Paz y Amor: The Making of Mexican Hippie Culture

Allie R. Cobb
arcobb@g.clemson.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/all_theses

Part of the Cultural History Commons, Latin American History Commons, and the Social History Commons

Recommended Citation

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses at TigerPrints. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Theses by an authorized administrator of TigerPrints. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.
PAZ Y AMOR:  
THE MAKING OF MEXICAN HIPPIE CULTURE

A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
History

by  
Allie Rebecca Cobb  
May 2022

Accepted by:  
Dr. Rachel Moore, Committee Chair  
Dr. Steve Marks  
Dr. Jürgen Buchenau
ABSTRACT

Following the violent government massacre of students in October of 1968, Mexican youth turned away from organized protest and turned on to the likes of Jimi Hendrix and Timothy Leary to challenge established society. This project focuses on Mexican hippie culture and Mexican hippie identity. It argues that hippie culture flourished in Mexico because of the development of consumer society and offered a way for Mexican youth to rebel against traditional authority while feeling a part of an international youth culture and at the same time reshaping what nationalism meant to them. In other words, hippie culture offered youth a dual identity: one that allowed them to be a part of the international community of hippies, as well as a national community they believed was uniquely Mexican.
DEDICATION

For Josh
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my committee for their support and guidance. Dr. Rachel Moore’s tireless encouragement, empathy, and humor kept me going when I felt like I could not. Our meetings were often a highlight of my week. Dr. Moore served as my thesis advisor and, along the way, became a role model. Dr. Steve Marks’s help and support were also invaluable. It was a pleasure to work as a teaching assistant for Dr. Marks for three years. He taught me a great deal about history and a lot about life when I sought his advice on many things, from the best research practices to the best wine. Dr. Jürgen Bucheanu’s guidance and expertise were critical to the shaping of this work. I greatly appreciate his willingness to serve on my committee.

I would also like to thank the directors of the graduate program during my time here, Dr. Paul Anderson and Dr. Michael Meng. Dr. Meng’s organization and advocacy for his students are immensely appreciated. Dr. Anderson’s confidence in me when I had none in myself is appreciated beyond words. Always direct but kind, I know that Dr. Anderson was molding his students not just for graduate school, but for life.

Thank you to the chairs of the History Department during my time, Dr. James Burns and Dr. Amit Bein, as well as to the rest of the History faculty, especially to those with whom I had the opportunity of taking a class.

Thank you also to Sally Mauldin, for whom I had the privilege of working as a research assistant during my final year. Sally’s organization, passion, and drive never ceased to amaze me. Behind her back, I always called her “Superwoman.”
I also want to thank my professors from Presbyterian College, especially from the history department. Thank you to Dr. Anita Gustafson, whose kindness and passion for history inspired me. Thank you to Dr. Michael Nelson, who first suggested I think about pursuing history in graduate school. Thank you to Dr. Roy Campbell, who has led me on adventures all over the world and fueled my passion for traveling. A special thank you to Dr. Jackie Sumner for her enduring support, guidance, empathy, and friendship. The inspiration for this project was born many years ago in a class of hers in Neville Hall. I hope she knows how much her mentorship means to me and how much I look up to her.

Muchísimas gracias a los profesores que me enseñaron español. El verano que pasé en Middlebury, Vermont aprendiendo español y haciendo amigos de por vida será para siempre uno de los mejores momentos de mi vida. Thank you to the Clemson History Department for its generous financial support in my language learning endeavors.

Thank you to the librarians who helped me tremendously with this research. A special thanks to Anne Grant and Dr. Yang Wu.

Thank you to the South Pacific World War II Museum staff in Vanuatu, where I interned after my first year of graduate school, and to the friends I made during that time.

Thank you to my friends both in and outside of the program. I am infinitely fortunate to have the friends that I do. A special thanks to my friend and roommate Annie Bruno, who made this final year and the writing of this thesis not only bearable but a lot of fun too.

Several families deserve thanks for making my time at Clemson extra special. Thank you to Jon, Ashley, Ivan, and Elena Glover for their friendship, trust, and support.
that afforded me opportunities that I otherwise would not have had. Thank you to the
Cook family, especially Lisa, for their guidance, support, and love. Thank you to Jaye
Melanson and Coco for the fun times and friendship. Thank you to the Davis family,
Nichole, Eric, and especially Theo, for allowing me into their home and letting me be a
part of their lives in a small way.

Thank you to my family, and especially to my grandparents: Meme and Papa, and
Sweet Nanny and Papa Jim. I am especially proud to now be a third-generation graduate
of Clemson University, following my late grandfather, Henry Rogers Cobb, Sr. (Class of
1961), and my father, Henry Rogers Cobb, Jr. (Class of 1983).

Lastly, I would like to thank my immediate family, without whom I would not be
the scholar or, more importantly, the person I am today. My entire life, my mother has
shown me what it means to work hard, sacrifice, and love unconditionally. Her relentless
work ethic and willingness to serve are things I still strive to match. My father generously
supported me on this journey and never rushed me to finish this degree. He has taught me
the importance of forming relationships, the power of keeping things in perspective, and
perhaps the greatest lesson of all: the beauty of forgiveness. My younger siblings,
Mitchell and Emily, offered unwavering support and just the right amount of distraction
during graduate school. Those two are models of resilience. I hope that I have been and
will continue to be the big sister that the two of them deserve. Mom, Dad, Mitchell, and
Emily, I hope you can see yourselves reflected in me and in this project. I love you.

Thank you all. I hope I have made you proud.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterculture and Early Examples</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hippies in the United States</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Beats and Hippies in Mexico</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argument</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Literature</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER I. STRANGE BEDFELLOWS:</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSUMER SOCIETY AND HIPPIE CULTURE IN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mexican Miracle and Mexico’s International Image</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumption and Identity</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relationship Between Consumer Society</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Hippie Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Consumption</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. GENDER AND JIPISMO: A CULTURAL</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHALLENGE AND REINFORCEMENT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Gender Ideas</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Expansion of the Male Look and</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanence of His Superiority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Struggle for Female Agency</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents (Continued)

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Freedom and the Male Gaze</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminized Indigeneity</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. JIPISMO AND ROCK-AND-ROLL: THE REAL THING OR A SIMPLE IMITATION?</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Relationship Between Rock-and-Roll and Hippie Culture</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitation versus Authenticity</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Official Opinion Regarding Native Hippies</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avándaro and the Youth Perspective</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Beginning of the End</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```
INTRODUCTION

To think of the 1960s and 1970s is to conjure images of young hippies hanging out in Greenwich Village or San Francisco and the tagline “sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll,” student protests against the Vietnam War, Civil Rights demonstrations, and fears of the Cold War escalating. Less imagined, though, are these same sorts of youth hanging out in the Zona Rosa of Mexico City, located north of the Colonia Roma and La Condesa. However, Mexico had its own colorful counterculture that flourished during the late 1960s until the early 1970s known as la onda. La onda referred to the broad countercultural movement in Mexico which included art, literature, music, alternative lifestyles, and fashions. A subsection of la onda included those who were hippies (also spelled jipis, and also called jipitecas or xipitecas). On September 14, 1968—less than a month before the October massacre at Tlatelolco—the Long Island Press, a daily out of Queens, New York, published a prescient article titled “The Student Revolt: A Mexican Dilemma.” The author, Ruben Salazar, wrote that walking around the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) were “long-hair bearded youths and their mini-skirted girl friends [sic] looking as rebellious as any at Berkeley.”

Counterculture and Early Examples

---

While the idea of a counterculture was not unique to the 1960s—indeed, countercultures existed in other societies prior to the studied period—\(^2\) the counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s has intrigued historians and sociologists since its beginning. In 1960, sociologist Milton Yinger coined the word “counterculture” to describe some of the subcultures that he witnessed developing at that time such as hippies and rock-and-rollers. He used the term to refer to groups whose values and practices sought to operate apart from the mainstream culture. More recently, W. J. Rorabaugh has distinguished between subculture and counterculture by claiming that those who belong to a subculture may have beliefs or practices outside of the “norm” for the mainstream society, but otherwise participate in the dominant society. Those who belong to a counterculture hold beliefs and practices that are opposed to the dominant culture and seek to exist outside of or apart from mainstream society.\(^3\)

The Lost Generation and Beat culture both serve as earlier examples of sub- or countercultures in the US during the mid-twentieth century. The Lost Generation was the young men and women of a subculture that developed following the end of the first World War. John Leland, in his history of “hip,” writes that for this generation “the [US] after the war reeked of failure and hypocrisy.”\(^4\) These men and women saw the destruction that modern (war) technology was capable of. Their response was disenchantment and a sense of hopelessness. This was often apparent in the literary works

\(^2\) W. J. Rorabaugh claims that “[E]very modern, complex society” has such a dominant mainstream culture that those who adhere to a different lifestyle are said to belong to a subculture. *American Hippies* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.


of this generation including those by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway.
Malcolm Cowley, writing in 1944, claimed that the writers of this generation “had no
home except in the past, no fixed standards, and, in many cases, no sense of direction.”
Howard categorizes the Lost Generation as a subculture rather than a counterculture
because they wanted to enjoy privileges that belonged to a different group, rather than
live outside of mainstream society.

Howard describes the Beats, active in the 1950s, as a counterculture for their want
to live apart from the dominant culture. The Beat generation developed after the Second
World War in the United States and served as a precursor to hippie culture. They too saw
a disillusionment with contemporary society and were united by a “new vision.”
Individual suffering, death, and, in a shift from the Lost Generation writers, a sense of
hope were dominant themes in Beat literature. There was also a spiritual element in Beat
culture. Stephen Prothero writes that “the beats shared…an undefined commitment to a
spiritual search. They aimed not to arrive but to travel and, in the process, to transform
into sacred space every back alley through which they ambled and every tenement in
which they lived.”
Howard claims that what separates the Beats from the hippies was the hippies’
desire to build communities. Despite an emphasis on individualism, hippies strove to
establish communities that would serve as examples for the rest of society of what it

---

5 Malcolm Cowley, “The Generation That Wasn’t Lost,” *College English* 5, no. 5 (1944): 233,
could become according to Howard. On the other hand, although sometimes living in the same neighborhoods, Beats did not actively try to establish communities that would serve as a reference for the rest of society. Rorabaugh points out that another critical difference between Beats and hippies was the size of the culture. In the mid-1950s, there were only a few thousand “bohemians” in the United States. In the 1960s, thousands of hippies were around, and millions adopted parts of hippie culture. Both the Lost Generation and Beats were especially concerned with literature, and indeed their lasting legacies may be as literary movements rather than social phenomena.

**Hippies in the United States**

Before beginning discussion on the concepts of hippies and hippie culture, it is helpful to define some terms in the context of this project. First, the “mainstream” and its derivatives (mainstream society, mainstream culture, etc.) refer to the dominant culture of the mid-to-late 1960s and early 1970s which was largely white, male, and middle-class dominated. “The establishment” refers to the structural authorities of the dominant society, including a patriarchal family structure, government, capitalism, etc. “Square” or “straight” refers to a person or entity that adheres to mainstream behavior and practices.

When one hears the word “hippie,” an image of exactly what a hippie is, or at least how one appears, quickly materializes in the imagination. When asked to define hippie the task becomes more difficult. Hippie culture developed in the United States in

---

the mid-1960s and spread to other countries through fashion, press, television, and music. In the preceding decade, World War II changed the world stage. With Europe wrecked by the war, the United States emerged as a superpower. Because of the war’s economic growth, the US economy and the middle-class were booming. Society strongly embraced patriarchal values, including traditional gender roles and family hierarchies. Arthur Marwick writes that “a conservative [in the US], of course, would see the fifties as a last age of morality, patriotism, law and order, respect for the family, tuneful music, and a popular culture which was pleasing, not shocking.”

The prosperity of the 1950s gave way to widespread unrest in the 1960s, from which many subcultures emerged. Growing tensions over the Cold War, US intervention in Vietnam, Civil Rights legislation, and student unrest polarized much of the country. Many people became adherents to subcultures, including hippie culture, in order to cope with the contemporary circumstances, express their discontent, and act for change.

Hippies framed themselves as reacting to the excesses of middle-class society and the U.S. government. They believed their parents worked meaningless jobs only to buy frivolous, mass-produced products. They observed the US government spending enormous amounts of money on a war which they felt was pointless and wrong. To them, the decadent consumerism that was fueled by capitalism was the root of all that was wrong with the mainstream culture.

---

At the heart of hippie culture is anti-intellectualism. Rorabaugh elaborates that “Sources [for researchers to interpret about hippie culture] are a problem. Hippies were not very articulate and often spoke in vague terms, for example, ‘groovy’ or ‘far out.’ This counterculture was about the expression of feelings; it was openly anti-intellectual. Hippies blamed reason and linear thought for most of the world’s troubles.”11 In the broadest terms, hippie culture was about defying authority in whatever form. Rorabaugh writes that hippies “rejected mainstream society and its culture. Hostile to the norms that the establishment tried to through public opinion and legal sanctions, hippies particularly resented pressure to conform concerning hair, dress, sex, drugs, and work.” Howard agrees that hippie culture was particularly contemptuous of mainstream culture’s “work and commerce.”12 Hippies believed that all that was wrong with society was the fault of mainstream culture with a particular antagonism for consumer society and materialism. In a rather vague way, hippies defined themselves in terms of individuality, community, and authenticity. One young man in Mexico put it this way:

With the youth movement that started two or five years ago, we have realized that man, through the simple fact of existence, has a very great value, whether he is a sweeper, a beggar, or whatever, right? So, the young people began to take true and universal human values, not the values of how much you have, how much you are worth, or that you are very attractive and dress very well; no, those

11 Rorabaugh, American Hippies, 10.
values, no, rather the values of human existence. So, the personality of each
individual, to be as one is, without copying others is very important.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{Us Beats and Hippies in Mexico}

Despite some similarities between them, Beat culture did not catch on in Mexico
to the extent that hippie culture did. A handful of Beats visited Mexico, but there is not
evidence of Mexicans adopting Beat culture the way that hippie fashion and attitudes
were. What the hippies and Beats did share was a romanticized vision of Mexico as
“other.” Using the concept of the “tourist gaze” coined by John Urry and adapted from
Michel Foucault to explain the idea of a foreign country that visitors have in their
imagination, hippies and Beats imagined Mexico as a land of exotic peoples and ancient
customs that led a more authentic existence.\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{13} Original Spanish: “Con el movimiento juvenil que comenzó desde hace unos tres o cinco años, nos
hemos dado cuenta de que el hombre, por el simple hecho de existir, tiene un valor muy grande, sea
barrendero, pordiosero o lo que sea, ¿no? Entonces, los jóvenes empezamos a sacar valores humanos
verdaderos y universales, no los valores de cuánto tienes, cuánto vales, o que está muy guapo y te vistes
muy bien; no, esos valores no, sino los de la existencia humana. Entonces, la personalidad de cada
individuo, el ser tal y como uno es, sin andar copiando a los demás es muy importante.” Susy Prieto,
“Entrevistas con Chavos no-Motos,” Piedra Rodante, October 30, 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony
Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91334.
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{14} It should be noted that this gaze of Mexico as an exotic place, untouched by modernity and therefore
more “authentic,” is not unique to the hippie or Beat gaze of Mexico. As letters to President Díaz Ordaz
from US residents and recent visitors to Mexico reveal, many types of tourists often congratulated Díaz on
the “warm, friendly, and sincere” people and “exotic country.” Other letters reveal the idea of Mexico as
primitive. One letter-writer condemns Mexico’s tradition of bullfighting by writing, “…I know the
Mexicans seem to have a special taste for cruel sports.” Another writer mentions that his tour group “were
disgusted [by the bullfights] and we think [the fights] are the most inhuman, gruesome and cruelest act on
this earth.” See “Tourism, Bullfights, and Bullets: Letters to President Díaz Ordaz,” in \textit{Mexico Other Wise:
\end{flushright}
Beats, such as Allen Ginsberg and Neal Cassidy, spent time in parts of Mexico like San Miguel de Allende. These Beats are in part responsible for transforming the town into the expatriate and bohemian mecca for which it came to be known. Jack Kerouac, famous for his novel *On the Road*, took a bus trip from Arizona to Mexico City in 1952. Journalist Damien Cave has written that Mazatlán, a stop on the trip, was “one of the many places that the Beats used to bolster the idea of Mexico as the destination for debauched recreation and self-discovery.” Jorge García-Robles, who has written about the Beats in Mexico, said that for Kerouac and the other Beats, “[Mexico] was a symbol more than something real.” Through their tourist gaze, Mexico was a land of mystery and an opportunity for new, often uninhibited, experiences.

