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The Black Idiot and the Mountain Woman: Interpretations of Discrimination
in Peruvian Media

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Latin

American and Iberian Studies

by

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September 2021

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September 2021

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Interpretations of Discrimination in Peruvian Media

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ABSTRACT

The Black Idiot and the Mountain Woman:
Interpretations of Discrimination in Peruvian Media

by

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This thesis focuses on differing interpretations of racialized media (mis)representations and its impact within the Peruvian context. This is done through the case studies of two television characters—*El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. In 2010, *El Negro Mama* faced major criticisms as well as temporary suspension. This is due, in part, to the organization of Afro-Peruvian advocacy group LUNDU, which stated that *El Negro Mama* is a harmful racist presentation of an Afro-Peruvian man. However, the ethics committee in charge of dealing with such complaints, as well as fans of the show, defended the comedic intent of the character. The same arguments were made in separate instances for *La Paisana Jacinta*. The longevity of both characters and their shared creator/actor—Jorge Benavides—is pertinent given that Benavides is *mestizo* and these characters are an Afro-Peruvian man and an Indigenous woman. This not only poses the question of what constitutes racism/discrimination in media, but also how interpretations of violence serve those who fit within the national image that Perú presents.

In order to gauge their makeup and direction, each character's trajectory from 1996 to 2019 is examined through textual analysis. A total of twelve clips were pulled from the shows each character appeared in (all found on YouTube): *JB Noticias*, *El Especial del Humor*, *El Wasap de JB* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. Six clips were dedicated to each character, with two coming from each show on which they appeared. This study utilizes NVIVO to codify the specific themes/traits that present themselves most frequently: *class*, *conflict*, *violence*, *degradation*, *deviance*, *otherness*, *sexuality*,

stupidity and *humor*. Additionally, the examination of two distinct case studies concerning the removal of each character from the air is included to explore the differences in interpretation, intent and impact.

What I found is that each character is incapable of changing according to the standards of advocacy groups and other organizations. The manner these characters present themselves from 1996 to 2019 remains the same, albeit some modifications to fit the context they existed in. Additionally, each character was found to be extremely stereotypical of each group they indirectly (mis)represent. Despite various forms of evidence, both characters remained protected by private ethics committees that deemed them as unproblematic. This thesis then examines how these committees are permitted to allow such (mis)representations. I make the argument that this is due to the reality imposed on these characters by the audience, a rigid definition of violence, and the overall impact racialized characters have on Peruvian society.

KEYWORDS: Media, Race, Afro-Peruvian, Indigenous, Andean, Peru, Representation

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Chapter I: Introduction

In 2010, one of Peru's most popular television channels, *Frecuencia Latina*, faced controversy. The controversy centered on one of the shows that *Frecuencia Latina* aired in their primetime slot— *El Especial del Humor* (2004-2015). These claims, substantiated by Afro-Peruvian advocacy group LUNDU, described the character *El Negro Mama* as a harrowing presentation of an Afro-Peruvian man.

Before chronicling the issues LUNDU attached with *El Negro Mama* as a character, and what their critique meant in 2010, some context is needed. To begin with, *El Especial del Humor* is a comedy-sketch show that focuses on an ensemble cast of characters set in Lima, the capital city of Perú. It is the second installment in the world that Benavides had constructed, his first titled *JB Noticias* (1994-2003). Both of these shows (and their successor *El Wasap de JB*) have the same cast and sketch-comedy approach. Their characters are stereotypical caricatures of people that live in Lima. These shows also use the setting to express different stories, relying on urban space and the nature of life in a city to propel them. The creator, Jorge Benavides has mentioned that his characters present the reality of life in Lima from his perspective.¹ Overall then, the theme of the show mostly encompasses the spirit of city folk, while also allowing for satire and commentary on the social aspects of life in Lima.² *El Negro Mama* has been present for all these iterations and also allegedly covers the same theme. For LUNDU, this is not the case. When engaging with *El Negro Mama* it must be remembered that he existed relatively unscathed from any critique prior to the 2010 controversy.

¹ ("La BBC Califica de 'Denigrante' Personaje a La Paisana Jacinta | MUNDO | EL COMERCIO PERÚ" n.d.)

² Although Benavides has stated that these characters stem from his interpretation of life in Lima, the racial stereotypes present are also due to the collective views that Peruvian society has on characters like *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*.

