



WOUNDS IN UTOPIA: The Politics of Gay Football in 4T Mexico

MAX D. LÓPEZ TOLEDANO
National University of Singapore

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-1843-8972>

When Josué shared the reasons why he left Kraken Deportivo, an LGBT+ football team in Mexico City, I could not help but feel disheartened.¹ After all, he described his time at Kraken as a form of “militancy, activism, and a political act of taking space.” When he joined the team four years earlier, he had never played football (soccer) before in his life but felt attracted to the project because he perceived it as a form of “political resignification” that disrupted what he called a “biological divorce” between the sport and his life as an openly gay man. While in the team, the fact that he could inhabit his sexual identity on a football field despite being “neither masculine nor talented,” as he described himself, had proved a transformative process. He became more comfortable with himself, and what “being gay” meant to him also changed. Wearing Kraken’s sky-blue jersey—even when he only came onto the field as a substitute for the final ten minutes of a game—became an act of using his identity in service of a collective purpose. Playing for Kraken became a means through which he felt respected while openly being who he is, and it was ultimately during a game with the team that his family showed up to support him in his queer journey for the first time. As I interviewed him, he proudly recounted the occasion of finally introducing his boyfriend to his parents after they had attended a game that had seen both of them on the field.

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY, Vol. 41, Issue 2, pp. 321–346, ISSN 0886-7356, online ISSN 1548-1360. *Cultural Anthropology* is the journal of the Society of Cultural Anthropology, a section of the American Anthropological Association. *Cultural Anthropology* journal content published since 2014 is freely available to download, save, reproduce, and transmit for noncommercial, scholarly, and educational purposes under the Creative Commons BY-NC 4.0 license. Reproduction and transmission of journal content for the above purposes should credit the author and original source. DOI: 10.14506/ca41.2.06



Figure 1. Kraken Deportivo (blue) playing against Toronto United (red) at the Guadalajara Gay Games in November 2023. Photo courtesy by the Federation of the Gay Games.

Clearly, Kraken meant a lot to him. But something still felt deeply incompatible. Not long before June 2021, when I joined Kraken Deportivo, the team had firmed up an alliance with the municipal government of Alcaldía Benito Juárez in Mexico City. In exchange for free access to training facilities, the team was expected to lend its image in support of the municipal government, led at the time by Santiago Taboada. For Josué, this presented a problem. He was a fierce believer in the political party *Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional* (MORENA), which in 2018 became the first “left-wing” and “progressive” party to be elected in Mexico’s democratic history. The party’s founder, Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO), was elected president of the country with an overwhelming majority vote of 53 percent, more than 30 percent more than the first runner-up and accumulating more votes than any other presidential candidate in Mexican history. AMLO’s political platform was rather simple. Voting MORENA would unleash Mexico’s “fourth transformation,”² following (1) national independence in 1821, (2) the secularization of the country in 1857, and (3) the post-revolution era, beginning in 1910. For a large sector of the Mexican population, wounded by widespread poverty, exacerbating inequality, and more than a decade of an ecology of violence resulting from the 2006 War on Drugs, the promise of change proved profoundly seductive. Josué, among millions of others, saw in MORENA’s 4T movement a rare opportunity to re-imagine what Mexico could be. For the first time in decades, they found hope for change.

Taboada, however, is not affiliated with MORENA. He represented the *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN), a political party reputed to be the most (religiously)

conservative and right-wing conglomerate in Mexico's electoral scene. Josué simply could not reconcile his political beliefs with Kraken's newfound alignment. Among other reasons that caused him discontent with the team, this was the tipping point: "I cannot live my identity while associating with parties that historically and consistently have launched attacks against it," he explained. By the second half of 2021, he had stopped attending games and training sessions. Shortly after, he left the team's group chat, and only those who actively sought to reach out maintained any form of communication with him.

Despite a growing, latent sense of political dissonance, Kraken's relationship with PAN continued to unfold. In December 2022 and in October 2023, the team was asked to attend political rallies organized by Taboada, who was preparing his candidacy for the 2024 elections, where he would seek to become city governor. When the campaign event was held in 2023, Neri Acosta, the founder and president of Kraken Deportivo, announced the event to the team, indicating mandatory attendance. This entailed potential repercussions for the playing time of those who chose not to go, since attendance at mandatory events (such as training sessions and occasional off-field activities) was one of the main criteria our coach used to decide who received how many minutes on the playing field. Pre-empting possible concerns, our captain framed the team's participation as a "non-partisan" act, merely meant to "represent LGBTQ+ sports" in the public sphere. Regardless, as expected, pictures of team members cheerfully posing with PAN paraphernalia circulated on the team's social media for the following days.

Not everyone was happy. Josué was not the only player who supported MORENA and the 4T movement, discursively constructed in opposition to PAN and the "old regime." "The good thing is that we were not supposed to go and support a political party," a team member sarcastically commented. Others defended their association with PAN, arguing that the party supported the team and thus deserved to be embraced in reciprocity. While rebuttals bounced back and forth for a few minutes, the debate dissipated quickly as soon as a team member reminded others that they could join a different team if they wanted to be associated with MORENA instead. The conversation ended there, letting unresolved feelings linger as the idea of being associated with a political party—no matter which one—felt inevitable, the implications of which no one dared unpack.

Importantly, Kraken Deportivo is only one of about twenty to thirty LGBTQ+ football teams in Mexico City (with that estimate reaching more than fifty nationwide), many of which are also associated with political parties. Kraken's political orientation was far from an isolated case, but rather one of many proliferating entanglements between LGBTQ+ football teams and political parties

in Mexico, encompassing MORENA, PAN, or even the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).³ In 2022, for example, there was an initial (though short-lived) attempt to create a city-wide LGBT+ football league, wherein each of Mexico City's sixteen municipal governments would be represented by a queer team competing against the rest. Mexico's queer football scene had clearly drawn interest from actors all across the political spectrum, transcending long-established ideological divides on what acceptable forms of gender and sexuality ought to be. How had Kraken, alongside other LGBT+ football teams, embarked on this political turn? What emergent political formations were finding expression at the nexus of gay football teams in Mexico City and historically conservative political parties? How did celebratory narratives of Kraken coexist with this side of the team?

WOUNDS IN UTOPIA

Despite its apparent political contradictions, it seemed that, from early on, team members attributed utopian traits to their life in Kraken. Some considered joining the most "socially significant" thing they had ever done, making claims such as "I can die feeling that I have done something interesting with my life" or "I learned how to love myself while in the team," common sentiments expressed across the interviews I conducted. Most referred to the team as a "family," evoking ideals typically found in queer narratives of kinship beyond consanguine bonds. Likewise, a majority mentioned feeling "at home" in Kraken, as attending training sessions and games became for many a "necessary" part of their life, framing the team as a place where they got to feel "more like themselves."