Hippies largely shared this gaze of Mexico but were more concerned with indigenous communities and finding an “authentic” experience. While they too visited San Miguel and Mexico City, they also traveled to more remote areas, particularly to the Sierra Mazateca region, specifically the town of Huautla de Jiménez in the state of Oaxaca. Hippies and other bohemian travelers were attracted to this region for its native psilocybin mushrooms. They were lured in part by a 1957 *Life* magazine article titled “Seeking the Magic Mushroom” written by Gordon Wasson detailing his experience with the psychedelic mushrooms in Huautla and with the “curandera,” later revealed to be

---

17 Cave, “Kerouac’s Mexico.”
María Sabina. Word of the magic mushrooms spread and brought interested travelers to the small indigenous town from all over.

The Mexican government also contributed to this sense of Mexico as both a modern and ancient destination through tourism promotion, as many scholars of Mexico have noted.\(^1\) Tourism posters showcased images of the cosmopolitan Mexico City alongside ancient pre-Hispanic pyramids was just one way that the Mexican government attempted to project an image of itself—or shape tourists’ gaze of the country—as a modern, stable nation. The hosting of the 1968 Olympic Games affirmed Mexico’s arrival on the international stage.

As foreign hippies entered the country, stores began to sell hippie fashions, television shows and the press covered hippies, Mexican youth began to adopt this culture. This adoption was a way to belong to an international youth culture and rebel against their own society.

**Argument**

This project explores Mexican hippie culture to investigate the role consumerism played in identity formation and how these youth imagined themselves as belonging to an international counterculture. By adopting a youth culture started in the United States, Mexican hippies used their middle-class status to create and display their countercultural

They adopted this culture in part to “fit in” with the growing international community of counterculturalists, but also as a cultural rebellion against the Mexican Partido Revolucionario Institutional (Institutional Revolutionary Party or PRI). Their cultural rebellion was most felt in the behaviors that hippies adopted, like using drugs, dressing “outlandishly” in a way that transformed ideas of manhood and womanhood in a macho country, and listening to rock-and-roll music. In creating their own national rock bands, the Mexican counterculture felt that it had proved that Mexico had a place in the international counterculture.

Following the government massacre of protesters at Tlatelolco on October 2, 1968, hippie culture became especially appealing to Mexican youth as it offered a mode of cultural rebellion. A cultural challenge proved to be less dangerous than a political one. Like the United States, jipismo in Mexico was largely a middle-class phenomenon. I argue that the development of the middle-class was essential to the adoption of hippie culture. Consuming certain products allowed Mexican youth to self-marginalize by appearing and behaving differently than established society. At the same time, this purchasing power afforded hippies a privilege that distinguished them from the lower classes they often romanticized.

The second chapter, which focuses on ideas of gender in Mexican hippie culture, argues that Mexican hippie culture both challenged and reinforced ideas of traditional gender. It allowed for expanded ideas of acceptable manhood but reinforced male superiority. While notions of femininity were not equally expanded, women sometimes
exercised greater agency. However, hippie men did not readily cede power, and the male gaze was ever-present in the culture.

The last chapter emphasizes the importance of rock-and-roll in constructing a national identity for these hippies. In particular, the Avándaro music festival was a pivotal moment for the Mexican counterculture. One on hand, it proved to many that Mexico had its own national counterculture, which then meant members of the culture imagined themselves both as Mexican hippies and belonging to the international community of hippies. The Mexican counterculture was effectively trying to transform traditional nationalism, strictly propagated by the PRI, into something entirely theirs. The 1971 festival proved to both participants and officials that there was a sizable number of youth discontent with society. While this excited participants, officials took the opportunity to demonize the culture and effectively move rock-and-roll underground, leading to the decline of the culture in Mexico.

Scope

This investigation is set in Mexico City. Despite hippie culture’s exaltation of rural spaces, hippie culture thrived in urban areas like New York City, San Francisco, London, and Mexico City. These were places where the middle-classes made up the masses and people congregated to share ideas, values, and experiences.

This study will focus on the period following the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. While current trends in the field of Mexican history include de-centering the massacre, it is
nonetheless an important event in the trajectory of native hippie culture in Mexico.\textsuperscript{19} I agree with historian Eric Zolov who argued that following the massacre, many Mexican youths turned to hippie culture as a way to “drop out.”\textsuperscript{20} In other words, after October 1968, not only did the number of Mexican hippies increase, but their motivation for adopting hippie culture could have shifted too. It is possible that Mexican youth adopted hippie culture before the massacre as a means of cultural rebellion, but it could have been a means of being “hip.” After the massacre, it was clear that outright political challenges would not be tolerated, and hippie culture offered a safer, more subtle form of rebellion.

I will end this study in the early-1970s. The Avándaro music festival held in September 1971 was a pivotal moment in Mexican hippie and rock-and-roll cultures. It was evidence that a sizeable counterculture with the ability to collectivize existed in Mexico. For participants, this reinforced their sense of national and international community. For Mexican officials, this was a worrisome event that could eventually lead

\textsuperscript{19} For example, see Louise E. Walker, \textit{Waking from the Dream: Mexico’s Middle Classes after 1968} (Stanford University Press, 2015), Jaime M. Pensado and Enrique C. Ochoa, eds., \textit{México Beyond 1968: Revolutionaries, Radicals, and Repression During the Global Sixties and Subversive Seventies} (University of Arizona Press, 2018). This also includes the historiographical trend to situate Mexico in the “Global Sixties” and more recently the “Global Seventies.” For example, see Eric Zolov, \textit{The Last Good Neighbor: Mexico in the Global Sixties} (Duke University Press, 2000).

\textsuperscript{20} Zolov states, “In the days and months following the massacre, renewed reports of the emergence of a Mexican hippie movement filled the pages of the press, and editorialists from the right and left found equal cause to criticize them. Alternately referred to as ‘hippies’ (in quotation marks), \textit{jipis}, and later \textit{jipitecas} (or \textit{xipitecas}), the appearance of these youth in larger numbers reflected the continuation of a trend that predated the 1968 movement but that had been given new impetus by the repression.” Eric Zolov, \textit{Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 133. Similarly, Carlos Monsiváis notes that “The year 1968 (the student movement, the massacre of Tlatelolco, the unequivocal conclusions over the nature of the governing sector) accelerates the change and multiplies the counterculture’s presence.” Carlos Monsiváis, “Would So Many Millions of People Not End Up Speaking English? The North American Culture and Mexico,” in \textit{The Latin American Cultural Studies Reader}, ed. Ana Del Sarto, Alicia Rios, and Abril Trigo (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 203–32.
to another series of protests reminiscent of 1968. The Mexican government and press used the occasion to demonize the counterculture, effectively leading to its decline.

**Scholarly Literature**

As previously mentioned, there are scholarly few works with Mexican hippies as their focus. Most scholars have approached the topic in broader discussions of popular culture and music, student protest, illicit drug use, and travel and tourism. In these works, Mexican hippies typically operate tangentially to the main focus of the work.

Eric Zolov’s work, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (1999), is perhaps the most thorough account specifically devoted to investigating the development of the Mexican counterculture. His work uses rock-and-roll music as a window into the creation and evolution of the Mexican counterculture, from the influx of rock music from the likes of Elvis Presley, which was able to be “contained” by the government and made popular through *refritos*, or sanitized covers, to the creation of *La Onda*, the name broadly assigned to the Mexican counterculture, to *La Onda Chicana*, a largely native rock movement with bands that wrote their own songs in English. His work is mainly about the breakdown of the Revolutionary Family: the gendered, hierarchical structure of society that was modeled on a familial level, but also on a national level, with the father-president acting as the macho and protective father-figure, presiding over obedient wives, children, and citizens. Generally speaking, he explains that a new generation of youth, brought up listening to rock-and-roll, posed a challenge to *buenas costumbres* through unique behaviors, the set of which was referred to as *desmadre*.
Desmadre, literally translated to “dis-mother,” referred to behaviors that contradicted orderly, traditional behaviors upheld by a patriarchal worldview. Jipismo challenged traditional, official nationalisms by reimagining concepts such as patriarchy through the search for personal freedoms and different collective identities.

Generally, in works about the Student Movement, hippies are evidenced as a part of the diversity of the Movement and the fracturing of students during the time.\(^{21}\) These works seek to bring attention to the divisions among the student population. The majority of students were moderate and sought only reform rather than revolution. Others were more radical (but less numerous) and called for armed revolution and were influenced by the Cuban Revolution. There was also a group that just wanted to “drop out:” the hippies, influenced by their counterparts from the United States and Europe.

Jaime Pensado discusses native hippies as a part of his larger discussion of student resistance in Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture During the Long Sixties (2015). He argues that desmadre was one of the factors defining Mexico’s New Left, but he does not limit the exhibition of these behaviors to only hippies.\(^{22}\) He agrees with Zolov that hippies presented a challenge to the PRI because “[m]imicking American hippies and British rock bands not only allowed the nation’s youth ‘to belong to a global movement’ but also to discover ‘new ways of being’ Mexican, ways that ran counter to the dominant ideology of state-sponsored

---

22 Pensado, Rebel Mexico, 180.
nationalism.”

Interesting to note here that Pensado explains that Mexican hippies did not dispense with their national identity. Instead, they expanded what it meant to be Mexican.

Louise E. Walker’s first chapter in Waking from the Dream: Mexico’s Middle Classes After 1968 (2015) outlines the “rebel generation:” the group of left-leaning students made up of those who sought moderate reforms and other, more radical groups of activists, guerillas, and dropouts. She provides a brief discussion of the hippie movement in Mexico by classifying hippies as those youths from the middle-class who “[u]nlike the moderate students who worked within the framework of Echeverría’s education reform and democratic opening, the hippies rejected the status quo and abandoned interaction with the state.” Jipismo was attractive because it offered an alternative to traditional life of patriarchal and religious values.

In works that focus on drug history in Mexico, native hippies (and foreign hippies) are highlighted for their use of marijuana and their fascination with indigenous medicine. The narrative concerning hippie culture in Mexico begins with traditional Mexican society viewing foreign hippies as a corrupting influence on Mexican youth. This group of foreigners is largely credited with advancing the “psychedelic revolution”

---

23 Zolov, Refried Elvis quoted in Pensado, Rebel Mexico, 169.
24 Walker, Waking from the Dream, 33.
after a 1957 Life Magazine article by Gordon Wasson revealing his experience with “magic mushrooms” and curandera María Sabina in Huautla de Jiménez in Oaxaca.

Isaac Campos, in his work Home Grown: Marijuana and the Origins of Mexico’s War on Drugs (2014), outlines the chronology of marijuana cultivation and use in Mexico from its introductions in the first half of the sixteenth century to the modern War on Drugs that formally began in the 1970s. He argues that the prohibition of marijuana, which was an essential factor to the twentieth-century War on Drugs, was largely a result of Mexican policies and attitudes. In his exploration, Campos mentions the counterculture, but only in the sense of US hippies in Mexico, rather than acknowledging the adoption of this movement by Mexican youth. Because marijuana was seen as an “Oriental” substance, Mexico was imagined as a kind of “quasi-Orient” for the movement. He further argues that “Mexico’s traditional role as a convenient and nearby Orient contributed importantly to the development of ‘the Sixties’ as we now understand that decade.” Despite not affording much attention to Mexican hippies, Campos’s characterization of Mexico as a “quasi-Orient” is useful in explaining foreign hippie attraction to the country, and domestic and foreign hippie fascination with indigenous cultures.

In his work on drugs in Mexico titled The Peyote Effect: From the Inquisition to the War on Drugs (2018), Alexander S. Dawson explains that youth drug use in Mexico during the 1960s caused great alarm in the country. Foreign hippies flooded

---

26 This is similar to Zolov terming Mexico “North America’s Nepal.”
27 Campos, Home Grown, 228.
Mexico during the late 1960s, and when global hippie culture was adopted by Mexican youth, “Social conservatives responded to the Jipitecas with disgust, viewing their desmadre as an existential threat to the modern, industrial, orderly postrevolutionary state and society their parents had worked so hard to create.” He reveals how hippies’ drug use was used as evidence for some in Mexican society of both the degeneration of youth and the discrimination against indigenous communities in Mexico. Officials claimed that drug use not only led to physical problems, but corrupted the moral values of users as well, and “unruly women in jeans and sandals and unscrupulous foreigners” were evidence of this. The consumption of peyote, an “indigenous drug,” was used to further demonize indigenous communities.

Sarah Beckhart Coppinger’s dissertation, *High in the City: A History of Drug Use in Mexico City, 1960-1980* (2020) effectively argues that class status affected drug use. Youth from the lower classes were more likely to use chemical substances easily found at industrial sites or found at low prices in hardware stores. She argues that while marijuana had previously been associated with Mexico’s “downtrodden, bohemian, sailors and prisoners,” it transformed into a middle-class drug once American hippies adopted it. Her discussions of native hippies are largely related to her examination of medical treatment of drug users, most famously conducted by Dr. Salvador Roquet. She establishes a profile of marijuana users that characterized them as older residents of more

---

31 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City,” 45.
affluent neighborhoods with a higher likelihood of remaining in school when compared to chemical inhalant users.32

Travel or tourism histories discuss foreign hippies as “undesired” tourists and recount how the Mexican government worked to keep these types of people out of the country, namely through denying entry to the country or deportations.33 Lisa Covert’s *San Miguel de Allende: Mexicans, Foreigners, and the Making of a World Heritage Site* (2017) discusses the transformation of the town of San Miguel de Allende into a bohemian and expatriate mecca. She discusses foreign and native hippie travel to the town, and in particular mentions one police raid in 1969 the police rounded up hippies and cut their hair. Her argument that this represented an effort by police to maintain the traditional hierarchy and gender norms was helpful in the second chapter of this project that focuses on the ideas of gender in Mexican hippie culture.34

**Sources**

This study is intended to be a social and cultural history that focuses on the youth in Mexico who identified as hippies. Unfortunately, as W. J. Rorabaugh writes in *American Hippies*, “the hippie social movement is not always easy to document. Sources are a problem.”35 In a culture that values nonconformity and claims to be apolitical, the

---

32 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City,” 216.
33 Covert, *San Miguel de Allende*.
34 Covert, *San Miguel de Allende*.
35 Rorabaugh continues that “Hippies were not very articulate and often spoke in vague terms, for example ‘groovy’ or ‘far out.’ This counterculture was about the expression of feelings; it was openly anti-intellectual. Hippies blamed reason and linear thought for most of the world’s troubles. Unlike the Surrealists of the 1920s, no hippie Andre Breton issued a guiding manifesto. There were no hippie membership organizations. The hippies counterculture lacked the philosophical underpinning that Albert
very nature of hippie culture runs counter to any formal groups or positions that would produce sources that could then be easily used for future research. With many sources about hippie culture written “from the outside,” I have tried to remain consciously aware of this perspective while at the same time lending the appropriate legitimacy to that perspective. I rely heavily on the revista \textit{Piedra Rodante}, the Mexican version of \textit{Rolling Stone}. With a global pandemic halting most international travel, I have found this to be the closest source to “the inside” of hippie culture available to me. Still, I have been able to glean a wealth of information from just the eight issues of the revista. Of particular use have been the “Cartas de amor y furor” section, where readers wrote in to express their opinions regarding a variety of topics. I take these letters as a sort of “voice” from the counterculture in order to try to understand and interpret the perspective from inside the culture. Additionally, the sixth issue dedicated solely to the Avándaro music festival was critical in my research. Specifically, the interviews conducted by Susy Prieto of Avándaro attendees were helpful as this was one of the very few sources available to me with first-hand accounts of the festival. I also utilized the advertisements from \textit{Piedra Rodante} in my analysis of gender in hippie culture and the connection between hippie and consumer culture.

