



## ARTICLE IN THE SPECIAL SECTION

# The *Fiesta* and the *Cerro*. Rocksi Broadcasting on Social Media From Xaamkējxp

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### ABSTRACT

This work presents the case of a young woman Rocksi, who works with social media and has a strong influence in her region. She lives in Xaamkējxp, Oaxaca, in the southwest state of Mexico. Her work shows us both the religious customs and the politics of the communities through live transmissions on her Facebook<sup>1</sup> and YouTube profiles. In 2024, she transmitted several celebrations in Xaamkējxp related to religious celebrations as she was invited to help a family that had a *comisionados de festejo cargo*. Rocksi filmed various activities illustrating the importance of ethnic religious practices in the community and the strength and vitality of the religious and political *cargos*. In the text, I will delve deeper into the topic through ethnographic description.

### KEYWORDS

Indigenous people, México, *fiesta*, Ayuujk, social media

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## Introduction

Over the last three decades the literature about cyberspace and Indigenous peoples has increased. In Latin America, several academics from anthropology,

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communication sciences, and sociology are researching the appropriation of digital technologies, media (radio, TV, cinema), and digital media by Indigenous peoples. The central themes of these works relate to the strengthening of Indigenous languages in cyberspace (Lee, 2006; Parffa, 2001; Pietikäinen, 2008; Warschauer, 2000), ethnopolitical claims (de la Guardia, 2018), the dissemination of customs and traditions for the reproduction of community values (Orobitg, 2020; Wilson & Stewart, 2008), among others.

From an anthropological perspective, Landzelius (2006) shows how ethnic minorities currently circulating on the Web have had to deal with various problems to overcome the digital gap. A first approach to the literature in Mexico, for example, revealed that one of the central issues in studies among Indigenous peoples using the Internet is accessing cyberspace. Many rural and Indigenous families and communities in Mexico are still far from having access (Winocur & Sánchez, 2015).

Even despite this panorama, there has been a strong and rapid growth in the cyberspace of Indigenous peoples. Prins (2001) gave a broad overview of what is still happening with ethnic minorities around the globe:

Although Indigenous peoples are proportionally underrepresented in cyberspace—for obvious reasons such as economic poverty, technological inexperience, linguistic isolation, political repression, and/or cultural resistance—the Internet has vastly extended traditional networks of information and communication. Greatly enhancing the visibility of otherwise marginal communities and individuals, the information superhighway enables even very small and isolated communities to expand their sphere of influence and mobilize political support in their struggles for cultural survival. In addition to maintaining contact with their own communities, Indigenous peoples also use the Internet to connect with other such widely dispersed groups in the world. Today, it is not unusual for a Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland to go on the Internet and communicate with individuals belonging to other remote groups such as the Maori in New Zealand, Saami in Norway, Kuna in Panama, or Navajo in Arizona. Together with the rest of us, they have pioneered across the new cultural frontier and are now surfing daily through Cyberia. (Prins, 2001, p. 308)

The case we will look at in this text is based on research conducted 20 years after Prins' opinion (2001). Apparently, the world has changed; however, some of the characteristics he mentions about Indigenous peoples, especially in Latin America, are still legitimate, such as cultural resistance, political repression, economic poverty, and linguistic isolation. Although what Prins calls “technological inexperience” is not applicable to many young people from Indigenous groups in Mexico. On the contrary, currently, Indigenous youth are familiar with technology, as evidenced by several studies on the use of the Internet and smartphones in Indigenous communities (Kummels, 2018; Nava Morales, 2019). Rocksí is an example of this generation of young people who handle technology with dexterity and speed.

This text is methodologically supported by fieldwork in Xaamkējxp<sup>2</sup> (since 2001), direct observation, several in-depth interviews with Rocksī and Paco, observation of Rocksī's Facebook<sup>3</sup> profile since 2019 and, more recently, I have also followed Rocksī's TikTok<sup>4</sup> page. I have worked on Rocksī's life story and systematized all the interviews I have had with her.

