterosexual masculinity (La-Fountain-Stokes 2014). Yet, for Percy, *loca* was neither emancipatory nor related to gender transgression. Even though he was gay, he laboriously maintained his sexuality as "tacit knowledge" (Decena 2011). He contrasted his professionalism ethos with others who were also involved in dance and choreography in Tarapoto:

> In reality, I keep my sexual orientation a little covered. One, for family reasons, and, two, because I am just like that, a reserved person. I am not *loca*, like others, getting drunk and going out, because this affects my work. I work with young girls, their parents, I mean, the public in general and I have to behave professionally. And they have asked me, "Percy, are you gay?" and when they ask me this I tell them, "Yes, I am gay but that does not have anything to do with my studio."

By keeping his sexual orientation tacit, or as he said, "a little covered," and by emphasizing his professional ethic and entrepreneurial acumen, Percy distanced himself from notions of *loca*.

However, unlike what Ascenio (2011) found among gay Puerto Rican migrants in the United States who distanced themselves from *loca* and effeminacy, it was the connotations of excessive alcoholic consumption from which Percy actively distanced himself. As I have described in previous chapters, while some gay and transgender people embraced the *loca* subject position, and while others found that being seen as *loca* severely limited their rights and ability to formally address discrimination, for Percy, being seen as *loca* was detrimental to his business.

His aversion towards the stereotypes associated with *loca*, however, did not mean that his dance performances were not transgressive. His performances disrupted hegemonic forms of masculinity in the prominent spaces of Tarapoto nightclubs, so distancing himself from *loca* in the way he described himself was not about emphasizing or affirming his own masculinity, as has been observed among Latino migrants in US-based contexts (e.g., Asencio 2011, Ocampo 2012). In the very large venues of Tarapoto nightclubs, such as the Anaconda, Pachanga, and La Mega, Percy staged his salsa and *sexi dance* shows. In fact, by staging same-gender salsa dance shows or by dancing in high heels, Percy understood his performances as the opportunity to express through dance what he could not express through words. In this excerpt from a conversation I had with him, he explained more about what his gender transgressive performance meant for him and the typical venues where he performs:

Justin: I saw your show at *Anaconda* the other night, the one of same-gender salsa dancing.

Percy: You saw it? Did you like it?

Justin: I always like your shows. How did you get the idea for this show?

Percy: Well, you know, I like to question the idea of an *opción*[22], like, it is sometimes not necessary to explain that I am gay, because sometimes in dance, your mouth cannot say it but your body can express it.

Justin: What do you mean?

Percy: What I mean is that sometimes I dance in high heels, or I do a show in heels, which expresses to the public that I am gay, but without needing to say to them, "I am gay," you know?

Justin: I did not know you also did shows at the discos in heels.

Percy: Yes, in La Mega, even in other towns like Tocache and at beauty pageants like Miss Tarapoto. I used to have a weekly show at Anaconda, but now that I am booked at Pachanga, well Pachanga wants exclusivity, only there.

Percy's gigs at the popular nightclubs of Tarapoto generally involved two or three fifteen minute shows on the main stage. He stages his shows with three or four other dancers and often included a male dancer in drag, male dancers in heels, or female dancers and male dancers paired in same-gender couples. During my fieldwork, his shows were popular, and discos throughout the region, as far as Tocache booked him. This excerpt ultimately illustrates two points: First, *loca*, for Percy, was not about transgressing gender norms or challenging gender stereotypes, but rather symbolized what he saw as unprofessional conduct. Second, maintaining his sexuality as tacit knowledge required significant effort. His dance performances, as he explained, expressed what he did not vocalize about his sexuality.

[22] In Tarapoto, people sometimes used the phrase *opción sexual* to mean sexual orientation. Consequently, when they said *opción*, or option, they were using it the way English speakers may mean orientation. This terminology was often critiqued by LGBT rights activists, both in Tarapoto and Lima, because it implied that sexual orientation was optional. I chose not to translate "opción" to option because I do not think that Percy necessarily saw his sexual orientation as optional, but was rather just using the terminology he normally used.