---

Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre gave to the French Existentialists. Whereas the Beat writers in the Fifties had critiqued existing society and offered a literary vision for the future, hippies produced no significant literature. They did produce some art and impressive rock music. In addition to the music, the main sources for studying hippies are statements by older gurus such as Ken Kesey and Timothy Leary, media coverage, social science field research, medical reports (which often stress deviance), and later hippie memoirs.” Rorabaugh, \textit{American Hippies}, 10. This is also a problem that Eric Zolov expresses in the conclusion of \textit{Refried Elvis}: “Indeed, if we are to take the study of rock music in Mexico seriously, it is above all this consideration that we must keep in mind: what is the relationship among capitalism, state power, and popular memory? The commodification of a countercultural movement—often criticized by cultural theorists—becomes an essential factor in the creation and survival of popular memory.” Zolov, \textit{Refried Elvis}, 258.
Other sources include informes from Presidents Díaz Ordaz and Echevarría, which were useful in establishing that the Mexican government tried diligently to frame the youth problem as imported from the United States. Both presidents speak about the drug trade’s danger to the youth. Similarly, reports from US agencies also refer to the danger that drug use posed to youth. Through the analysis of these sources, I examine the role that drug consumption played in hippie culture. I also put forth that because hippie culture was often too difficult to officially regulate, Mexican officials framed the “native hippie problem” as a drug use problem. Therefore, in order to curb hippie culture, Mexican officials enacted harsher drug laws.

Magazine and newspaper articles made available by the Hemeroteca Nacional Digital de México from Jueves de Excelsior, Impacto, and Sucesos para todos helped establish public opinion surrounding native hippie culture. Generally, journalists discounted native hippies as mere imitations of foreign hippies and brushed them off as a fashion trend. Photographs from UNAM Historical Archive (AHUNAM) and the Estanquillo Museum were essential in analyzing hippie culture’s consumption practices, including self-presentation styles and behaviors. Photographs from both archives of the Avándaro music festival helped to understand the scope of the event and activities that occurred there. I used interviews from the Netflix docuseries Rompan todo: la historia del rock in América Latina. These were essential to the chapter covering rock-and-roll music in this project. Though they were filmed nearly fifty years after the Avándaro festival, these interviews reinforced the argument that Mexican youth truly felt they had earned their place in the international counterculture.
Purpose

While research on the 1960s and 1970s in Mexico is abundant—particularly on the 1968 Student Movement—scholarship specifically devoted to Mexican hippies is less so. The topic fills a few paragraphs, perhaps a few pages of the works about the period, but there have been few works with hippies as their central focus. There are several reasons for this, including a scarcity of sources from people who identified themselves as hippies.

While the hippie movement may sometimes be thought of as connected to Mexico, this is mainly through the idea that foreign hippies traveled to Mexico due to their desire to “drop out” of US society. Yet generally, most people do not realize the active participation of Mexican youth in the international hippie movement. By illuminating this further, I hope this work will contribute to recognizing the broad scope of the hippie movement and therefore shift the center of focus of the topic a bit away from the United States and the First World.

In a broader sense, this project asks difficult questions about power dynamics at work in a diverse world. It attempts to deal with discussions surrounding the commodification of culture, appropriation versus inspiration, cultural rebellion versus political protest, imitation versus authenticity, and cultural imperialism versus colonial mentality. I have found that these discussions are never black-and-white, and are ones that I believe historians will continue to grapple with in the future.
CHAPTER ONE

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: CONSUMER SOCIETY AND HIPPIE CULTURE IN MEXICO

The Mexican Miracle, beginning in the 1940s and lasting until the mid-1980s, created precisely the middle-class, consumer society that allowed for the flourishing of hippie culture in Mexico City. Government officials eager to burnish Mexico’s image as a modernizing country characterized the country as both modern and ancient. Though they positioned themselves as anti-materialists, hippies had an intimate and ironic relationship with consumer society: businesses catered to hippie taste, and hippies purchased products that created and telegraphed their anti-establishment identity to the general public. Despite government officials’ fundamental discomfort with hippie culture, Mexican hippies contributed to their nation’s image as modern. Hippies’ purchasing power afforded them an identity on an international scale as middle-class consumers. It also allowed them to consume products which created an identity separate from mainstream society and apart from the lower classes. In short, what these youth consumed made them different from the middle-class mainstream, and the fact that they could purchase products distinguished them from poorer economic groups. Hippies self-marginalized rather than being forced into the margins by others.

The Mexican Miracle and Mexico’s International Image

Eric Zolov argued that during the 1950s-1970s, Mexico “achieved a ‘new look,’ one that coincided with a sustained period of relative political stability, an unprecedented
expansion of its middle classes, and a harmonious relationship with the United States.”

Mexican officials worked diligently to promote Mexico as a modern nation with a grand ancient past. It offered the glory of the ancient Aztec and Mayan civilizations and, at the same time, was a stable country, ready for foreign investment.

The fact that Mexico was chosen as the host of the 1968 Olympic Games is evidence that this promotion of Mexico worked. Kevin B. Witherspoon stated that “[w]inning the Olympic bid was perhaps the signal achievement in an image-building project in Mexico that had been decades in the making. Government officials and Olympic organizers had convinced the world that Mexico was stable enough, prosperous enough, and sufficiently prepared to host the Olympics.”

The introduction to the Official Report of the 1968 Olympic Games shows a nineteenth-century picture of Mexico City containing the caption, “Yesterday, Tenochtitlan. Today, the capital.” The report continues in its praise: “With the triumph of the social movement during the early 1920s, Mexico took on a new countenance. The men and women who celebrate it have also changed…Today Mexico’s progress rivals that of the rest of the world.” In fact, no other Olympic Games report had an entire volume dedicated to the host country itself. However, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz requested this volume to provide an overview of Mexico so that “the present report be preceded by an objective presentation of Mexico. The President was firmly convinced that a general understanding of the contemporary

---

nature and spirit of the Mexican people would result in a better appreciation of the open-hearted reception they offered the youth of the world.”

The next volume in the report read that:

Mexico’s successful petition for the 1968 Olympic Games was based primarily on its existing facilities and experience in staging previous events. Thus, the commitment might well have been fulfilled with a minimum of additional preparation. But from the moment the Organizing Committee of the Games of the XIX Olympiad became an official entity—the day after the site’s designation—it was apparent that Mexico aspired to far more than essential requirements. The optimal realization of the Games, the celebration of an unprecedented cultural program, and the world-wide projection of both the Games and a valid image of the host country; these were the fundamental objectives of the Committee.

Unsurprisingly, the massacre of students just two weeks before the Games’ opening went unmentioned in the Olympic report. The government was praised for its efforts at making higher education more available and its hands-off approach towards the National Autonomous University of Mexico. The report states that “With its autonomy and academic freedom, the University—a forum for free social and political debate—tends to reflect the national political climate…Faculty members are free to reach any philosophy, and students may support any cause of ideal.”

---

a picture of Mexico that officials had carefully crafted: democratic, modern, inclusive. This, however, was not necessarily the entire picture.

The achievements that Mexico made were primarily a result of the Mexican government’s efforts to boost the economy. After the nation stabilized in the years following the 1910 Revolution, the government adopted an economic model in the 1940s known as Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI). The government focused on increasing industry and domestic manufacturing. Most of the development was concentrated in Mexico City, resulting in a population growth for that area. From 1950-1972, Mexico’s gross domestic product (GDP) grew by more than 5 percent annually. Industrial output rose, but agricultural production declined. In 1950, agriculture represented 19 percent of the GDP, whereas in the early 1970s, its share had decreased to 10 percent. With the growth centered in Mexico City, many left their homes in rural areas to move to the urban center searching for work. This new concentration of people earning money in the new industries eventually led to the emergence of a middle-class in Mexico, as well as an ever-widening wealth gap between the upper and lower classes.

While the Miracle eventually collapsed in the 1980s, during the time, it appeared as though Mexico was “moving forward into the future, leaving its problems behind.”

Writing for *Foreign Affairs* magazine in 1970, John Womack, Jr. wrote,

> [T]he business of the Mexican Revolution is now business. In Guadalajara and Ciudad Juárez, in Monterrey and León, in Puebla and Mexicali, in scores of

---


smaller cities, above all in Mexico City, the shimmering new buildings teem with transactions and accountings into the future. Already Mexicans run up bills on three credit cards of their own nationality, Bancomer, Bacomático and Carnet Bancario. This summer the Bolsa, the sedate old stock exchange in downtown Mexico City, will very likely go as modern as Milan’s Borsa or Tokyo’s Kabutocho.44

The economic growth on a national level and the emergence of a middle-class in Mexico City established Mexico as a country with great potential, changing the perspective of many who saw Mexico as a near-Third World country previously. One US traveler remarked about 1960 her trip to Mexico that—compared with her visit ten years earlier—“the standard of living seemed much higher. There were fewer ragged clothes and bare feet. The top of what had been the lower class was merging into the middle class…One seldom saw the abject misery and poverty of former years.”45 With higher wages and disposable income, middle-class Mexicans developed a modern consumer economy.

The creation of the middle-class and consumer economy was essential to the adoption of hippie culture in Mexico. For one part, it was the purchasing power of the middle-class which enabled young people to consume the products that formed and displayed their identity as hippies. For another, the mainstream middle-class and consumer society were what hippie culture often positioned itself in direct contrast to. In other words, the existence of a middle-class consumer society created the space for

hippies to take an opposing stance, which formed the foundation of their identity. Lastly, middle-class privilege allowed these youth to distinguish themselves from the lower classes that they often glamorized. With this economic growth and political stability, Mexico imagined itself as a “modern” country, in the company of the United States and Great Britain. The youth, too, then, saw themselves as belonging to youth movements of the First World, including hippie culture. They could afford the music, clothes, and drugs which displayed their hippie identity to spectators. In this way, Mexican hippies felt they had an international identity in both the global class of consumers and international hippie culture.

Consumption and Identity

The consumption of products is important to identity formation and performance. By consumption, I mean the goods and services that one obtains, typically through purchase. This can mean the clothes we wear, the food we eat, or the music albums we purchase. Economic status and consumption have a close relationship in that one’s economic status dictates what one can buy, and what one purchases often reflects his or her economic status. Similarly, we can display identities besides our economic class through our selective consumption of goods and services, including our political, religious, sexual, gender, and cultural identities, to name a few.

Arnold J. Bauer, in his work, Goods, Power, History: Latin America’s Material Culture (2009), argues that people acquire and use products for several reasons: survival, to establish and exhibit an identity, and to fix public meanings or social relationships. For
this project, Bauer’s second justification for acquiring goods is most relevant: people consume products and ideas to create an identity and then display it to others. Bauer explains:

A quick look around, at a teenager’s jeans or an executive’s yacht…reminds us of the commonplace that many people acquire goods for display, as markers of identity and a boost to self-esteem. Some people (not everyone, not at all times) self-consciously consume food, clothing, or live in certain dwellings to express individuality or identity. Even the way we consume a certain dish or drink or wear a specific hat or uniform may be designed to produce a sense of uniqueness, or group, or even national solidarity.46

Here, at the end of this quote, we see that consumption can be used to establish one’s individual identity and identify a group or community. Eric Zolov has written that consumption in Mexico became an identity marker not only for the people of the middle-class but also for the country itself: “conspicuous consumption became a mark of the middle classes’ own modernity and a sign of the nation’s advancement not only in material terms but also in the more abstract sense of development itself.”47 Consumption of certain products was used to display modernity by individuals and Mexico as a country. The existence of a middle-class signaled to the rest of the world that Mexico was a “modern” nation.

47 Zolov, Refried Elvis, 6.
The idea of consumption to display modernity was not unique to the late 1960s in Mexico. William H. Beezley has written how the Mexican elite during the Porfiriato often bought goods or adopted practices—including baseball, horse racing, and bicycles—to display their elite status and pose Mexico as a country of “progress.” Though these activities and products were typically imported from the United States and Europe and therefore deemed as “more consistent with modernism,” it is important to note that Beezley does not chalk this adoption up to mere imitation. Rather, Mexicans adopted practices and goods that they liked and rejected those that largely contradicted their culture, like American-style football. In this way, Mexicans acted with agency by adopting practices and consuming products and services which appealed to them, rather than passively imitating US and European populations.

However, a lot had changed from the 1890s to the time of this study during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Production became even more massive, and the invention of televisions and radios along with faster modes of travel allowed trends, fashions, and ideas to spread farther, more quickly, and to a larger audience. In other words, the world was much more globalized in the 1960s and 1970s than just eighty years prior. Hippie culture is evidence of this, as countercultural youth, bound by similar fashion and taste in music were found in the US, Mexico, Argentina, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, etc.

---

In her work, *Dressing for the Culture Wars: Style & the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s & 1970s*, Betty Luther Hillman demonstrates how youth in the United States used consumption to display their political affiliations. Through new “self-presentation styles”—which included clothes as well as hair and facial hairstyles—youth in the US displayed their political attitudes. For example, many Black activists adopted traditional African dress and natural hairstyles to show that they were a part of the new generation of Civil Rights activists and show contrast to white beauty standards. Women’s liberationists adopted unisex fashions to demonstrate that women had a choice in what they wore and to show their challenge to traditional feminine modesty.

These self-presentation styles also created solidarity amongst groups that had established themselves outside the “mainstream.” Hillman gives the example that long-haired hippies, harassed by police, felt a sense of solidarity with Black Americans who were also harassed by police, or with women who were oppressed by traditional society’s ideas of what were acceptable ways to dress or style one’s hair. This same suggestion appeared in an article in *La Prensa* in January of 1969, which discussed the hippies of North America. It claimed that hippies “stand in solidarity with the Black Power movement.”

It continued that “[hippies] also search for an alliance with the marginalized of the industrial society: the racial minority, the poorest classes.”

---


51 Original Spanish: “Buscan también la alianza con los marginados de la Sociedad industrial: las minorías raciales, las clases más pobres…” “Los Hippies.”
least to many of those in the groups, created a community of oppressed youth which crossed racial, gender, and often national boundaries.\textsuperscript{52}

The products that hippies consumed—including drugs, music, hairstyles, and fashions—allowed them to at once exercise their middle-class privilege via their purchasing power and to establish themselves an identity apart from the “mainstream” middle-class through cultural rebellion. Hippies around the world dressed and behaved similarly, creating a “hippie identity” that disregarded traditional national boundaries. As Mexican youth began adopting hippie culture to identify with the growing international youth movement and as a method of resistance, they were simultaneously setting themselves apart from their parents’ generation and other Mexican youth. Mexican hippies used products and behaved in ways that challenged their parents’ \textit{buenas costumbres}, but they did not challenge their economic status as they fully participated in the consumer economy.

\textbf{The Relationship Between Consumer Society and Hippie Culture}

As stated in the introduction, many scholars argue that the defining characteristic of hippie culture was distaste for materialism and consumer society. However, hippies and consumer culture had a complex relationship. The existence of consumer society was a prerequisite for the development of hippie culture: hippies defined themselves in contrast to it. However, consumer society and corporations did not turn such a cold

\textsuperscript{52} Betty Luther Hillman, \textit{Dressing for the Culture Wars: Style and the Politics of Self-Presentation in the 1960s and 1970s} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015).
shoulder to hippie culture, as evidenced by advertisements in countercultural magazines such as *Piedra Rodante* that catered to hippie style. There was a backlash to the commercialization of the cultural rebellion, most critiques claiming that it robbed the movement of its authenticity (these critiques will be explored below). It is possible that some hippies ironically felt their act of consumption was different from their parents. Rather than trying to buy items they considered frivolous, hippies were acquiring products that made them *different* and allowed others to recognize them as hippies. Still, hippie culture proved very marketable, not just in Europe and the US, but also in Mexico.