In 2001, the first time I visited Xaamkējxp, I was conducting my undergraduate research and stayed for thirteen months in the community to ethnographically study the practices that young people had on the Internet in the local high school. From 2001 to the present, my visits to the village have been frequent and lately they have involved collaborative research or student internships that I conduct in coordination with the municipal authorities. Since 2019, I have travelled two to four times annually to the community, and the visits lasted approximately five to 15 days. It all depends on the activities of the community and the obligations I have at the University and with my students. In 2024, I travelled to Xaamkējxp twice, in May (three days) and in August (12 days). I conducted the first interview with Rocksī and her partner Francisco (Paco) in 2019 in the community. In 2020, we were unable to carry out interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, we succeeded in having three recorded talks to construct Rocksī's life story. In 2022, 2023, and 2024 we did four more interviews. The reunions were more frequent, and I was able to join Rocksī at different events and festivities from which she broadcast. For this text I have worked with data mainly corresponding to the year 2024.

This text is divided into six parts: the introduction, the first part where I review the literature on *cargos* and *fiestas* in the region known as Mesoamerica, and the second part where I discuss *cargos* and *fiestas* from the perspective of the community giving meaning to all ethnographic description present in this text. In the third part I introduce Rocksī and detail some aspects of her life. The fourth section describes the climb up the *cerro* of the *comisionados de festejo*<sup>5</sup> accompanied by Rocksī. Finally, I conclude with some insights on the importance of the Ayuujkization of Facebook<sup>3</sup>.

### ***The Cargo and the Fiesta***

The literature on the *cargo* and *fiesta* in Mesoamerica is extensive. Most of this material, during the first 60 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was produced by American anthropologists who transformed Mexico into their "ethnographic paradise." The political and social organization of non-Western peoples, including Indigenous communities, is one of the fundamental themes in anthropology, as is kinship. It is therefore clear that the

<sup>2</sup> I will call the village of Santa María Tlahuitoltepec Mixe in the inhabitants' own language, that is Xaamkējxp.

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<sup>4</sup> TikTok is a trademark of ByteDance, registered in China and other countries. TikTok has suspended all new posting and live-streaming for users in the Russian Federation.

<sup>5</sup> Throughout the text I will use the words "käptän" and "comisionados de festejo" interchangeably to refer to the latter.

phenomenon in the Mesoamerican region has fascinated anthropologists for almost a hundred years.

More than four decades ago, anthropologists Chance and Taylor (1985) successfully recognized four American “generations” of studies of the *cargo*, *fiesta*, or *mayordomía* system. Each generation theoretically interpreted the system in different ways. The general structure of these generations was established from the 1930s to the early 1950s, and were ethnographies carried out in Guatemala among the highland Mayans (Bunzel, 1952; Tax, 1937; Wagley, 1949).

Later, between 1950 and the early 1960s (second generation), there were the works of Wolf (1959), Cámara (1952), and Nash (1958) with approaches oriented towards thinking of the *cargo* and *fiesta* system as a socioeconomic regulator and a communal protection device in the face of external entities. Harris (1964) criticized this interpretation of the system, arguing that it was hierarchical and did not produce any socioeconomic regulation. Furthermore, he argued that the cargo system did not function as a communal protection device, but as a repressive institution implemented by the Catholic Church in Indigenous communities (Chance & Taylor, 1985).

In the third generation of scholars, Frank Cancian (1965) stood out and proposed the religious cargo system balanced wealth in the community, but also produced stratification and legitimized existing economic differences (Cancian, 1967, p. 292). Several authors (DeWalt, 1975; Greenberg, 1981) refuted Cancian’s thesis on stratification, as it did not correspond to the religious cargo system.

In the fourth generation, attention focused on the influence of external conditions of the community and no longer on the stratification or horizontality of the *fiesta* system. Some of the authors representing this generation include Aguirre Beltrán (1967), Diener (1978), Dow (1977), Greenberg (1981), Jones (1981), Chance and Taylor (1985), and Smith (1977), etc.

In these debates on the religious cargos system, the importance of the pre-Hispanic and colonial antecedents of Indigenous societies emerged several times. One of the first efforts to analyze the issue was Carrasco’s work (1961). He discussed the continuities and discontinuities of pre-Hispanic elements in these systems. The Indigenous societies in the Mesoamerican region have also transformed over time, adding, eliminating, or absorbing elements in their political, economic, and social structures.

