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ADJUSTING THE LENS

COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATIVE VIDEO IN MEXICO

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CONTENTS

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"Shaping the Taraspanglish Diaspora," by Argelia González Hurtado, is an expanded version of a prior essay with the same title published under the Creative Commons license in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society* 4, no. 1 (2015).

into this reflective space, which presents the different categories chosen by the directors to define themselves in a negotiation process of adding and integrating all of these identifying discourses. Thus, being indigenous is regarded not as an essence but as a construction in constant change, one that is affected and influenced by a multiplicity of experiences and relationships (social, cultural, economic, etc.). The documentaries I have analyzed here incorporate a variety of styles and technical, expressive, and conceptual resources, which come to be a reflection of the way the new identities are assumed and built by the indigenous migrants in their current migratory context.

But above all, *Cortos Taraspanglish* shows us the way the indigenous identity is assumed (in a transcendental moment for the self-determination movements), and also shows us the different combinations of elements, discourses, and situations that intersect and overlap into being and knowing one's indigenous self: woman, man, activist, Mexican, migrant, marginal, indigenous, intellectual, video maker, narrator, and so on.

Chapter 5

Patron Saint Fiesta Videos

Mediatization and Transnationalization between the Sierra Mixe and California

Ingrid Kummels

The fiesta in honor of Santa Rosa de Lima is a central public spectacle that takes place annually in the village of Tamazulapam in the highlands of the Distrito Mixe in Mexico.[1] The fiesta I witnessed in August 2013 was a veritable multimedia event. Two local enterprises—the internet provider (*ciber*) Tuuk Nëëm and the internet radio station Yin Et Radio—broadcast livestream video from the village's main plaza between the municipal building and the church. For the first time, migrants from Tamazulapam, who have largely settled in the city of Oaxaca, in Mexico City, in northern Mexican cities such as Guanajuato, and in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Milwaukee, were able to follow the festivities live. Tama's main plaza is the venue for an annual competition between the local philharmonic band and those from other villages in the region. Two other local radio stations, La T Grande Tamazulapam and Radio Jënpoj from the neighboring village of Tlahuitoltepec, both competing for local listeners, also broadcast the fiesta with commentaries in Ayuujk and Spanish.

Several local *videoastas* (videographers) who have specialized in videotaping the fiesta, including members of Video Rojas and Video Mecho, filmed the celebrations systematically for long hours during the five main festival days. They captured scenes they considered of interest to the village's satellite communities in the United States and focused on traditional elements such as the *danza de la Malinche* and the chickens' blood offering, or *costumbre*, that took place prior to the vast *castillo* (castle) fireworks.[2] This religious ceremony, hitherto performed discreetly, was caught extensively on camera for the first time in a fiesta video.

FIGURE 5.1. Genoveva Pérez Rosas of Video Tamix at work during Tama's Santa Rosa de Lima fiesta in August 2015. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

The distinctly modern aspect of the celebrations was likewise documented, including the Copa Mixe tournament, in which approximately eighty basketball teams from across the entire Mixe region took part, all of them in stylish sports tricots on the refurbished basketball courts. The winning teams were presented with valuable silver-plated trophies reminiscent of those at the national championships and partly sponsored by Tama migrants in the United States. On each of the festival days, the videographers edited their films overnight and were able the next morning to offer the residents and numerous visitors a DVD of events from the previous day as a brand-new product. Once the Santa Rosa fiesta and the band farewells (*despedida de bandas*) were over, they sent the ten-part DVD series to their migrant clientele in the United States through the local delivery service at the Trébol pharmacy.

The primary focus of this chapter is the novel use of video in the Ayuujk villages of the Sierra Mixe region in the state of Oaxaca.[3] Video is not employed exclusively as a purely community-based mode of production with explicit political messages. Like other ethnic minorities around the globe, Mexico's indigenous peoples, including the Ayuujk ja'ay, began to pursue their own local media projects in the 1990s as a method of overcoming their discrimination in the area of political participation and access to the national public sphere. Indigenous movements throughout Mexico sought, in addition to full citizen rights, to assert their cultural rights as *pueblos originarios* (first peoples) in a Mexican state that had been redefined constitutionally as multicultural. When the Zapatista National Liberation Army (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or EZLN) emerged in Chiapas in 1994, it became the movement with the greatest international visibility and impact.

Along with these political efforts, indigenous people from several regions began to train as film directors, camera operators, and sound engineers, and to make (analog) video documentaries, which they then disseminated in solidarity groups and NGOs, and presented at international festivals. One of their primary objectives was to decolonize the standard portrayal of indigenous people as exotic Others and as passive subalterns by replacing these images with self-determined representations. The media movement became known as *video indígena*,[4] and it gave indigenous people a face as political actors, while the use of audiovisual means provided a sounding board for their political messages, which were now beginning to reach Mexico's national public sphere.

In response to these developments, the government granted the country's indigenous populations the constitutional right to their own languages and forms of social organization. The video indígena movement in Mexico during the 1990s has meanwhile been well researched from a media anthropology perspective.[5] Precisely because research has focused almost exclusively on video indígena, however, two misunderstandings have arisen. First, it is assumed that the decisive impetus for indigenous communities and movements to engage with audiovisual media emanated from the government's *indigenismo* policies and that a program called Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales a Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas, initiated by the Instituto Nacional Indigenista (INI) in 1989, was crucial to providing instruction, equipment, and organizational structures. Second, current research also suggests that film production in indigenous villages is basically synonymous with the video indígena movement, which later broke away from the INI. From this perspective, collectively organized teams make documentaries with the sole intent of giving a uniform voice to the local needs and demands of indigenous collectives.

In this chapter, I question these assumptions by exploring the processes of appropriating photography and film in the Sierra Mixe that took place before the video indígena movement emerged and that are, furthermore, currently evolving without any close relation to media initiatives associated with the *indigenista* policies of the Mexican government. Focusing on the village of Tama—as Tamazulapam is popularly called—I will examine the diversity, intensity, and historical depth of the media spaces, within which photographs and videos are used not only for explicitly political purposes but also in the interests of business. I contend that videos of the patron saint celebrations

constitute a local and transnational genre that above all reflects the shift in relations between the indigenous people of Mexico and the state, on the one hand, and the dynamics of their international migration to the United States, on the other. Indeed, the films are an integral part of these current processes.

I also want to shed light on the political significance of this genre for the social life of the transnational community. It repeatedly triggers vigorous debate on whether audiovisual media should serve nonprofit communal purposes exclusively or be permitted to embrace commercial goals. The patron saint fiesta videos do not fit the ideal image of "indigenous media" as synonymous with a political commitment with a communitarian focus. In the course of my multisited ethnographic research between 2012 and 2015 in Tama and one of its satellite communities in Los Angeles, I realized that these videos might provide important insights into the autonomous driving forces that had been harnessed to reinvent mass media in a village that has meanwhile expanded transnationally to the United States.[6] In my opinion, these complex local and transnational dynamics have been neglected. The unequal access of indigenous communities to modern audiovisual media, their historical experience of a "visual divide," and their current intent to decolonize mass media should now be investigated.

I introduce the concept of a visual divide, in line with the more familiar term "digital divide," in order to capture in a similar manner the uneven access to audiovisual media technology that has resulted from educational disparities, geography, social class, ethnicity, cultural factors, and gender.[7] Those who are able to bridge the divide as a result of the wider distribution of media technology at less cost nevertheless access this technology with a time delay. Appropriating audiovisual media in their case means investing a singular effort to make up for being latecomers.

Variform waves of migration prompted the residents of Tama to take up this challenge based on their desire to communicate translocally. They launched into audiovisual media, adapting them to local conditions and largely reshaping community life in the process. The concept of a visual divide refers to the comprehensive structures of inequality that people categorized as indigenous have to face in this field—inequality is not inscribed only in representations, but also in the materiality and social practices of audiovisual media, such as in media training and the organization of work. I therefore use the term to facilitate analysis of the cultural values attached to media technology, knowledge, and practices resulting from the coloniality of power.[8] Scholars have observed that, in line with the dominant geopolitics of knowledge, indigenous peoples have been perceived and represented as the opposite of "Western" modernism. In other words, they allegedly live in the past, are averse to progress, and have no affinity for modern media.[9] Even expectations of media professionalism

prove to be culturally inscribed, given the hegemonic standards with a claim to universality. According to the latter, "indigenous" forms of appropriation are marked and criticized as improvised and amateurish. Actors in Tama's spaces of media production, diffusion, and reception creatively skirt or challenge and transform these hegemonic evaluations. In this vein they negotiate and redefine what it means to be from Tama/Tuuk Nëëm and to be Ayuujk.[10]

Communal Media and Commercial Videos of the Patron Saint Fiesta

At first sight, the genre of the patron saint fiesta video seems to have little connection to previous developments in local media. Since the end of the 1970s, the highlands region of the Sierra Mixe, which is considered one of Mexico's "indigenous" regions,[11] has become known nationwide for its ethnopolitical movements, its cultural resistance, and its communal media. Ayuujk organizations such as the Comité de Defensa y Desarrollo de los Recursos Naturales y Humanos Mixe (CODREMI) and later Servicios al Pueblo Mixe A.C. (SER) met with a strong regional and national response precisely because of their strategy of using modern audiovisual means of communication to spotlight their political demands for control of local industries such as coffee cultivation and mining. In an effort to articulate these interests, local radio and television stations were launched in Tama and the neighboring village of Tlahuitoltepec (known as Tlahui). They were conceptualized as community media, that is, as alternative media that were organized and financed independently of the state and of private media corporations.

In addition, use of the indigenous language and the focus on local culture in media constituted a brand-new approach at the time. One example is Radio Jënpoj (literally "wind of fire"), which has operated in Tlahui since August 2001. It continues to broadcast in Spanish and the Ayuujk language across a region that extends way beyond the nineteen municipalities (*municipios*) of the Distrito Mixe and encompasses parts of the adjoining Zapotec-speaking area of the Sierra Norte and Valle Central. In another example, between 1993 and 2000 Tama hosted the remarkable community television station TV Tamix, which broadcast weekly programs on village events and political and cultural issues in two languages. It continues to have an empowering effect on the alternative media movement even today, as it proved that a culturally specific television program could work and showed how to put it into effect.

The community media continue to maintain their strong position in the region. In 2011, local media activists (radio journalists, filmmakers, and the cultural managers of several villages, with those from Tama at the helm) founded the regional ethnic association Comité Cultural Comunitario Ayuuk (CAYUUK).[12] It was against this backdrop that a media summit of the Pan-American indigenous movement, the second Cumbre Continental de

Comunicación Indígena del Abya Yala, was held in Tlahui in October 2013. In the Sierra Mixe, media work of an explicitly political nature is linked for the most part to the concept of *comunalidad* as drawn up in the early 1980s by Floriberto Díaz from Tlahui and Jaime Martínez Luna from Guelatao in the Zapotecan Sierra Norte.[13] As Alejandra Aquino Moreschi summarized in an issue of *Cuadernos del Sur* dedicated to comunalidad, these intellectuals belong to the generation that gave birth to the first regional organizations to build on the concept of comunalidad with the aim of specifically asserting Ayuujk ethnic identity, and of promoting processes of communal autonomy.[14] Since "comunalidad" refers to the principles of conviviality practiced in the villages of Oaxaca's Sierra Norte, it even surpasses Guillermo Bonfil Batalla's then-progressive formulation according to which *pueblos indígenas* are defined not by essential cultural traits, but by the condition of colonization.[15] In one way or another, all the actors engaging in media in Tama profess ideas of comunalidad and see audiovisual means of communication as a tool to serve the communal practices that form part of their everyday life, such as serving as an official in the civil-religious cargo system and carrying out communal labor (*tequio*). They consider these practices fundamental to Ayuujk villages and see them as the basis of their autonomy vis-à-vis the Mexican state.