Percy's success on the television program in Argentina further encouraged him to pursue choreography and dance opportunities in Lima in the future, particularly on popular television stations like *Frecuencia Latina* and *América*. He envisioned a future in Lima in the world of televised spectacles, on popular dance shows like *El Gran Show* or *Bailando Por Un Sueño*. To pursue this, and potentially more international experience, he believed that he needed to learn English. One morning, as we were chatting on Facebook, he asked me to come over to his dance studio to see if we could arrange English lessons. I offered to do a couple of sessions so he could practice English in situations he might encounter, like arranging private dance lessons for foreign tourists. I told him I would be happy to help him for free. He responded that learning English was a way to advance his professional career and that, since he wanted more international experience, he needed to learn English. He proposed an intensive packet of English classes and then laid out the details of payment. For S./ 150 (approximately $50), we would do five one-hour lessons. I nodded my head and before I could even say anything, he pulled out S./ 50 from his pocket. This was the initial payment and then, he explained, he would pay the final payment after the classes.

I would have been happy to have conducted a couple of English lessons with Percy for free, however, I realized that such informal agreements and favors did not fit with the professional identity Percy worked tirelessly to achieve. These lessons, like his trip to Argentina, were as much about acquiring technical skills as cultivating his professional identity. During every English lesson that I did with him, he insisted on having his sister or someone around the studio take a picture of us sitting at the table practicing English. He then uploaded these pictures on his studio's Facebook page, annotating them with explanations that he was learning English to be able to learn more about dance abroad and eventually share that knowledge with his

students. Percy was astute and saw me, the foreign anthropologist, as a resource to further advance his career.

Ideas and practices come from and are realized through a circulation that goes beyond the region or the nation, but is also is not mediated by or going through the United States and Europe. In the case of Percy, for example, while he aspires to learn English, his self-realization as a gay dance professional was not dependent on influences or experiences with the Global North. Nor was it a result of the workshops and capacity trainings sponsored by community-based organizations in the region. In his recounting of his experiences in Argentina, as well as my interactions with him and our interviews, Percy saw Argentina as an opportunity for professional growth. The idea of *salir adelante*, or getting ahead, was central to his narrative of self-actualization and professionalization. As Ulla Berg observed about transnational Peruvian migrants in the United States, transnational mobility is "inseparable from long-standing moral and cultural imperatives about class mobility exemplified in expressions such as 'getting ahead' (*salir adelante*) and 'improving oneself' (*superarse*)" (Berg 2015, 36). Percy is also an exception to the sexual migration framework, as his motivation to go to Argentina were not based on a desire to live a more fully actualized gay self. Rather, dominant narratives about getting ahead economically animated his desire to study in Argentina. Ultimately, Argentina figured into Percy's life as a way to mark his acquisition of technical skill and work ethic, which for him translated into a more successful dance studio and dance career back in Peru. While gender privileges certainly influenced his ability to be mobile, his narrative about transiting through Argentina and back to Tarapoto was not about constructing a more fully actualized or cosmopolitan sexual subjectivity. The scale of the global, which inevitably includes the West as a key node, was not part of the actual circuits of mobility available to Percy. A hemispheric

scale, I argue, more appropriately accounts for the circuits of movement and migration central to the gay and transgender people in Tarapoto.

III. The Curse of Salomé: Planning a Transgender Beauty Contest in Tarapoto

Transgender beauty contests have been an important site for queer ethnographic research and analysis. From case studies as diverse as the Philippines, Tonga, Venezuela, Brazil, and the United States, the research has vividly demonstrated that the rituals are socially meaningful in cultures throughout the world (Besnier 2002; Johnson 1996; Manalansan 2003; Noleto 2014; Ochoa 2014). However, just because these contests are perhaps a global phenomenon, that is, the genre is itself globalized, does not mean that spectators and participants always imagine them as such. These beauty contests, as Besnier (2002) observed in the case of Tonga, demonstrate how locality itself can be constituted by the tensions and symbols on display in these contests. Yet, despite the recognition that the local and the global themselves are up for interpretation in queer anthropological scholarship, there are limits in the ways these scales have been conceptualized: the local can never exceed the national, and the global always emanates from or circulates through the West. Through an analysis of the 2014 iteration of the Miss Gay Carnaval beauty contest, this section expands on the theme of the previous section by showing how community and social life for gay and transgender people in Tarapoto was linked to Buenos Aires, Argentina, but even for those who have not even traveled or migrated there. Through this analysis, I argue that a hemispheric scale, that is, a scale that exceeds the reified boundaries of Latin American nations but is not entirely encompassing of the West, complements the existing frameworks in queer anthropology for understanding how globalizing processes shape local gay and transgender communities.