For the four generations of American scholars, the system of *cargos* and *fiestas* is composed of the following elements: civil and religious hierarchy, and *mayordomía* or *comisionados* of the *fiestas*. In this text, I will specifically discuss a case focusing on the latter, the *comisionados de festejo*. As mentioned earlier, it is essential to make it clear that the *mayordomías* or *comisionados de festejo* are an organizational structure that is constantly changing. The invention of “new traditions,” the emergence of new financial actors, the breakdown of the civic-religious cargo system with the entry of political parties or other religions, and the incorporation of elements of “modernity” create a complex network of relationships.

This was highlighted by Chance and Taylor forty years ago and still prevails today:

The current cargo system is changing in new and different ways .... However, we believe that the historical analysis we offer here elucidates the interpretative problems that continue to emerge in ethnographic studies. Neither approach reflects the complexity of the institution. When we look at the cargo system as a process and not as a category, we find that important changes have occurred in its operating and these have been related to other also important transformations in the structure. The variation in time is as significant as the variation in space. Both appear to be greater than we thought a few years ago. (Chance & Taylor, 1985, p. 22)

Until now, we have only reviewed an account of hegemonic American anthropology thoughts about Mesoamerican communities and their “*cargo* and *fiesta* systems.” Although this literature shed light on the question, the demand for more knowledge on the issue remained latent. Mexican anthropology itself, as a generator of knowledge about its own local realities, discussed the topic and during the last 30 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it can be observed that anthropological research carried out in Mexican universities strongly emphasized the *cargos* of the communities and the *fiestas*.

### ***The Fiesta, the Cargos, and Comunalidad***

The ethnopoltical movements and the powerful emergence of ethnic identities in the 1970s and 1980s in Latin America encouraged people from Indigenous communities to migrate to big cities to pursue academic training. Such was the case of Floriberto Díaz Gómez and Jaime Martínez Luna, both Oaxacans from the Sierra Norte. Floriberto, an Ayuujk<sup>6</sup> from the community of Xaamkējxp, and Jaime, a Zapotec from the community of Guelatao de Juárez. They studied anthropology in Mexico City and Xalapa, Veracruz, respectively. They played a fundamental role in the consolidation of ethnopoltical organizations in their regions and in the generation of knowledge from their own communities.

From an empiricist point of view, Floriberto and Jaime, both being natives of Indigenous communities<sup>7</sup>, succeeded in proposing a way of analyzing the *cargos* and the *fiestas*, from an *emic* vision that allows us to bring together the political, the religious, the work, and the territory in a single, broader theoretical perspective, with a very powerful heuristic potential. It is essential to move away from functionalist analysis where systems are analyzed separately, and a more complex view is developed where all dimensions are interconnected.

<sup>6</sup> Throughout the text I will use the words “Ayuujk” and “Mixe” interchangeably to refer to the same Indigenous group.

<sup>7</sup> There is an important debate concerning insider/outsider anthropologists: “The discussion of insider/outsider researchers is addressed by Jones (1980) in an interesting way, as he proposes to emphasize the insider anthropologist’s point of view as the voice of his own group, although he does not rule out the outsider anthropologist’s point of view at any point. Similarly, the anthropologist Narayan (1993) considers her Hindu origin as part of the development of her fieldwork in India and questions the relevance of thinking of herself as a ‘native’ anthropologist when defending the idea of a multiple identity” (Nava Morales & Calderón, 2014, pp. 11–12, Trans. by Elena Nava Morales—E. N. M.).

In the *comunalidad*, as Floriberto and Jaime called it, we observe a mosaic of diverse elements that are continuously related to giving life to the community. The community is the basis for the articulation of the various dimensions, for Floriberto the community is not defined in the abstract but there are elements that turn it into something concrete and give meaning to the dimensions of Ayuujk life:

Any Indigenous community has the following elements: (a) A territorial space, demarcated and defined by possession. (b) A common history, transmitted from one generation to the next. (c) A variant of the people's language, through which we identify our common language. (d) An organization that defines the political, cultural, social, civil, economic, and religious spheres. (e) A community justice system. (Díaz, 2007, p. 38; Trans. by E. N. M.)