For myself, "healing" constituted an important part of these explorations. As a transfeminine football player, I grew up navigating Mexico's "men's" football scene at both amateur and semi-professional levels, which always elicited an endless sense of struggle and contradiction. Normalized aggression, compulsory (cis)heterosexuality, and an overall "pedagogy of violence," as [Rodrigo Castillo Aguilar \(2023\)](#) describes the culture giving shape to Mexico's (men's) football scene, were entrenched norms of the environment I grew up in, where I learned to love the sport despite my marginal place in it. I grew up negotiating insults regarding my alleged homosexuality, for example, redirecting them to claim an ambiguous form of femininity instead.

After my first day with Kraken, however, it felt as if everything had changed. I witnessed dynamics within the team that I previously thought forbidden if not impossible on a football field. I still remember the state of enchantment I fell into during my first session in June 2021. When training started, our coach brought his boyfriend onto the field and gently kissed him as he sent the



Figures 2 and 3. Romance often flourishes in Kraken. In this case, team captain and his boyfriend celebrate Kraken's second-ever trophy at Mexico City's Transgender Day of Visibility Tournament in April 2023. Photo courtesies by Kraken Deportivo.

team off to run some laps. Players joked about how our stretches prepared us for anal sex for the whole duration of our warmups (or I thought they were joking, at the very least). Some had even invited me to paint my nails with them just before the session. And, to my surprise, people occasionally referred to me in feminine language without seeking to insult, degrade, or humiliate, even before I disclosed my transgender identity. The socio-spatial logics of the field, as I had known them up to that point, all dissipated within the first ten minutes.

Indeed, Kraken felt like what [José Esteban Muñoz \(2009\)](#) describes as “queer utopia”: “The rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world.” In this case, another world was based on an attempt to break away from dominant gender norms in sport to create new ways of inhabiting the nation, establishing queer relationality, and navigating the football world. It felt liberating, but I was also confused: a genderfluid full-back scolded me in our very first interaction. I had attempted to shake his hand when introducing myself to him, which he assertively rejected. “I am not straight, *amiga*,” he said, indicating he wanted to be greeted with a kiss on the cheek instead. I had plenty to learn and catch up with.

Yet my perception of this supposed utopia quickly changed. Within a month of joining the team, I realized that disrupting the heteronormative foundations of Mexican football did not foreclose the possibility of reproducing gendered violence. I felt uneasy with the ways team members continuously rewarded what I perceived to be the same dominant, patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic ideologies that inform the hegemonic and exclusionary Mexican culture at whose margins we had grown up. As much as I continued to develop deep bonds with my teammates, my first months with Kraken consisted of a constant struggle attempting to make sense of the way our training methods relied on humiliation and physical punishment, or how a significant volume of our conversations

employed rape, racism, and misogyny as laughing points. I remember very clearly the whole team laughing while stretching prior to a training session when a defender claimed the nickname “Coco” for himself (referring to a monster in Mexican folk mythology) because he had allegedly sexually assaulted his neighbor. I also recall a team member telling another that he “would never have sex with him because he is *prieto* [dark-skinned].”⁴ Utopia had stains.

From early on, it became clear that “healing” and breaking away from a heteronormative national culture constituted only a fragment of what was going on with the team. I struggled to understand how the team could transgress gender norms from the football world so easily yet still reproduce some of its most violent aspects. And certainly, Kraken was not the only team enacting these patterns; they could also be found in other LGBT+ teams. In fact, an enduring internal perception in Kraken is that the team has one of the “least toxic” environments among LGBT+ teams in the city, a narrative that has attracted multiple players after they found themselves disenchanted with other queer teams. How could these groups be simultaneously sites of healing and violence? Was there a connection between the reproduction of violence in LGBT+ football teams and their recent political turn? In the broader context of Mexico and its gender politics, what do Kraken and other LGBT+ football teams represent?

I explore these questions based on ten months of participant observation conducted with Kraken Deportivo between 2021 and 2023, as well as on seventeen interviews with team members, some of whom had left the team or were exploring this decision. All interviews were conducted with cisgender gay or bisexual men, as they constitute a majority in the team, with the exception of some cisgender straight men, whose presence and influence in the team remains perennially controversial.

This journey involved documenting the team’s preparations to compete in the eleventh Gay Games, held simultaneously in Hong Kong and Guadalajara, Mexico, in November 2023.⁵ For Kraken, it marked the team’s first time participating in an international competition since its foundation in 2019. To prepare, we had to understand who we are as people and as football players, learning from each other and attempting to put our differences aside to build understanding, chemistry, solidarity, and synergy on and off the football field. This also involved weekly training sessions and competitive games in a “heterosexual” league, with occasional off-field events facilitating bonding (and sometimes conflict) with each other. For example, we attended Mexico City’s 2022 Pride Parade together, went to dancing clubs, celebrated some of our birthdays, watched football games, and so on. Periodically, we also competed in dedicated local LGBT+ tournaments, requiring at times travel outside of Mexico City.

Methodologically, I concentrate ethnographic attention on contradictions (Berliner et al. 2016) to advance the relationship between a queer political anthropology and the study of utopia (Weiss 2016). I do this by placing a conceptual emphasis on what I refer to as “wounds in utopia.” By this, I do not allude exclusively to the wounds that result from longing for that which is *yet to exist*, a classic approach to utopia (Muñoz 2009) and an experience bound to disappoint in rather cruel ways (Berlant 2011). Neither do I solely refer to the co-constitutive relationship of utopia and dystopia, where the utopia of some implies the dystopia of others (Gordin, Tilley, and Prakash 2010). Instead, what the concept of wounds in utopia highlights is what happens when utopias indeed “successfully” come to be yet wounds prevail; when the dreamed possibility of another world stops being a possibility to become a reality—as embodied feeling, narrative, project, and experience—but violence tags along.

My proposition, then, is that we ought to move beyond an analytical approach that casts utopia as unattainable (Brown 2021), absolute (Abensour 2012), diametrically opposed to the status quo (Foucault 1984), and as contradictory to the possibility of wounds and violence. Utopia is here, though it is much messier, and much more wounding, than what those views make it out to be. It needs wounds to heal, but we may also wound in it. It is by itself fragmented and may not wholly account for the needs of its members, a realization that can by itself make for a wounding experience. Yet neither of these conditions make utopia cease to be what it is, nor do they necessarily make it “an obstacle to our flourishing” (Berlant 2011, 1). In its dialogue with the context in which it exists, in the transformations it allows members to experience and carry over, and in the unique storylines it enables, utopia prevails. Wounds and utopia may be co-constitutive but, at a deeply embodied level, utopia goes further than this. It is, in a way, past the contradictions.