Gay and transgender beauty contests were important social and political events for the gay and transgender communities in Tarapoto. There were several throughout the year, each organized by a different individual: Miss Gay San Juan, Miss Gay Carnaval, and Miss Gay Mitologia were some of the most popular contests and also the three that have been consistently staged in recent years.[23] Each contest was the "signature event" of an enterprising gay and transgender individual from Tarapoto and this person was in charge of recruiting participants, generating excitement, and ultimately receive the financial reward of a successful event. Miss Gay San Juan was typically held in late June, coinciding with the month-long celebration in the Peruvian Amazon for Saint John, the patron saint of the region. Miss Gay Mitologia required contestants to draw from the regional Amazonian mythology for their outfits and performances. And Miss Gay Carnaval typically coincided with the Carnaval celebrations occurring the week before the Lenten season. The reward of organizing a successful contest extended beyond the potential for profit: for those living or working in Buenos Aires, it was the opportunity to show those back home that one has been successful in Argentina. For those in Tarapoto, it was the chance to showcase a talent for organizing and drawing large crowds, which could lead to event planning gigs in the future or even political opportunities. Pablo, the organizer of Miss Gay San Juan, told me in an interview how he was asked by a candidate for mayor of Tarapoto to run on his ticket and be in charge of organizing events and activities during the campaign. And, it was during this campaign in which he first organized Miss Gay San Juan. Consequently, there were economic, social, and political stakes in a successful contest, and this was not just for the participants themselves, but for the organizers as well.

The day of Miss Gay Carnaval had finally arrived, but throughout the day it was raining on and off. This was not unusual in Tarapoto in early March. Given the upper Amazonian

[23] While these contests were called "Miss Gay," the contests were primarily transgender women.

region's climate, it was common for brief, scattered showers throughout the day. However, as the afternoon turned into evening, and it appeared as if it would continue to rain. I made my way to Axel's house to hang out since we planned to go together and he invited two of his other friends to join us. A rained out event was disastrous for a beauty pageant, and particularly a transgender beauty pageant. "The organizers of these pageants do not rent out nightclubs, they hold them in parks or in the street and set up the stage there because they make more that way," Axel explained to the group, when I asked him where exactly this event was going to take place that night.

That year's Miss Gay Carnaval was scheduled to be held in a *loza deportivo,* or large field typically used to play soccer, in the Banda de Shilcayo sector of Tarapoto. Unlike the nightclubs, this space was not covered and, although less costly to use, was consequently riskier given the chances of rain. One of Axel's friends then asked him, "Last year's Miss Gay Carnaval was at the secondary school Ofelia Vasquez, right? Why did they not do it there again." The reason he asked this was because local elementary and secondary schools also have the covered space to put on large events like beauty pageants, soccer tournaments, and, as mentioned in the prior section, dance shows, and are cheaper to rent then nightclubs, but profit for the event was limited to ticket entrances because alcohol could not be sold. Pablo, who organized Miss Gay San Juan for six consecutive years, explained to me in an interview that the nightclubs change owners and sometimes new owners are homophobic or do not honor the tradition. Pablo held Miss Gay San Juan at the La Granja nightclub, but the owner eventually decided to not rent the space for the event, citing the fact that there were so many other events during the San Juan celebrations they did not have the time to host the event. Consequently, in 2014 Pablo held the

event at the Bunker Space disco. However, Bunker Space changed owners and when Pablo approached the new owners for scheduling the following year's event, they declined to book it.