How could corporations cater to a culture that was so anti-establishment? There are a few theories that offer answers. The first is the simple co-optation theory: amoral corporations saw these middle-class youth with purchasing power and decided to co-opt their style to line their own pockets. Writing on the history of “hip,” John Leland explains that this is the theory “in which hip’s genuine antimaterialist, anticorporate sentiments are turned around and used to sell product.”\(^5\) Another theory Leland explains is that hip is a result of capitalism. In other words, to maintain an expanding economy, producers create new products deemed “hip,” sell them to a group, then move on to selling the following hip product. Leland states it this way: “The second, darker argument evokes the paranoia of *The Matrix*: There is no difference between commercialized hip and the real thing, because *there is no real thing*. Even at its most pure, hip is just a cog in an expansionist economy, conjured to create the radical consumers that the market needs to sell ever-

---

newer stuff. Its fetish for novelty trains us to embrace obsolescence and constant turnover.”

Thomas Frank offers another argument, in which corporations did not merely imitate countercultural style to sell to youth nor is capitalism constantly inventing hip consumers, but rather that corporations underwent their own countercultural revolution. He views the counterculture of the 1960s less as a youthful revolution, here for a few years and then gone, and more as a developmental stage in the middle-class. Business leaders were engaging with the counterculture and those new ideas and values made their way into their products and business models. He writes that:

Both [menswear and advertising] industries underwent ‘revolutions’ in their own right during the 1960s, with vast changes in corporate practice, in productive flexibility, and especially in that intangible phenomenon known as ‘creativity’—and in both cases well before the counterculture appeared on the mass-media scene…[A]dvertising and menswear executives seized upon the counterculture as the preeminent symbol of the revolution in which they were engaged, embellishing both their trade literature and their products with images of rebellious, individualistic youth. While leaders of both industries appreciated the demographic bonanza that the baby boom represented, their concentration on the symbols of first youth and then culture-rebel owed more to new understandings of consumption and business culture than to a desire to sell [to] the kids.55

54 Leland, Hip, 284.
Whatever theory we accept, it is evident that the new youth culture in Mexico represented significant opportunities for corporations willing to cater to the demographic. Advertisements and products tailored to the youth culture’s style were abundant in youth magazines. Fonky t-shirts used celestial designs on their shirts, alluding to hippies’ fascination with the natural world and alternative spirituality (Find this advertisement in the fourth issue of *Piedra Rodante*, page 37, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91333). Some brands even used hippie symbolism or language in their marketing. El Taconazo Popis used brightly colored flowers in its advertisements for “the most chic shoe at the most ‘jipi’ prices.”56 A different poster for El Taconazo Popis featured a drawing of a hippie, complete with big, long hair and a peace sign.57 Interestingly, for this ad, the spelling was changed from “precios jipis” to “precios hippies.” El Mundo del Milano clothing store advertised the colors of its clothes as “groovy” and claimed to be the store of “the new people.” These advertisements catered to hippies’ sense that they, as a community, were somehow new and, more importantly different, than their parents or traditional society.

International companies also employed hippie symbols and imagery in their advertisements. On his way to Avándaro, Marcos Mendoza recounted in *Piedra Rodante* that when he arrived at Valle de Bravo, he saw “Paz y Amor, Coca-Cola” banners above

kiosks in the town. These were probably a part of Coca-Cola’s 1971 marketing strategy to target the countercultural youth audience, most famously remembered for its “I’d like to buy the world a Coke” television commercial. In the commercial, young people from all over the world gather on a rural hillside to sing not about mass production or bottling of Coca-Cola but about hippie values like love and harmony. The opening lines were, “I’d like to buy the world a home and furnish it with love. Grow apple trees and honeybees and snow-white turtle doves.” The song ends with a photo of a Coke and the caption “It’s the real thing. Coca-Cola,” alluding to the hippie search for authenticity (For images from the commercial please visit https://www.coca-colacompany.com/company/history/creating-id-like-to-buy-the-world-a-coke).

The production of these goods advertised in Piedra Rodante was a part of the modern mass-production economy geared towards the middle-class. Many advertisements stressed a large number of choices and the low prices of the products that were made possible due to mass production. El Mundo de Milano emphasized that their t-shirts came in 50 different designs. Piedra Rodante offered discounts on musical equipment advertised as durable and available in many sizes. The products were mass-produced and stressed choice, durability, and affordability. Hippies bought these clothes and music equipment because of their ability to as middle-class consumers. Still, the acquisition of these products set them apart from both the mainstream middle-class as well as the lower classes without their economic privilege.

Another irony produced in the entanglement of consumer and hippie cultures was the creation of bohemian urban spaces. Despite the purported affinity for the countryside, hippies gathered in urban areas for music shows, shopping, doing drugs, and simply hanging out. In Mexico, the heart of hippie culture was located in the Zona Rosa in Mexico City. Its streets lined with cafes, clothing stores, and music shops, the Zona Rosa indeed fell in with other cities which cultural theorist Stuart Hall characterized as having the “hippie ambiance.” Sarah Beckhart describes this “bohemian mecca,” writing:

The Zona Rosa offered a counterculture zone for Mexican middle-class minors… and a tourist destination for visiting hippies from abroad. The area, lined with art galleries, cafes, restaurants, boutiques, and street vendors, all expressed an ‘avant-garde aesthetic,’ an atmosphere of a modern, progressive, and liberated Mexico. This aesthetic existed only within the confines of several square city blocks. Aspiring Mexican jippees appropriated the avant-garde styles of foreign hippies, mixing their pop culture mixed with indigenous clothing and jewelry. For many young Mexicans, the Zona Rosa was the locus of counterculture rebellion, a place to experience drugs and rock music. Marijuana users were average middle-class Mexicans who saw the use of marijuana and the spaces of consumption, especially the Zona Rosa, as a symbol of their class status.

Photographs from the National Institute of Anthropology and History archive reveal one store selling necklaces with the word “Hippie” painted in large letters on the outside.

---

60 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City,” 221.
existed in Mexico City in 1968 (Figure 1). Unfortunately, the store’s exact location was not recorded, but it is reasonable to suggest it was located in the Zona Rosa. In short, hippie culture and consumer culture were intimately related. Hippies bought products to display their countercultural identity despite their distaste for modern consumer society. Corporations tailored their products to meet hippie demand. Spaces for consumption developed in urban areas.

Figure 1. "Man hanging necklaces in a store" by Casasola is licensed under CC BY-ND 4.0.

There was immediate pushback against the close relationship between hippies and consumer culture, as revealed by several letters in Piedra Rodante’s “Cartas de amor y furor” sections. One letter authored by a reader named Bernardo Torres read in part: “The attempt to create underground journalism in this exorbitant and repressed country is very
good. But is it really an attempt to make honest journalism, or is it just another organ of exploitation of a market with vast possibilities, since they realized the purchasing power of the young people? If in reality *Piedra Rodante* is made for and by the youth, prove it by removing commercials.”⁶¹ He goes on to explain how advertisements from the establishment can “infect” the entire onda. He believed that there were already bad ondas “in the church, the government, dad and mom,” and if the magazine did not change, then it would fall to the same malice.⁶² This letter articulated the irony of publishing advertisements for mass-produced commodities in an “anti-establishment” magazine. Another author, Jose Gonzalez, wrote that he criticized the magazine only for its advertisements and posters: “We are sick to death of ads: ads on the radio, on the television, in newspapers, on posters, on trucks, on walls; in short, ads everywhere.”⁶³ Gonzalez’s letter demonstrated the ubiquitous nature of consumer society in Mexico: advertisements were appearing everywhere. He warned that the magazine would sacrifice the onda if was only after the advertising money.

---


⁶² Original Spanish: “Comerciales del stablishment [sic] que dicen despreciar (o cuando menos rechazar) pero que puede llegar a infectar toda la onda...Para malas ondas ya están la iglesia, el gobierno, papi-y-mami y ya estuvo.” Torres, “Cartas de amor y furor.”

With hippies’ participation in consumer culture, they contributed to Mexico’s modernizing process. While their styles and music taste seemed odd and distasteful to many Mexican officials and much of the public, hippies still presented Mexican officials an opportunity to show the world that they had an emerging youth culture closely tied to consumer practices. These youth were evidence of Mexico’s economic growth: young people spent their (or their parents’) money on new consumer goods. It was a sign of modernity that Mexican youth participated in a hippie culture emanating from the United States. This could be one reason that Mexican officials did not rush to oppress hippies the way they did student protesters: rather than act as a direct challenge to political power, Mexican officials could have seen hippies as a sign of status, which leveled them with other nations including the US and United Kingdom. In April 1968, an article appeared in the *New York Times* that claimed President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz “defended hippies and miniskirts as representative of the exercise of personal freedom.” The article quoted the president: “Everyone is free to let his beard, hair or sideburns grow if he wants to, to dress well or badly as he sees fit, so long as he does not harm others’ rights or break the law.” Díaz could have taken this stance because his son, Alfredo, was a member of the Mexican counterculture. Still, it is also likely that this opinion was adopted to promote an image of Mexico as fully democratic and, therefore, modern.

---

65 “Mexican Leader Sees No Harm in Hippies.”
66 Eric Zolov, in *Refried Elvis*, speaks a bit to the children of elites participating in hippie and rock-and-roll culture. He relates that these members of the upper-class were often able to participate in the counterculture with little fear of punishment (though not completely without fear). These youth often received more
Drug Consumption

Yet, hippies’ purchasing power not only allowed them to consume new products like the latest fashions, but also products deemed more dangerous by government officials and parents alike, such as drugs. Hippie consumption of drugs began in the mid-1960s, several years after Gordon Wasson published an article titled “Seeking the Magic Mushroom: A New York Banker goes to Mexico’s mountains to participate in the age-old rituals of Indians who chew strange growths that produce visions” in the May 1957 issue of Life magazine. In the article, Wasson described his 1955 trip to Huautla de Jiménez in the Oaxaca, where he participated in a ceremony involving “curanderas” and hallucinogenic mushrooms. Wasson and his friend, Allan Richardson, ate the magic mushrooms and “emerged from the experience awestruck.”67 The article had an air of adventure, including the language of sex, religion, conquest, and discovery (This language was not unusual for descriptions of psychedelic experiences). This article and the adventure it implied allured young people from the US and brought them to Huautla in small numbers beginning in 1962. After 1964, the number of foreign visitors, many of

---

whom were young hippies, picked up. By 1969, some young Mexican hippies traveled to Huautla searching for magic mushrooms.68

While some Mexicans did consume hallucinogenic mushrooms, marijuana proved to be the drug of choice for Mexican hippies. One writer for the Berkeley Barb, an underground countercultural magazine based in Berkeley, California, reported after a trip in 1967 that “acid is virtually unknown [in Mexico City].”69 A survey conducted at the national preparatory school in Mexico City in 1971 revealed that 1.2 percent of respondents used magic mushrooms, 1.2 percent claimed to have used LSD, and 10.7 percent reported they had consumed marijuana.70 The use of marijuana reinforced the middle-class status of the hippies. As Sarah Beckhart noted, hippies’ middle-class purchasing power enabled them to buy marijuana, the privacy to smoke it, and the ability to distinguish themselves from members of the lower classes who often had to use different drugs because they lacked the means to buy marijuana.71

Interviews after the 1971 Avándaro music festival reveal that marijuana was abundant at the festival, but that Mexican youth had different opinions regarding the recreational use of drugs. When asked if there was much marijuana, interviewees answered yes. Jorge Arreola Carrasco told the interviewer that was not only marijuana present, but also cement and thinner and “alcohol above all.”72 He explained that he was

70 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City.” 5.
71 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City.”
neither for nor against the use of drugs: “I am not for nor against drugs. I think that everyone has their own life.” Antonio Campos Romero echoed Arreola Carrasco’s indifference towards drug use but called attention to the irony of selling and advertising alcohol when its effects are sometimes worse than that of drugs. The presence of different types of drugs at the festival may indicate that the event was open to more diverse classes of people than regular events and communities in Mexico City. However, the abundance of marijuana would indicate a largely middle-class attendance.

Figure 2. "View from the Festival de Rock y Ruedas, Avándaro," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.

The media and government of both the United States and Mexico proved to be primarily concerned with youth drug use during this period. A special task force report

---

73 Prieto, “Entrevistas.”
74 Prieto, “Entrevistas.”
delivered to the US President in 1969 stated that “One of the most serious problems facing the United States today is the marked increase in the use of narcotics, marihuana and other hallucinogenic [sic] or ‘mind-changing’ drugs. This problem is especially prevalent among the youth of our nation, who have experimented with these drugs.”

The report states that “Mexico has become by far our largest supplier of marihuana [sic] and it is also the source of a substantial amount of other drugs.” Mexico and the US targeted drug trafficking together. In his sixth informe, President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz stated that “[t]he government of the neighboring country [the US] undertook to modify its inspection procedures and Mexico confirmed its intention to intensify its own program against these criminal activities which cause so much harm to mankind and, in recent times, especially to the youth.” In his first informe in 1971, President Luis Echeverría echoed this message about the danger drugs posed to youth (called a “crime against health”) and the need for the US and Mexico to collaborate to solve the problem. He stated,

The social phenomena characteristic of the contemporary world often transcend borders. Some crimes cannot be attacked as merely local, both because of the propaganda that encourages them and because of the specific interest that

---


stimulates them from outside. Such is the case of crimes against health derived from the use of drugs, as well as assaults that, carefully organized and executed, are undoubtedly intended to create a state of social unrest and anxiety. In a spirit of cooperation, talks continued between the authorities of Mexico and the United States of America to coordinate their efforts to combat the production, illegal trafficking and consumption of narcotics, marijuana and dangerous drugs...Considering the need to protect our people, and particularly the youth, against the propagation of antisocial habits, this Honorable Congress modified the Sanitary Code.78

While the Mexican governments did little (at first) to repress the native hippie culture, actions to curb youth drug consumption could be seen as a veiled attempt to squelch the culture since drug consumption was a large part of it. While officials could brush off other transgressions with mild annoyance, drug consumption proved harder to look past. It also damaged the nation’s image which they worked so hard to promote. Having foreign young people traveling specifically to consume drugs certainly ran counter to their efforts to project a modern image.

78 Original Spanish: “Los fenómenos sociales característicos del mundo contemporáneo frecuentemente desbordan las fronteras. Algunos delitos no pueden ser atacados como meramente locales, tanto por la propaganda que los fomenta como por los intereses concretos que desde el exterior los estimulan. Tal es el caso de los delitos contra la salud derivados del empleo de las Drogas, así como el de los asaltos que, cuidadosamente organizados y ejecutados, pretenden, sin duda, crear estados de intransquilidad y Zozobra social. Dentro de un espíritu de cooperación, prosiguieron las pláticas entre las autoridades de México y de los Estados Unidos de América, a fin de coordinar los trabajos que realizan para combatir la producción, el tráfico ilegal y el consumo de estupefacientes, marihuana y drogas peligrosas. Atento a la necesidad de proteger en forma más cabal a nuestro pueblo, y en particular a la juventud, contra la propagación de hábitos antisociales, este Honorable Congreso se sirvió modificar el Código Sanitario.” “Informes Presidenciales: Luis Echeverría Alvarez,” Dirección de Servicios de Investigación y Análisis. Subdirección de Referencia Especializada, 2006, 7, http://www.diputados.gob.mx/sedia/sia/re/RE-ISS-09-06-14.pdf.
Conclusion

Through the consumption of different products, hippies created a self-marginalized identity that distinguished them from the older generation and mainstream middle-class. It also them a privilege that differentiated them from the lower classes. They marginalized themselves with the products they wore and behaviors in which they engaged, but they did not challenge their socioeconomic status. Through their participation in the modern consumer economy, hippies contributed to Mexico’s modernizing process and their projection of that image to the community abroad.
CHAPTER TWO

GENDER AND JIPISMO: A CULTURAL CHALLENGE AND REINFORCEMENT

To recall the article from the introduction of this project, the Long Island Press printed an article titled “The Student Revolt: A Mexican Dilemma” in September 1968 written by Ruben Salazar. Salazar wrote that walking around the campus of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), he saw “long-hair bearded youths and their mini-skirted girl friends [sic] looking as rebellious as any at Berkeley.” Salazar’s quote points to the fact that self-presentation styles—how one wore their hair as well as what accessories and clothes one wore—were changing with the times at UNAM. Mexican men were growing their beards and facial hair long—practices that anti-war activists had adopted in the United States to show their opposition to the clean-shaven look demanded by the military, and by hippies to adhere to a more “natural” style. Young women, identified simply by their relationship to the males on campus as their “girl friends,” donned mini-skirts, another international counterculture trend that shocked the older generations with its affront to traditional female modesty.