What is actually considered part of comunalidad, however, is subject to negotiation, particularly in view of new challenges such as international migration. When assessed according to the ideas formulated in the 1980s, small-scale entrepreneurs in Tama and the surrounding communities, who earn their living with videotaping, are singled out as practitioners of commercial media (*medios comerciales*) by those who see themselves as politically active *comunicadores*.[16] Although this is accurate, their films, not unlike community-run media products, use the Ayuujk language (as part of the original sound), depict village culture, and are operated by Ayuujk *comuneros/as* (community members who own communal land and comply with the obligation to serve as officials). Local family businesses such as Video Rojas, Video Tamix,[17] Video Mecho, and Video Cajonos are not invited to CAYUUK meetings or to the indigenous media summit. Neither do they expect to be included. Yet in spite of these sharp lines of distinction, community and commercial videographers often interact in practice, exchanging their knowledge and equipment and cooperating or competing with each other at venues such as fiesta locations, where they record the events. Actors of both media fields engage in the appropriation of photography, video, and television in the Sierra Mixe.

Due to the visual divide, local actors of the Sierra Mixe were relatively late in appropriating these media for their own ends. When they finally did, however, they built on existing media practices in their villages, among them live music and dance performances that were part of the patron saint fiesta, thereby translating these practices into contemporary media forms as a response to new cultural and social needs. It would therefore be misleading to see these actors as simply catching up belatedly with developments in the fields of photography, video, and television, which some media theorists assume to be universally predetermined by the characteristics of technology and to be proceeding unilinearly.[18] Instead, local and transnational actors shaped this development to suit their own historical, cultural, and social experiences. Using digital video, they opened new "media spaces" by introducing among other things a new professional field, that of the videoasta, and new genres (among them videos of the patron saint celebrations, weddings, and other social events), thereby extending media practices and representations beyond the community.

I conceptualize the capacity of actors from the margins to appropriate new means of communication based on cultural and social needs as the opening of new media spaces in a geographical, practice-oriented, and imagined sense. Here they utilize their expertise and creativity to overcome physical borders and social hierarchies, and widen their scope for action beyond their marginal position.[19] This process of creating new media genres and spaces of imagination, which is by no means without conflict over the use of alternative media, will now be examined with regard to the patron saint fiesta videos.

Patron Saint Fiestas in the Flux of Migration

What strikes the visitor about the community of Tama today is the apparent prosperity, which contradicts the standard Mexican image of indigenous life as synonymous with poverty, backwardness, and existing on the margins of the country's mainstream development. The residents of Tama are peasants, manual laborers, skilled workers, teachers, professionals, merchants, and entrepreneurs. They claim that migration was a significant factor in their economic advancement and that their primary destinations in the 1970s were the city of Oaxaca and Mexico City. The 1990s saw their increased migration to cities such as Celaya, Irapuato, and Guanajuato in northern Mexico, as well as to the international destinations of Los Angeles, Chicago, Milwaukee, and cities in North Carolina. In many respects, the village of origin in the Sierra Mixe has undergone a dynamic process of modernization. Local knowledge today is based on the substantial amount of experience residents have accumulated in recent decades in terms of education, work, and business. Migration also triggered the community's accumulation of capital, which was allocated to its dense urbanization, solid infrastructure, and mediatization, all of which are aligned with contemporary urban standards. Many households are currently able to afford satellite television, and some have private internet access. Cell phones have become commonplace since Tama's inclusion in the cellular network in 2011. Via the private Mexican television provider Sky, which is owned

by Televisa, households now receive channels common throughout Mexico, ranging from TV Azteca to the Discovery Channel and Nickelodeon.

This development, however, has by no means led to the loss of Ayuujk culture. Rather, in Tama, a Mixe or Ayuujk identity is actively promoted through public discourse and communal cultural practices.[20] The politics of ethnic identity emphasizes the self-concept of people in and from Tama as comuneros/as and their participation in the civil-religious cargo system (often referred to in Spanish as *el cabildo*). Being a comunero/a implies ownership of communal land and the commitment to serve in the civil-religious cargo system every five years without remuneration when nominated by the General Assembly of all comuneros/as. Key concepts such as being a "good" comunero/a refer to specific characteristics of the (semi)autonomous governance system of indigenous communities throughout Mesoamerica. Many communities have fought to sustain this pillar of self-administration since the colonial era and have in many cases essentially preserved the cargo system as a mark of distinction to this day, while at the same time adapting it to changes in the political system at the national level. The demands of ethnopolitical Ayuujk organizations, along with those of the EZLN in Chiapas, impelled the state government of Oaxaca in 1995 to accept the cargo system for the first time as a legal form of municipal government. Municipalities such as Tama may now officially govern themselves as so-called *usos y costumbres* (traditions and customs) without having to adopt the Mexican party system.[21] The cabildos are economically and politically important in the state of Oaxaca. The municipal districts they represent have been granted budgetary aid by the federal government since the end of the 1990s.

Currently, however, the cargo system and another communal institution, the patron saint fiesta, have been adapted significantly as a result of waves of mass migration to the United States. A large number of villagers, especially those of prime working age, have emigrated to the United States.[22] This has led to a shortage of people in this age group in the hometown who would normally take part in the cargo system and the patron saint festivities. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, Tama has reorganized the communal obligations to counteract the negative repercussions of migration. Migrants are no longer required to serve in offices on-site in the home village. Instead, they are expected to provide considerable financial contributions as compensation. This includes contributing money to the patron saint fiesta. Their donations to the festival are deducted from their yearlong cargo service, which is estimated at one hundred thousand pesos. It is with this calculation in mind that many migrants donate to the fiestas.

Migrant donations mean that the festivals in honor of el Espíritu Santo (during Pentecost) and Santa Rosa de Lima (around August 30) are currently

celebrated in a grander style than in the past, rendering them culturally more prominent. It should be noted that the men and women who reside in the village are rarely mere spectators at the celebrations. Instead they participate either as cabildo officials or as individuals delegated by an official to actively organize some aspect of the fiesta.

This also applies to migrants living in the satellite communities outside of the Sierra Mixe. Even those who commute between a satellite community and Tama, and lead a transnational life, identify first and foremost with Tama and fulfill the financial obligations that convey their sense of belonging. Despite their physical absence from the celebrations, they participate in order to comply with the ideal of being good comuneros/as. In addition, they are often pressured by officials from the hometown to make financial donations to the fiesta. Their contributions cover the food, decorations, prizes for sports contests (e.g., prize money or the silver-plated trophy for the winning basketball team), and even the ostentatious castillo fireworks. Part of this "diasporization" of the fiesta involves its mediatization, the new professional field of video making and the creation of a local and transnational genre—the patron saint fiesta video—that will now be described in greater detail. Fiestas, a core element of communal life, have assumed this particular media form.[23]

Fiesta Videos and Their Aesthetic Devices

Films of the patron saint festivities, bearing titles such as *Feria anual de Tamazulapam* (Annual fair of Tamazulapam), are sold locally by small businesses like Video Rojas, Video Tamix, Video Mecho, and Video Cajonos in their shops and market stalls. Other street vendors also sell fiesta videos on market days, along with assorted pirated copies of mainstream DVDs and CDs. Recordings distributed on discs (*discos*) are in heavy demand both in the village itself and in Tama's numerous satellite communities. But in general, despite this dissemination, the productions are not widely discussed. Occasionally they are even disparaged by members of the communal media sector, which emerged in the 1990s partly due to the efforts of a group of men at Casa del Pueblo and TV Tamix and has remained tightly networked to this day with regional media organizations like Ojo de Agua Comunicación and a new generation of communal filmmakers.[24]

Various members of this group repeatedly indicated to me that the recordings (*registros*) of the patron saint fiesta cannot be compared to their documentary films (*documentales*). They cited the fact that the films have no narrative ("no tienen narrativa"), are expressly focused on pleasing the audience ("son complacientes"), and—particularly because they do not make use of interviews—do not stimulate reflection ("no incitan una reflexión").[25] Indeed, filmmaker Yovegami Ascona, who at the time was writing his bachelor's thesis

FIGURE 5.2. The Video Rojas shop in Tama (*left*) and videographer Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez (*right*). Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

titled "Cine y video en la región mixe" (Film and video in the Mixe region), asserted that these were the precise reasons that he did not include the fiesta genre in his thesis. Nonetheless, I would argue that such dismissive opinions are due to the visual divide and hegemonic "universal" standards being attributed to audiovisual media production and professionalism. Communal filmmakers often reject media practices deemed "unprofessional," because they seem to reinforce the stereotype that indigenous people are backward and averse to progress.

At first glance, the DVD series of the patron saint fiesta would seem to support the view that the videoastas lack professionalism. The DVD covers convey the impression that the fiesta event itself is the narrative. Video Rojas's series of nine DVDs of the Santa Rosa fiesta of 2013 bear titles that mirror the common parlance for different phases of the fiesta, including *Reception of the Bands, The Traditional "Calenda"* (disc 1); *The Sports Parade, Inauguration of the Copa Mixe* (disc 2); *Cultural Program, Dance Event with Super T and Los Originales de Tlahui* (disc 3); *Public Performance of the Bands, Ignition of "The Castle" Fireworks* (disc 4); *Second Dance Event with Maike y Sus Teclados Super Uno, Musical Group Calenda and Grupo La Sombra* (disc 5); *Final Basketball Matches Children, Female, and Male Youngsters, Final Matches of the Copa Mixe 2013* (disc 6); *Final Matches of Female and Male Adult and Youth Basketball, Finals of the Copa Mixe 2013* (disc 7); *Award Ceremony, Third*

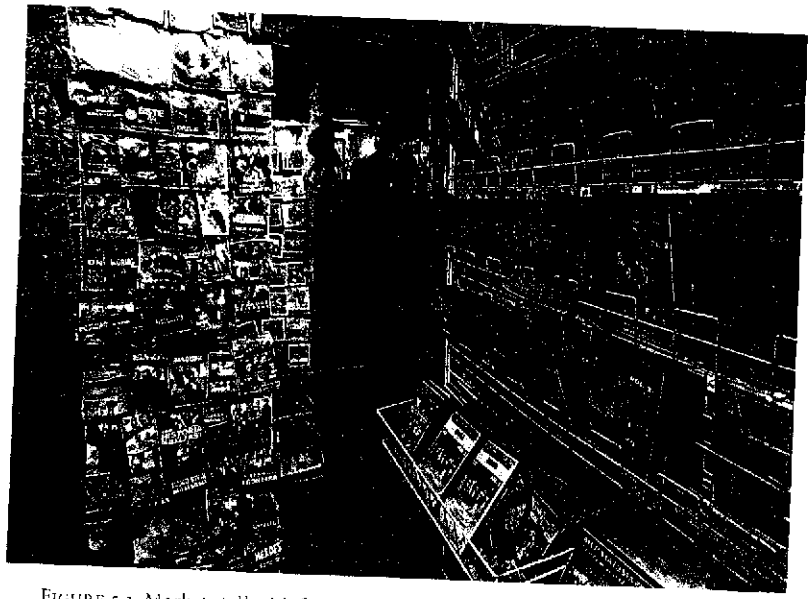

FIGURE 5.3. Market stall with fiesta DVDs. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

Dance Event Grupo Siglo XXI (disc 8); *Farewell to the Bands* (disc 9).[26] For anyone watching one of the 90-to-150-minute discs for the first time, they indeed appear to be merely unedited footage that has been strung together. Events are linked with minimal editing, and sometimes with no editing at all. Moreover, there are no interviews and most of the material consists of long shots. Since the recordings often forgo credits and thus explicit indication of authorship, they seem to make no claim to being filmic narratives.[27]

A closer look at the films, however, reveals their deliberate design. The videographers I spoke to expounded on how they purposely created an aesthetic format oriented to the taste of their customers, the local and transnational villagers.[28] This is an audience that appreciates videos free of commentary but with original sounds. Unlike viewers of "classic" documentaries, the audience is not interested in identifying with the subjective perspective of the filmmaker or of a main protagonist. Instead, village viewers prefer to undergo a vicarious "real-life" experience where they can adopt the perspective of a ubiquitous fiesta spectator. They value long shots (*planos generales*) that allow them to appraise the interaction of as many people as possible and to decide for themselves what aspects of the recording interest them most. For their part, the videographers have become experts in long shots, which are maintained using monopods that permit changes in perspective when recording. At the same time, they often use slow panning shots from a slightly raised position to incrementally record all of the fiesta's participants. Their crowd scenes empha-

size collectivity over individuality in a way that corresponds to the choreography of the patron saint fiesta in real life. They generally try to portray fiesta visitors on film as serious and dignified members of the larger community. On the other hand, they avoid putting the spotlight on individuals, because close-ups can be interpreted as signaling, criticizing, or ridiculing their behavior, not least when dancing at a *baile* (see discussion below).