The reason, however, for the change of venue of Miss Gay Carnaval between the two years, as Axel explained, was not because of a change of ownership at the venue, but because Miss Gay Carnaval was now organized by a new person than the year before. Since he could remember, Miss Gay Carnaval had been organized by Salomé, a trans woman from Axel's neighborhood. Several years ago, Salomé moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina, but, even from Argentina, she continued to sponsor the event financially. This past year, however, she found herself in prison in Argentina and was thus unable to be the *madrina*, or godmother, of Miss Gay Carnaval. According to Axel, when someone else took over the organization of the event, Salomé sent a *maldición*, or curse, condemning subsequent iterations of Miss Gay Carnaval to be less successful than hers. As the evening progressed, and the rain did not stop, we found out on Facebook that the organizers decided to postpone the event for a later date. "It was because of Salomé's curse," Axel assured us, to which the three of us nodded and agreed.

IV. Local Tensions in the Context of Global Defunding

Nearly a month later, and well in to March, the re-scheduled Miss Gay Carnaval was finally slated to happen. Throughout the day, like the first time a month prior, it rained. Axel, who was in Lima visiting family at the time, reminded me over a Facebook message that the rain was surely because of Salomé's curse. Because of the constant rain, I spent the day indoors using the wi-fi in the office with Arturo and Felipe, two young, heterosexual men who owned and operated a tourism company. After The Global Fund withdrew its payments to community-based organizations throughout Peru, these organizations were unable to pay the rent for office space.

So while I previously had access to the Diversidad San Martinense office, after The Global Fund's withdraw, I used other types of office space to access wi-fi. With Axel in Lima, and with others participating in the event as stylists or the entourage for different contestants, I decided that I would go alone and, as was always the case in the medium-sized city of Tarapoto, run into people I knew once I arrived. When I told Arturo and Felipe my plans, they stared at me in shock: "Gringo," as I was often affectionately called by many in Peru, "you cannot go to that part of the Banda de Shilcayo alone!" Although they did not want to go that night, Arturo insisted on driving me to the *cancha*, or field, where it was going to take place that night.

Perhaps Anderson would be interested in going with me to the Miss Gay Carnaval Pageant? After all, only a few days earlier, Anderson, Martín, and Bruno had led a workshop for transgender women at the Las Amazonas organization and the three of them committed to helping the transgender women address the issue of police discrimination. Las Amazonas, alongside Diversidad San Martinense, had been selected as the community-based organizations to implement activities for The Global Fund in Tarapoto: Las Amazonas was to work with transgender women and Diversidad San Martinense was to work with gay men. Even though the organization was no longer receiving financial support from The Global Fund, Norma, the leader of Las Amazonas, continued to operate the organization out of her house and organized meetings and workshops for the community of trans women in Tarapoto. She had asked Anderson, Martín, and Bruno to come to a meeting and give a workshop to help transgender women in Tarapoto who, in the past few weeks, had experienced increased nighttime harassment and scrutiny by the municipal police on the Jimenez Pimentel Avenue where they work at night. Norma had asked Anderson, Martín, and Bruno because, as she explained to me, they were LGBT activists with power and should be able to help them: Anderson was a lawyer working with the Defensoria del

Pueblo, the public ombudsman; Martín worked for the Tarapoto municipality organizing social and cultural events; and Bruno was an elected official in the municipality and Tarapoto's first gay Teniente Alcalde, or Deputy Mayor.

During the meeting, however, tensions between the three gay activists and the trans women became apparent. The tensions revolved primarily around the notion of how to properly address the discrimination. Several trans women commented that it was common for the police to cat-call them while they were patrolling, and would either call them *travesti* or with masculine names. Cheryl shared a story of how the police picked her up in their truck and drove her to the nearby town of Juan Guerra, telling her to walk the 15 kilometers back to Tarapoto. Yesenia, who had recently returned from Buenos Aires, Argentina where she had been living and working for a couple of months, commented that this type of harassment from the police did not occur in Argentina. While everyone agreed that the police were discriminating against the trans women, especially because other sex workers were not experiencing the same harassment as the trans women, there was less agreement on the proposed solutions. While Anderson, Martín, and Bruno insisted on the need of cultivating a culture of denouncement, a concept which I analyzed in the previous chapters, Norma believed that the formalized grievances would not actually help the issues on the ground. Norma cited the fact that the grievance would draw more attention to the individual who filed it and it would make it impossible for an individual to practice sex work in Tarapoto. Ultimately, at the end of the meeting, the resolution was that Bruno would begin to address the issue at the level of the municipality and arrange a meeting between several of the Las Amazonas members and the police, and Anderson would be available to provide legal help and draw on the resources available at the Defensoria del Pueblo.