Inevitably, this view is shaped by my own relationship with the team and its members. Perhaps the most defining characteristic of this relationship is the fact that I was, at the time, the only transgender person on the team, which made me, to a degree, an outsider to an environment defined by an attachment to (homosexual) masculine norms. Considering that I had not undergone any form of medical transition at the time (and was often subject to the de-feminizing powers of sweaty and smelly football clothes), my experience as a non-binary trans woman was often, and somewhat understandably, erased by my teammates, especially during my first months in Kraken. Belonging to and fighting for the team thus pushed me outside of my comfort zone, often finding myself in need of carving out space for transness in an environment where I had initially hoped and imagined I would simply not need to.

Nonetheless, for my teammates and me, being respected and celebrated for our football still proved a deeply transformative, utopian process through which we found shelter from the hostile and exclusionary norms of Mexican football, presented with an opportunity to re-write personal and cultural histories. Yet this still came with expectations for a particular kind of masculinist gender performance, showcasing the dialectics of “play” that [Margot Weiss \(2011\)](#) articulates: “Play and performance not only display—often spectacularly—social relations, they also set these relations into motion, creating circuits between social norms and social power.” Namely, in the way that playing football allowed gay men to bypass potentially “discrediting” aspects of their gay identity, symbolic negotiations of power pertaining to the broader gendered transformations that Mexico underwent in the early days of its 4T period were revealed. The football field became at once a stage for rupture from old forms of nationalist power; for utopia to come to be; for wounds to deepen; and for new political formations to gain their shape.

I became in some ways an unwilling recipient of the benefits that the relationship between football and nationalism enabled. Playing football with gay men allowed me to “pass” as masculine enough to be respectable, which in turn made me feel that I could belong in the nation for the first time since I encountered my queerness, albeit at the cost of adequately representing myself. This tension lies at the heart of the reconciliatory process that this research involved, a tension that has long felt like navigating wounds in utopia.

“1-4-3-3”: QUEERNESS IN THE FOOTBALL NATION

That football mediates belonging in the nation at an intimate level is no news to anthropologists of Mexican football ([Fábregas Puig 2001](#); [Magazine 2008](#); [Magazine, Martínez López, and Varela Hernández 2012](#)). Mexico’s national football team is culturally deployed as a vessel that actively fashions the country’s modern national identity, exemplified by popular myths frequently mobilized to claim that football fosters social cohesion like nothing else.⁶ When Mexico plays in World Cups, for example, it is common for schools and universities to stop their activities and find ways to show the game. Massive screens are set up in public venues, thousands of people gather, and anyone can wear a green shirt—the “traditional costume” when the national team plays—and bond with the stranger beside them, facing little to no need to reconcile social distinctions. Millions participate, making Mexico a *nación futbol*, a football nation.

Nevertheless, as much as football connects people from different backgrounds, it is also inscribed with its own set of gatekeeping forces. To an exclusionary effect, football in Mexico is typically conceived almost entirely as a

masculine space and a site where men are expected to “become men,” a purpose inscribed in football since it was first exported by the British Empire (Dimeo 2002). It often proves unwelcoming, if not outright hostile, to those who wish to participate without engaging in competitive and heterosexual masculinity. Few things reflect this like the way Mexican football fans have come under international scrutiny for more than a decade because of a homophobic slur enthusiastically chanted in stadiums, an activity defended by fans as a “national tradition.”

As a result, from an early age, femmes, broadly speaking, learn that football is not a place where they belong. If they insist, they may need to assimilate into the displays of masculinity that shape the place, a conflict that some of my interlocutors and I have struggled with considerably throughout our lives. We enjoy football, but to care for ourselves, we have had to stop playing at different times. The exposure to violent masculinity has proven too overwhelming, and football’s benefits can easily be outweighed by feelings of performance or living an “incomplete double life,” as some of my teammates reflected. Football excludes, and it has the potential to inflict lasting wounds on those it keeps outside.

The sport is thus complicit in reproducing the exclusionary form of nationalism that Norman Monroy Cuéllar (2022) has referred to as *heteromestizaje*, building on Mónica Moreno Figueroa’s (2010) critique of Mexico’s racial ideology throughout the post-revolution period, *mestizaje*. At its core, *mestizaje* proposes an imagined sense of unity and sameness among members of the nation by effacing, rather than affirming, racial differences. The mestizo nation is “raceless” in that sense, or “cosmic,” as framed in an appeal to the universal by the cultural revolutionary José Vasconcelos (1948). However, not everyone is willing to or capable of effacing their racial markers, making Mexico’s racelessness broadly translate to whiteness, with those who do not fit this frame typically excluded from any aspirational view of the nation.

When applying a queer perspective, the analytical outcome proves much the same: belonging to the Mexican nation and building relationships with its members are imagined by default as (cis)heterosexual acts, with those who do not fit the heteromestizo ideal expected to assimilate and hide their differences. Constructions of the ideal footballer in Mexico as (cis)heterosexual, white-adjacent, able-bodied, and possessing virile masculinities account for this, articulating a heteromestizo and masculine nation that systematically excludes queers and femmes even while uniting people across other social differences. So, I ask, if football, (cis)heterosexuality, and dominant forms of belonging in Mexican nationalism are so deeply entangled, why would conservative political parties that have historically stood against queer people seek to build alliances with LGBT+ football teams?



Figure 4. Kraken Deportivo's goalkeeper (yellow) intercepts an attack by Toronto United (red) at the Guadalajara Gay Games in November 2023.
Photo courtesy by the Federation of the Gay Games.

This apparent paradox is best solved by understanding what happens when gay men join queer football teams. Like most people in Mexico, the players I interviewed went through feelings of surprise when they first heard about the country's queer football scene, a memory also imbued with skepticism and a sense of contradiction: "I thought it would be like playing with princesses," shared a teammate when reflecting on his beginnings in gay football, only to learn that "they can be tough to play against too." However, those initial assumptions tend to fade quickly for LGBT+ football teams in Mexico untether heteronormative masculinity from the culture surrounding the sport, creating openings to inscribe new gendered meanings and to generate currencies of national belonging. The team members I interviewed repeatedly described this experience through a specific affective form: "feeling respected."