In his texts, Díaz shows the community as a tissue of relationships between space-nature and of people with each other. The relationships are revealed through "the underlying and acting energy between human beings among themselves and between human beings and each and every element of nature" (Díaz, 2007, p. 39).

Attributing a relational character to community opens up powerful possibilities for understanding it in diverse spaces and times and between and among different human, non-human, tangible, and intangible entities. The immanence of the community (what is intrinsic to it) would be defined by *comunalidad*, which explains the phenomenal, the tangibility of the community:

*Comunalidad* expresses universal principles and truths as far as Indigenous society is concerned, which will have to be understood from the beginning not as opposed to, but as different from Western society. To understand each of its elements, some notions must be considered: the communal, the collective, complementarity and integrality. The communal and integral meaning of each part that we seek to understand and explain is central; without it our knowledge will always be limited. (Díaz, 2007, p. 40; Trans. by E. N. M.)

Díaz (2007) does not reproduce the classical binarism such as *Gemeinschaft/Gesellschaft* [Community/Society] and highlights the differential character of Indigenous society in relation to Western society. He also emphasizes the aspects that make Indigenous societies distinct. The notion of *comunalidad* is composed of some basic elements that guarantee its understanding: (a) the Earth as Mother and as territory; (b) consensus in the Assembly for decision-making; (c) free service as an exercise of authority; (d) collective work as an act of recreation, and (e) rites and ceremonies as an expression of the communal gift (Díaz, 2007, p. 40).

As we can see, work as the basis of the community's recreation is present in all daily activities. Through continuous hard work, it is possible to sustain the power of the community. During the *fiesta*, the work is not an exception, presenting in each of the activities that compose the festive event. In August 2024, when we were in Xaamkëjxp, Francisco (Paco), Rocksí's partner, told us that although from an external point of view the *fiesta* seems to be all about joy and entertainment, it involves some

other things, including problems. Regardless the joyful atmosphere, there are also disagreements and conflicts due to the differences in character among the assistants of the *comisionados de festejo*. Tensions between people may be calmed down somewhat by family relationships, but the stress of the celebration is always present. The *cargos* also show the work of the community in each *cabildo*, in each authorities change, in each moment experienced during the year, in each community activity.

With this insider theoretical perspective, we cannot separate the *fiesta* from the *cargo* system or rituality from work. All the constituent elements of *comunalidad* play a role in the various communal moments and are interrelated to reproducing the community itself.

## Rocksi

R. M., better known as Rocksi, turned 30 in 2024. She is a tall, cheerful woman with great charisma. She was born in Mitla, in the Central Valleys of the state of Oaxaca. Her mother is Zapotec, and her father is Ayuujk. Though Rocksi could currently be considered an influencer, with more than 18,000 followers on Facebook<sup>8</sup>, she calls herself a blogger. She is a content creator who has had various phases over the more than five years she has been generating diverse materials for Facebook<sup>8</sup>, TikTok, and Youtube<sup>9</sup>. Crovi Druetta (2016), studying the interactions of young people in digital social networks, identified and proposed a typology of interaction with four scales: visualizes, moves, modifies, and creates.

Visualizing consists of minimal interaction, where users only visualize in search of new experiences. Transferring consists of disseminating content, they are a sort of replicator of the voices of others. Modifying and transferring involves another level where users have a greater cognitive involvement with the messages. Creating represents an act of originality and a greater involvement of the user with the digital content (Crovi Druetta, 2016, pp. 52–53). It seems to me that Rocksi's profile is very well characterized by the fourth level proposed by Crovi Druetta (2016), as originality and creativity are hallmarks of her content.

In other works, I have proposed that the educational capital of the subjects involved in these activities is also central to their productions, creations, and interests. In Rocksi's case, she attended high school in Xaamkējxp, had a scholarship and practiced dances during her high school years. In addition, her strong and rebellious character makes her always look for and learn new things.

It was in Xaamkējxp where she met Francisco (Paco), her partner, who was studying Community Communication at the Zempoatépetl University, an educational project located in Xaamkējxp. Paco has also been a great influence and support for Rocksi, as he constantly encourages her in her projects. In addition, when it comes to making the broadcasts for which they are hired, Rocksi and Paco function as a synchronized and well-organized team.