Paradoxically, viewers are particularly drawn to comical (*chusco*) scenes in which people are in fact exposed to ridicule. Several motifs are a traditional source of amusement, including the grotesque body motif in *la danza de los viejitos* (borrowed from the Zapotecs), where the dancers are disguised as old men and parody their movements. Dancers, athletes, and drunks are especially popular. Videographers deliberately try to capture *lo chusco*, in dances, for example, or when clowns perform during the intermissions at the *jaripeo* bull riding. That said, they frequently end up recording comical scenes inadvertently, as will be shown in the next section.

Typically fiesta videos capture both "traditional" and "modern" components of the festival. Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez of Video Rojas, who called my attention to this, explained what distinguishes her work as a local videographer from that of nonindigenous documentarists. The latter are primarily interested in recording what they consider to be "authentic" indigenous culture and concentrate on religious rituals such as the costumbres.[29] Village videographers, on the other hand, view "modern" elements as part of their culture. Locally, specific cultural manifestations are distinguished according to when they were introduced. Thus, while la danza de la Malinche, which was integrated into the fiestas at the beginning of the twentieth century, is looked upon as "traditional," the couple-dance events (bailes) that became popular in the 1990s are generally classified as "modern."

I gradually became aware of the numerous aspects of the fiestas that village videographers generally fail to take into account or deliberately leave out when recording and editing. The negotiations with and relationships to cabildo officials and film customers play a major role here. Media makers and their activities should be primarily analyzed in their cultural and social positioning as comuneros and comuneras. Community life is the principal source from which videographers draw their contacts, expertise, basic materials, and particularly their cultural forms of expression. In other words, it is the cornerstone of their media work, as we shall see in the following.

Videographer, Merchant, and Comunero/a

Video Rojas, Video Tamix, Video Mecho, and Video Cajonos are small family businesses and, for the most part, consist of a married couple and occasionally their adult children. They travel as itinerant merchants to as many as forty patron saint fiestas a year, capturing them audiovisually over a period of several days each. Their decision as to which regional fiestas to record is determined by the potential for profit. Like other itinerant merchants, they link the villages where the fiestas take place into a flexible market system. Genoveva Pérez Rosas likes to call her self-taught profession "traveling camera" (*cámara viajante*). These businesses typically own or rent a car that houses their traveling studio. As a rule the equipment comprises a PC with an editing program (e.g., Pinnacle), a DVD burner, a color printer, a television screen, and often several camcorders.

Commercial success depends on being able to conform to customer tastes, something that the videographers have become experts at analyzing. Jesús Ramón García, from the Zapotec village of San Pedro Cajonos, who runs Video Cajonos with his son as a second cameraman and his Tama wife as a salesperson, was the first person to provide me with an analysis at Tama's Santa Rosa celebrations in 2012. I met Jesús Ramón at his pickup truck parked behind the village church. He is a jovial and engaging man and a larger-than-life festival vendor. The previous day's recording flickered on a large television set resting on the open bed of the truck. A group of ten people were assembled around the television set to watch the dance from the previous evening, featuring the band Super Klas. At first I just saw a *cumbia* show band performing in front of the dancers. Nothing in the sound or visuals suggested that the scenes had been shot in Tama, since the dancers were not wearing ethnic clothing and the songs were in Spanish. I gradually gathered from the comments of the spectators that what was special about this recording was the documentation of a baile with this particular band, currently popular all over central Mexico due to its hit "Pobre corazón," in Tama of all places. Jesús Ramón had edited the ninety-minute film overnight and slept a mere three hours, normal procedure for a videographer at a fiesta. The circle of people around the large television were having a lot of fun. But what exactly made them laugh? For the most part, they were amused by how some of the dancers, many of whom were well-known village people, performed, and they commented on the constellation of the couples, who had either just become acquainted or were long-standing spouses.

Moreover, consuming this village genre generates a sense of belonging and self-esteem: in home video style, viewers take pleasure in recognizing themselves and other familiar faces from the community. They identify their hometown as the dominant field of personal experience and social interaction, and thus as a physical environment they experience as both secure and pleasant.[30] The pleasure Tama viewers feel, however, is also tied to the visual divide. To this day, mainstream television—such as the broadcasts of Televisa and TV Azteca—has yet to represent indigenous people as an integral part of Mexican

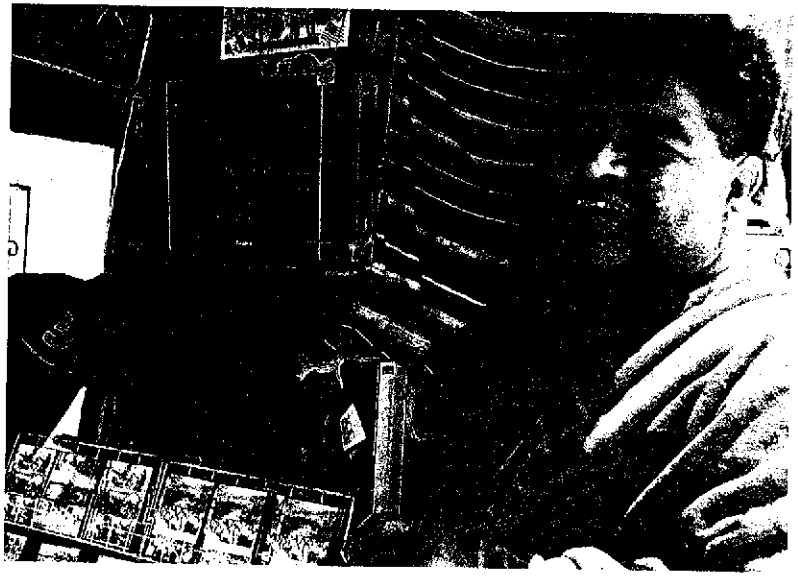

FIGURE 5.4. Jesús Ramón García of Video Cajonos, presenting his videos at Tama's Santa Rosa de Lima fiesta in August 2012. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

society. Indigenous characters in telenovelas continue to be portrayed stereotypically as servants.[31] In contrast, "indigenous" viewers see themselves in patron saint fiesta videos as subjects and protagonists on the television screen, and thus as part of a medium they have appropriated. Consequently, practices surrounding the fiesta videos contest hegemonic concepts of what the mass media consider "appropriate" representational subjects.

From a business standpoint, videographers generally concentrate on two different areas: family celebrations that they film for private individuals and the recording of the village fiestas, which they document even without a specific commission. In the first case, for example, the client purchases videos of a wedding, christening, or *quinceañera* celebration. Due to the increasing popularity of this genre, it is now common for a *padrino* and/or a *madrina de video* (some of whom live in one of Tama's satellite communities) to sponsor the recording, which can cost between one thousand and five thousand pesos. In the case of the patron saint fiesta videos, on the other hand, there is no need for sponsors, since videographers can make ten thousand pesos or more selling the DVDs to the attendees at thirty to fifty pesos apiece. It is difficult to quantify the earnings of commercial videographers, since there is a tendency to conceal large profits to prevent envy or criticism.

In Tama, Video Rojas and Video Tamix are the oldest businesses active in this field. Video Rojas is largely operated by the married couple Óscar Ro-

FIGURE 5.5. Watching a fiesta DVD of the dance event in the back of the Video Cajonos pickup truck at Tama's Santa Rosa de Lima fiesta in September 2015. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

jas Cruz and Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez, who have been producing films since 2005. Óscar is in charge of the first camera and the film editing, while Jaquelina is responsible for the second camera and occasionally takes over for her husband. Sometimes they employ an additional cameraman. In 2012, for instance, they hired a member of the Video Rey team from the Zapotec community of Guelatao to film the Santa Rosa de Lima fiesta in Tama, while Óscar was fully occupied with his responsibilities as a municipal official (councilor of education). The couple have a Nissan pickup for journeys to fiestas throughout the region, where they park in rented market spaces.

Video Tamix is a family business owned and run by Genoveva Pérez Rosas and her sons Romel and Illich Ruiz. Interestingly, Genoveva sees herself as a housewife who makes films on the side. Along with Jaquelina from Video Rojas, she is in fact a woman pioneer in the male-dominated field of village audiovisual production (as TV Tamix, a collective composed exclusively of men, demonstrates). Genoveva essentially manages Video Tamix. Her son Romel edits the films, while his younger brother Illich operates the camera and designs the DVD covers and the discs themselves. Over the years, the Ruiz family has performed a wide range of commissioned work and has made land dispute documentaries.[32] In addition, Video Tamix has made a video on a family that lost its house in a landslide, produced music videos for local rock

FIGURE 5.6. Genoveva Pérez Rosas of Video Tamix, recording the local philharmonic band at Tama's Santa Rosa de Lima fiesta in August 2015. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

bands, and made films at the annual Feria Cultural del Pulque event organized by the community youth.

The diverse range of the film work indicates the different inclinations of the videographers. Some, like Romel, are involved in film projects critical of village society. All of the videoastas, however, consider themselves amateurs and emphasize that they are self-taught.[33] They partly base their status on the fact that none of them has attended workshops such as those offered by video indígena. Interestingly, they refuse to even call themselves videoastas or *camarógrafos*, as they are not comfortable with the idea of actually being professionals. But their regular cooperation with communal filmmakers who have professional training has nonetheless given them a great deal of knowledge specific to their profession. The transfer of media knowledge on-site has proved crucial to setting up their businesses. Commercial and communal media makers do not adhere to a strict division when it comes to passing on knowledge or sharing equipment. Adherents of both fields value being able to ask for advice on the spot without further ado. Due to their practical advantage, knowledge transfers of this kind are frequent. Those who cooperate in this way profit in the long run, because favors are likely to be returned in the future.

Both Video Rojas and Video Tamix work at patron saint festivals over a vast region encompassing Villa Alta, the administrative center in the Zapotec-

speaking Sierra Norte, and villages in the Mixe Media region to the south. Over time, the videographers have learned to take the clientele in the different municipalities into consideration, as each has a specific relationship to its fiesta. Some communities regard the church Mass as an important component of the fiesta, while others find this uninteresting. Hence the filmmakers scrutinize the reaction of their individual audiences and try to design videos to match their tastes. They primarily judge the quality of their films by how successful they are in meeting audience expectations and by product sales.

At the same time, videographers are not solely dependent on their local and migrant clientele for success. Indeed, the village cabildos (that is, their officials) have different attitudes toward videorecording. Jesús Ramón of Video Cajonos noted that when the boom began in 2005, several villages insisted on staking a claim to this lucrative business. They argued that their local culture—in which the cabildos had invested considerable sums of money—should represent a communal cultural patrimony. The cabildo of Cotzocón demanded a payment of ten thousand pesos for a film permit. Jesús Ramón's response was to stay away from the village since then. Given that cabildo officials are replaced annually, however, the situation may now have changed.