Despite its political limitations—for it requires "paying respect to the normative order of things"—respectability has constituted an important aspect of queer studies and narratives in past decades (Dave 2012; Drucker 2015). After all, respect can hardly be taken for granted by people who deviate from established norms, and gaining access to it after periods of absence can have deeply transformative effects on a person's psyche. This was poignantly narrativized by a bisexual goalkeeper who plays for Kraken. When I interviewed him, he recounted how he used to struggle navigating his sexuality in multiple social spaces. He described his family as "old school" and shared how, growing up, he

was not allowed to do anything coded as feminine, even if only slightly so. For example, he had always liked cooking, but his dad did not let him do it as it fell outside the scope of respectable masculinity. Coming out to his family was not easy. In his workplace, a financial institution he asked me not to name, he rarely gets to fully express who he is either. He shared that when people at his work learned that he was not straight, he felt “rejected and excluded.” He could no longer sit with his colleagues, and one of his supervisors explicitly told him that “*jotos* are not accepted in the workplace.”⁷

Thus, as his sexuality has often been met with stigma and rejection beyond the field, Kraken has become a pillar of his life and an outlet for expressions of who he is. Being a part of the team has helped him transform contexts in which he previously struggled. By associating it with football, he now finds it easier to talk to his family about all things related to his sexuality, and some of his coworkers now show support by liking the social media posts he shares about the team. Kraken is a place where he feels respected and can “exist without fear,” and who he is in the team transfers to other parts of his life. A majority of team members I interviewed shared similar accounts, with family reconciliation emerging as a recurrent theme.

Furthermore, gay football players earn respect in Mexico not just by virtue of playing football. As I learned during my interview with Allan Domínguez, Kraken Deportivo’s coach, respectability under a national gaze is continuously mediated at a tactical level as well. It takes place as Kraken attempts to play “good,” “cultured,” and “sophisticated” football, possibly even at the expense of winning games. The football style that Allan seeks to implement at Kraken follows the principles of the Lavolpista tactical school, which prioritizes a possession-based style of play and passing the ball all the way from the defense, which Kraken typically does employing a “1-4-3-3” formation. Allan insists on calling this formation “1-4-3-3” instead of using the more conventional “4-3-3” nomenclature, as he expects the goalkeeper to be actively involved in the buildup game, a growing trend in world football known as “modern goalkeeping.” By highlighting the “1” in the formation (signifying the goalkeeper), he demonstrates tactical savvy and performs being up-to-date with contemporary football trends.

However, this tactical approach involves risk, and Kraken has conceded countless goals because of miscalculated passes when attempting to play “out from the back.” But for Allan, teaching the team “the right way” often proves more valuable than winning games, especially when done outside of major competitions. He has previously called this tactical style “real football,” contrasting it with “less civilized” tactical systems based on playing long passes, running in

behind, and hoping for an opponent's mistake. In the realm of Mexican football, there is a widespread understanding that the latter system (*pelotazo*) is inferior to possession-based styles, a belief inculcated in Allan during his professional training as a football coach. Losing against a team that plays *al pelotazo* can prove a source of embarrassment for any team, gay or not. Kraken's cultured playing style, hence, is one of its major sources of pride, and it has received praise from tournament organizers, fans, and opponents alike.

Together, these vignettes stand as samples of the perceived transformations that Mexico's LGBT+ football scene unleashes in the lives of its participants. Football, a currency of respect and national belonging, provides a filter through which queer individuals can present parts of who they are to the world (and to themselves), parts they previously believed unwelcome. This, I contend, lies at the heart of political parties' involvement in Mexico's queer football scene, showcasing the socio-political transformations that occurred in the early days of Mexico's 4T era. It would seem as if the embrace of queerness has become a form of political currency in "homo-nationalist" times (Puar 2007), even while trans- and homophobia remain lethally entrenched in most parts of the country.

Nonetheless, state-sanctioned expressions of queerness are undergoing rapid development, indicators of which include the implementation of mandatory quotas for LGBT representation in Congress in 2024; the issuing of the first-ever non-binary passports and birth certificates for Mexican nationals in 2023; the legalization of same-sex marriage in all thirty-two states of the country in 2022; political parties sending blocks to Pride events in traditionally conservative cities like Monterrey; and the endorsement by national and regional governments of mass-participation LGBT+ events such as the Gay Games. For more conservative parties (PRI/PAN), supporting a football team that will occasionally wave a rainbow flag from the sidelines may feel like the more respectable option, but trading in this moral economy has apparently become inevitable for any political actor seeking to stay relevant in the early 4T days.

What changed, and can we confidently attribute it to the 4T movement? For the newly enabled forms of queer respectability, what is the price to pay? And, more broadly, is Mexico becoming a queer utopia?

HIERARCHIES IN FLUX

On the Saturday afternoon of July 15, 2023, I had the opportunity to play in one of the most memorable games Kraken Deportivo has had in years. After going down 2-0 in the first ten minutes of the game against the first place in the league, we scrambled but managed to reorganize and reduce the difference to

just one goal before halftime. During the interval, our coach scolded the team, and the substitutes were similarly frustrated with the discombobulated passage of play that those of us who were on the field had struggled to put together. But when the second half started, everything changed. Minutes into it, after a cross flew over to the back post on the left flank, I managed to find the loose ball and hit a left-footed half-volley across the goal to level the score. Drawing 2-2 after being 2-0 down and with more than thirty minutes to go, we felt unstoppable. A few minutes later, one of our attacking midfielders launched a quick counter-attack dribbling through the right side and sent a long ball to our striker shortly after crossing midfield. After a phenomenal jump that felt as if the player had spent minutes suspended in the air, our striker managed to redirect the ball in the opposite direction of the opponent's goalkeeper. The score became 3-2 and, with some challenges, the team managed to hold on to the lead. Kraken won, leaving behind any remaining feelings of the "intrinsic inferiority" that some team members reported experiencing before they joined the team. On a good day, Kraken could compete and win against anyone, including technically skilled, well-rehearsed heterosexual teams.

Yet what happened before the game proved more influential to my understanding of the politics underpinning the proliferation of Mexico's LGBT+ sports scene than Kraken's memorable win. That morning, I had attended Mexico City's alleged first "Non-Binary People's March" near the city center. About a hundred people gathered between 10 and 11 a.m. to commemorate the occasion



Figure 5. Kraken Deportivo (light blue) scoring a goal at the Guadalajara Gay Games in November 2023. Photo courtesy of the Federation of the Gay Games.

at El Ángel, Mexico City's default site for political gatherings. However, as the march organizers completed their prepared speeches, a person emerged from the crowd calling on all attendees to abandon the official route and follow them in an alternate direction. Quickly, some people joined, revealing this to be a pre-planned intervention. They were members of the Anti-Fascist Non-Binary Front (Frente Antifascista No Binarix), and they were protesting the event through a relatively simple claim. The originally planned march, they argued, had been co-opted by political parties, evidenced by the presence of the city government's logo on the event poster that had circulated during the week. Participating in the official route, then, would constitute an endorsement of a necropolitical mode of governance deployed indiscriminately by actors on all ends of the electoral politics spectrum:

We must fight the acute tie between the state-capitalism system, materialized, for example, in the politics of the social cleansing of Sandra Cuevas,⁸ who is taking the city away from us and gifting it to cis-hetero-whiteness and private capital, and who is deploying the police against homeless people, informal workers, and sex workers! We must also fight América Rangel and her proposed law to criminalize transgender existence and dissolve institutions fighting discrimination!⁹ These are racist, transphobic, serophobic, and xenophobic politics that marginalize us from the city and impede our education, work, and health! And equally fascist is (Marcelo) Ebrard's proposed security politics,¹⁰ as much as Sheinbaum's urban planning,¹¹ which neighborhoods and communities have stood up against! These are all politics of extraction, marginalization, criminalization, and death. And you may ask, what can a small organization like ours achieve against this? Our answer is that we are not alone. We stand together with other organizations and causes, and we believe in mutual aid and consensus over competition and obedience.¹²

The crowd was visibly divided, as many felt torn by the sudden choice they had to make. After a minute or so, about thirty people abandoned the official event and joined the anti-fascist block, which moved South toward La Tianguis Disidente, a well-known informal marketplace and community hub for transgender people and sex workers. As they marched, the group fended off isolated members of the police and moved along to the following chants: "They want your votes, not your rights!"¹³ and "Neither master, nor state, nor assigned gender at

birth!”¹⁴ Controversially, the group passed in front of a popular LGBT+ club, where some demonstrators used spray paint to graffiti its facade on account of the establishment supposedly recurrently exploiting the transgender and/or non-binary people who work there. This earned the block public criticism: “Wow, a non-binary march vandalizing a place where non-binary and transgender people work, people who I consider family,” commented a queer person on social media. When the anti-fascist block reached La Tianguis, the counter-political leaders re-read the speech they had delivered. Once again, besides the few people in attendance, the group did not gain much public sympathy: “Envy and delinquency,” read the only comment on a social media post by a news outlet covering the event.

The contrasting expressions of queerness and the political fissures exhibited that day, I argue, offer a crucial window into understanding the core of Mexico’s 4T, as well as the role of queer populations within it. Throughout its first presidential term, the 4T movement instigated an assertive re-organization of discursive social hierarchies, one not entirely aligned with the “traditional” boundaries demarcating the respectable modern Mexican subject in the post-revolution era (read the heteromestizo subject). The proliferation of purportedly respectable queers, a phenomenon epitomized on and off the field by Kraken’s 3-2 comeback, constitutes a flagship expression of this. But as new social roles and cultural choreographies develop, internal fractures have surfaced among communities that previously found unity in their shared marginalization, as demonstrated by the unforgiving divisions between “respectable” non-binary demonstrators and the “politicized” front that broke away from the government-sanctioned event. The question of violence in environments like Kraken becomes easier to account for too. With hierarchies in flux, the line between the respectable and excluded subjects of the nation is tenuous at best, making discursive violence the means through which distinctions are enacted by those who emphatically seek to prove their worthiness as they cast for newly respectable roles.

As a result, the 4T movement has nurtured a climate of fluidity and indeterminacy surrounding socio-political and gendered norms, blurring the traditional ideological domains that previously mapped the relationships between political parties and LGBT+ groups. It has resulted in an ideological potpourri where, on the one hand, we find parties from all parts of the political spectrum supporting queer football teams, betraying in many cases their historical set of values. On the other hand, we ought to make sense of queer groups who, in good anarchist fashion, reject the same parties, no matter how transformative their promises claim to be, even at the expense of alienating people who arguably share in the

same identity-based struggles they do. The relationships of partisan representation that have anchored Mexican politics for more than a century have seemingly come to an end, or have at the very least morphed into a bastard iteration. Thus I am most concerned with the question: Who is the 4T actually for? In the 4T era, who represents what, whom, how, and to what end?

We can trace a possible clue to November 2022, as AMLO began his preparations for the 2024 presidential elections, when his successor would be elected. Addressing the nation from El Zócalo, Mexico City's main square, AMLO was clear on his desired political legacy:

I propose calling the model of governance we have been deploying Mexican humanism, because no human issue will ever be removed from our concerns. . . . Our thesis is that economic growth is not enough, and that justice is the most important. . . . The ultimate end of the state is to create the conditions through which people may live free from misery and fear, while exiling privilege and corruption to give everything back to the people, specifically, the poorest and most marginalized.¹⁵

From that moment on, Mexican humanism would outlive him as the political philosophy of the 4T. What exactly this meant, however, was not as clear. AMLO's vague definition of Mexican humanism as an optimistic outlook on social justice left most of the conceptual work to future commentators, many of whom have yet to decipher with precision what the concept will tangibly imply (Cárdenas Gracia et al. 2024). Paradoxically, it is precisely because of this orientation toward justice that many grassroots queer, feminist, environmentalist, disability justice, and leftist groups feel disappointed, for policies apparently at odds with this philosophy became defining characteristics of AMLO's time as president, earning him comparisons with political figures like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (Agren 2020). These policies include an ethos of austerity toward the public health system that left many (poor, disabled, and chronically ill people foremost) in vulnerable positions, or the rather perplexing creation and widespread deployment of the National Guard—a subsidiary of the Mexican army—despite endless grievances during his regime about his further militarizing an already conflict-scarred nation. Such dissatisfactions are similarly exemplified by recurrent feminist protests over the lack of accountability in cases of femicide or, for instance, by the nation-wide protests that erupted when the suspected murder of the non-binary magistrate Ociel Baena in 2023 was quickly dismissed as a romantic dispute.

Paul Amar's (2013) conceptual work on human security may prove a fitting frame for such contradictions, providing insights into who the subject of the 4T may be. This use of human security attends to the way "military interventions [are] structured by a grammar of humanitarian protection or securitized humanization" that relies on a method that "protects, rescues, and secures certain idealized forms of humanity identified with a particular family of sexuality, morality, and class subjects" (Amar 2013, 5). Cultural rescue and redemption form important aspects of this, bringing previously marginalized communities into protected social roles defined by the inscription of new forms of cultural, economic, and political value. Simultaneously, governments expand militarized ambitions that unequivocally deploy violence against the subjects not deemed worthy of redemption, relocating—if not eliminating—these bodies as new markets open up. When applied to queer populations, C. Riley Snorton and Jin Haritaworn (2022, 67) have already shown how the "recognition, protection, and self-actualization" of transnationally normative kinds of queer subjectivity exist in "complicities and convergences with biomedical, neoliberal, racist, and imperialist projects." Respectability mediated by activities that are culturally rewarded, like football in Mexico, prove central to this negotiation, instigating the prominent distinctions within queer groups that the gendered re-organizations of AMLO's 4T brought on.