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<sup>9</sup> YouTube™ is a trademark of Google Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

There was a time, between 2020 and 2021, when Rocksi broadcast regional Oaxacan music (as a music program). She was pleasing her audience with songs as a virtual DJ. This type of transmission ended due to a Facebook<sup>10</sup> rule regarding the copyrights of songs used throughout the program. Therefore, she had to end that job and start others. She continued to produce videos about the traditions and customs of Xaamkējxp and Mitla, her hometown. She was also hired several times with Paco to travel to different communities to broadcast basketball games. Basketball is considered the most important sport in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca and many people attend the games. Migration and the difficulty of travelling between towns make social networks the best way to watch basketball matches. For this reason, Rocksi and Paco broadcast via Facebook<sup>10</sup> with local, regional, and international sponsorships. Many migrants located in the United States ask Rocksi, Francisco, and their colleagues to broadcast the games. This request is accompanied by the corresponding payments that come as American remittances. In the case of patron saint festivals, they also pay for broadcasts from the north to be able to attend, albeit virtually, the celebrations in their hometowns. Many migrants are never able to return to Mexico for their *fiestas* or to reunite with their families because they are undocumented. In this way, Rocksi's broadcasts allow people to experience their festivities, traditions, regional basketball championships or the daily rituals of their hometowns.

### Climbing the Hill on Facebook<sup>10</sup>

On August 12, 2024, during the *fiesta* of the Virgin of the Assumption<sup>11</sup>, Rocksi climbed the hill with the family of the *kāptān*. Being a *comisionados de festejo* has a very important meaning as it allows a person to climb to other more important and prestigious positions in the village. In Xaamkējxp, the positions are hierarchical, a person can move up the hierarchy little by little and slowly gain more and more prestige and positions of greater responsibility and complexity.

Generally, the young people starting as *topiles* (vigilantes or community policemen) are responsible for the security of the village, maintaining order and preventing fights or street brawls. Their boss is the "*mayor de vara*," another higher-ranking position that can only be obtained by people who have already been *comisionados de festejo*. For a whole week a month (with its days and nights), the *mayor de vara* and his wife oversee a group of *topiles* who oversee the security of the village. Being *mayor de vara* is a position of great responsibility, as it involves the care and vigilance of the village, as well as the feeding and care that the *topiles* may require.

The *comisionados de festejo* can wait several years before they become *comisionados*, there is a long waiting list to get there. This position carries the

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<sup>11</sup> In Xaamkējxp, there are three major festivals. The first of the year is in May when they celebrate the Ascension of the Lord which is just 40 days after Easter Sunday, the second one is in August, when they celebrate the Virgin of the Assumption and the biggest and most important one on December 12 when they celebrate the Virgin of Guadalupe, patron saint of the town and of all Mexico. She is the main Virgin in the catholic religion in Mexico.



responsibility of hosting and feeding (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) one of the philharmonic bands invited to the *fiesta*, as well as feeding all the people from the village who arrive with the band. The financial outlay is very high and means years of savings. The *comisionados de festejo* need to involve their entire extended family to carry out the celebration. In other words, as soon as they know when they will be *kăptăn*, they start to visit their relatives to ask for help and support in this exhausting task. Generally, the request for help is accompanied by a bottle of mezcal to properly close “the pact” of going to help the *comisionados de festejo* at least 10 or more days before the *fiesta* formally begins.

“Climbing the hill,” as I mentioned at the beginning of this section, is part of the ritual activities to be carried out by the *kăptăn*. The hill is called Zempoatépetl or *li'pxy yukp* (hill of 20 peaks) in Ayuujk, it is in front of the town of Xaamkējxp. It is said that Konk, king of the Mixes, took refuge there after the Spanish intrusions into the territory. Today it is a sacred place with great affluence of the Mixe population in general, especially the highlands population. The path is not easy, many people suffer from knee or back pains due to the efforts of the ascent, but the journey up and down is completed due to the devotion they have to the hill.

Families go to the hill to pray, give thanks, and make offerings for different reasons. In the case of the *comisionados de festejo* of each *fiesta*, they go up the hill to give thanks for having the opportunity to receive the bands and to pray that everything goes well during the days of the *fiesta*. Rocks, being part of the families that were invited months before to help the *kăptăn*, was present in all the respective activities many days before.