This chapter will analyze how Mexican hippie culture both challenged and reinforced traditional notions about gender. For this project, I use gender to mean male and female and the ideas, characteristics, and behaviors society attributes to man and woman, masculinity and femininity. I realize that using this term to refer to only male and female excludes numerous gender identities that some societies more readily

79 Salazar, “The Student Revolt.”
recognize today, and that surely existed during the time covered by this study, but that were not yet widely accepted. This is not to say that there were no cultures that did not accept and recognize the existence of one or more different gender identities besides male and female, but those cultures are outside the scope of this project.  

By analyzing self-presentation styles including fashion and hairstyles, advertisements from *Piedra Rodante*, Mexico’s leading countercultural magazine, photographs from the Avándaro music festival, and mestizo ideas regarding feminized indigeneity, I argue that Mexican hippie culture both expanded notions of masculinity and femininity while also reinforcing a traditional gendered hierarchy favoring male dominance and superiority. This challenge and reinforcement allowed hippies to question aspects of their established society in social and cultural manners to not directly threaten PRI rule. Mexican hippie culture-expanded ideas of manhood by allowing men to dress differently, but reinforced traditional roles by still allowing a man—even one who had “femininized” his self-presentation styles through hippie fashion—to maintain his superior position in the traditional gender hierarchy. Hippie fashion offered women more agency in giving them more styling options from which to choose and by providing them spaces to express themselves more freely. However, male-controlled media and advertisements largely reinforced women’s inferior position by either insisting on female modesty or hyper-sexualizing the female body for the male gaze. Lastly, hippie culture reinforced the construct of feminized indigenous culture by imagining those communities as passive and more authentic to the point of being emasculated.

---

80 See, for example, work on Juchitán.
**Traditional Gender Ideas**

Sociologist Norman Hayner regarded Mexico as a “man’s country.” By this, he meant that men dominated most aspects of life in Mexico. The archetypal male’s strength, power, and virility balanced his benevolent duty to protect and provide. Women, occupying an inferior position, filled domestic roles. Women were to be modest, obedient, and respectful. Although these concepts were evolving somewhat in the 1960s and 1970s, society still had a code of conduct filled with moral double standards for men and women.

The gendered concept of the “Revolutionary Family” helps understand the dynamic between the sexes, the state and citizens, and among members of a family. Eric Zolov, in *Refried Elvis*, explains: “At the head of this [PRI “family home”] stood, of course, the presidential father figure, to whom all disputes were directly or ultimately submitted.” Quoting author Octavio Paz, Zolov goes on: “Behind the respect for Senor Presidente there is the traditional image of the Father...In the center of the family: the father. The father figure is two-pronged, the duality of patriarch and macho. The patriarch protects, is good, powerful, wise. The macho is the terrible man, the chingon, the father who has left, who has abandoned a wife and children.” The PRI government was the father of Mexican citizens, protecting with one hand and oppressing with the other.

---

The Revolutionary Family metaphor also worked at the familial level. Zolov states that “[t]he idealized family of the postrevolutionary order was one in which the father was stern in his benevolence, the mother saintly in her maternity, and the children loyal in their obedience.” The father of the home was at the center of the traditional family and held power. The mother was gentle, respectful, and fertile. Children were obedient. This gendered framework that operated on societal and familial levels set the scene for gendered and generational conflict in Mexico.

The concepts of *buenas costumbres* and *desmadre* are important as well. Buenas costumbres, essentially translated as “good manners,” referred to the proper comportment of members of respectable society. As the Revolutionary Family concept dictated, obedience to authority was a key component to the functioning of the family at all levels, including the national. Much like the Revolutionary Father and Mother had different roles and expectations, men and women were expected to behave differently according to buenas costumbres. Still, both men and women were expected to adhere to some level of modesty, heterosexuality, and obedience to the state.

Desmadre, literally translated as “dis-mothering” and loosely translated as unruliness, referred to disorderly or “deviant” behavior of youth at the time. Many hippies and *rocanroleros* adopted the term to describe themselves and their behavior as well, but for them, it took on a greater purpose than parents and authorities afforded. For many youths, it was the only form of “protest” allowed under the authoritarian PRI. After the Avándaro music festival in September of 1971, one writer for *Piedra Rodante* wrote

---

that “Avándaro demonstrated the necessity of relajo [leisure, with a connotation of leisure to distract from politics] understood as the unique opportunity of realization; the social importance of desmadre as the only practical and useful value in a country where organized and serious protest is banned.”

After the violent government massacre of protesters on October 2, 1968, at Tlatelolco, many young people realized that organized protest was not a practical challenge to state power. This was reinforced by another brutal government massacre on June 10, 1971, known as el Halconazo. Young people realized that any direct challenge to the government would be shut down quickly and violently. Desmadre offered youth an outlet to express their discontent without threatening the government to the extent that the organized protests of the previous decade had.

**The Expansion of the Male Look and Permanence of His Superiority**

One manner of cultural challenge was through new self-presentation styles. Aesthetically, men were able to challenge the traditional male norm of short, well-kempt hair. While hippie culture offered men an expanded idea of masculinity by inviting them to be a part of the “new generation” with new hairstyles, it fortified male superiority. A man was still dominant in hippie culture, even if he looked like a hippie. Just because one grew his hair long, there was no effort to diminish his social standing within the hippie

---


50
community, nor was there a concerted effort to strengthen the status of women in hippie communities. Equality between the sexes was not a feature of hippie culture.

Hippies across the globe chose to grow their hair long to live a more “natural” lifestyle. Photographs from UNAM and the Avándaro music festival and cartoons by artists Rius and Bartolli, show that this style was just as popular in Mexico. Enrique Marroquín, cited growing one’s hair as one of the first signs that one is becoming a hippie. He pointed out how long hair had become a symbol of opposition and a challenge to traditional gender norms. He writes that during the time, long hair had “rich significance.” He discussed the book, *The Unconscious Significance of Hair* by Dr. Charles Berg, in which Berg equates long hair to the feminine, and short hair to the masculine. He explains that jokes about this gender confusion were frequent from the start of the hippie movement.

---

88 Marroquín, *La Contracultura Como Protesta*, 54. See also Zolov, *Refried Elvis*. 

51
Figure 3. "View of the Festival de Rock y Ruedas, Avándaro," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.

Figure 4. "View of the Festival de Rock y Ruedas, Avándaro," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.
Testimonies from Avándaro also reinforce the idea that long hair caused anxiety within families and society. When asked the purpose of the Avándaro music festival, María de Lourdes Elenes Duval told Piedra Rodante that it helped people realize that “young [men] that have long hair are not bad.”\(^8^9\) Another interviewee, Antonio Campos Romero, similarly stated that for him, the festival showed to the outside world—which was quick to criticize men with long hair—that “more or less one sees that people, with or without long hair, know how to behave well, no? There it was seen that there is nothing wrong with men who call themselves hippies.”\(^9^0\) This shows not only that the link between long-haired men and hippie culture was explicit, but that there was general anxiety over male youth who grew out their hair and partook in hippie culture.

\(^8^9\) Original Spanish: “…la gente se dé cuenta de que no por traer pelo largo los jóvenes son malos.” Prieto, “Entrevistas.”

\(^9^0\) Original Spanish: más o menos se vio que la gente, con o sin pelo largo, sabe comportarse bien, ¿no? Ahí se vio que no hay nada malo en los hombres que se dicen jipis.” Prieto, “Entrevistas.”
Mexican officials’ reactions to long-haired men reveal that they were seen as a threat to the nation and traditional manhood. At the border, long-haired tourists were hassled or denied entry. Carl Franz’s 1972 countercultural guidebook, *The People’s Guide to Mexico*, encouraged disguises for hippies trying to enter Mexico:

“If you do not look like the average tourist (and you long-haired, bearded, beaded, and braless people have already guessed that there was a catch somewhere), you may not get average treatment when entering Mexico. Instead of, ‘Stamp! Stamp! Sign here please. Next?’, you might hear, ‘Where’s your money? How much? Get a haircut! Go back!’ This is what is very commonly known as the border hassle…Once you accept the logic that is used to determine who is hassled and who isn’t, you can avoid exposing yourself to close official scrutiny. The best methods for this are deceit and camouflage.⁹¹

He describes how he and his friend, Steve, donned expensive suits (that they bought for cheap across the border on a previous trip), wet their hair, and even gave themselves trims before approaching border officials. Rather than leave her long hair loose, their female friend, Lorena, put it up into a tight bun and changed into a knee-length skirt. The accompanying image is a cartoon drawing of a tourist approaching the border as a hippie, transforming into an acceptable-looking tourist, only to transform once more into his original hippie look (Figures 6 and 7).

---

Mexican police, and in fact authorities across many countries with governments spanning the political spectrum, often arrested foreign and local men with long hair and cut it. Marroquín reported that at the time of the roundup of hippies in Huautla de Jiménez, there were about 200 Mexican hippies in addition to numerous foreign hippies. They were deported or arrested, where, in prison, police forcefully cut their hair.\textsuperscript{92} In addition to their long hair being a challenge to a man’s acceptable self-presentation style,

\textsuperscript{92} Marroquín, \textit{La Conracultura Como Protesta}, 36.
Marroquín took the explanation for the violence of police further to a Freudian interpretation. He explained that long hair on men was also interpreted as a phallic symbol. Thus, the authority who sees a youth (subordinate) with long hair sees a sexual rival and responds with repression and attempted “castration” through hair cutting. He offers the Biblical story of Sampson as evidence of this phenomenon. Similarly, Lisa Covert argued that a hair-cutting incident in San Miguel de Allende in 1969 was an attempt by Mexican officials to repress and “mark supposedly deviant male bodies.” By arresting men and then forcefully cutting their hair, Mexican officials recognized the challenge that hippie culture raised to gender roles and often acted aggressively to maintain the traditional norm.

Countercultural media and advertisements both broadened ideas of manhood and reinforced male superiority and dominance. Milano clothing store featured males in their advertisements and marketed itself as “the store of the New People.” Similarly, Radio Mundo advertised itself as “a new world in the world of music.” Men could dress in a new way and listen to new music while maintaining their masculinity in this “new world” of a “new people.” By publishing articles about (and making idols of) men considered by the mainstream somewhat outside of traditional masculine tropes such as Elton John and John Lennon, *Piedra Rodante* and hippie culture created space and offered models for men to step outside of the traditional confines of manhood. Several issues end with a photograph of a man dressed as a hippie selling the magazine. Rather than wear the suit and tie that buenas costumbres would demand of a businessperson at the time, he has

---

93 Covert, *San Miguel de Allende*, 142.
long, unkempt hair and wears an unbuttoned shirt with a denim jacket, blue jeans, and huaraches (traditional sandals in indigenous communities). The advertisement reads, “Do not ask for money! It is better to sell Piedra Rodante. Do not ask for money from passersby. Earn it by your own effort and in your own onda. Sell Piedra Rodante. All you have to do is contact the Circulation Department.”

This ad shows that someone can be a hippie while maintaining his manhood by earning money.

Hippie culture also reinforced traditional male superiority and dominance. Mexican hippies were primarily men. Photographic evidence from Avándaro reveals the disproportionate number of men to women. This could be because it was easier for men than for women to step outside the bounds of buenas costumbres and participate in hippie culture—a woman would likely be criticized more harshly for this transgression—or because the culture simply appealed more to men. The male domination of this hippie culture was nothing unique. Men dominated the government, the Student Movement of 1968, and hippie cultures worldwide. Piedra Rodante’s intended audience was also male. The male gaze is apparent throughout the magazine in its photographs, content, and advertisements. Most of those readers who wrote to the “Las cartas de amor y furor” section were male.

Males maintained their traditional superior position as primary consumers as most advertisements were geared towards men. For example, advertisements for Milano's clothing store and Radio Mundo featured only drawings of male models in their advertisements.\textsuperscript{95} Other advertisements catered to ideas of traditional masculinity. For example, Kustom Amplifiers described its products with words such as “loud” and “strong”—adjectives traditionally associated with masculinity—when it advertised its products in this manner: “…when the youth music is supported by a Kustom amplifier,\textsuperscript{95}

its message is louder, clearer, stronger, incandescent.”⁹⁶ In these ways, advertisements that hippies saw in Piedra Rodante reinforced ideas of traditional masculinity, just transposed on to a new culture.

The Struggle for Female Agency

Advertisements directed at females offered more agency in terms of a more extensive selection of clothing options but often reinforced female modesty. Unisex clothing was present and marketed in Mexico, but unlike in the United States, it did not seem to cause the same uproar. In the US, conservative opinions such as Phyllis Schlafly’s used unisex clothing as proof that society was turning to a genderless world and used it to attack the proposed Equal Rights Amendment. Betty Luther Hillman argues that “Anti-ERA activists…argued that the amendment would erase gender distinctions in the law that antifeminists believed were important and real differences between men and women, and afforded women certain legal privileges in recognition of those differences.”⁹⁷ I have yet to turn up evidence of similar opinions in Mexico (though I do not doubt they existed). Few advertisements feature both men and women or unisex clothing in Piedra Rodante. However these advertisements seem to afford women a certain level of agency in what she wears as long as it is within the confines of tradition. A Fonky clothing advertisement features an entire family where a mother stands with one hand on her husband and the other on a child. While she wears modern clothing (a t-shirt

---


⁹⁷ Hillman, Dressing for the Culture Wars, 86.
featuring Olive Oyl from *Popeye*), she is still dressed modestly and fills the role of wife and mother. Another advertisement for *Novedades*, a daily newspaper in Mexico, reads: “The spectacular world of fashion, cultural events, the fun and entertaining page; The most useful tips for the housewife and the most complete information about the people is reflected in the Novissima section of What's New for the Home that the Best Journal of Mexico brings to you now in full color!” This advertisement fails to create space for non-traditional femininity and in fact reinforces the concept of separate spheres for men and women by creating a section specifically for “housewives” that covers “fun and entertainment.” While the Fonky advertisement offers a woman dressed nearly identically to her husband, both advertisements also advocate for traditional notions of femininity (Find this advertisement in the third issue of Piedra Rodante, page 21, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91330).