As a result of such experiences, fiesta videographers now negotiate directly with the municipal officials on an annual basis. They endeavor to avoid up-front payments and instead create favorable conditions for their work and subsequent sales. Their ultimate goal is to obtain exclusive rights (*exclusividad*) and special permission from the cabildo to film the fiesta in its entirety and sell the extensive material on DVD. Romel from Video Tamix indicated that videographers have considerable leverage with municipal officials, who generally exploit patron saint fiestas to publicize their organizational talent and their ability to bring together the whole village. He has had the experience of persuading officials that it is in their best interest to capture on film the fiesta they organize, since it serves as visual proof of the extent of their local engagement, which is particularly important with respect to the distant satellite communities in the United States.

Furthermore, fiesta videos are an enduring testimony to a significant moment. According to Romel, these videos can enhance the officials' prestige since they are disseminated over both space and time. He and his father, who held an important office (as councilor of finance) in Tama in 2013, decided to broaden their business strategies. For example, when officials they knew through family relationships asked them to stage a *box ranchero* in their village for the first time, they complied and requested permission to record the fiesta.[34] The municipal officials agreed, recognizing that staging a popular sporting event and having it captured on a fiesta video would make their celebrations more appealing. As a rule, visitors from neighboring villages closely

observe and comment on the success of a patron saint fiesta year after year, which, in turn, serves as a barometer of the economic, religious, and political power of the hosting municipality. Officials therefore do their best to provide memorable highlights: they invite the most popular bands, organize a regional sports competition, or present other novel attractions.

In sum, these negotiations demonstrate videographers' self-determined path to professionalism. Since they are also comuneros/as, these videoastas have in-depth knowledge of the dynamics of patron saint fiestas and the motivations of the officials who organize them. A number of them have already held higher office themselves and helped to organize fiestas. The dual role of videographers has an impact on organizational structures, forms of interaction, and the ways in which the videographers acquire knowledge as part of their business. Hence they are not purely motivated by monetary gain, nor do they act in this way. Instead they strive to balance their commitment to making a profit with the ideal of being a good comunero/a (or they are pushed in this direction by the community). This ideal connects them to that part of their clientele that lives in the migrant satellite communities and seeks to preserve its rights and make contributions as comuneros/as from a distance.

The Invention of the Patron Saint Fiesta Videos in Tama

The fiesta videos are by no means specific to Tama. On the contrary, professional videographers specialized in documenting social events such as weddings and village fiestas are part of a global trend. The wedding videography business, for example, was established in the United States as early as the 1980s with the advent of affordable video cameras.[35] Yet as communities have distinctive needs, the social event genre (called *eventos sociales* in Mexico) had to be reinvented in places like Tama, where it has been adapted to meet local and transnational requirements and has become a standard item since the beginning of the 1990s. This genre has been developed on the basis of existing local media. The following examines how fiesta videos specifically evolved in Tama in connection with the new need, triggered by migration, to form a transnational community.

Up until the early 1960s, the people who took photographs or filmed in remote regions such as the Sierra Mixe were almost exclusively anthropologists, government officials, missionaries, or travelers, while the local inhabitants had to be content with their role as photo subjects. The first generation of Tama rural schoolteachers bridged the visual divide when they began to acquire small, affordable, and easy-to-use Kodak Instamatic cameras with a cassette film system. Committed to cultural work, they organized music and dance performances in schools. The teachers enriched the performances with photography, seeing it as the best medium to record and modernize these creative efforts.

Tama's television project, TV Tamix, exemplifies a further step toward a more sophisticated audiovisual documentation of local festivities.[36] When this project was initiated as part of the Casa del Pueblo in 1989, the collective of young men working there, including several teachers, turned to the patron saint fiesta as the first "natural" film subject to be captured on tape.[37] The fiesta itself is a platform for music and dance performances absorbed in a regional context. Using the then-novel medium of analog video, the collective set out to capture these traditional media productions. At that time, the first Tama villagers had already begun to migrate to the United States, a development partly spurred by their awareness of the scores of people from neighboring Zapotec communities wandering to the north. Returnees brought VHS video cameras back with them from the United States to record their children growing up, much in line with US home movies. Inspired by the idea of filming the Espíritu Santo fiesta, Genaro Rojas commissioned Fortino Lucio (a villager who lived in Los Angeles, and the father of Jesús Ramón García, the Video Cajonos entrepreneur) to purchase the Casa del Pueblo's first video camera. The story of this video camera is itself instructive in terms of the entanglement of village media, migration, and the innovation of communal practices: In 1990, Lucio brought this analog video camera to Tama to record the costly castillo fireworks, which he had sponsored that year for the Espíritu Santo fiesta. He thus used the camera to document his financial success as a migrant for relatives and friends in the United States and Mexico. TV Tamix later used this video camera to broadcast the fiesta live for the first time on local television in 1993.

Beyond this, the TV Tamix collective produced a documentary film on the Espíritu Santo celebrations entitled *Fiesta animada* (Animated fiesta). According to Hermenegildo and Genaro Rojas this film was not a patron saint fiesta video in the current sense of the genre. At that time, TV Tamix formed part of the video indígena movement initiated by the INI. Guillermo Monteforte, who was then still working for the INI, also helped to establish the Centro de Video Indígena (CVI) in the city of Oaxaca in 1993. TV Tamix produced the twenty-two-minute video for the CVI, and according to Genaro Rojas "it was widely circulated" ("y se movió bastante"), shown at workshops and festivals where this type of documentary was regularly presented and analyzed.[38] Though it was acknowledged as well made, some criticized its message as apolitical. *Fiesta animada* later continued to be disseminated through the distribution channels of Ojo de Agua Comunicación, an organization that contributed to the redefinition of the video indígena movement by making itself independent of the INI and its political guidelines.

Yet when they screened *Fiesta animada* in Tama itself, the village audience was somewhat disconcerted by its concise editing. From their perspective, it

left much to be desired, since everything they considered attractive at the fiesta (such as the basketball game) was captured only in fragments. In line with the "classic" documentary film approach, a refined montage style is thought not only to convey the film narrative, but also to make it "faster" and more entertaining. The villagers, however, preferred the raw footage of the fiesta to the edited version. The video indígena style of representing Tama's fiesta did not appeal to the local taste of an "indigenous" community like Tama, despite the former's claim of complying with the needs of "indigenous" audiences.

In 2000, the village's General Assembly withdrew its support for TV Tamix and revoked its communitarian status. Many residents distrusted the media project because, in their view, it lacked communal orientation. They accused the young male collective of recruiting more on the basis of their connection to the Rojas family than on communal principles.[39] Crucially, TV Tamix presented a statement of account to the General Assembly but was ultimately unable to justify the use of grant money from the Rockefeller Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. In the early 2000s, once Genaro and Hermenegildo realized that they could no longer work as communal filmmakers, they began to seek private commissions in the field of audiovisual production. Suddenly a new avenue of opportunity opened up for videography productions, now linked for the most part to the incipient mass migration to the United States.

In 2001, Hermenegildo took advantage of an invitation to the Smithsonian Institution's Native American Film and Video Festival to visit Los Angeles and look up relatives who had migrated there. During his visit, he showed films that TV Tamix had produced, including a recording of Tama's fiesta in honor of Espíritu Santo in 2000. He was overwhelmed by the enthusiastic response to the film and the high demand among migrants to watch it. This led him to set up his own commercial venture shortly after his return to Tama, which he called Pata de Gallo. Between 2001 and 2005, Hermenegildo produced annual videos of Tama's Espíritu Santo celebration. He relied less on the style of his own previous documentary film work than on the production methods of Video Líder, which pioneered the videotaping of patron saint fiestas in the Sierra Norte region.

Ingeniero Fernando Sánchez, a Zapotec businessman residing in Guelatao, was the first to show an interest in the standards and demands of this genre a few years earlier with his company Video Líder. Sánchez, who had learned the art of filmmaking thanks to a course he took in Los Angeles during a stay as a migrant laborer in the 1970s, had initially made documentary films with classic Oaxacan motifs, such as *El espíritu de Monte Albán* and *Days of the Dead in Mexico*. Their style is modeled on travelogues that portray "foreign countries and people" (precursors of Discovery Channel documentaries).

They were prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. Only later did Sánchez begin to tap into the fiesta videos as a new market, calling the movies *La fiesta de mi pueblo*, followed by the name of the particular community. These videos adopt an observational style and in part record the festivities in real time. Based on his own criteria rooted in the "classic" documentary, Sánchez had quite a negative opinion of the fiesta videos, including his own.[40]

Notwithstanding this precursor, Hermenegildo and Genaro Rojas had to reinvent the patron saint fiesta video for Tama. This was because new migration patterns called for novel solutions to communal institutions such as the patron saint fiesta. The village increasingly gave returnees or absent migrants a central role as sponsors. In the 2002 video that Hermenegildo and Genaro made of the fiesta in honor of Espíritu Santo, Genaro pointedly asks a leading official about his plans for migrant donations to the celebration. The official explains in detail what happens to their money at the fiesta. During this interview Genaro and the official both invoke the term *paisanos* or *paisanas*, referring to community members living in the United States. By doing so they extend the viewers envisioned by local film producers to include viewers in the United States and, at the same time, transform the hometown fiesta with a story line staged explicitly for a transnational audience.

My findings regarding the development of the patron saint fiesta videos proved surprising. When I first encountered fiesta videos, members of the video indígena circle, including Hermenegildo, explained that they were the work of self-taught filmmakers. Apparently lacking knowledge about film craft and film aesthetics, these videographers had recorded their footage without adhering to conventional filmmaking standards. Instead they left their camcorders on for hours at a time and recorded the overall scene in long shots from the same position. As it turned out, however, community filmmakers were instrumental in creating this genre, which in fact has its own professional standards. As locally embedded as the patron saint fiesta videos might appear at first—even in the context of the history reconstructed here—they are basically a product of Tama's transnational community. The way in which villagers living abroad influence the hometown's fiesta and its filmic representations will be examined in the next section.

Transnational Marketing and Audience Expansion

In the course of several migration waves with changing characteristics, the people of Tama have extended their community far beyond the borders of their hometown in the Sierra Mixe.[41] As mentioned earlier, their diaspora includes satellite settlements in the city of Oaxaca and northern Mexican cities, particularly in the state of Guanajuato, as well as cities in the United States, mainly Los Angeles, Chicago, and Milwaukee, and numerous parts of the country

with large-scale agriculture. From these sites, various translocal connections have been established to the village of origin, which holds a key sociopolitical position. For this reason Tama maintains a very close relationship to the state capital of Oaxaca, located 105 kilometers away. Prosperous families from Tama frequently have an apartment or a house there, and commute back and forth. As part of their migration experience, the people of Tama have also built up a profitable line of business away from home: the taquería. Interestingly, the tacos they sell in these restaurants are not seen as traditional food back home. On the contrary, migrants first learned to make them in Mexico City, and over the years set up their own businesses in northern Mexican cities, where conditions were more favorable for such ventures and allowed them to prosper.

Most migrants in Los Angeles, California, work as simple, albeit well-paid, laborers—at least compared to Mexico. As a rule, women find employment as maids and housekeepers and men in construction sectors such as plumbing and electricity, or in the taquería business. Most people from Tama first moved to the United States in 1999 and 2000, a period of economic expansion in the destination country. During this migration wave, a local coyote specialized in illegal border crossings. Today, interested individuals generally consult village diviners (Spanish: *adivina/o*; Ayuujk: *xëmääpy*) to determine the best day to travel.

This section focuses on the Los Angeles community's perception and coproduction of the patron saint fiesta videos. Due to the restrictive US policy toward job seekers from Mexico, this migration contains a new dimension. So far, the estimated four hundred paisanos and paisanas from Tama have not established a community with formal institutions (e.g., a hometown association) and political representation to the same degree as other Oaxacan diaspora communities in Los Angeles. One reason is their relatively late migration in comparison to other groups from Mexico and their lack of legal status in the United States. Sierra Norte Zapotec people, who immigrated in large waves in the 1980s, profited from the *amnistía* (the amnesty provided by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986) and were able to legalize their immigration status. As official US residents, they now travel freely back and forth between Mexico and the United States. Most of their satellite communities have an independent political committee (a *comité*) that organizes patron saint festivals in rented salons (called *kermeses*) in Los Angeles and raises funds that are subsequently invested in infrastructure projects in their hometown. Although the paisanos/as from Tama in Los Angeles organized themselves into a committee in 2004 in response to an acute conflict between Tama and its neighboring village Ayutla over water resources, it had a life span of only a few years. It was in fact dissolved as a result of the alleged corruption of its leader.