When I called Anderson to meet up with me to go to the Miss Gay Carnaval, I was surprised when he said he did not want to go. We met up at the central plaza of Tarapoto and he explained to me what had happened since the last meeting with Las Amazonas over a couple of beers. Two nights earlier, I received a text message from Norma around 2:00am, asking for Anderson's phone number. Yesenia and a couple of other trans women, who had been at the meeting at Las Amazonas with Anderson, Martín, and Bruno, had experienced harassment that night from the police and wanted it to be addressed. So she called Anderson, and explained that the police kept passing by the street telling her to "walk." While sex work in Peru is legal, loitering at night in Tarapoto was not, so one tactic police use to disburse sex workers is to have them "walk" and leave the street blocks where they tend to congregate. When Yesenia called Anderson asking for assistance, Anderson explained that there was nothing he could do unless she went to the comisaria, or police station, and file a denuncia, or formal grievance. He instructed Yesenia and the group to call him once she arrived to the police station, but they did not actually go, so there was nothing he could do. After a series of calls later in the night, Anderson decided to turn off his phone. So, he explained to me, he did not want to go to the event that night. Yesenia and others would surely be there and he believed they thought he had reneged on the promises he had made at the workshop several days earlier.

As LGBT activists reproduced the "culture of denouncement" discourse in Tarapoto, the effect was increasing tensions among gay and transgender communities. This became evident in the events surrounding the Miss Gay Carnaval beauty pageant. These tensions, as I outlined explicitly in the previous chapter, were the result of a paradox in which, on the one hand, LGBT activists and others involved in the technical aspects of global health and international development projects advocated for empowering LGBT people to file formal discrimination

grievances and address the lack of a culture of denouncement. Yet, on the other hand, when LGBT people tried to follow through with these grievances, there was never an explicit acknowledgement that the time, resources, and legal expertise necessary to follow through meant that only a few exemplary cases could ever be addressed. Consequently, the political strategies related to the collection of formal discrimination grievances that were introduced in Tarapoto as a result of the vectors of globalization (e.g., LGBT activism and HIV/AIDS efforts), generated real social effects among the gay and transgender people in Tarapoto. Anderson, who in his youth competed in trans beauty pageants, was now distanced from the trans population in the region.

However, the tensions that arose as a result of the introduction of global discourse on discrimination and denouncement into the context of Tarapoto were not central to what was happening for the rest of the gay and transgender community in other dimensions of social life. That night, the attention of most everyone else was set on Miss Gay Carnaval: whether it was getting ready to compete, helping a friend who was competing with her hair, makeup, outfits, or choreography, or getting ready just to go out and watch the contest. In fact, I even hung out with Cheryl and Yesenia later that evening, and they did not mention what had happened only a few nights earlier. So, I called up Arturo to take him up on his offer to drive me to Miss Gay Carnaval. As he picked me up, Anderson winked at me. This wink, I believe, was meant to communicate his assumption that Arturo was a *mapero* and that he was taking me as part of our intimate relationship. While this was not the nature of my relationship with Arturo, I was content with Anderson thinking this, and was particularly anticipating those who saw me dropped off at the pageant by Arturo thinking that way as well. Even though I was not in a sexual relationship with Arturo, I found that I was more relatable to informants if they saw me as another *maricón*

who lived the dramas and pleasures of finding *maperos* and gifting them *peches*. However, my efforts at crafting my image were shattered by the rain, as the rain that evening made the road into the Banda de Shilcayo neighborhood impossible to get through by car. Arturo dropped me off as close as he could get and I walked, through the rain and mud, until I showed up at the field were the Miss Gay Carnaval was taking place.