A different advertisement for Fonky clothes adapted the Mexican revolutionary slogan of “Land and Liberty” associated with Emiliano Zapata and transformed it to “Fashion and Liberty!” The advertisement claims that “One can dress like Mick Jagger, a Buddhist monk, a vampire of silent movies, an Aztec warrior, Sor Juana, Vietcong, Tongolele, a minstrel or Zapatista.” Rather than explicitly advocating for unisex clothing, the advertisement suggests that men and women have the freedom to dress as they wish rather than conform to society’s standards (Find this advertisement in the seventh issue of

---

98 Original Spanish: “El mundo espectacular de la moda, los acontecimientos culturales, la amena pagina de entretenimiento y diversión; los más útiles consejos para el ama de casa y la más completa información sobre la gente se refleja en la Novissima sección de Novedades para el Hogar que El Mejor Diario de México lleva hasta usted ¡ahora a todo color!” “Novedades,” advertisement, *Piedra Rodante*, July 15, 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91330.
While not explicit in its text, this advertisement features two women dressed as soldaderas, female soldiers who fought in the Mexican Revolution of 1910. While women did fight in the Revolution, this image nonetheless challenged traditional female roles as timid and subservient. With this contrast, it can be said that fashion did sometimes, though rarely, offer women more agency by emboldening them to dress as they wish. Yet women in these advertisements, despite dressing in unisex clothing such as t-shirts and pants, were always dressed modestly. Therefore, the advertisements in Piedra Rodante offered women the opportunity to express themselves in non-traditional styles but did not offer them space to challenge the idea of feminine modesty.

**Sexual Freedom and the Male Gaze**

Buenas costumbres and Mexican officials seemed to require modesty from all of society, albeit while holding women to a higher standard. In 1969 after the first performance of “Hair,” the Broadway showed was banned from the country due to the first act’s concluding scene that featured several nude men. In 1972, Piedra Rodante was shut down under government pressure after featuring a naked woman on its cover.

---


100 The argument could certainly be made too that the soldaderas of the 1910 Revolution were challenging traditional feminine gender roles as well.

However, this ideal of modesty stood in the way of the hippie culture’s idea of open sexuality and free love. From photographs and articles, it seems that this attitude could provide agency for both men and women to express themselves sexually at events such as Avándaro. Photographs showing young lovers embracing reveal behavior at the music festival that would not have been acceptable for two teenagers behaving according to buenas costumbres. Photos also reveal public nudity present at the festival, which was outside the bounds of what traditional society accepted.

Figure 9. "Hippies," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.
However, the countercultural male-controlled media often exploited the attitude of free love, which resulted in the hyper-sexualization of women. This is not to say that media outside of Mexico’s counterculture did not sexualize or objectify women for the male gaze—that, of course, did occur. However, in planned photographs for Piedra Rodante (compared to candid shots at events such as Avándaro), readers are presented with female bodies, often hyper-sexualized through sexual acts and nudity, specifically for the (heterosexual) male hippie. An article about Mexican writer Salvador Elizondo features two naked women with their bare breasts visible.\footnote{Raúl Prieto, “Salvador Elizondo y la Pornografía,” Piedra Rodante, October 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91337.} The magazine’s eighth issue cover features a naked woman, though she holds objects to cover her groin and breasts.
The fifth issue’s cover features a naked woman crouched in a corner, her head turned away, while in front of her lie various drugs. The tag line reads: “40 pages full of drugs, sex, pornography and strong emotions.”

In the fourth issue, the photograph above “Las cartas de amor y furor” features a female's bent-over back and hips. There are depictions of male nudity in the magazine, but rarely in an overly sexual manner compared to the women. For example, the band Tinta Blanca appears nude in one photograph, standing with their backs to the camera (except for one guitarist in the distance who uses his instrument to cover his groin).

While nude women are present in both staged and candid photographs in *Piedra Rodante*, the second instance offers a woman more agency. In candid pictures, the women acted of their own volition for their own purposes. For example, one woman danced topless on a bus because she wanted to, or another bathed nude in the river at the festival because she felt like it.

One interesting article focuses on groupies and reveals that some women used this position to feel empowered, but others recognized its exploitative nature. One woman explains that groupies have always existed, but that now, they feel they have more power and are in charge of themselves. The author writes, “Many groupies do not think of themselves as possessed, but rather that they are the possessors.”


reports that sometimes groups are simply “decorative objects.”105 These conflicting perspectives demonstrate the ability of hippie culture to either offer women more agency or reinforce their inferior position.

In the instance of staged photographs, often present was an overt sexualization. Rather than acting on their agency, the women were photographed for a male audience. Their photo existed for the male gaze rather than because they were the ones speaking in the article. In the cover of the fifth issue with the crouched woman in a corner behind drugs or the two lovers in the article about Salvador Elizondo, the women’s faces are not even visible, only their bodies. Readers become voyeurs, consuming the women’s bodies, seemingly without the women even noticing and without their consent.

Another trait demanded by buenas costumbres for men and women was heterosexuality. This element was challenged in the sense that multiple naked men at Avándaro indicated a type of homoerotic environment, however, there is no evidence of any homosexual activity. The traditional concept of male heterosexuality was not strongly challenged by Mexican hippie culture. There are, however, numerous staged photographs in Piedra Rodante that feature nude women engaging in sexual acts (For an example of this, view the fifth issue of Piedra Rodante, page 26, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91337). In summation, hippie culture offered spaces where heterosexual men and women could express their sexuality more openly, which challenged rules of modesty for both genders, though for women to a greater extent.

However, when controlled by men, women’s bodies were often exploited for the male
gaze, which made up most of the hippie population.

**Feminized Indigeneity**

Challenges to traditional gender in hippie culture also operated at another level:
the national. Analisa Taylor argues that the Mexican government worked to create a
Mexican identity that favors the *mestizo*, those people who are ethnically indigenous and
Spanish. The origin story of the mestizo relates that La Malinche, an indigenous woman
also known as doña Marina, is the mother of all mestizos and Hernán Cortés, the Spanish
conqueror, the father. Through this creation of Mexican identity and the degradation of
indigenous populations, indigenous communities became feminized in the mestizo
imagination. Taylor writes:

…artists and writers associated with national popular state formation following
the revolution of 1910 have considered their national identity to stem from a
gendered *mestizaje* (miscegenation)—that is to say, from the genetic and cultural
mixture and absorption of (female) indigenous traits into (male) Euro-Iberian
ones. Mestizo nationalists constructions cast Malinche and Cortés as racialized
and gendered icons of the two halves that together embody the volatile foundation
of modern Mexican nationhood, one half female, Indian, and dominated, the other
half male, European, and power hungry.\(^{106}\)

---

As this origin story shows, Mexican officials and artists made considerable efforts to include indigenous aspects in their national culture. However, it was the ancient indigenous past that was celebrated, while contemporary indigenous peoples were considered mainly second-class citizens. This was not unique to this decade in Mexican history. For example, in the 1889 World’s Fair, Mexico designed an “Aztec Palace” to exhibit. Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo states about the palace, “The palace was meant to highlight the great, though atypical, lineage of the nation it represented: a national entity with a glorious past but ready to adjust to the dictates of cosmopolitan nationalism and eager to be linked to the international economy.”\(^\text{107}\) In the 1940s and 50s, Mexican tourism agencies marketed the country as a nation with a glorious ancient past as well as modern.\(^\text{108}\) Mexican identity, then, celebrated the ancient indigenous history, while dismissing the contemporary plurality of the nation and doing little to elevate the economic, political, and social standing of contemporary indigenous communities.

In the minds of many mestizo Mexicans including hippies, rural indigenous peoples were imagined as more primitive. Hippies lauded indigenous communities for their “authentic” lifestyle, “untouched” by modern capitalism and consumer culture. They adopted indigenous fashions, including wearing flowers in their hair, yaskis around their necks, and huaraches on their feet. They visited indigenous communities such as Huautla de Jiménez in search of a more authentic lifestyle for themselves. However, by imagining these cultures as more passive and primitive than the urban mestizo, hippies effectively

\(^{107}\) Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World’s Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation*, (University of California Press, 2018), 64.

\(^{108}\) For more on this topic, see Zolov, “Discovering a Land ‘Mysterious and Obvious.’”
further emasculated indigenous peoples and cultures. This was compounded by the fact that while hippies appropriated indigenous fashion and reduced indigenous cultures to generalities, there was no effort at real activism for indigenous rights by hippies.\textsuperscript{109} By identifying with feminized indigenous culture, mestizo hippies were challenging ideas about gendered ethnicities on a scale larger than their day-to-day interactions.

Conclusion

Mexican hippies were able to both challenge and reinforce established gender ideas to live outside of the “mainstream,” challenging their society culturally and socially rather than through explicit political means. Through their clothes, advertisements, media, and identification with indigenous communities, hippie culture offered expanded notions of masculinity that allowed a man to look different while maintaining a superior position. Women were given more agency in choosing what they wore. However, designers often made clothes with traditional ideas of female modesty in mind, and male-controlled media used women’s bodies to cater to a male audience. When women could act on their own agency in events such as private parties or festivals, women were given space to express themselves more openly. By identifying with indigenous cultures, hippies reinforced the feminization of those cultures. Despite the challenges to gender norms which stood as resistance to established society, hippies made no concerted effort to move towards equality between the sexes or for indigenous peoples.

\textsuperscript{109} This is not to say that indigenous peoples were not fighting for their rights—they were.
CHAPTER THREE
JIPISMO AND ROCK-AND-ROLL: THE REAL THING OR A SIMPLE IMITATION?

This chapter will analyze the relationship between rock-and-roll and hippie cultures. It will discuss the debate that occurred in both cultures between imitation and authenticity and argue that Mexican hippies, despite criticisms from the national Left, believed themselves to have a dual identity, both as Mexican youth and as legitimate members of international hippie culture. Mexican hippies did not deny their Mexican identity but rather felt that they had created their own national hippie and rock-and-roll culture, thus earning a spot in the international hippie community. The development of a national rock sound was essential to this dual identity. The Avándaro music festival, held in September 1971, was a pivotal moment in Mexican rock and hippie cultures. Featuring numerous bands and reportedly drawing a crowd of about 200,000 people, the Avándaro festival, held in Valle de Bravo in the state of Mexico over two days, represented a seminal moment for those who identified not only as hippies in the international culture, but also as Mexican hippies.110 It was also this festival that truly turned Mexican officials away from rock-and-roll. Because of the perceived debauchery that occurred at the festival as well as the fear of a potentially large youth movement, the government and

---

110 There seems to be some disagreement about how many bands actually performed at Avándaro. Some sources claim that twelve bands performed, others that ten did. A promotion featured in *Piedra Rodante* advertises eleven, including El Amor, Javier Bátiz, Los Dug Dug’s, El Epilogo, Love Army, Peace & Love, El Ritual, Los Tequila, Tinta Blanca, Three Souls in My Mind, and Conjutos Tapatios. “1er Festival de Rock y Ruedas,” advertisement, *Piedra Rodante*, August 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91333. It is known that Javier Batiz nor Love Army made it to the festival.
press moved quickly to demonize rock-and-roll, effectively repressing the culture. Both the youth and officials saw the festival as a powerful unification of their power.

Figure 11. "View of the Festival de Rock y Ruedas, Avándaro," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.

The Relationship Between Rock-And-Roll and Hippie Culture

The relationship between rock-and-roll music and hippie culture in Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s was complex. Not all rocanroleros were hippies, and not every hippie listened to rock-and-roll music. Still, there was an undeniable connection between the two. José Agustín wrote, “Rock was [hippies’] natural vehicle of expression, especially since 1966, when the forms and themes of this music were substantially modified from being a mere emotional release to becoming a source of awareness and a
countercultural complex. Many youths found themselves participating in both cultures simultaneously. For example, the musician Armando Suárez from the rock band Chac Mool referred to himself as a hippie. Young people were the primary participants in both cultures, and both were attractive in part for the sense of rebellion they offered. Hippie culture claimed to be an “escape” from the mainstream, and rock-and-roll in the late 1960s and early 1970s provided youth a new sound that encapsulated rebellion and a sense of freedom. Many of the foundational themes in hippie culture were also evident in rock-and-roll, such as resistance to authority, drugs, and sexual freedom. Consider the song “Marijuana” [sic], sang in English by the Mexican band Peace and Love:

I like marijuana
You like marijuana
We like marijuana too
I want to be a hippie and I want to get stoned
Marijuana

It’s my life and I do what I want
Marijuana

Clear here is an endorsement of illicit drug use and an explicit connection between hippies and the use of marijuana, sang by a rocanrolero stating that he wanted to be a hippie. Also evident is the idea of individualism and rebellion in the line “It’s my life and

111 Original Spanish: “El rock era su [los jipis] vehículo de expresión natural, especialmente desde que a partir de 1966 se modificaron sustancialmente las formas y los temas de esta música que dejó de ser mera liberación emocional para convertirse en surtidor de tomas de conciencia y complejo contracultural.” José Agustín, Tragicomedia mexicana 1: La vida en México de 1940 a 1970 (México, D.F: Planeta, 1990), 243.

I do what I want.” Another song that demonstrates the overlap between these cultures well is “Abuso de Autoridad” (“Abuse of authority”) by Three Souls in My Mind. This song directly calls out the “bad government” in Mexico and reveals how no one can protest or tell the truth. This song reveals a politicized nature of rock-and-roll with the direct criticism of the “bad government” and the inability to protest. With the use of “bad government,” rock-and-roll music was echoing protests that dated back to the colonial period. Most famously, the Hidalgo Rebellion of 1810 used this terminology in its rallying cry against the Spanish government. The integration of rock music into hippie culture added an explicit political tone to Mexican hippie culture.

Several magazines were created that catered to the counterculture in Mexico, such as México Canta (1964-1975) and Piedra Rodante (May 1971-January 1972). Piedra Rodante was started by Manuel Aceves who was working in advertising at the time. He secured permissions from Jann Wenner (co-founder and publisher of Rolling Stone) and Straight Arrow Press to start the magazine and use material from Rolling Stone in 1970.¹¹³ Piedra Rodante was primarily focused on rock-and-roll music, but it also covered cultural interest topics like psychedelic drugs and political events such as El Halconazo which occurred on June 10, 1971, when a paramilitary group called the “Halcones” attacked student demonstrators and killed dozens in Mexico City following a

¹¹³ “Collection Overview: Piedra Rodante,” Stony Brook University: University Libraries Digital Research Collections, accessed February 12, 2021, http://digital.library.stonybrook.edu/cdm/about/collection/rodante. It is interesting to note that Manuel Aceves was working in advertising at the time he began Piedra Rodante. More research is needed on Aceves, but this could lend itself to Thomas Frank’s argument in The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism that business culture, particularly advertising and men’s fashion, was not co-opting but rather participating in the counterculture itself.
dispute regarding the Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon.\textsuperscript{114} It boasted a circulation of 50,000 and claimed to reach audiences in the US, Central and South America, and Spain.\textsuperscript{115} Some of its articles were translations of the US \textit{Rolling Stone}, and national reporters wrote others in Mexico. All of the articles were in Spanish. The magazine was often praised by readers and even foreign visitors as being essential for and needed by the counterculture in Mexico. One man, traveling on bicycle through Mexico, congratulated \textit{Piedra Rodante} for being “something of quality in the Mexican onda.”\textsuperscript{116} Even Carlos Monsiváis admitted the necessity of the magazine: “It [\textit{Piedra Rodante}] was missing; it was necessary; it will be important; it is important.”\textsuperscript{117} These sorts of comments show that there was a sizeable counterculture in Mexico that needed something like this magazine to rally around, share information, and validate the culture. Despite its translations of \textit{Rolling Stone} articles, \textit{Piedra Rodante} felt like Mexico’s own version of this. Simultaneously, Mexican readers felt they were claiming something of their own while also belonging to an international culture.

\textit{Piedra Rodante} stood out for many readers as they alluded to its authenticity compared to other magazines of a similar genre. In particular, many readers seemed to have a special disdain for the magazine \textit{Mexico Canta}. Those readers felt that \textit{Mexico

\textsuperscript{115} Zolov, \textit{Refried Elvis}, 221.
Canta was “not authentic” and contained poor writing, but Piedra Rodante was “true” to the new culture. For example, Alfredo Díaz wrote, “My congratulations for having published a newspaper that was needed by all of us, especially those interested in knowing the true onda [emphasis mine].”