This notwithstanding, the people of Tama in Los Angeles foster close relations with one another by means of a common orientation toward their hometown. A cornerstone of their togetherness is their self-conception as comuneros/as of Tama even from a vast distance. Despite their long absences, many paisanos/as continue to regularly send remittances to their immediate families and relatives in the home village. Besides, they make annual payments for communal work (tequio) and—less regularly—donate to the patron saint fiestas in Tama. Numerous men and women from Tama have lived in the United States for nearly twenty years. Although visits back home to Mexico entail great risks and enormous cost because the border has to be crossed illegally, many have nonetheless returned temporarily to Tama in recent years if elected by the village General Assembly to a cabildo office, occasionally even bringing with them their wives and children. In some cases they rely on relatives in Tama when they are obliged to comply with their election to an office. A parent, for instance, may substitute for them by serving as an *interino*, a common mechanism used in the absence of the migrant in question. Marriages in the United States not only bring together paisanos/as from the village of origin, but also connect men and women from Tama with people from other Mexican regions or other Latin American countries.

Acquiring and watching patron saint fiesta videos is a means of reinforcing close ties with the village of origin. Each of the Tama families I visited in Los Angeles had numerous fiesta videos in their home collections. They preserve the annual films of their hometown in small family archives. Along with fiesta videos from *el centro*, Tama's central district, they also keep recordings of *agencias* (the municipality of Tama has eight such settlements in total) that organize their own patron saint fiestas. The families either arrange to have the DVD series sent to them or they acquire them from paisanos/as who act as *distribuidores* in Los Angeles either over the phone or door-to-door. Most of the distributors I met are relatives of videographers in Tama. Just about every family in the village has a close relative in the United States—a brother, a sister, a cousin, a parent, or a child. The DVDs are sent from Mexico via self-organized delivery services (*paqueterías*) that specialize in shipping iconic foods and items, such as *chintestle* (a chili paste), *hierbas* (herbs), and *totopos* (large dry tortillas), from home to the United States.

In Los Angeles, the fiesta videos are watched in different spaces of belonging, such as at home with the family or other members of the household, or in the context of a weekend get-together with guests. They are shown on an ordinary DVD player and a television set. At get-togethers neither hosts nor visitors watch the many hours of film in their entirety. They leave the video on as a means of attunement in the background, giving their full attention only to scenes of particular interest, which they then watch several times. Gatherings

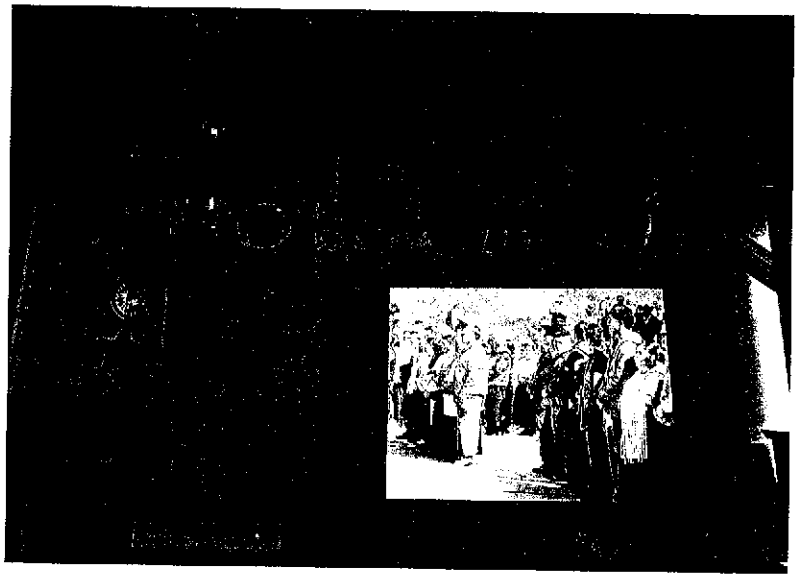

FIGURE 5.7. TV set with a fiesta DVD in the background at the home of people from Tama living in Los Angeles, March 2014. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

like these constitute important forums for cultivation of the paisano/a community. Viewed more broadly, the patron saint fiesta videos are consumed in Los Angeles in a field of tension of different belongings, where paisanos/as in the United States develop a sense of community that is linked explicitly to the hometown, but that is also, in part, independent of it.

The following example clearly illustrates the role of the fiesta videos in this process. In February 2014, I sat with eight paisanos/as at a barbecue prepared by our host Francisco, who has lived in Los Angeles since 1999 and works as a plumber.[42] These eight people constituted a highly mixed group in terms of the nature of their migration from Tama and the specific time periods, motivations, genders, and accompanying statuses this entailed.[43] Although I explicitly avoided raising the subject of fiesta videos at first, in order to get a sense of its relevance, it came up repeatedly in conversation, for instance when I asked Felipe, my neighbor at the table, where he came from. Felipe was about forty and worked with my host, Francisco, as a plumber in a business run by a migrant from Michoacán. In response to my question, Felipe not only referred to the Tama agencia Konkixp as his home village, but also felt moved to describe it, going into great detail about its new municipal building and drawing my attention to the beauty of its façade, newly painted light green. Although his words gave the impression that he had recently seen it, he had actually not returned there since he left for the United States in 1999. As it turned out, the

source of his description was a recent fiesta video from Konkixp.[44] Felipe, as part of this genre's large transnational audience, and I, as a recent visitor to his hometown, were thus able to exchange views on contemporary Konkixp.

The conversations at the barbecue repeatedly revealed a key aspect of these videos, namely, that the paisanos/as use them to gather audiovisual information about their hometown and revitalize their feeling for it. This, in turn, allows them to participate more fully in village life from a distance. Viewers in Los Angeles told me that they enjoy this genre in the style of "our telenovelas." In other words, they consume it as a series that gives them an opportunity to participate in the latest gossip and, in a manner of speaking, to be personally present in their hometown. These videos simultaneously show and create a social microcosm. Viewers have a specific interest in identifying family members and friends, and in witnessing their engagement at the fiesta as visitors or as officials. Moreover, they are eager to judge the appearance of the village, with its buildings, streets, and decorative painting, and to see its residents and their facial expressions, movements, clothes, and behavior. The staging of new fiesta elements and the transformation of the fiestas in general also capture their interest. All of these video aspects have the potential to trigger conversations, not only while audiences view the film, but also in other contexts, such as face-to-face meetings, chats on the phone, or contact on social media (e.g., Facebook), across the Mexican-US border. Based on these particulars, the paisanos/as comment on and intervene in community affairs. Such exchanges in a common audience space are forms of creating and participating in a transnational media space.

Clothes are a telling example of this. On the evening of the barbecue, sitting in the kitchen drinking coffee (drinking coffee at night is a typical Ayuujk pastime), the paisanas, who were in their thirties, began to comment on "good clothes." While watching the latest fiesta DVDs, they had been particularly surprised to see that most children in Tama now wore "good clothes," that is, name-brand clothes. Emilia, one of the visitors, joked that residents of the hometown wore even better clothes than they did in the United States, given that she herself wore her employer's cast-offs. All three women worked as housekeepers, two of them *encerrada* (locked up), as live-in housekeepers. The money that migrants who are encerrada save on room and board is seen as a particularly effective method of saving. They mainly invest their incomes in the education of their children, who study either in Mexico or in the United States.

It seemed to the paisanas that—thanks to them—the hometown had finally caught up with "being modern," having the higher standard of living that they themselves had sought when they migrated years before. The women complained that the traditional Ayuujk female costume has come to be

worn less and less, and then only by older women. The paisanas themselves flout convention in the United States by specifically wearing traditional attire, which they have sent to them from home for special events such as christenings and weddings, where the paisano/a community convenes. They also send videos of these events to their relatives in Mexico. Hence paisanos/as do not identify solely with their village of origin—they also compete with it and in many cases criticize it.

This conversation hints at a particular interpretation of the patron saint fiesta videos: paisanos/as see them as an indicator of the overall transformation of the home village. The fiesta is particularly suited to this purpose due to its character and its massive attendance, which serves as a demonstration of village power. The progress the migrants see in the images gives them a sense of pride in the impact of their earnings. Every paisano/a I met worked overtime during the week and on part of the weekend to amass as much money as possible now and in the foreseeable future. Most are between twenty and forty-five years old and support their families in Tama with regular remittances. Some also invest money in such a way as to facilitate their return to the village, for example, to build on land they own or on land they will inherit from their parents. Photographs and video recordings sent from Tama allow them to supervise these projects from Los Angeles.

In the United States, Tama migrants also watch patron saint fiesta videos, which they sometimes simply call "*la movie*," with their children, who have grown up in Los Angeles. This gives them an opportunity to acquaint their offspring with the hometown, a place with which this next generation might otherwise find it hard to identify. Parents often send US-born children to visit Tama on their own, starting at the age of ten. Unlike their parents, these children are legal citizens of the United States. An example is Marina, who emigrated from Tama in 1999. When we spoke in 2015 she was in the process of sending her sixteen-year-old daughter and twelve-year-old son to visit her grandparents in Tama's agencia El Duraznal. She hoped that the fact that she had regularly shown them fiesta videos would help make *el pueblo* less foreign to them.

Because members of this early generation of immigrants in particular have made their home in Los Angeles, they now invest their money in their quality of life. The fiesta videos, at ten dollars per DVD, are part of this. The migrants occasionally buy several DVD series of the same fiesta produced by different videographers, a luxury that could mean $160 for a single fiesta. One evening I visited the couple Felipe and Olinda. They live with their two children in a small house near Pico Boulevard in Mid-City, a modest residential area that has attracted a noticeable concentration of people from Tama, both single men and women as well as nuclear families and family groups. After a meal of

homemade tamales, Tama style—Olinda buys her corn dough at the nearby tortillería of the restaurant Expresión Oaxaca—Felipe and Olinda showed me their personal library of fiesta videos. Since 2005, they have been collecting films about their two agencias, Konkixp and El Duraznal, as well as those about Tama center, first in 8 mm format and later on DVD. Yet they are not merely consumers of this genre. Felipe lent Óscar Rojas money to help finance his first recordings, and in 2005 Olinda sponsored a recording made in El Duraznal when her father held the high religious office of *capitán*. Thanks to videotape in her home in Los Angeles, she was able to share this significant moment of her father fulfilling his duties as a comunero. The DVD is therefore both an expression of her financial contribution to the communal duty of her family and an opportunity to witness this momentous and emotional event from a distance.