On Monday, August 12, 2024, the *comisionados de festejo* went up Zempoatépetl with their families and helpers to perform the corresponding ritual. The appointment was at 3 a.m. to get organized, perform the corresponding rituals in the *kăptăn*'s house and have some bread and *atole* before starting the journey. They departed to the mountain at 5 a.m., took a van that left them in Tejas, an agency of Xaamkējxp that is located right at the foot of the hill, and from there they began the upward trek. They reached the top three hours later, at approximately 9 a.m. They made the necessary thanks and petitions at the highest point of Zempoatépetl and then began the slow descent until they reached Xaamkējxp in the afternoon. In the evening of the same day, a meal was held with all the helpers, family members and guests at the home of the *kăptăn*, as tradition dictates.

\* \* \*

The whole trip to the hill was recorded by Rocks, who uploaded the edited video to Facebook<sup>12</sup>, explaining many of the details of the journey. We will stop here to elaborate on the content of the material (Rocks, 2024).

Rocks begins the video by explaining that they arrived at the home of the *comisionados de festejo* where some offerings had already been made (presenting the *xătsy*, which are corn offerings, offering *tepache* and mezcal, and the sacrifice of

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birds). Then they drank *atole* with bread because it was time to get ready to start the journey. The women in charge of the kitchen organized the chilli-smeared tortillas and hard-boiled eggs, the traditional meal when ascending the hill. The men, including Rocks's partner Francisco (Paco), were also preparing their birds (turkeys or roosters) to take to the hill to be sacrificed.

The group took a van to the Tejas agency with all the things they were carrying (food, mezcal, *tepache*, chickens, roosters, turkeys, and water) and from there they could start the walk. When they arrived at the place where the walk began there were already several vans parked because other *comisionados de festejo* had already arrived to make their offerings<sup>13</sup>.

At one point, Rocks takes a shot of herself and briefly tells that they are starting the walk, she asks Paco what time it is, and he replies that it is 6:36 a.m. Rocks excitedly says that this is the second time she will climb the hill.

The images of the people are streaming, everyone is well covered up and loaded with various things, a serrano sound in the background accompanies the video. The images stop, Rocks's voice comes on and mentions that they are making a first stop at an important place where they rest from the walk and share water and mezcal. There is someone else who is filming and is also accompanying the group. It is Peck, another family member who is also dedicated to audiovisual production and is also filming the ascent to the hill<sup>14</sup>. The head of the festival committee (an elderly person of great experience), who is a direct relative of the *comisionados de festejo*, gives a few words in Ayuujk, refers several times to *et nääjxwii'nyit* (to life, to nature, to the earth) and thanks each of the participants for accompanying the *käptän*.

In the images, the people present are being cleansed with bunches of herbs from the place<sup>15</sup>. Rocks explains that this place is a spiritual site where people clean themselves to leave all the bad energies behind before continuing their ascent. There they also ask for strength to be able to reach the top safely<sup>16</sup>. At this time, they had breakfast. The women hand out the tortillas covered with chili, the hard-boiled eggs, and a few pieces of *quesillo* (Oaxacan cheese). Again, the images are shown with Rocks's voice saying that they must continue, as they are not even halfway up.

<sup>13</sup> At each village fiesta, there are several *käptän*. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the *comisionados de festejo* increased in number, as the fiestas for the whole of 2020 were cancelled. Then the *comisionados de festejo* of that year joined the *comisionados de festejo* of the year 2021. In other words, between the years 2021 to 2024 each of the three bands coming to Xaamkējxp are served by 18 *käptän* in total. Each *comisionado de festejo* is responsible for providing food (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) to a band twice during the week of the fiesta. It seems that this will change again in 2025 and it will be back down to only nine families serving the three bands that come to play at the fiesta, i.e., each family will be responsible for feeding a band five times instead of twice during the week of the fiesta.

<sup>14</sup> Peck also has a Facebook page where he frequently uploads his material (Video Producciones Peck, n.d.).

<sup>15</sup> Gently tapping a person's body parts with bundles of twigs and leaves, usually in the case of a spiritual cleansing or temazcal bath.