Most readers felt there was a greater significance to the magazine than simply a means of providing information about music. In the third issue, Alejandro Quiroz wrote, “After having read Piedra Rodante from beginning to end, I feel satisfied with having bought it, because it was what was missing: a magazine of the rock wave, with sincere journalism, full of vitality; a publication that tries to humanize the robot-human which mankind has become; that wishes, like all young people, to change what makes us lesser men, to improve and to make this world happier and freer.” Not only did Piedra Rodante supply readers with rock-and-roll information, but it formed a greater sense of community for them. By reading the magazine and participating in rock-and-roll and hippie culture, these youths believed they were improving the world and human condition, as Quiroz mentioned.

Many readers understood that Piedra Rodante held a greater significance than just a music magazine. For some, hippie and rock-and-roll cultures were simply means to

---

118 Original Spanish: “Mis felicitaciones por haber sacado un periódico que hacia falta a todanos [sic], principalmente a los interesados en conocer la verdadera onda.” Alfredo Díaz S. “Cartas de amor y furor,” Piedra Rodante, June 15, 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91331.

119 Original Spanish: “Después de haber leído Piedra Rodante de principio a fin, me sentí satisfecho de haberla comprado, porque era lo que faltaba: una revista de la onda del rock, con periodismo sincere, lleno de vitalidad; una publicación que intenta humanizar al robot-hombre en que está convertida la humanidad; que desea, como todos los jóvenes lo hacemos, cambiar lo que nos hace menos hombres, mejorar y hacer más feliz y más libre este mundo.” Alejandro Quiroz, “Cartas de amor y furor,” Piedra Rodante, July 15, 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91330.
rebel against their parents or fit in with a group. Enrique Marroquín, writing for *Piedra Rodante*, admitted this in an article after the Avándaro festival: “There was a lot of peace and love. But it lacked much more. Although they were a minority, there were quite a few azotados for whom the festival was just a pretext for their excesses.”120 But for others, their purpose was something more significant. Jesús D. Morales wrote that “rock has to be a medium of expression of youthful and clear philosophy that demands freedom, understanding, and peace.”121 Many of the interviewees in *Rompan Todo: La historia del rock in América Latina* echo this argument. From the beginning of the docuseries, the musicians explain that rock is more than a sound: it is a method of communication, an attitude, a way to “take the mask off society,” to question, to protest, to unite the youth. Hippie culture operated similarly. By culturally rebelling, hippies were trying to communicate their disdain with contemporary society. While native rock-and-roll bands and hippies specifically targeted the Mexican governments and ideas of the Revolutionary Family and buenas costumbres, the broader movements of rock music and international community of hippies criticized government and traditional society more generally.


**Imitation Versus Authenticity**

The debate between authenticity and imitation loomed large among participants of rock-and-roll and hippie cultures. Many hippies and rocanroleros were accused of participating in cultural imperialism, or simply being imitators of US and European cultures, and some within the culture recognized the thin line that they walked between imitation and authenticity. Hippie culture strove for authentic experiences. This was foundational to many of their actions: doing drugs opened your mind to an experience free from inhibitions, living rurally allowed one to serve themselves rather than a corporation, to express oneself sexually was to give in to one’s desires free of societal norms. Certainly some people wanted to participate in the counterculture to fit in with a largely First World youth movement, but also for their own reasons unique to them as Mexicans.

The accusation of being mere imitators of US or British cultures is not unique to rock-and-roll or hippies. Writing in 1983, Stephen Niblo began his article about British propaganda in Mexico during World War II by writing, “Cultural imperialism is a blatant fact in Latin America. Foreign influence in the mass communication media is ubiquitous…Sometimes the countries in which these groups work are only partially aware that they have been the object of media manipulation.”

Carlos Monsiváis called the Mexican hippies “the first generation of *estadunidenses* [US Americans] born in

---


Mexico.” He later described the large role that the US media played in Mexico when he wrote in his 2004 essay *Would So Many Millions of People Not End Up Speaking English?: The North American Culture and Mexico* that, “[t]elevision channels *gringophilia* and contributes more than any other factor to the transfer of the Americanization of the well-to-do sectors to the rest of the population. The meaning of this Americanization is not to disseminate technological, scientific, cinematographic, and literary influences and adoptions, but instead to implant the dreams of individual ascent and to monopolize the keys of the ‘the contemporary’: ideas, images, and sensations. The message is categorical: modernity is courtesy of the United States.”

While it would be difficult to dispute the claim that, in this situation, the US and Britain did exert a cultural influence on Mexico, in a globalized world the relationship becomes more nuanced. Countercultural influences were exerted by the US and UK, but it was also desired by Mexican youth. As Lynn Thomas argues in *Beneath the Surface: A Transnational History of Skin Lighteners* (2020), imitation does not negate agency. Thomas asserts that black South African women used skin-lightening facial powders for a number of reasons including to improve their appearances, portray themselves as more fashionable, and even to aspire to the elite social class of lighter-skinned black people. Those who criticized those black women ignored the abundance of reasons for the use of such cosmetic products and “reduced it to a matter of race.” She continues that the

---

debate over skin lighteners “highlights how in twentieth-century South Africa black women’s efforts to cultivate what they deemed fashionable or modern appearances could readily be interpreted by others as unsightly imitations of white ways.” This is similar to the debate surrounding native hippies in Mexico. To chalk native hippies up to simple imitators is to rob them of agency and ignore their motivations for participation. Mexican youth wanted to be a part of the countercultural movement for reasons both unique to them as Mexicans and for broader reasons of belonging to a culture of international youth. Monsiváis dedicates a section to the Mexican counterculture in the essay mentioned above. He noted a change after the Tlatelolco massacre in 1968:

> The year 1968 (the student movement, the massacre of Tlatelolco, the unequivocal conclusions over the nature of the governing sector) accelerates the change and multiplies the counterculture’s presence. For political, sexual, and sentimental reasons, thousands of young people—commonly university students from the middle class—take the road of Americanization proposed by the counterculture and disassociate themselves from the government and traditional morals and culture.\(^{128}\)

This is similar to Zolov’s argument that the number of Mexican hippies increased following the Tlatelolco massacre. After this show of force on the part of the Mexican government, many youths realized that traditional political protest would only be met with further violence. Many people turned to the developing hippie culture, seen as less

\(^{127}\) Thomas, *Beneath the Surface*, 63.

innocuous by Mexican officials and therefore not violently repressed, as an outlet to
express their dissatisfaction with contemporary society. Here, Mexican youth actively
participated in hippie culture because of the Mexican government’s authoritarianism.

Some Mexican intellectuals criticized hippies and rocanroleros as willing victims
of cultural imperialism. Zolov stated, “But for many on the left, the jipi movement was
too overtly depoliticized and, at any rate, still a second-hand copy of the ‘authentic’
revolt against technocratic life that was embodied in the hippie movement abroad. When
Carlos Monsiváis asked, ‘Against which high technology do [the jipis] protest in the
name of love?’ he articulated the left’s paradoxical sense of bitterness toward Mexico’s
jipi movement and simultaneous admiration for hippie culture elsewhere.”129 Those who
felt similarly to Monsiváis believed that the problems that created the US and Britain's
countercultural movements were different from those that plagued Mexico.

The same divide existed even among rock musicians themselves. Rafael Acosta
from Los Ritmos del Rock, one of the pioneering rock bands of Mexico, stated that many
musicians “look down on [his band’s] music; they say [they] were just copycats.” In
other words, these bands were not authentic. Acosta countered this argument by claiming
that Los Ritmos del Rock and similar bands laid a foundation for Mexican rock. Without
that foundation, today’s legends of rock would not exist.130

Many readers wrote to Piedra Rodante to express their concerns regarding this
debate about authenticity. Gabriel Vargas Lozano worried that lovers of Mexican folklore

129 Zolov, Refried Elvis, 134–35.
130 Talarico, Rompan Todo.
would criticize the magazine for its “gabacho aspect.” Vargas wrote: “I fear that it is going to rain criticisms from the lovers of Mexican folklore, in the sense that your (our) newspaper has a gabacho aspect. They will ignore the explanation that you are not trying to make a *Mexican Canta*, but rather an authentic, youthful newspaper.”\(^\text{131}\) Carlos Monsiváis explicitly asked the magazine, “Do you have sufficient Mexican material? That is the enigma and the challenge. Otherwise would be to repeat colonial schemes.”\(^\text{132}\) Another reader warned emerging rock groups of the dangers of singing in an “imported language” and encouraged them instead to make “Mexican rock.”\(^\text{133}\) After the Avándaro festival, most attendees agreed that Mexico had achieved its own place in the international rock-and-roll movement, thereby actively participating in the international counterculture. The festival proved to them that there was a native rock culture in Mexico blossoming with its own sounds and its own participants. In a way, they felt they had pulled off their own native Woodstock festival despite the setbacks that arose.

**The Official Opinion Regarding Native Hippies**

In addition to some intellectuals, many Mexican officials saw youth as merely imitating an imported culture. In this view, Mexican youth were passively being

\(^{131}\) Original Spanish: “[M]e temo que les va a llover críticas por parte de los amantes del mexican [sic] folklore, en el sentido de que su (nuestro) periódico tiene un aspecto gabacho que no puede con el. Harán caso omiso de la explicación de que no se trata de hacer un *México Canta*, sino un periódico auténtico, juvenil…” Gabriel Vargas Lozano, “Cartas de amor y furor,” *Piedra Rodante*, June 15, 1971, Piedra Rodante Collection, Stony Brook University Libraries Digital Collections, Stony Brook University, http://hdl.handle.net/11401/91331.

\(^{132}\) Original Spanish: “¿Tendrán el suficiente material mexicano? Ese es el enigma y el desafío. De lo contrario, a repetir esquemas coloniales.” Monsiváis, “Cartas de amor y furor.”

\(^{133}\) Morales, “Cartas de Amor y Furor.”
“contaminated” by hippie and rock-and-roll culture that emanated from the US and Europe. Jean Marie Thores wrote that when he attempted to enter Mexico with his long hair, border authorities told him it was dangerous, but, he continues, “in few or many words, what they do not say is they are scared that the Mexican youth are contaminated.”134 By viewing the youth as contaminated by foreign visitors and imported culture, Mexican officials removed the responsibility of participation in the culture from the native youth and placed it instead on foreigners. Effectively, this robbed Mexican youth of agency.

The press often viewed hippies as mere imitators. In 1968, Impacto printed an article titled “World Invasion of the Hippies: In Mexico no true hippies exist, only imitators of their outlandish style, who are used for commercial propaganda.”135 In a later issue of the magazine, another author continues this coverage of hippies by writing that the hippie movement did not prosper in Mexico because of a lack of “social pressures.”136

He continues harshly:

[Foreign hippies] influence was immediately felt: native hippies emerged. Some, only outwardly, copying their stupendous psychedelic attire and others, on the contrary, adopted the hippie in their philosophy, in their mysticism. But that's as

---


far as it went. Neither one nor the other came to constitute a truly nurtured group. The reason is obvious. In Mexico there are not the sociological pressures that exist in the United States or other countries where the movement was born or deeply rooted. Here there is no imperialist society, nor the problems that arise from the automation produced by high technology. The sincere hippies that exist in Mexico can only protest, rebel, against the regime—still provincial—of the family, or against the guadalupan society or against the disposition that forces us to listen to the ‘national hour.’ In reality, ‘hippismo’ in Mexico does not have a sufficiently strong imposition against which to fight, to rebel, to throw the symbolic power of their flowers. As has happened in our country since Doña Marina showed her preference for Don Hernando over the brown princes who sought her favors, our young people have rushed to adopt the exterior, the spectacular of the hippie movement, without being able to apply—although some are sincerely convinced that they want to—the discipline in their conduct that the ‘Hippie Guide’ imposes on them…The real hippies, those who go hungry, who organize peaceful protests against the Vietnam War, those who respond by throwing flowers at police who break up their meetings with clubs, must look—in accordance with their doctrine—with sadness at their apocryphal Mexican emulators. 

---

137 Original Spanish: “Inmediatamente se dejó sentir su influencia: surgieron los hippies autóctonos. Algunos, sólo exteriormente, copiando sus estruendosos atuendos sicodélicos y otros, por el contrario, adoptaron lo hippie en su filosofía, en su mística. Pero hasta ahí. Ni unos ni otros llegaron a constituir un grupo verdaderamente nutrido. La razón salta a la vista. En México no existen las presiones sociológicas que existen en los Estados Unidos u otros países donde el movimiento nació o enraizó profundamente. Aquí no hay sociedad imperialista, ni los problemas que surgen por la automatización que produce la
Another journalist writing for *Jueves de Excélsior* explained: “The ‘importation’ of filthy and shaggy people from the northern border of our country has been stopped. Then the hippie invasion slowed down. But the natives, the ‘Mexican hippies,’ emerged, alien to our characteristics.”

Again, viewing native hippies as just imitators stripped them of agency. It also could have been a way that Mexican officials relieved themselves of criticism. In other words, they claimed their native hippies were only imitations because there could be no good reason for someone to want to change or rebel against Mexican society.

**Avándaro and the Youth Perspective**

El festival de rock y ruedas de Avándaro was held on September 11th and 12th, 1971, was a critical moment in the development of Mexican hippie culture. It proved that there was a sizable counterculture in the country capable of uniting. Musician Alex Lora of Three Souls in My Mind said that their “hippie lifestyle was at its peak in...”

ellevada tecnología. Los hippies sinceros que existen en México solamente pueden protestar, rebelarse, contra el régimen--todavía provinciano--familiar, o contra la sociedad guadalupana o contra la disposición que nos obliga a escuchar la ‘hora nacional.’ En realidad, en México el "hippismo" no tiene imposición lo suficientemente fuerte ante quién combatir, ante quién rebelarse, ante quién arrojar el simbólico poderio de sus flores. Como sucede en nuestro país desde que doña marina patentizó sus preferencias por don Hernando, sobre los principios morenos que pretendían sus favores, nuestros jóvenes se apresuraron a adoptar lo exterior, lo espectacular del movimiento hippie, sin poder aplicar -- aunque algunos estén convencidos sinceramente de que quieren hacerlo--la disciplina en su conducta que les impone el "Decálogo Hippie...Los auténticos hippies, los que pasan hambres, los que organizan pasivas manifestaciones contra la guerra de Vietnam, los que contestan arrojando flores a los policías que disuelven sus reuniones a garrotazos, deben mirar—de acuerdo con su doctrina—con tristeza a sus apócrifos émulos mexicanos." Mundo, “Invasión mundial de los hippies.”

While this excited the youth—many felt excited for the counterculture’s future development—it was frightening for government officials. If this culture could unite in such a way, it risked the chance to turn into a more direct political protest and therefore, a stronger threat to government power.

The idea for the festival began when someone approached car racer Eduardo López about including a couple of bands in the car race that he was planning in Valle de Bravo, Mexico. They contacted Armando Molina, a representative for several bands, and began to work with him to plan the sets. The festival was promoted on the radio and television, through posters, and in the press including youth magazines such as *Piedra*

---

139 Talarico, *Rompan todo.*
Rodante.\textsuperscript{140} The site’s construction was planned and included a large stage, towers for an elaborate sound system, buildings to accommodate the bands and their equipment, and a fence to serve to keep everything secure. However, when it was time for the festival, it was clear that this plan did not come to fruition. The stage was smaller than planned and poorly built, the sound system was inadequate, accommodation had been reduced to tents with several cots inside, and no security fence. The projected number of spectators was estimated to be around 100,000, but after people began arriving, the organizers quickly realized that they had underestimated the turnout and the car race was canceled.\textsuperscript{141} It was estimated that roughly 200,000 people came out for the festival.

Discontent began to grow when the bands realized that the organizers were making money off the event, but they had been told it was a “free event” and were promised only a small payment of 3,000 pesos. Tickets were twenty-five pesos, there was an entrance fee, and the organizers planned to record the event for an album and a movie, all without telling the bands of their plans. The sound system degraded with each performance, and it was reported that by the time White Ink took the stage, there was only one working microphone. Despite these setbacks and disputes, the festival demonstrated that there were many young people in Mexico who liked “rock, freedom

\textsuperscript{140} Luis Fernando, \textit{Avándaro: La historia jamás contada} (Editorial Resistencia S.A. de C.V., 2018), 38–41.
and peace” and who were willing “to fight for their ideals, enduring all types of hardships.”