The intense experience of watching patron saint fiesta videos is characterized by the various feelings that are awakened in the paisanos/as who live in Los Angeles. Francisco describes the enormous entertainment value of the films: like local viewers in the Sierra Mixe, he heartily appreciates examples of lo chusco.[15] At the same time, he remarks that watching the films in the United States "also hurts. You would like to be at the fiesta and not here. You see your parents, siblings, and cousins. . . . And you don't know when you'll be able to see them again." (Felipe, too, explains that he looks for relatives in the scenes and is quite sad when he finds one of his parents, as he has no idea when they will meet again.) Francisco's opinion of village videographers is therefore ambivalent. He has the impression, on the one hand, that "videographers are doing us a favor"; but on the other hand, he suggests that they might be exploiting the migrants' nostalgic feelings for profit. "We're also critical of them," he says. "In the beginning videographers used to charge up to fifteen dollars for a DVD as if it were a Hollywood picture with good actors. They [the Hollywood films] also cost fifteen dollars. They should have more consideration for us. After all, we don't earn that much and we work hard for our money."[16]

Viewers who live in Tama and viewers thousands of miles away from Tama constitute a transnational audience. The members of this audience, however, do not always see eye to eye on the issue of fiesta videos. At times they engage in open disputes, as in the case of DVDs of the fiesta's bailes. This has not stopped these DVDs from becoming the top-selling films in both the countries of origin and those of destination. Discontent about videotaped scenes of couples dancing to cumbia music and *música norteña* was so acute in 2011 that the then-*presidente municipal* temporarily prohibited them from being filmed. At the time, certain individuals who had either been videotaped while dancing in Tama or seen a recording in the United States complained to Tama's cabildo, accusing (in this particular case) Video Rojas of destroying their

FIGURE 5.8. Dance event at the fiesta of El Señor de las Cinco Llagas, Chuxnabán, April 2014. Photograph by Ingrid Kummels.

marriage. The accusations came from married men who had migrated north to make money and had been away from the hometown for a period of three to seven years. While watching DVDs of the bailes, they discovered their wives dancing with other men. Since these dance events are also an opportunity for attendees to signal that they are (once again) "single and without commitments" (*soltera/o y sin compromisos*) and looking for a new partner, taking part could be interpreted as evidence of infidelity.

The couples dance events are linked to a more comprehensive transformation of relationships over the years. While marriage arrangements in the 1980s were still based on parental decision, in the 1990s self-determined courtship, where a relationship could be initiated by the young man or the young woman, became commonplace. Female migrants in particular have contributed to increasing the autonomy of young people involved in courtship. Yet the consequences for the transnational audience watching fiesta videos have been quite dramatic. Some husbands in the United States, for instance, stopped sending remittances as a result of "visual evidence" of their wives' infidelity. The conflicts that arise from recording "illicit" dancing couples are widely discussed in Tama. In these media spaces, not just the couple concerned but also the larger transnational community of viewers debate basic questions regarding gender roles, transnational households, and child maintenance in a transborder marital situation. Inhabitants of Tama village complain that videotaping

has made it difficult for residents to enjoy the bailes in peace, whereas inhabitants of its satellite community in Los Angeles rely on the videos as a means of controlling their partners and other relatives from a distance. The videoasta Romel Ruiz Pérez explains the diverging interests of these audiences: "Many people buy the DVD because of the allure of finding out: 'I'll see if I discover my wife. Maybe she danced with another man.' I think those are two very different worlds. We who live here [in Tama, and work as videographers] receive complaints. And those who live there [in the United States] appreciate our recording because it allows them to watch us here [from a distance]. But people here don't like that."[47]

To summarize, patron saint fiesta videos have become a key element of opening new media spaces that allow for novel dimensions of transnational belonging in the wake of Tama's diasporization to the United States. Their role must also be understood against the backdrop of the relatively late arrival of Ayuujk immigrants in Los Angeles in the period after 9/11 and the particularly restrictive immigration policies toward migration from Latin America they have had to face. These migrants live under precarious conditions and can visit their country of origin only at considerable risk. Due to their marginalized and disenfranchised status in the United States, they are denied recognition and sociopolitical participation.

Residents of the hometown and the satellite community have felt compelled to look for new means of overcoming this exclusion. Fiesta videos are produced, circulated, and consumed in a tight exchange between residents living in Mexico and those who have settled in the United States; they have created crucial media spaces. Paisanos/as from Tama are essentially coproducers of these films, which they have in part commissioned and financed. They enjoy this genre as an entertaining diversion, and indeed often as a form of telenovela, one that allows them to keep in touch annually with relatives and friends who participate in a patron saint fiesta as their hometown's chief communally organized event. The multiple layers of information presented by the fiesta videos serve to compensate for the viewers' lack of direct access to the village of origin and its inhabitants, while keeping them up to date on current events. The films enable viewers to participate in conversations and gossip as if they were actually on-site. They are also used as a didactic device to socialize the second generation in the United States into the Tama communal way of life that they are expected to eventually experience in person one day. By accessing and creating a common imaginative space, members of this genre's transnational audience enhance and intensify their communication with one another.

On the other hand, paisanos/as also draw on fiesta videos in order to distance themselves from their hometown and assert their independence. While

watching the DVDs, they interpret the growth and modernization of the village in Oaxaca as largely resulting from their own work and financial contributions as migrants. For some migrants, moreover, the filmic sections showing the bailes present an opportunity to monitor their spouses back home in Mexico. Finally, the videos constitute a medium that permits migrants who have decided to stay in Los Angeles indefinitely to reconstruct their home there around the patron saint fiesta as a key cultural component.

The Political Dimension of Patron Saint Fiesta Videos

The videoastas who produce fiesta videos and the audience that consumes them both actively participate in the creation of new media spaces when they represent, view, and comment on Tama's celebrations via means of mass communication. In a twofold movement they not only have an impact on the community itself but also carry innovative forms of organization and media formats to the circuits beyond it. Several actor perspectives are at work in fiesta video production, circulation, and consumption, as various stakeholder groups debate current issues of importance for Tama as a community, one that has expanded beyond the national borders of Mexico and undergone rapid change as a result of international migration. Among other things, these stakeholders reflect on and discuss the development of the village of origin, the role of officials in village governance, and marital relations and parenthood. These dimensions of social life are examined for new fissures and inequalities that have arisen and that affect the numerous forms of engagement as individuals, family members, and members of the community. Many of these debates refer implicitly or explicitly to comunalidad, a ubiquitous political concept in this environment. They address the question of what it means to be a comunero/a in times of geographical dispersion, as well as the role of self-designed media, in particular patron saint fiesta videos, in the culture and social life of the transnational community.

There are a number of reasons that the audiovisual representation of patron saint fiestas specifically became a village genre, whereby local perspectives derived from the village of origin must be distinguished from those of satellite communities such as that in Los Angeles. Furthermore, actor groups such as officials and comunero/as, on the one hand, and commercial and communal videoastas, on the other, have different attitudes toward the mediatization of the fiesta. In the hometown the fiesta is a central traditional medium. Through live music and dance performances it identifies with its patron saint as the major figure of religious-political authority. In recent decades, the officials have secured migrant money and the involvement of paisanas/os in the fiesta's organization, enriching it with new elements in the saint's honor. Due to access to financial capital via government budgetary aid, migrant money, and

the growth in consumer purchasing power—which has benefited merchants, including the videoastas—the fiestas have become an attractive commercial hub. This economic development coincides with the ruling officials' interest in employing the services of videographers to record their contributions to the community. Filmic documentation of the officials' achievements is an effective method of diffusing them in time and space.

At the same time, these dynamics of the fiesta's capitalization are used to reinforce its function as the expression of comunalidad. The geographical dispersion of Tama's inhabitants is problematic given the required contributions to the fiesta (e.g., through physical presence and work). Yet the mediatization of the fiesta allows absent members to demonstrate to a transnational audience their commitment to their hometown in the form of financial contributions to the celebrations and to assess it via video. Thus to a certain degree mediatization ensures satisfying participation in the fiesta, albeit from a distance. It enables actors to socialize and to be perceived as comuneros/as, a crucial cultural element of indigenous communities throughout Mesoamerica. This mediatized form of comunalidad was of course not envisioned in the 1980s, when the term was first coined by intellectuals such as Floriberto Díaz.[48] Communality practices have moved on since then and have demanded redefinition.

Diasporization and mediatization have even enhanced the relevance of the patron saint fiesta as a major display of community power. At the same time, the celebrations involve an internal tug-of-war over the divergent interests and requirements associated with comunalidad. This is exemplified by disagreements between officials and videographers on the matter of ownership of fiesta images. Since officials organize the festivities, they may well consider the financial aspect of these visual images and demand a considerable payment for them from the videoastas. Officials and comuneros/as may see the patron saint fiesta as the cultural heritage of the village, giving the community the right to choose whether to commercialize its images or keep them to itself.

On the other hand, the members of Tama satellite communities in the United States, who have little opportunity to return to their village of origin, rely on the production of film images for other purposes: It is through mediatization that they establish and experience social relationships as part of a transnational community. The video recordings also enable them to contest social control in their hometown, such as when they gain insight into the private lives of the spouses they left behind. It is precisely because of this form of control that mediatization is looked on with ambivalence in the village of origin.

Tama's transnational community has not yet reached a broad consensus on the question of what it means to be a comunero/a in times of geographical

born insistence on the need to be optimistic against all odds. My examples of video activism do not offer modernist experimentalism but register a process and experience of radical change, the diasporic redefinition of concepts like democracy and revolution that occurs as indigenous notions of governance migrate and take up residence among a range of social activists and anarchists. Against the exaggerated emotionalism of the sensationalist mass media and the ubiquity of the horror film, the new distribution of the sensible that is articulated by current video activism is a politics of hope, an invitation to participate in the constituent creativity of a diasporic decolonial politics.

NOTES

Adjusting the Lens

1. Smith, "Decolonizing Hybridity."

2. Smith, "Decolonizing Hybridity," 342.

3. Smith, "Decolonizing Hybridity," 342. We might also ask why, when someone is indigenous, the audience assumes the right to interfere. In addition, and not unrelatedly, *Dulce convivencia* raises the question of when and why a particular film or video is considered community-made when in fact it is the work of an auteur, and when and why other works are labeled auteurist when they are the result of collaboration. The answers to these questions certainly must address colonial-looking relations and ethnocentric assumptions.

4. Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media*, 4–6.

5. Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media*, 6.

6. Lerner, "Dante Cerano's *Día dos*," 175.

7. Vázquez Mantecón, *El cine Súper 8 en México*, 307.

8. Rancière, *Disagreement*, 39.

9. Ginsburg, Abu-Lughod, and Larkin, *Media Worlds*; Wilson and Stewart, *Global Indigenous Media*.

10. Rodríguez, Kidd, and Stein, *Making Our Media*.

11. Dowell, *Sovereign Screens*, 23.

12. Himpele, *Circuits of Culture*; Schiwy, *Indianizing Film*; Wood, "Revolution and *Pachakuti*."

13. Wood, "Revolution and *Pachakuti*"; Wood, "The Metamorphosis of Cine Indigen(ist)a."

28. Many examples of this kind of linear and argumentative documentary can be found among the video productions made by the government-sponsored CVIs as well as others produced by the NGOs Ojo de Agua Comunicación and those supported by the Chiapas Media Project/Promedios.

29. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 149–53.

30. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 197.

31. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 199.

32. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 203.

33. Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary*, 206.

34. Naficy, *An Accented Cinema*, 21–22.

35. Dyer, *Pastiche*, 10.

36. Dyer, *Pastiche*, 14.

37. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 223.

38. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 223.

39. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 225.

40. The silk screen effect is a visual phenomenon seen in rear-projection televisions. It is described by viewers as the appearance of the texture of the television screen in front of the image.

41. "Taraspanglish Media Video Project es mediante el video informar a la gente acerca de los derechos y responsabilidades como migrantes, que uno tiene especialmente en los Estados Unidos en el área de California."

42. Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 222.

43. Ramírez Berg, *Cinema of Solitude*, 77.

44. Ramírez Berg, *Cinema of Solitude*, 77.

45. Stephen, *Transborder Lives*.

46. Stephen, *Transborder Lives*, 24–25.

47. Peluquero: Ya está haciendo frio, ¿verdad?

Cliente: Es muy diferente aquí la temperatura que allá en México. ¡Está cabrón!

Peluquero: Yo sé, yo sé.

Cliente: No estoy acostumbrado.

Peluquero: Si no te matan los cholos te vas a morir de un resfriado.

48. Peluquero: ¿Culeros, no?

Cliente: No me gustan por eso. O sea, o sea que son mexicanos y a la misma vez se aprovechan de uno que no sabe hablar inglés. Y ya unas veces uno va a la tienda y compra una cosa y se la quedan. Por eso no me gustan.