<sup>16</sup> In her ethnographic accounts of her ascents to the hill, Castillo Cisneros explains that this: "is very necessary and is always done, it is part of a purification that is done to be able to enter what is known as the house of Kontoy on the hill" (Castillo Cisneros, 2021, p. 99).

The voice and the image of Rocksí enter again, saying that they have been there for two hours, she is exhausted and is carrying a chicken in a sack, showing it to the camera. She takes a panoramic shot of the landscapes and assures us that they are spectacular and beautiful. Again, the images run and at 8:57 in the morning, two and a half hours after the start of the walk at 6:36 a.m., Rocksí appears again on camera and says that they are almost at the top and takes a shot of one of the boundaries of the community<sup>17</sup>.

On reaching the top, a queue is formed according to the order of arrival of each *comisión de festejo*. Once at the front of the queue, the corresponding offerings are left. At the summit, while waiting for the offerings to begin, Rocksí explains:

They come to the hill of Zempoatépetl to give thanks for all the blessings, for the wellbeing of their family and to pray that their *comisión* passes well, that there are no setbacks and that they spend it in harmony with all their helpers, their families, and their guests. At the end of the offering comes the ritual again, which is *tepache* with red [*wĩnxatsy*], as it is known, and to taste another tortilla with hard-boiled egg and spend some more time there on the hill. (Rocksí, 2024; Trans. by E. N. M.)

After performing offering rituals and socializing in that sacred space, comes the return journey, the descent, although faster, is also tiring and energy demanding. In the video, Rocksí shows the *comisionados de festejo*'s house being decorated by family members who did not go up the hill.

They oversaw setting up the altar where the image of the Virgin of the Assumption would be placed. Later, all the helpers gathered in the house of the *kāptān* and drank the *tepache* with *martajado* corn, which is customary when going to the mountain. Immediately after, they performed a new ritual conducted by the principal of the *fiesta*, who gave a few words in *ayuujk*.

After this comes the *caldo mixe*, which consists of a chicken soup with green beans, accompanied by chilli, onion, coriander, and lemon, as well as a bean tamale. This soup is always eaten after coming down from the hill and is generally prepared with the sacrificed chickens in the house of the *comisionados de festejo*, in the first ritual of dawn, before climbing the hill. At the end of the video, Rocksí closes with a comment:

To end this beautiful day, the *comisionados de festejo* gave some presents to each one of us who are going to be helping during these days of celebration. The women were given these very beautiful handmade shawls, naturally dyed, and the men were given a sweatshirt with a print that, not for nothing, but my friend Paquito and I made [the gifts can be seen in the images in the video]. (Rocksí, 2024; Trans. by E. N. M.)

<sup>17</sup> The *colindancias* are the boundaries between one community and another, marking the limits of one territory and another with large rocks.

This video posted on Facebook<sup>18</sup> on August 13, 2014, received more than 510 reactions, had 32 comments, and was played 27,000 times. It lasts 12.19 minutes. The content of the comments is diverse, with greetings and congratulations to Rocksí. Several people thank Rocksí for the content she uploads because she shares the traditions of the region. They admire the landscapes, the music, and the gastronomy. In addition, several people ask her various questions about when the *calenda* is, if she carried anything during the journey and what was the fate of the chickens that they carried on their backs. One comment caught my attention, it was the first and commented as follows:

The religious cosmovision of the *Ayuujk Jaay* is very remote and very ancient, the spirituality of believing in a supreme protector of the Mixes .... called King Konkoy ... they give him offerings ... for health, work and for their lives ... is a part of the Mixe theology. (Reyes, 2024; Trans. by E. N. M.)

In the comment, we observe how the spirituality and religious cosmovision of the Mixes is discussed, also mentioning that Kondoy, the king of the Mixes, was born from an egg and was an explorer of distant lands. In Ayuujk thought, Kondoy fought against Montezuma (Aztec emperor) and the Spanish *conquistadores*, preventing both invasions. He is known for his strength, boldness, and protection of people. The Ayuujk earned the nickname “the never conquered” because of Kondoy. He lives on Zempoatépetl, which is why we find so many references to him when ascending the mountain.