Figure 6. Kraken Deportivo at the Guadalajara Gay Games opening ceremony in November 2023, doing an "Olympic" lap around the city's premier sports venue, which was built for the 2011 Panamerican Games. Featured in the background is Enrique Alfaro, governor of the state of Jalisco and previously PRI representative.

Photo courtesy by the Federation of the Gay Games.

The “human” whose “justice” the 4T works to ensure, then, would seem to be less universal than it initially appeared. After all, [Benedict Anderson \(1983, 7\)](#) correctly points out, “no nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind,” for the politics of nationalism necessarily involve a “selective erasure and inscription of distinction” ([Ghassem-Fachandi 2011, 62](#)). Yet the 4T has succeeded at pushing the boundaries of who this subject is, exemplified by Sheinbaum’s election in 2024 as the country’s first female president. Gendered forms of belonging in the nation are being redeemed, finding new cultural locations as marginalization is replaced with respectability instead. Nonetheless, transnational hierarchies of value and an overall inclination toward whiteness—deeply seeded in the cosmic race ideology—prevail, demarcating the limits of the 4T’s appeal to the so-called universal category of the human.

All this, of course, is but the backdrop to the ball in play. During training, while warming up for games, at halftime, and once the final whistle has blown, football, rather than the philosophies underpinning the historical legacies of Mexican nationalism, is what Kraken members tend to keep themselves busy with. In fact, political discussions in Kraken rarely openly touch the topic of political parties. It is worth asking, then: Do members of Kraken even perceive themselves as beneficiaries of the 4T? Do they consider the involvement of political parties to be in their interest, and does it matter to them what the implications might be? In other words, in Kraken, what is politics?

THE GAY POLIS

Just two weeks after I joined, when my first LGBT+ tournament ended, some team members led the group to a popular chicken wings and burgers restaurant to eat together. Not everyone felt enamored of the choice, however: some members proposed a famous lesbian seafood bar instead, while others bickered about a place “too straight for us.” As we were a large squad, not everyone could fit at a single table at the restaurant, so some, including me, sat at a separate smaller table. Somewhat surprisingly, those at the isolated table did not feel left out. Instead, they felt they had escaped tedious interactions with what they described as the “conservative” majority in the group. These few members perceived most of the team to be “apolitical,” comfortable with their middle-class status and gender privilege as men, and “probably *PANistas*.” When called on to laugh at a joke or to confirm the details of a particular piece of gossip, members of both tables interacted with ease, as they did on the football field, but clearly not everyone felt as enthusiastic about each other as it had initially seemed.

Political distinctions seemingly translated to subtle fractures within the team, a symptom of the shifting patterns of identification, solidarity, and allegiance stirred in the early years of the 4T era.

At the time, I believed this was my first exposure to a common feud in the team. Partisan alignment, I assumed, was a silent fault line in the team, and talking about it without caution could irrevocably pull the project apart. To a degree, I was correct. Josué's departure offers a poignant example. Yet partisan politics are only sporadically discussed in Kraken, broadly perceived as a system of affiliations that team members carry with them but whose distinctions should not be taken too seriously. There are occasional jokes among team members about parties and politicians, but they tend to be inconsequential, often lined with some kind of sexual innuendo. The conversation that followed Kraken's participation in Taboada's 2023 event, for example, showcases this. "Clientelism"—the "exchange of goods and services for political support, to mutual benefit, . . . in networks of informal relationships" (Hagene 2015)—was denounced as the *modus operandi* of political parties, exploiting teams' dependence on them for access to training facilities, whatever their ideological orientation. But without delving too deeply into the political commentary, team members quickly steered their way out: "Let's fight together against those sell-out *acarreados* through love and sex," the conversation ended.¹⁶

This does not mean to say that Kraken is not a political space. Josué's testimony emphasized the team's political value when recognizing what he liked about it, even when "politics" was ultimately why he left. Indeed, politics does not refer exclusively to that which pertains to the state (Bayat 2012; Mahmood 2001). Rather, the polis, in its traditional sense, refers to the way we ought to live, to questions about how to organize collective life and the distinction between life and the "good life" (Agamben 1998). Politics, in that sense, occur primarily in the everyday, continuously mediated through normative questions regarding the mundane, ones often experienced more strongly than anything concerning the state.

Questions about who gets more playing time and on what basis, for example, can prove far more incendiary and have greater repercussions than the ongoing debate about whether the team represented PAN wholeheartedly or not. Many factors intersect: ongoing commitment, punctuality, and attendance; performance, talent, and form; tactical fit; and identification with an LGBT+ identity, broadly defined. At times, heterosexual players raise complaints for being benched when they have attended sessions more consistently than their gay teammates, for instance. At other times, queer players argue that straight teammates

are insufficiently self-aware about their role in the team, consequently leading it astray and making it feel less “safe” than what they had hoped for. These tensions are not always fully resolved, as evidenced by Kraken’s one-month lack of a coach when Allan resigned due to internal conflicts. He eventually returned following reconciliation, but others have walked away and not looked back for much less.

The meaning that the political acquires in Kraken thus pertains much more to existential questions about the project and its nature than to a partisan landscape far removed from the team’s control. Moreover, if what political parties stand for remains unclear, and their means of operating—structurally incentivized to take in as many bodies as possible despite ideological differences (Menon 2010)—do not seem to vary between them, it becomes easy for queer football players to ignore (or tolerate, at least) the alleged political contradictions that performing occasional support for PAN might entail. Team members understand it is a performance, and they are willing to play along if it means that the political benefits of belonging to the team remain within reach. To many, this may include feeling like fully respected members of the nation for the first time, whereas for others it can be as intimate as having a proxy for healthier relationships with their families. For members who previously had professional aspirations, Kraken may also be a way of re-living their dreams, especially with the opportunity to compete internationally through tournaments like the Gay Games.

The result is a series of competing directions, requiring compromises on all ends. The balance between building a competitive team and ensuring a safe space where LGBT+ team members feel like they belong, for example, forms a major part of this tug-of-war. It raises the question of how many straight people can be on the field at the same time without sacrificing the team’s identity. Or, conversely, how many absences will be tolerated from a queer team member before they lose their priority vis-à-vis a fully committed heterosexual player. This is why, when someone newly joins the team, figuring out—or policing—the recruit’s sexuality and/or gender identity ranks among the first things team members set out to do. On it hinges the polis’ claim to utopia.

Yet overall, by decentering state politics from the normative questions they ask, team members strip the power to divide away from the partisan system of affiliations that pervades the country. They know that, should they want their political actions to go further, off-field opportunities are more than plenty. While in the team, politics remain focused on preserving Kraken’s utopian condition, accepting potential contradictions as simply inevitable. These, after all, are intrinsic to the idea of the team, an attempt to counter the “biological divorce” between radically opposite disciplines of the self in the Mexican nation.