49. *Peliar* is a popular form of the verb *pelear* (to fight) and is used in informal conversation.

50. "Los paisanos ya que tienen sus papeles se portan más culeros." The dictionary of the Royal Spanish Academy notes that *culero* (asshole) in Mexico means "coward," but in Mexican slang the word refers to a person who injures or harms others.

51. Monsiváis, *Escenas de pudor y liviandad*, 292.

52. "Una voz de origen prehispánico/ un término introducido por trabajadores migratorios chilenos y peruanos/ el primer emperador chichimeca llamado Xólotl, etcétera." Monsiváis, *Escenas de pudor y liviandad*, 291.

53. Agustín, *La contracultura en México*, 105.

54. Castro, *Dictionary of Chicano Folklore*, 105.

55. Castro, *Dictionary of Chicano Folklore*, 61.

56. "¡Qué gacho! ¿Verdad? En lugar de que estuviéramos aquí más unidos así se portan. Ni modo."

57. Stephen, *Transborder Lives*, 25.

58. Nafici, *An Accented Cinema*, 55.

59. The dance of the Kúrpiti, or Cúrpites, is a very traditional dance of the P'urhépecha community. It originally comes from San Juan Parangaricutiro, but since the exodus caused by the eruption of the Paricutin volcano in 1943, it has been performed in towns such as San Juan Nuevo and Angahuán. This dance has pre-Columbian roots, which are now mixed with elements of the Catholic religion. According to Joyce M. Bishop, the dance involves the use of elaborated costumes and masks with "dark velvet knee britches over white cotton pantaloons," ceremonial sarapes, cloaks, ribbons, and other elements (Bishop, "Those Who Gather In," 394). *Kúrpiti* or *cúrpite* (from the Tarascan, *kúrpinjaa*) is a term that in Spanish means those who come together, gather in, or join in (391).

60. "Extraño mucho la danza. Ya quiero ir a bailar otra vez ahí, para que vean que todavía puedo."

61. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 18; Boone and Mignolo, *Writing without Words*, 3–7.

62. Schiwy, *Indianizing Film*, 8–9.

63. Hoesterey, *Pastiche and Cultural Memory*, 29.

64. Dyer, *Pastiche*, 21.

65. Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 20.

Chapter 5. Patron Saint Fiesta Videos

My thanks go to the following people from Tama and Los Angeles, who generously shared with me their knowledge and analysis of local and transnational media practices: Hermenegildo and Genaro Rojas Ramírez, Óscar Rojas Cruz and Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez, Genoveva Pérez Rosás, Romel Ruiz, Illich Ruiz, Jesús Ramón García, Fernando Aguilar Rojas, and Herlinda Martínez. Hermenegildo Rojas read and commented on a Spanish version of this article, which I discussed with him in order to strengthen my basis for an exchange of ideas.

1. Tamazulapam del Espíritu Santo's patron saint is the Holy Spirit, as is apparent from the town's name. Like other villages in the region, Tama also celebrates another major fiesta dedicated to Santa Rosa de Lima.

2. The "castle" consists of multiple figures arranged on a rack that are ignited in an elaborate display.

3. The term "film" in this chapter mainly refers to recordings on digital video, but will also be used as an umbrella term for analog video and celluloid film. "Video" refers to both analog and digital video.

"Ayuujk ja'ay" (which is used as an ethnonym), on the one hand, and "community," on the other, refer to different dimensions and senses of belonging. Individuals identify with the community of Tama based on their being a *comunero/a*, owning communal land, and complying with obligations such as serving voluntarily as an official. "Ayuujk" refers to this particular indigenous language and culture, whereby "being Ayuujk" has been couched in ethnopolitical terms ever since regional *líderes* (political strongmen) were able to establish the Distrito Mixe, which in 1938 became the only government district of Mexico to be defined by ethnicity.

4. Video indígena was later appropriated and resignified by the actors involved with a view toward their own political interest in self-determination. As Erica Cusi Wortham explains, "Video Indígena [is a] specific media categor[y] that [was] deliberately constructed in institutional settings in the 1990s" (*Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 9). The notion of video indígena has been disputed over the years, however, because of its origin in the Mexican state's patronage and the connotations of "indígena" as an othering term (Kummels, "*Cine Indígena*," 271–72).

5. See Cremoux Wanderstok, "Video indígena"; Plascencia Fabila, Gilberto, and Monteforte, "Cine, video y los pueblos indígenas"; Salazar and Córdova, "Imperfect Media"; Smith, "Mediating Indigenous Identity"; Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens"; Ramos and Castells-Talens, "The Training of Indigenous Videomakers"; Kummels, "*Cine Indígena*"; and Wortham, "Between the State and Indigenous Autonomy," "Más allá de la hibridad," and *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

6. The ethnographic research in Tama was sparked by my own involvement in its media sphere as a visual anthropologist and documentary filmmaker. In 1993, when I spent a day filming TV Tamix with Manfred Schäfer for a German television program, the collective consisted of Genaro and Hermenegildo Rojas, Vicente Antúnez, Tito Antúnez Núñez, Victoriano Guilberto Juárez, Alfonso López García, Rafael Juárez Martínez, Aureliano Martínez Núñez, and Jorge Pérez Jiménez. One of the members I happened to meet again twenty years later in Berlin came up with the idea of bringing the unedited films back to Tama. Once I had discovered self-designed village genres, among them the patron saint fiesta videos, I then began this long-term research in Tama and Los Angeles. My fieldwork up until 2015 included participant investigation and interviews with key actors over a total of eight months in Tama and one month in Los Angeles. See also Kummels, *Transborder Media Spaces*.

7. See, for instance, Macnamara, *The 21st Century Media (R)evolution*, 80.

8. Quijano, "Coloniality of Power"; Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*.

9. Schiwy, *Indianizing Film*, 40; Kummels, "*Cine Indígena*," 271.

10. The village's name in the Ayuujk language, Tuuk Nëëm, is prominently used in the context of modern mass media, i.e., the internet. Tuuk Nëëm literally means "place of one water."

11. I set "indigenous" in quotation marks to remind readers that the term is problematic. It unduly homogenizes people according to the historically constructed ethnic category of colonized inhabitants of the Americas and elides much more varied self-conceptions that include differences in gender, age, profession, and locality.

12. Due to disputes among its members prior to the Second Cumbre Continental de Comonicación Indígena del Abya Yala, CAYUUK has not been operative as an organization for some time.

13. Floriberto Díaz identified the following as the five central elements of comunalidad: (1) a territorial space delimited and defined by possession; (2) a common history that is passed down orally; (3) a variant of the language of the people (*pueblo*); (4) an organization that defines the political, social, civil, economic, and religious; and (5) a communal system of justice administration. Díaz, "Comunidad y comunalidad," 38.

14. Aquino Moreschi, "La comunalidad como epistemología del Sur," 8.

15. Batalla, "El concepto de indio."

16. The explicitly community-oriented media makers prefer to self-identify as comunicadores, not as filmmakers or videoastas, because the term "comunicadores" avoids reference to current technology alone. Instead it emphasizes the historical continuity of the unremunerated use of media by indigenous people for social ends. Servindi, *Comunicación y comunicadores indígenas*, 11–12.

17. To avoid confusion, I only use the name Video Tamix to refer to the commercial media enterprise that Genoveva Pérez Rosas and her sons have managed since 2006. The TV Tamix collective also called itself Radio y Video Tamix.

18. A well-known advocate of the deterministic position is Marshall McLuhan.

19. Kummels, introduction to *Espacios mediáticos*.

20. The term "Ayuujk" is generally preferred as a term for self-identity, although "Mixe" is often used in everyday life, especially when the spoken language is Spanish. Both terms have several semantic levels, which refer to the local language and the people who speak it or identify as Ayuujk on the basis of a common culture and engage in service to the community.

21. *Usos y costumbres* is a contentious term, not least because it characterizes a vital civil-religious institution as static "customs." Numerous scholars prefer to call it an "internal normative system" (*sistema normativo interno*). Nevertheless, it is the term that people in Tama adopted for the most part, equating it with their notion of comunalidad.

22. Every Tama household has a close relative living in a satellite community. Some people estimate that 50 percent of the municipality's population lives outside the hometown.

23. The research term "mediatization" refers to how these "core elements of a cultural or social activity (e.g. politics, religion, language) assume media form." Stig Hjarvard, quoted in Couldry, "Mediatization or Mediation?," 376.

24. The Casas del Pueblo were founded in rural communities in 1990 based on a development program implemented by the Oaxacan state. Ojo de Agua Comunicación is an NGO that split from INI's Transferencia de Medios Audiovisuales program in 1998. It is now a central organization that supports the radio and video operations of indigenous communities in Oaxaca and also produces its own films.

25. My interlocutors for this topic, who position themselves as communal filmmakers, were Carlos Pérez Rojas, Vicente Antúnez, Yovegami Ascona, and Hermenegildo and Genaro Rojas.

26. *Recepción de bandas, La tradicional Calenda* (disc 1); *Desfile deportivo, Inauguración de la Copa Mixe* (disc 2); *Programa cultural, Baile de Super T y Los Originales de Tlahui* (disc 3); *Audición musical, Quema de castillo* (disc 4); *2da noche de baile Maike y Sus Teclados Super Uno, Grupo musical Calenda y Grupo La Sombra* (disc 5); *Partidos finales infantil, pasarela, cadetes femenil y varonil, Finales de la Copa Mixe 2013* (disc 6); *Partidos finales de basquet bol master, juvenil, femenil y varonil, Finales de la Copa Mixe 2013* (disc 7); *Programa de premiación, 3ra. noche de baile Grupo Siglo XXI* (disc 8); and *Despedida de bandas* (disc 9).

27. Today, authorship is frequently indicated by a corporate logo on the videos. Videographers took this measure to prevent local piracy.

28. Here I summarize corresponding statements from interviews with Jesús Ramón García (Tamazulapam, August 2012), Óscar Rojas Cruz and Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez (Tamazulapam, April and May 2013), and Romel Ruiz Pérez and Genoveva Pérez Rosas (Tamazulapam, August and October 2013; and Chuxnabán, March 2014).

29. *Costumbres* is the word used in Spanish for the Ayuujk religion. It refers to fowl's blood as a central element of highly complex offerings to the forces of nature.

30. Moran, *There's No Place Like Home Video*, 61. Although Moran analyzes the home video genre in the culture-specific context of US society, some of his findings apply to the transnational village under study here. Focusing on homemaking practices as culturally varying practices of uprootedness/rootedness, I detected that video use of constructing images of "home" (*comunidad*) may coincide cross-culturally between different societies.

31. One example of this is a Televisa telenovela from 2012, *Un refugio para el amor*, in which the indigenous Tarahumara protagonist is a housemaid.

32. Kummels, "Negotiating Land Tenure."

33. Videoasta Jaquelina Rojas Sánchez explained, "We are autodidacts" ("Somos como líricos"), *líricos* being a term used to describe self-taught musicians.

34. A box ranchero resembles a boxing competition but does not adhere to all the rules of professional boxing. Virtually anyone can participate, although men and women compete separately.

35. Moran, "Wedding Video and Its Generation."

36. As a pioneer local TV project in an "indigenous" community, TV Tamix has already received scholarly attention by media anthropologists such as Daniela Cremoux Wanderstok and Erica Cusi Wortham. Wortham's research mainly covers the years up to 2000, when TV Tamix came to an end. She does not specifically discuss TV Tamix's involvement in patron saint fiesta videos. Nor does she deal with Tama's media production as part of a wider and diversified media field, which initially adopted mass media independent of the INI and was later coopted as part of video indígena.

37. Genaro and Hermenegildo Rojas, interview with the author, Tamazulapam, September 2013. The TV Tamix collective filmed the celebrations annually in Tama's center and in some of its municipal settlements (*agencias*), and also broadcast the raw footage on local TV.