There was agreement among most attendees that the festival was evidence that Mexico had arrived on the world stage of rock-and-roll with its own native sound. Ciro Casanova Padilla related to a Piedra Rodante journalist that he was glad the festival was filled with Mexican bands, as it was time for others to “get out of their heads the idea that only foreign [music] is good.” The musicians who performed agreed that they had a national audience deserving of respect, and because of that, it was worth the effort to work diligently to continue to create national rock. In his summary of points about the festival, Oscar Sarquiz wrote that “the future of rock in Mexico is…brighter than ever.” Alex Lora, of Three Souls in My Mind, said, “We realize that we are many, and no one can stop us, because we have the truth.”

Many people who attended Avándaro believed the festival held a tremendous symbolic victory for Mexican hippies and rock-and-roll. Moving beyond having a native rock scene, these youth felt that they had carved out a space for themselves as Mexicans in the international cultures of hippismo and rock-and-roll: they had both international and national identities. Andrew Hannon, writing about the US, British, and Australian

---

142 Original Spanish: “…hay un núcleo significativo de jóvenes mexicanos que gustan del rock, la libertad y la paz, y que están dispuestos a luchar por sus ideales, soportando todo género de penalidades.” Sarquiz, “Humillación, Fraude con los Músicos.”

143 Original Spanish: “…la gente se quite de la cabeza la idea de que sólo lo extranjero es bueno.” Prieto, “Entrevistas.”


145 Original Spanish: “Ya no dimos cuenta de que somos muchos, y nadie nos puede detener, porque tenemos la razón.” Sarquiz, “Humillación, Fraude con los Músicos.”
hippies, has written that “countercultural groups did not think of themselves in terms of national outposts of an international organization, rather, they thought of themselves as a collective with local constituents, part of an informal network to whom borders were of limited consequence. Their culture crossed borders on airwaves, shared cultures in common, and imagined communities of shared experience.” While US American, British, and Australian hippies may not have consciously thought of their national identities, I argue that the same is not true of Mexican hippies. They were conscious of their national identity, while—as Hannon argues—also feeling a part of a larger, international culture. To feel a part of hippie culture internationally was not to totally ignore national boundaries or deny their identities as Mexicans. It was largely this native rock movement integrated into Mexican hippie culture that lended the culture its national identity. In other words, without a native rock movement, hippies’ identity would have largely been international, rather than also including a national identification. Native rock grounded Mexican hippie culture in Mexico.

As Marroquín put it, the festival was about Mexicans having the “opportunity for [their] own festival, like happens in the countries that carry the onda baton.”146 Here, Marroquín alludes to Mexican hippies’ place in the international onda and their having something of their own. He continues that at the festival, “a feeling of raza was awakened; it was felt that we are Mexicans, not gabachos. It is our onda. It waved the

---

146 Original Spanish: “Se trataba de que tuviéramos ya nuestro propio festival, tal como acontece en los países que llevan la batuta ondera.” Marroquín, “Dios Quiere que Llueva para Unirnos.”
Mexican flag without the fresa patriotism of September.”¹⁴⁷ Important here is the allusion to a new type of nationalism different from the “fresa nationalism.” *Fresa* was a mildly derogatory slang term used for members of the upper-class in Mexico City. “Fresa nationalism,” then, referred to the elite nationalism of the urban upper-class and the official nationalism that the Mexican government had carefully crafted and touted.

Marroquín continued: “In any case, Avándaro represents the first step towards cultural decolonization, or better, for the beautiful cultural integration that Mexico is called to achieve: here, in our homeland, country of mushrooms and peyote, of the eclipse of ’70, of Tijuana, will be where two cultures will go hand-in-hand; two Americas, in the peace that comes from love…In Avándaro our race, subjected for so much time to silence, screamed and sang, with a secular cry that made Mexico City itself tremble.”¹⁴⁸ Again, Marroquín was not insisting that the youth have thrown their identity as Mexicans to the side. Instead, Mexico was integrated into the international culture.

Eric Zolov has argued that “the youth culture actively sought to forge a new collective identity that rejected a static nationalism while inventing a new national consciousness on its own terms…Such a shift in consciousness allowed for the simultaneous reembracement of national cultural within the framework of an ideological

---

¹⁴⁷ Original Spanish: “En Avándaro se despertó un sentimiento de raza; se sintió que somos mexicanos, no gabachos. Es nuestra onda. Ondó la bandera mexicana sin el patrioterismo fresa de septiembre.”

Marroquín, “Dios Quiere que Llueva para Unirnos.”

¹⁴⁸ Original Spanish: “De todos modos, Avándaro representa el primer paso de la descolonización cultural, o mejor, para la bella integración cultural a la que México está llamada a realizar: aquí, en nuestra patria, país de hongos y peyote, del eclipse del 70, de Tijuana, será donde se den la mano dos culturas; dos Américas, en la paz que viene del amor…En Avándaro nuestra raza, sometida tanto tiempo al silencio, gritó y cantó, con un grito secular que hizo temblar la misma ciudad de México.” Marroquín, “Dios Quiere que Llueva para Unirnos.”
It was not the nationalism purported by the Mexican government or even by participants’ parents. Like the student protesters three years before, these Mexican youth imagined a more democratic Mexico. I agree with Zolov that it was the native rock movement that gave these youth a sense of national pride. Therefore, the creation of a native rock movement offered Mexican hippies, who largely identified with an international culture, an identity as Mexicans as well.

The presence of the US and Mexican flags at Avándaro was evidence this dual identity. María de Lourdes Elenes Duval remarked that people at the festival replaced the eagle of the Mexican flag with a peace symbol. By taking the flag of Mexico and drawing a peace symbol, these youth were recognizing both their national and international identities. The new flag’s peace sign was emblematic of contemporary international hippie culture while the similar design to the traditional Mexican flag reinforced hippies’ identity as Mexicans. The US flag appeared at Avándaro as well. However, attendants did not see the presence of this flag as evidence of cultural imperialism or their mere imitation of a US subculture. Eric Zolov puts it this way: “[W]hile the U.S. flag stood for imperialism at protests in 1986, at Avándaro in 1971 it symbolized solidarity with youth abroad and especially the Chicano fusion at the heart of Mexican rock counterculture.”

---

149 Zolov, Refried Elvis, 207.
150 Prieto, “Entrevistas.”
151 Zolov, Refried Elvis, 209.
The Beginning of the End

Mexican authorities used the festival to promote a campaign against rock-and-roll and hippie cultures. According to many musicians, the Mexican government used the festival to demonize rock-and-roll. One musician interviewed for Rompan Todo claimed that “[t]he government used it as the perfect way to say, ‘Look at this chaos.’” Alex Lora similarly stated that “[f]rom that moment [of the Avándaro festival], [Mexican authorities] made up that rock-and-roll was the most terrible thing possible.”152

---

152 Talarico, Rompan Todo.
Indeed, the press was not kind in its perspective of Avándaro. The sixth issue of *Piedra Rodante* highlighted the unfair way the Mexican media covered the event. Sarquiz wrote that most journalists only talked about the negative occurrences at the festival and ignored all the good. Those interviewed for *Piedra Rodante* were asked their opinion of the festival. Besides some complaints regarding the crowding and sound system, they answered that the festival was successful. Many were also asked about their views of the press Avándaro received. All of them remarked that the press was terrible, and several went as far as to call what the press printed lies.

The press called the participants “degenerates,” “delinquents,” and “sexual perverts.” Marroquín related that for the conservative right like journalist Mauricio Gómez Mayora for *Impacto*, the festival was evidence of an international communist conspiracy. The Left criticized the festival for political passivity and said the youth were being distracted from actual politics.

![Figure 14. "View of the Festival de Rock y Ruedas, Avándaro," by the Government of Mexico City is in the Public Domain.](image-url)
The violence used to repress the counterculture in places like Argentina was not present in Mexico, but officials acted to exterminate the culture. Humberto Calderón of the band Neón recalled that while the violence never reached the levels in other parts of Latin America, “there was a terrifying repression in Mexico.”\(^\text{153}\) Hoyos funkis, literally “funky holes”) were spaces where rock-and-roll concerts would be held, sometimes with an attendance of 20,000. According to Zolov, these concerts already “had a spontaneous, often transitory, urban character.”\(^\text{154}\) Following Avándaro, these concerts became focuses for police raids. Other music festivals were held after Avándaro, but not on the same level and always with the threat of government shut down.\(^\text{155}\)

A real end to hippie culture in Mexico, or anywhere else for that matter, is difficult to pinpoint. Some scholars like Sam Binkley in his work *Getting Loose: Lifestyle Consumption in the 1970s* have argued that hippie culture never really ended. Rather, the mainstream absorbed many aspects of the culture, therefore taking away the anti-establishment appeal. Unfortunately, without the sources at my disposal, I am unable at this time to substantiate this argument in the case of Mexico, but I would speculate that something similar occurred. For example, one US police officer, Captain Dewitt Treder of the Suffolk police remarked to Robert Kessler, journalist for the *New York Times*, “My own son has very long hair and I don’t mind…Most of our younger officers now wear sideburns and long hair.”\(^\text{156}\) This quote highlights two important aspects of the absorption

---

\(^{153}\) Talarico, *Rompan Todo*.


\(^{155}\) Talarico, *Rompan Todo*.

of hippie culture to the mainstream. First, it shows that there was a growing acceptance of
the hippie aesthetic. The fact that Capt. Treder does not mind his son’s long hair shows
that a part of the older generation came to accept parts of hippie culture. Second, it shows
that some of those people considered mainstream—even those as “establishment” as
police officers—were not only tolerating hippie culture, but adopting it for themselves by
wearing sideburns and long hair. Because something like a fashion trend is difficult to
control, I suspect that there was a similar acceptance that occurred in Mexico as more
establishment-type people adopted the dress or other aspects. This also could be a
powerful tool in undermining hippie culture: if everyone was doing it, it was no longer
“hip.”

Something as amorphous as culture proved difficult to eradicate totally. Mexican
officials tried before the Avándaro festival to curb the flow of foreign hippie visitors
when the problem of hippie culture was framed as imported. Yet with the festival
providing evidence of a substantial native movement, Mexican officials came at this
problem mainly through drug use legislation. As Beckhart noted, “The profound changes
in drug use trends of the 1960s and 1970s…led to reforms in the sanitary and penal codes
in 1968, 1973, 1974, and 1978 regarding illegal drugs and drug use by including
addiction but also become [sic] more criminalized.”157 It is revealing that the 1973
revisions to the sanitary code added peyote, hallucinogenic mushrooms, and ololiuqui (a
species of morning glory) to the list of illegal drugs.158 These drugs, all psychedelics, had

157 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City,” 112.
158 Beckhart Coppinger, “High in the City,” 113.
a particular tie to hippie culture. Because Mexican officials could not criminalize a culture perse, they cracked down on this behavior tied to hippie culture.

It is true that a rise in drug use among young people coincided with the development of hippie culture. In order to combat youth drug use and by extension hippie culture, Mexico undertook a number of measures in addition to updating the sanitary codes in the late 1960s and early-to-mid 1970s. These efforts included opening the Juvenile Integration Centers (CIJ) in 1969 to care for youths suffering from drug addiction. In 1972 the Ministry of Health established the Mexican Center for Studies on Drug Dependency (CEMEF) to study drug addiction.159 It is also telling that the international “War on Drugs” officially began in 1971.160 This “war” also often served as a convenient pretext to monitor potential Communist activity in Mexico and Latin America more broadly. Mexican officials were active participants in these efforts, and lessening the influence of hippie culture was certainly a benefit.

**Conclusion**

Mexican hippies were imagining themselves as fitting into international hippie culture. The integration of a native rock-and-roll movement into the Mexican counterculture gave Mexican hippies a national identity as well. On one hand, they felt a

---


160 I say “officially began” here because according to some historians, specifically Isaac Campos, the war on drugs began in the early twentieth century. He also stresses Mexico’s role in the war. Typically framed as being led by the US, Campos works to highlight the ways that Mexico was an active participant. See Campos, *Home Grown*. 

94
part of an international counterculture and on the other, they felt uniquely Mexican as well. In this way, members of the Mexican counterculture were reshaping Mexican nationalism. Avándaro was a pivotal moment as it was then that the Mexican counterculture felt most united. This represented a potential threat to Mexican officials’ power, and thus they acted to repress rock-and-roll culture and continued with renewed vigor to repress hippie culture. Because it was difficult to maintain a democratic image while repressing a cultural movement, the Mexican government instead criminalized drugs closely associated with hippie culture in order to stifle it.
CONCLUSION

This thesis sought to probe Mexican hippie culture from the inside by exploring how Mexican hippies performed their identities through consumerism, conceptualized ideas of masculinity and femininity, and imagined themselves fitting into an international culture as well as a reimagined national identity. Hippie culture in Mexico offered young people a way to rebel against their families, government, and society, without complete fear of violent repression. These hippies maintained their Mexican identity as the Mexican counterculture transformed traditional nationalism and inserted itself into the ranks of an international youth culture. Mexican officials tolerated this culture for a while, brushing it off as a fashion trend or robbing the youth of agency by blaming foreigners for bringing it into the country. However, the Avándaro festival proved that these youth were powerful. Following the festival, the government worked to repress rock-and-roll and hippie cultures. This was achieved largely through shutting down rock concerts and by adapting drug laws to target countercultural behaviors.

This project contributes to the study of Mexican history by centering and contextualizing Mexican hippies. Rather than exploring jipismo as a tangential topic in a larger discussion of music, drugs, or tourism, I have tried to make Mexican hippies the focus of this project. I demonstrate the ties that Mexican hippies had to “the mainstream” rather than treating them as a phenomenon completely apart from society. I also hope that this study will contribute to other studies of hippies and the 1960s counterculture, by highlighting that Mexico too had a vibrant counterculture and therefore broaden the scope of those studies which typically highlight places such as New York, San Francisco,
London, and Paris. My argument that Mexican officials combated hippie culture via drug laws then lends a level of gravity to hippie culture that it perhaps was seen to lack previously.

As the Mexican government repressed rock-and-roll culture and forced it underground, it could not stop other youth cultures from developing. Hippies and rocanroleros may have seemingly disappeared from public view, but other subcultures developed and offered Mexican youth a unique identity in their families, country, and world. Looking forward, this trend of ever-developing subcultures will not stop, and will probably only continue to evolve more rapidly as the world becomes ever more connected.

Eric Zolov, in *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture*, speaks to the loss of collective memory regarding the Mexican rock movement: “Repressed in the name of cultural imperialism, the memory of Mexico’s native rock movement from the early 1970s has been replaced by an imported rock memory of a commercialized counterculture from without. Although today recognized as a familiar term, ‘Avándaro’ has become a reference point absent a shared popular repertoire of images or musical experiences.”

As stated previously in the project, there is a lack of source material about the Mexican counterculture, and even more so when speaking of sources from Mexican hippies. However, I believe that a renewed interest in Mexico’s native counterculture has been developing in recent years. For example, Luis Fernando wrote a graphic novel about Avándaro in 2018, Netflix premiered a docuseries titled *Rompan*

---

todo: la historia del rock en América Latina in 2020, Revista de la Universidad de México published an issue dedicated to the international counterculture in 2021, and Gaceta UNAM published an article for the fiftieth anniversary of the Avándaro festival the same year, to name a few. The evidence of this reinvigoration signals to me that a new historical memory of the Mexican counterculture is in formation.

As stated in the introduction, I believe this project to raise interesting questions surrounding power dynamics in our world during the 1960s and 1970s. As I wrote this thesis, I realized how current many of the discussions that this project broaches remain, and I hope that scholars will continue to investigate them.
BIBLIOGRAPHY
Primary Source Materials


Secondary Source Materials


**Images**