Hill climbs are the daily bread of the Ayuujk. It must be understood that the Ayuujk religious system is interconnected with various elements of the Catholic religion that arrived in the region in colonial times, and this discussion is present in the literature we reviewed at the beginning of this text. The ascent to the hill as a fundamental part of the complex Ayuujk religiosity allows us to observe the multiple relationships between diverse entities involved in the community festivities. For this reason, the perspective of *comunalidad* helps in this analysis. Let us return here to the elements that conform *comunalidad*: (a) the Earth as Mother and as territory; (b) consensus in the Assembly for decision-making; (c) free service (cargo communal) as an exercise of authority; (d) collective work as an act of recreation, and (e) rites and ceremonies as an expression of the communal gift. We observe how these elements appear tangibly or intangibly during the ascent to the hill.

The connection established during the rites or ceremonies with the territory and the various elements that compose it (the mountain, the live and sacrificed animals, their blood, the plants, the food, the corn used in the offerings) is given through collective work, not only as an act of recreation, but also as an act of community co-responsibility. In the case examined here, the ascent to the hill took place because of the cargo that had to be executed: to be a *comisionados de festejo* or *käptän*. As I mentioned a few pages back, being a *käptän* requires a lot of money that is

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saved over the years and immense help from the whole extended family, friends, and neighbors. The communal gift is present in the help received from the people close to them, but also from the territory and all its entities to whom the petitions and offerings are destined to be able to complete the cargo with the greatest harmony, solidarity and understanding.

Rocksi's eye and camera allow us to walk alongside her and climb the hill with the *comisionados de festejo*. Rocksi decides to create these contents because she knows the relevance of these rituals and due to her ability to film, edit and upload the content to her Facebook<sup>19</sup> profile it is possible to have access to diverse experiences occurring in Xaamkējxp.

In her content there is no in-depth analysis of the rituals performed by the people, just as *comunalidad*, as an Indigenous theory, does not appear in the everyday discourses of the population. Rocksi knows that *cargos*, the rituals they involve, ceremonies, collective work, and territory are the fundamental elements around which community life in Xaamkējxp rotates and are therefore part of her Facebook<sup>19</sup> contents. The comment I transcribed above shows us how their interlocutors on Facebook<sup>19</sup> are feeding back her publications through a reflection on the vitality of Ayuujk spirituality and cosmovision.

In the past, in the Ayuujk region, it would have been impossible to climb the hill by filming a video and then broadcasting it to an unknown and heterogeneous audience. Now it is possible because of the transformations that the community has undergone, the invention of "new traditions" (such as recording the festivities on video and then watching them several times with the family), the emergence of new actors as the financiers (national or international migrants) and the emergence of young people with leadership and charisma who use digital technologies daily and skillfully, and generally have a high school education that supports them and their connections and social relations go beyond the community.

## Conclusion

There are several ideas to conclude this text. First, it is central to highlight the growing use of digital platforms and technologies among Indigenous peoples in Latin America, specifically in Oaxaca. The effective use of media such as radio, television, video, or cinema for more than forty years in the region is part of the history that has led to the varied and innovative uses that Indigenous youth are making of digital platforms today. The second idea has to do with their specific purposes for using these platforms, as they are often linked to the profound importance of communicating with migrant family members (many located in Mexico City or the United States). The main theme of the content of the transmissions is related to religious festivals and all the events that are manifested in them, such as basketball, dances, the different parts of the festival, the *jaripeo*, the box *ranchero* or, as shown in this article, the climb to the hill.

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The third idea considers the transformations that also emerge in the older generations. For example, it is important to say that traditional authority figures support Rocksí's different activities since they think the divulgation of the celebrations by social media is important to reproduce the community and their values, as in the case of the main character who accompanied the *comisionados de festejo*.

Finally, in this case, rather than indigenization of digital technologies (Ginsburg, 2008), we are dealing with an Ayuujkization of Facebook<sup>20</sup> that is strongly anchored in the elements that make up *comunalidad*, such as territory, festivals, *tequio*, the cargo system or rituality (Kummels, 2018). In other words, the uses and practices related to digital platforms are determined by the central axes of Ayuujk society in the case considered here.

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