38. The early video indígena films in Mexico consisted exclusively of documentaries with a political message to demonstrate indigenous peoples' empowerment. Although videographers who trained at workshops in this communal media sphere were encouraged to develop their own "indigenous" visual ideas, their documentaries initially emulated the "classic" documentaries made by Mexican anthropologists on indigenous peoples. These were the films regularly screened at INI and CVI workshops.

39. See also Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 163–64.

40. Ingeniero Fernando Sánchez, interview with the author, Oaxaca City, August 2013.

41. This interweaving of Tama's social, cultural, religious, and political life with migration to the United States is comparable in many ways to the situations that Lynn Stephen, in *Transborder Lives*, describes for Zapotec communities such as Teotitlán del Valle. This book expands the analysis of transborder dynamics by taking into account the mutual shaping of social relations and media and the respective mediatization of local life. Dante Cerano ("Purhépechas vistos a través del video"), Ulla D. Berg ("Videoculturas itinerantes"), and Lynn Stephen (*We Are the Face of Oaxaca*) have pioneered the subject of the mediatization of social relationships in the context of Latin American migration to the United States.

42. I use pseudonyms for Tama villagers living in the United States.

43. The group included men and women, married and unmarried. Some had lived in the United States for more than twenty years and some had been there for only two years.

44. While fiesta videos are not the sole source of information on the village of origin in the age of cell phones and Facebook, they are nonetheless still important. Since the introduction of the mobile network in Tama in 2011, paisanos/as connect with residents in Tama and receive most of their information on current affairs in the village through Facebook and cell phones.

45. He sees the *veteranos* (veterans) basketball game as *chusco* since these older players tire more easily, making their movements less athletic.

46. Francisco, conversation with the author, Los Angeles, February 24, 2014.

47. Romel Ruiz Pérez, interview with the author, Tamazulapam, March 12, 2013.

48. Díaz, "Comunidad y comunalidad."

Chapter 6. *Romper el cerco*

1. It does, however, have a list of acknowledgments.

2. Canalseisdejulio is often referred to in print as "Canal 6 de Julio" (see, for instance, Mendoza, "Canal 6 de Julio"; and Magallanes-Blanco, *The Use of Video*, 73). Different versions of its logo incorporate the number 6 rather than the word "seis." In films over the last decade in which it refers to itself in print and on-screen, it usually writes out its name as "canalseisdejulio," with no capital letters or spaces. I have chosen to capitalize it here for the sake of simplicity.

3. Couldry and Curran, *Contesting Media Power*.

4. Downing, *Radical Media*.

5. Rodriguez, *Fissures in the Mediascape*.

6. On Canalseisdejulio, see Mendoza, "Canal 6 de Julio"; and Magallanes-Blanco, *The Use of Video*. On Promedios, see Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens"; and Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

7. He graduated from and now teaches at the University Center of Cinematography Studies (Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematográficos) of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Universidad National Autónoma de México).

8. Ventura and Viveros are both, in 2017, professors of film at the Autonomous University of Mexico City (Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México). Viveros is also the university's communications coordinator.

9. Turner, "Representation, Collaboration and Mediation"; Ginsburg, "'From Little Things, Big Things Grow'"; Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

10. Buddle, "Transistor Resistors," 140.

11. See also the volume that Carlos Mendoza edited for the association's twentieth anniversary, *Canal 6 de Julio: La guerrilla fílmica*.

12. Mendoza, "Canal 6 de Julio"; Mendoza, "Disputo por la pantalla"; Mendoza, *La invención de la verdad*, 217–20.

13. Mendoza, "Canal 6 de Julio," 48.

14. Carlos Mendoza, interview with the author, Mexico City, July 9, 2007.

15. In this sense, Canalseisdejulio fits into the broad context of independent film that Sherry B. Ortner describes as having emerged in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s. Ortner, *Not Hollywood*.

16. Mendoza, "Canal 6 de Julio."

17. Viveros, "Un trabajo necesario," 65.

18. Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens"; Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

19. Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens," 162.

20. Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens"; Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

21. Worth and Adair, *Through Navajo Eyes*; Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*.

22. Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens," 176.

23. Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 206.

24. For more on this trend of "creating stars" in US documentary films, see Ortner, *Not Hollywood*.

25. Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 58.

26. Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 69.

27. Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 206.

28. Wortham, *Indigenous Media in Mexico*, 217.

29. One might cite Michael Moore's films as following the extreme model, as his films are synonymous with his name, face, public persona, and reputation.

30. Marcos attempted to rename himself Delegado Zero (Delegate Zero) for the campaign, but the name didn't seem to stick. For this reason, I use his more well-known alias here.

31. This material was initially featured in a series of Promedios films about La Otra Campaña that are distributed by the Chiapas Media Project. It was also used in Défossé's film *¡Viva México!* (2009), distributed by Terra Nostra Films.

32. Due to the transportation difficulties of getting to Atenco as a result of the blockade and the police presence, however, he was unable to arrive much before midday.

33. Mario Viveros, interview with the author, Mexico City, July 7, 2008.

34. Mario Viveros, interview with the author, Mexico City, July 7, 2008.

35. Nicolas Défossé, interview with the author, Mexico City, March 17, 2009.

36. From most perspectives the lines between these categories are ill-defined and porous. Independent journalists were largely covering the campaign because they believed in it and saw themselves as activist media. The situation is complicated in Mexico, where the penalty for foreigners demonstrating against the state is to be expelled from the country and prevented from returning for five years. This makes the position of sympathetic international media producers particularly vulnerable.

37. Nicolas Défossé, interview with the author, Mexico City, March 17, 2009.

38. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 67.

39. Graeber, *Direct Action*; Juris, *Networking Futures*.

40. Khasnabish, *Zapatismo beyond Borders*.

41. EZLN, "Sixth Declaration of the Lacondan Jungle," June 28, 2005, http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/sdsl-en.

42. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 118.

43. It is notable that in his theorization of publics and counterpublics, Warner is borrowing from and attempting to redefine Nancy Fraser's conception of what she calls "subaltern counterpublics." Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 123.

29. According to these authors, "The EZLN's strategy has focused on mobilizing civil society. On August 27, 1995, 1,300,000 people participated in a nationwide consultation that was organized by sympathizers of the movement" (La estrategia del EZLN se ha enfocado en la movilización de la sociedad civil. En una consulta organizada por los simpatizantes del movimiento a nivel nacional el 27 de agosto de 1995, en la cual participaron 1,300,000 personas). The EZLN made the decision not to convert itself into a political party, instead favoring the creation of an independent organization at the margin of the state, "from where it seeks to generate democratic practices based on participation and direct action by civil society instead of pursuing armed or electoral options" (y desde ahí pretende generar prácticas democráticas basadas en la participación y acción directa de la sociedad civil, en vez de las opciones armada o electoral). Baronnet, Mora Bayo, and Stahler-Sholk, introduction to *Luchas "muy otras,"* 29.

13. "es la comunidad de los pueblos tsotsil, tseltal, ch'ol, tojolab'al, junto con la población mestiza en las zonas Altos, Selva, Norte y Fronteriza de Chiapas que habitan ejidos, rancherías y 'nuevos poblados' establecidos en tierras que fueron tomadas tras el levantamiento sobre todo en el primer año de la rebelión." Baronnet, Mora Bayo, and Stahler-Sholk, introduction to *Luchas "muy otras,"* 22.

14. Baronnet, Mora Bayo, and Stahler-Sholk, introduction to *Luchas "muy otras,"* 21.

15. Shannan Mattiace explains that demands for self-governance were first articulated in 1975 in the face of the PRI's effort to administer indigenous peoples in Mexico through the formation of Consejos Supremos and a Consejo Nacional de Pueblos Indígenas (Mattiace, *To See with Two Eyes*, 62–65). Héctor Díaz-Polanco discusses the Zapatista demand for autonomy in light of the Mexican state's refusal to truly negotiate any reform. While indigenous communities in Oaxaca have been advocating primarily for local, municipal autonomy, the Zapatistas have sought to create regional autonomous zones. Although the San Andres Accords were never implemented, the autonomous rebel territories under the protection of the EZLN have implemented de facto autonomies, which are based on the ideal of open, informed discussion in assemblies and the consensus of everyone in a community or region, or their authorized representatives (*consulta*). Díaz-Polanco, *La rebelión zapatista*, 223–24.

16. Martínez Luna, *Comunalidad y desarrollo*, 27.

17. Nava Morales, "Comunalidad."

18. See Martínez Luna, *Comunalidad y desarrollo*; Nava Morales, "Comunalidad"; Aquino Moreschi, "La comunalidad."

19. "las políticas económicas y culturales del capital, y a los rezagos históricos de la colonialidad." Baronnet, Mora Bayo, and Stahler-Sholk, introduction to *Luchas "muy otras,"* 21.

20. "Las prácticas indígenas de autonomía política en las diferentes zonas de influencia zapatista en Chiapas . . . generan una reconceptualización de lo político que emerge desde los espacios de la educación, en los talleres de salud, en las asambleas, en los colectivos de producción de las mujeres y de los hombres." Baronnet, Mora Bayo, and Stahler-Sholk, introduction to *Luchas "muy otras,"* 20.

21. Mattiace, *To See with Two Eyes*, 111; Díaz-Polanco, *La rebelión zapatista*, 15.

22. Díaz-Polanco, *La rebelión zapatista*, 16; Mattiace, *To See with Two Eyes*, 110. In 1995 the PRI recognized the right of indigenous communities in Oaxaca to govern according to their *usos y costumbres*. Some in the political sciences have interpreted this recognition as a strategy of containment, a reaction of the Mexican state in the face of the Zapatista uprising in neighboring Chiapas (Anaya Muñoz, *Autonomía indígena*; Goodman, "Voice, Loyalty, Exit or 'Extension'?"). In other words, indigenous autonomy becomes exemplary of the control of the state: the effective administration of difference, now reduced to a local phenomenon without transcendence, incorporated into the existing Mexican state (whether ruled by the PRI or by another political party). Díaz-Polanco judges the preference for local autonomous rule over regional models as a limitation in this sense (*La rebelión zapatista*, 213). Mattiace argues, however, that local and regional autonomy projects are complementary and that effective local autonomy must create the basis for regional autonomy, particularly given the risks of power abuse still present in many communities (*To See with Two Eyes*, 110). See also Stephen, *¡Zapata Lives!*

23. For more on the context of the production and distribution of Chiapas Media Project/Promedios videos, see Halkin, "Outside the Indigenous Lens."

24. Roberto Olivares, conversation with the author, Oaxaca, August 2010.

25. The sources included Corrugated Films, Mal de Ojo TV, Ojo de Agua Comunicación, Canalseisdejulio, Universidad de la Tierra, Gringoyo Productions, IndyMedia Oaxaca, Mario Viveros, Cooper Bates, the Chiapas Media Project in Oaxaca, and Narco News. The film's numerous still photos are attributed to a long list of individuals.

26. There are at least thirty-five activist video shorts about the uprising in circulation through the street vendors (who also sell pirated Hollywood productions) in the markets of Oaxaca. They are displayed alongside other independent regional and national activist media producers, including IndyMedia and the production collective discussed by Livia Stone in the previous chapter of this volume.

27. Stephen, *We Are the Face of Oaxaca*, 145–77.

28. Rancière, *Disagreement*, 28–30.

29. The authoritarian reaction to media occupation speaks to the intimate alliance between the state and mainstream media in Mexico. See Sinclair, "The Globalization of Latin American Media"; and Cantú, *Medios y poder*.

30. Roberto Olivares, conversation with the author, Oaxaca, August 2010.

31. One of the APPO participants wrote, "Without denying their differences, teachers, workers, indigenous communities, artists, migrants, libertarian collectives, militants of political organizations, and people not affiliated with any party had come together in the APPO, an experience that was unprecedented and, at once, immemo-

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Partidos finales infantil, pasarela, cadetes femenil y varonil, Finales de la Copa Mixe 2013 (disc 6)

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