I finally arrived around 11:00pm at night and the field was bustling. There was a long line of about fifty people waiting to get into the walled off zone where the Miss Gay Carnaval was to take place and perhaps three times as many people hanging out outside. Vendors were selling *anticuchos* and other snacks and the music from the local cumbia band was blaring and all of this added to the bustle of the event. Despite all of the commotion and crowd at the entrance, I immediately ran into Walter and Britney. Walter is a young gay man from Tarapoto who works for a local radio station and Britney is a young transgender woman who owns a salon in the Banda de Shilcayo neighborhood. Both are talented volleyball players and I know them primarily from watching or playing volleyball with them. Britney was there to help a friend with her hair and makeup who was competing in the beauty contest, so with Britney's box of cosmetics in tow, the three of us cut the line and walked right through the entrance, saying to the security that the three of us were helping a contestant prepare for the show.

By now, as it was getting closer to midnight, the contest had still not yet started. A local band, Internacional Yurimaguas, was on the stage, playing the Amazonian cumbia music popular in the region. Since it was still raining, most of the crowd was sitting in the covered section, far from the main stage, while the handful of people crowding around the stage were primarily the young gay and transgender people that were cheering on their friends or helping them prepare their outfits in the makeshift green room off to the side. I commented to Britney how I was

surprised there were this many people out this late and in the rain. Britney explained to me that it was to witness the scandal that might happen that night: "These contests always end in scandal," she determined, reminding me of the Miss Gay San Juan the year before that ended with a fight on the stage between contestants immediately as the winner was announced. Britney's comment echoed what Marcia Ochoa observed in her ethnographic research of *transformista* beauty pageants in Venezuela, "scandal is an important part of the beauty pageant form" (2014, 110). Even though participants and audience members appear shocked that some sort of scandal occurred during the contest, Ochoa argues that "the predictability of scandal at beauty pageants suggests that these are not random eruptions" and reveal how the pageants are also about defining and contesting notions of democracy, justice, and fairness (2014, 116). The chance of witnessing first hand a scandalous event, especially one that might go viral on the Internet, was, according to Britney, reason enough for the people of Tarapoto to come out in the rain to watch the event unfold.

After the band played a few more popular songs, the *animadoras*, or hosts, of the event finally came out on stage to start the show. Annabelle Torres, a local celebrity who from time to time appeared in the Lima *farandula* as a *vedette*, was one of the hosts.[24] As soon as she came out on stage, she thanked the *madrinas* of the event, two transgender women from Tarapoto who were currently living in Buenos Aires. Even though they were not present for the event, they were here in spirit, and the audience gave a round of applause for their sponsorship. Then, the three judges for the even were introduced: Miss Trans Peru 2013, Miss Trans Argentina 2013, and Miss Gay San Juan 2011. While Miss Gay San Martín was the only judge from the region, all three had come from Argentina, the host announced, to judge the event. As each judge was introduced, she walked down the runway and upon return to the stage, was asked what advice

[24] See Huerta (2014) for analysis on the history and role of the *vedette* figure in Peru.

she would give to the contestants. Finally, they took their seats at a table facing the runway and the show began. After each contestant was introduced, they were going to return to the stage in three different rounds: a sportswear round, a lingerie round, and, finally, a Brazilian Carnaval round. In the final round, each contestant came out in a traditional Brazilian Carnaval outfit and danced a samba. Here, the organizers and contestants drew from the globalized symbols of Brazilian Carnaval, particularly those that "symbolize a sexual and social regime that unabashedly accepts fluid sexual identity, including male-to-male sexuality" (Green 1999, 3). And although research in Brazil has consistently pointed to how these stereotypes of sexual permissiveness and tolerance do not correspond to the day-to-day realities for many LGBT people in Brazil, the symbols are still circulated both on global and hemispheric scales (Green 1999; Mitchell 2016).