Utopia, then, does not end at the wounds and contradictions. It goes far beyond. The story of a Kraken member who attempted to end his own life in 2022 yet found in the team “a reason to stay alive” perhaps offers the ultimate example. The politics, wounds, violence, and contradictions do not supersede the deeply embodied feeling that Kraken works to produce. Quite the opposite. It is in the wounds—whether brought from outside or inflicted within—that utopia is found. It is in the messiness that escape gains meaning. It is in the tangible experience of *something* different, when political promises elsewhere seem perpetually bound to fail, that utopia is felt. It may not be a panacea for the broader necropolitics with which the country is rife, but the change it promises is real, and that, in and of itself, is worth the insistence.

CONCLUSION

Halfway through the Gay Games in Guadalajara, in November 2023, Kraken’s spirits were high. We had exceeded our own expectations by assertively winning three out of five games against opponents from Canada, the United States, and England, losing only one game 1-0 against our national rival Lobos and drawing the remaining game 1-1 against one of the international teams expected to challenge for the title. As we headed into our rest day before the second half of the tournament, some of the team members staying in the same rental apartment shared drinks and talked into the night, celebrating how far the team had come just four years after its creation. Kraken felt nearly unbeatable, and being competitive at the international level had clearly made everyone proud. During that night, team members began asking each other whether they imagined themselves attending the next Gay Games in Valencia, Spain, in June 2026. One of the team leaders took the opportunity to make a preliminary announcement: “We will go to Valencia! We had conversations already to make one of the people in this room a political candidate for next year’s municipal elections in Estado de México, which will guarantee we have the funds to go to Spain.” While ambitious, the prospect of turning one of the team members into a local politician did not seem far-fetched. The conditions to utilize gay football as a political platform had never been as ripe, even though, as I learned a few months later, the plan did not work out. But while the gay-footballer-turned-politician aspiration failed, the cultural logics of contemporary Mexican politics became clearer than ever.

In 2018, Mexico embarked on an ambitious project of socio-political change, blurring most entrenched social, cultural, and political distinctions and hierarchies as a result. All kinds of ideological and political compromises have

been necessary for anyone who has sought to keep up, creating unexpected alliances such as gay football teams and historically conservative political parties. These football teams have been a poignant example of the transformations that the 4T movement has entailed, giving previously marginalized groups a socio-political platform to claim respectability and achieve projects of self-realization. However, resulting from an expanded militarization of the nation and the advancement of neoliberal economic doctrine into everyday life, multiple social fractures have surfaced among communities whose political unity was previously assumed under a national gaze. This mixture, which we can refer to as Mexican humanism or as a human security regime, has consequently re-shuffled what vulnerability and belonging mean in the country and created new possible forms of subjectivity, like the *homomestizo* subject I have previously alluded to (López Toledano 2023). Football remains one of the primary arenas in which the Mexican nation is made and unmade, revealing all these cultural patterns through the tactical blueprints that play out on the field. Gay football, therefore, has become a site of wounds in utopia: a place of contradictions where healing and violence unfold simultaneously; where members may bring wounds to heal, but take wounds away to heal elsewhere.

In the memory of Edyam, with whom the conversation was truly only getting started.



Figure 7. Kraken Deportivo at the Guadalajara Gay Games in November 2023, taking a team photo after a game. Photo courtesy by the Federation of the Gay Games.

ABSTRACT

LGBT+ football teams have proliferated in Mexico in recent years, allowing communities who previously struggled with feeling at the margins of the nation to make new claims to respectability and national belonging. At the same time, these have developed surprising alliances with political parties, blurring in some cases the relationships of partisan representation that Mexican electoral politics are built on. These patterns, I contend, have been largely enabled by the sociopolitical transformations of Mexico's 4T movement, which has instilled a climate of change surrounding cultural hierarchies of gender and sexuality. In this context, emergent fractures within queer groups have shed light on the contradictions of "Mexican humanism," Mexico's newly coined political philosophy. Exhibiting the characteristics of a human security regime, Mexico's 4T acts as backdrop to a broader array of political paradoxes that accompany the country's gay football scene—a space of "wounds in utopia," where wounds, healing, and violence may all coexist. [football; politics; LGBT+; Mexico; nationalism; utopia]

RESUMEN

En los últimos años, equipos de fútbol LGBT+ han proliferado en México, ofreciéndole a comunidades que previamente se encontraban al margen de la nación una nueva oportunidad de respeto y pertenencia ante la mirada nacional. A la par, algunos de estos equipos han establecido alianzas inesperadas con partidos políticos, oscureciendo las relaciones de representación partidista que sostienen de manera histórica al sistema electoral mexicano. Contiendo que estos patrones son en gran parte producto de las transformaciones sociopolíticas del movimiento de la 4T, el cual ha instigado una atmósfera de cambio en torno a las jerarquías culturales de género y sexualidad. En este contexto, fracturas emergentes dentro de grupos LGBT+ revelan las contradicciones del supuesto "Humanismo Mexicano", la nueva filosofía política de la nación mexicana bajo la 4T. Demostrando características pertenecientes a un régimen de seguridad humana, la 4T en México actúa como telón para una serie de paradojas políticas que acompañan a la esfera de fútbol gay en el país: un entorno de "lesiones en la utopía" dentro del cual procesos de herida, sanación, y violencia coexisten en el día a día. [fútbol; política, LGBT+; México; nacionalismo; utopía]

NOTES

Acknowledgments I express my gratitude to the *Cultural Anthropology* editorial collective and the anonymous peer reviewers for the faith shown to my work and the critical engagement that drastically improved this piece. I am also deeply indebted to Wahid Al Mamun, Katrina Jacinto, Matthew Aviso, Rodrigo Castillo Aguilar, and Amali Ibrahim for the ongoing support, discussions, feedback, and guidance from day one and, of course, to my teammates and interlocutors, without whom none of this would have been possible.

