

# Sounding Homophobia: Neoliberal Discourses, FIFA Regulation, and the Collective Chanting of “Puto”

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## Overview

- This project investigated the discourse surrounding the use of the term “*puto*” (Spanish for “faggot”) by fans of the Mexican national soccer team from 2012 to present.
- Discourse analysis suggests that there is a stark tension between neoliberal notions of tolerance and queer activism and acceptance politics.
- This work shows that sounding-in-synchrony has the potential to be violent and homophobic and simply removing them (homophobic chants) fails to confront heteronormativity.



Example of “Puto” Chant during Mexico vs. Croatia at the 2014 World Cup. Courtesy Mark Hapin on YouTube. All rights reserved.

## Significance and Future Work

- This project expands upon previous research, such as Cusick’s (2008) work on music as torture, Herrera’s (2018) study on Argentine chants, and Chung’s (2020) exploration of the sexual violence in strip club music; all of which show that music and sound can be extensions of violence and oppression.
- Future research would investigate how homophobia (and in general, oppression) is regulated by neoliberal forces in a way that only dissuades those from acting out publicly.
- Research should also examine how the rise of tolerance discourse minimizes efforts by LGBTQ+ rights advocates in order to provide recommendations for advocacy groups to dismantle heteronormative structures outside of neoliberal assimilationist politics.

## Methods

- This project examined the changing debates around the use of the term “*puto*” at soccer games from fans of the Mexican national soccer team since 2012.
- I created a timeline (figure 1) of news coverage of the debates surrounding the use of the slur after compiling and examining sources.
- My ultimate goal is to understand how coverage of the controversy surrounding the term was used as a way to discuss issues of masculinity, heteronormativity, and *Mexicanidad*.

## Discourse Timeline

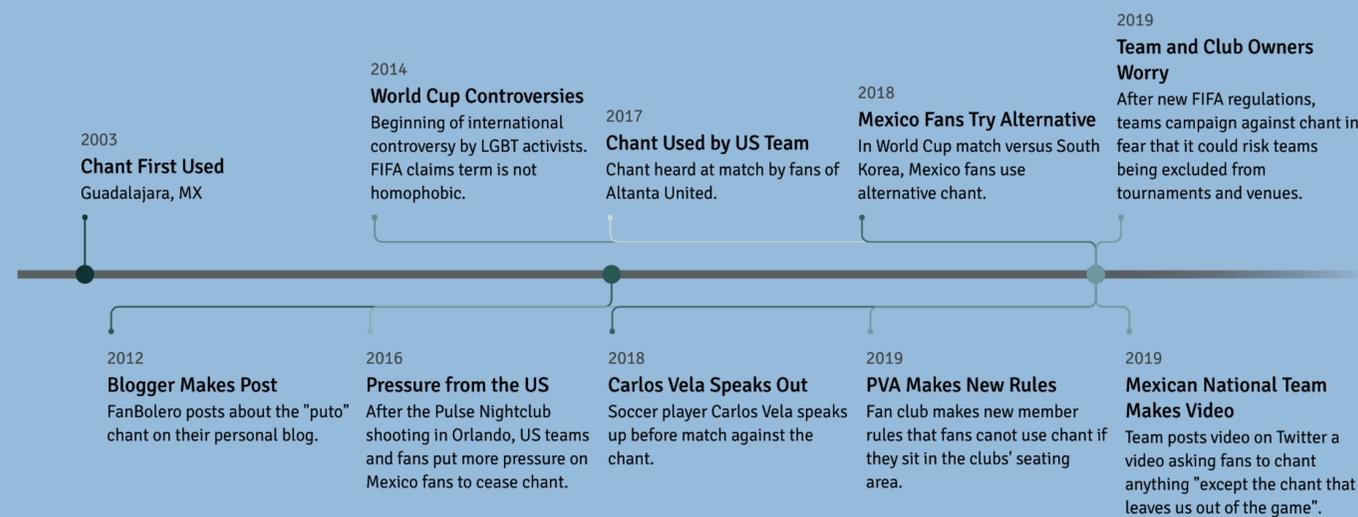


Figure 1. Chant Discourse Timeline

## Analysis

- FIFA’s regulation of the chant began with fines, which the Mexican Federation paid with little social consequence. Once, after international backlash, FIFA threatened to remove entire audiences, the team began a campaign for members to cease the chant during games.
- My analysis highlights how when collective sound-making is oppressive, queer activism did not solve the issue; when passive homophobia became unprofitable, members of the soccer team and national Federation worked to dissuade fans from using the chant.

## References

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