By 3:00am, the samba round was still going, but I had lasted about as long as I possibly could. I was wet from the rain, cold, and tired and decided that it was time for me to make my way home. Although Britney and Walter encouraged me to stay so that I could see who would be crowned the winner, I convinced them that I was afraid of catching a cold and was able to slip away from the group. Several days later, when Axel asked me about how the event was, I showed him some of the pictures and videos that I had taken. Unimpressed by the choreography in the videos and the way the rain ruined the outfits, he reminded me that it was all because of Salomé's curse.

In my analysis of Miss Gay Carnaval, I gesture towards the analytical possibilities enabled by a hemispheric framework. The organizers and the participants looked towards Argentina and Brazil, not the United States and Europe, for both making the event economically possible and for symbolically inflecting their performances. The tensions between Anderson,

Cheryl, and Yesenia were certainly, in part, a result of the globalizing influences I have discussed in previous chapters. The tensions engendered by the "culture of denouncement" discourse were, again, a consequence of the introduction of rights-based HIV/AIDS interventions and LGBT activism in the region. However, that is just one aspect of the event, and not even a central one. This example, I argue, requires analytical attention not just at the scale of the local and the global, but at the hemispheric scale. The transgender women from Tarapoto but living in Argentina at the time of the event were central protagonists and their actions influenced how those in Tarapoto understood and evaluated the event's success or failure. Salomé, although located outside of Peru, was, for Axel and others, directly responsible for the rain that ultimately set the tone for the event. Salomé's curse ultimately shows how the contours of gay and transgender social life were shaped not just by globalizing forces, but constituted by gay and transgender people themselves at a hemispheric scale.

V. Tracing a Queer Hemispheric Imaginary Through Percy's Dance and Salomé's Curse

In this chapter, I offered ethnpgraphic cases that, for the gay and transgender people I was studying in Tarapoto, required an understanding of their community as extending to and encompassing of Buenos Aires, Argentina. In accounting for how gay and transgender individuals made curses and dance courses meaningful and interpreted them in their everyday lives, I addressed debates in queer anthropological research. First, I outlined the ethnographic and analytical consequences of imaging a local community through broad, but not global, connections and flows. Second, I brought a new interpretation to previous analyses of male same-sex sexuality in Latin America. The activo/pasivo framework (Carrier 1995; Lancaster 1987) was also, in a way, a hemispheric formulation. Based primarily on fieldwork in urban

Mesoamerican cities, it was the typology itself that was imagined to be modular and explanatory of Latin America more broadly. I consider this relationship between Peru and Argentina as hemispheric not because it encompasses the entire hemisphere, but because it can be a springboard to understand other relationships throughout the hemisphere without analytically privileging some contexts over others. This, a queer hemispheric imaginary responds ethnographically to the circulations and connections that emerged in the context of the global defunding of LGBT rights and HIV/AIDS initiatives.

The narrative of LGBT identities in non-Western contexts as configured through channels of globalizing vectors, primarily LGBT activism and HIV/AIDS interventions, as well as the queer critiques of this narrative that these vectors were always already colonial and imperial, misses a significant aspect of how gay and transgender people imagined the extent of their community and the contours of their social life. For Anderson and Bruno, it was precisely in the moment of the withdrawal of The Global Fund's HIV/AIDs initiatives in Peru, in the impending termination of other LGBT rights development projects, in which their attention shifted away from the sites of the global and towards Argentina. I follow Anderson and Bruno in my analysis, positing that while the global forces of HIV/AIDS interventions and LGBT rights activism profoundly shaped the lives of gay and transgender people in Tarapoto, when these global structures began to dismantle, I was able to observe other connections and relationships that had always been there, but that were obfuscated or overshadowed by that which was global.

The proposal for a queer hemispheric ethnography extends queer anthropological debates on the relationship between globalization, LGBT identities, and the scales through which anthropologists have examined these relationships. My intervention is not meant to enumerate a need for another scale nor do I argue that a hemispheric imaginary, when added to the local, the

global, and the national, gets ethnographic description closer and closer to a true reality (Boellstorff 2007). Rather, my proposal elaborates a way to envision gay and transgender lives and communities outside of the West that recognizes the transnational circulation of people, symbols, and capital, but does not analytically privilege the consequences of circuits that transit towards or through the United States and Western Europe.

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