1. This is a pseudonym.
2. La cuarta transformación, or 4T for short.

3. The PRI is seen to represent seventy-plus years of monolithic rule in the twentieth century, sometimes referred to by critics as “the Dinosaur,” as it symbolizes what they perceive to be a long-lasting, fossilized political legacy that the PRI—supported by satellite parties—pioneered and left entrenched in the sediment of Mexican politics.
4. The term is always used in a derogatory fashion.
5. The Gay Games are the queer equivalent of the Olympic Games and, for the first time in history, they were hosted outside Europe, Canada, Australia, or the USA.
6. Examples include narratives published by international media outlets along the lines of “when the Mexican national team plays, crime rates decrease” (ESPN, “Juega el Chicharito y baja el crimen,” 2012) or “Mexican fans celebrate goal and trigger earthquake sensors” (“Mexico Fans Set Off Earthquake Sensors Celebrating Seismic World Cup Win,” *Guardian*, June 18, 2018), which fans take high pride in.
7. *Jotos* is a Mexican slur used against homosexual men.
8. A former mayor of Alcaldía Cuauhtémoc, a PRD-PRI-PAN coalition representative.
9. A PAN-representative MP.
10. Mexico’s current secretary of the economy and an internal candidate in MORENA for presidential elections at the time.
11. Mexico’s current president, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, the governor of Mexico City at the time.
12. Translated by the author.
13. “¡Quieren tu voto, no quieren tus derechos!”
14. “¡Ni amo, ni estado, ni género asignado!”
15. See Gobierno de México, “Discurso del presidente Andrés Manuel López Obrador en la celebración por 4 años de transformación,” [Presidential speech by Andrés Manuel López Obrador celebrating 4 years of transformation]. <https://amlo.presidencia.gob.mx/discurso-del-presidente-andres-manuel-lopez-obrador-en-la-celebracion-por-4-anos-de-transformacion/> Translated and abridged by the author.
16. *Acarreados* refers to individuals coerced or paid to attend political rallies, often used critically to claim that parties are unable to gather genuine support.

REFERENCES

- Abensour, Miguel
 2012 “Utopia: Future and/or Alterity?” In *The Politics of the (Im)Possible Utopia and Dystopia Reconsidered*, edited by Barnita Bagchi, 23–46. New Delhi: Sage India.
- Agamben, Giorgio
 1998 *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Translated by Daniel Heller-Roazen. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Agren, David
 2020 “‘He’s Mr. Scrooge’: Mexican President Unveils Severe Cuts amid Coronavirus.” *Guardian*, April 24.
- Amar, Paul
 2013 *The Security Archipelago: Human-Security States, Sexuality Politics, and the End of Neoliberalism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Anderson, Benedict
 1983 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Bayat, Asef
 2012 “Politics in the City-Inside-Out.” *City & Society* 24, no. 2: 110–28. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-744X.2012.01071.x>
- Berlant, Laurent
 2011 *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Berliner, David, Michael Lambek, Richard Shweder, Richard Irvine, and Albert Piette
 2016 “Debates: Anthropology and the Study of Contradictions.” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6, no. 1: 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.14318/hau6.1.002>

- Brown, Jayna
 2021 *Black Utopias: Speculative Life and the Music of Other Worlds*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Cárdenas Gracia, Jaime, John M. Ackerman, Daniel Márquez Gómez, and Pastora Melgar Manzanilla
 2024 *Humanismo y cuarta transformación: Apuntes en torno al “Humanismo Mexicano” [Humanism and fourth transformation: Notes on “Mexican Humanism”]*. Mexico City: Tirant Humanidades.
- Castillo Aguilar, Rodrigo
 2023 “La Pedagogía de la violencia: Masculinidad y fútbol.” In *Otro deporte es posible: Atletas LGBTTTT+ en México*, edited by Rodrigo Castillo Aguilar and Max D. López Toledano, 33–50. Puebla, Mexico: Rizoma Cultural.
- Dave, Naisargi N.
 2012 *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Dimeo, Paul
 2002 “Colonial Bodies, Colonial Sport: ‘Martial’ Punjabis, ‘Effeminate’ Bengalis, and the Development of Indian Football.” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 19, no. 1: 72–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714001700>
- Drucker, Peter
 2015 *Warped Gay Normality and Queer Anti-Capitalism*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill.
- Fábregas Puig, Andrés
 2001 *Lo Sagrado del rebaño: El Fútbol como integrador de identidades [The Sacredness of the Herds: Football as an Identity Integrator]*. Guadalajara, Mexico: El Colegio de Jalisco.
- Foucault, Michel
 1984 “Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias.” Translated by Jay Miskowic. *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité*, no. 5: 46–49.
- Ghassem-Fachandi, Parvis
 2011 “Religious Synthesis to a Muslim Shrine.” In *A Companion to the Anthropology of India*, edited by Isabelle Clark-Decès, 260–76. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.
- Gordin, Michael D., Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash, eds.
 2010 *Utopia/Dystopia: Conditions of Historical Possibility*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Hagene, Turid
 2015 “Political Clientelism in Mexico: Bridging the Gap between Citizens and the State.” *Latin American Politics and Society* 57, no. 1: 139–62. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2015.00259.x>
- López Toledano, G. M. D.
 2023 “Rumbo al homostezaje” [“Towards homostezaje”]. In *Otro deporte es posible: Atletas LGBTTTT+ en México*, edited by Rodrigo Castillo Aguilar and Max D. López Toledano, 19–32. Puebla, Mexico: Rizoma Cultural.
- Magazine, Roger
 2008 *Azul y oro como mi corazón: Masculinidad, juventud y poder en una porra de los Pumas de la UNAM [Blue and gold like my heart: Masculinity, youth, and power in a supporter’s group for Pumas UNAM]*. Mexico City: Afinita Editorial Universidad Iberoamericana.
- Magazine, Roger, Samuel Martínez López, and Sergio Varela Hernández
 2012 *Afición futbolística y rivalidades en el México contemporáneo: Una mirada nacional [Football fandoms and rivalries in contemporary Mexico: A national overview]*. Mexico City: Universidad Iberoamericana.
- Mahmood, Saba
 2001 “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival.” *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 2: 202–36. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.2001.16.2.202>

- Menon, Kalyani D.
 2010 *Everyday Nationalism: Women of the Hindu Right in India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Monroy Cuéllar, Norman I.
 2022 “Colonialidad, género, muerte y sexualidad en el Valle del Mezqueertal” [“Coloniality, gender, death, and sexuality in the Mezqueertal Valley”]. Master’s thesis, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Hidalgo.
- Moreno Figueroa, Mónica G.
 2010 “Distributed Intensities: Whiteness, Mestizaje, and the Logics of Mexican Racism.” *Ethnicities* 10, no. 3: 387–401. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796810372305>
- Muñoz, José Esteban
 2009 *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. New York: NYU Press.
- Puar, Jasbir K.
 2007 *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Snorton, C. Riley, and Jin Haritaworn
 2022 “Trans Necropolitics: A Transnational Reflection on Violence, Death, and the Trans of Color Afterlife.” In *The Transgender Studies Reader Remix*, edited by Susan Stryker and Dylan McCarthy Blackston, 66–76. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Vasconcelos, José
 1948 [1925] *La raza cósmica [The cosmic race]*. Mexico City: Espasa-Calpe.
- Weiss, Margot
 2011 *Techniques of Pleasure: BDSM and the Circuits of Sexuality*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
 2016 “Always After: Desiring Queerness, Desiring Anthropology.” *Cultural Anthropology* 31, no. 4: 627–38. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca31.4.11>