El Negro Mama is a recurring character in all three of Benavides' shows, and is a caricature of a poor Afro-Peruvian man in Lima. His name, *El Negro Mama*, translates to "The Black Idiot" in English; *Mama* is a Peruvian slang term used to call someone stupid. The majority of his sketches follow his antics. However, 'antics' feels like such a benign term to use for how unsettling his character is. The storylines given to *El Negro Mama* usually involve him stealing or lying, with secondary characters often times ridiculing him throughout these sketches. On top of this, Jorge Benavides portrays *El Negro Mama* in dark makeup, prosthetic lips and nose, a curly-haired wig and ragged clothes. All of these features granted to *El Negro Mama*, on top of generally positive reception, allow the type of humor this character expresses to become violent towards Afro-Peruvians as a whole. *El Negro Mama* may not claim to be an accurate depiction of an Afro-Peruvian, but it is still implicitly accepted as one by the show's audience. It is only upon viewing Jorge Benavides alongside *El Negro Mama* that one can truly understand how horrific this performance is.



It is with this background that LUNDU's concerns must be taken into account. LUNDU is an organization focused on research, education, and serving the Afro-Peruvian community while providing a space for community members to express themselves through art. What makes them distinct is their stance and actions towards shifting and highlighting instances of

³ (Trome, *Jorge Benavides alongside El Negro Mama*, 2020.)

discrimination, specifically in media presentations. In the view of LUNDU and Mónica Carrillo—founder and president—*El Negro Mama* is reproducing harm towards Afro-Peruvians by broadcasting an incorrect, brutal presentation. The storylines *El Negro Mama* is in, his appearance, his name, and Benavides portraying him all contribute. This harm was felt so extensively that Carrillo herself has recounted personal experiences of harassment. Sadly, this is not an isolated experience. These claims alongside a petition for *El Negro Mamas*’ immediate and permanent removal from the show circulated and came to a head. *El Negro Mama* did end up being temporarily removed in late 2009, only to be reinstated a couple months later. Despite LUNDU placing their efforts towards quantifying the multitude of times Afro-Peruvians were negatively represented in the media, asserting that *El Negro Mama* was one of many manifestations, they were rebuffed on multiple levels.⁴ The ethics committee in charge of handling such remarks, the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, felt removal was unnecessary. The same can be said about the opinions of *Frecuencia Latina*, Jorge Benavides, media outlets and of course, Benavides’ supporters. What resulted were the insistent decries against LUNDU which transformed into rage. In their view, LUNDU was being racist for attaching the parody *El Negro Mama* supposedly performs to racism in the first place.

These rage-filled remarks beg for understanding. An understanding of what causes the disconnect between what constitutes racism and the “parody” that Benavides uses. The disturbing image of *El Negro Mama*’s character alongside his stereotypical presentations may seem so obvious depending on the viewer. Yet *El Negro Mama*’s appearance and performance did not pose an issue before; at least, not to the same degree that 2010 did. This also could be in part because of the fact that Carrillo as an Afro-Peruvian woman was the one leading the discussion to

⁴ (LUNDU 2010)

begin with. *El Negro Mama* had been placed in a similar position before in 2002. With the pressure of Jorge Ramirez, the president of ASONEDH (*La Asociación Negra de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos*), *El Negro Mama* was silently removed and reinstated. Taking this into account then it becomes clear that LUNDU's approach felt abrasive to those defending *El Negro Mama*. It is reasonable to believe then that Carrillo's position as a Black woman caused much of the anger to be directed at her, because afterwards she was effectively shut down. ASONEDH's stance was not much different than LUNDU's after all. The key difference was that ASONEDH adhered to respectability politics. As opposed to the explicit criticism LUNDU presented in 2010, Ramirez opted to speak to Benavides directly; in sharp contrast with LUNDU, there was no extensive media coverage.⁵ Therefore, when LUNDU briefly succeeded in *El Negro Mama*'s removal from *El Especial del Humor*, it came at a price.

The controversy caused debates as to whether *El Negro Mama* was actually a racist caricature. With backing from Afro-Peruvian athletes and musicians, *El Negro Mama* managed to survive the claims that LUNDU and Carrillo had made.⁶ Commentary made by these entertainers generally fall into the argument that *El Negro Mama* is a fictional character and the creator has no ill-intent. Basically, these celebrities stated that they themselves will not take the character as an attack, and since they choose not to it clearly is not racist—supporting Benavides' claims that his work is not racist.⁷ Yet, in LUNDU's study recording discriminatory media representations of Afro-Peruvians, the *Observatorio*, they cited that these representations are common and often result in negative perception of Afro-Peruvians.⁸ Thus, when celebrities like Martín Farfán make comments such as, “No permitiré que me censuren como al “Negro Mama” [in reference to his caricature of an Afro-Peruvian woman named *La negra Bombelé*]. En ese sentido, espero que

⁵(Becerra, Miguel 2010) 48-49.

⁶ (Mosquera Rosado, Ana Lucía., 2019)

⁷ (“Explotó: Jorge Benavides acusó de discriminadoras a organizaciones afroperuanas” 2010)

⁸ (LUNDU, 2010)

Canal 4 me respalde. Que una persona de color posea un trabajo, debería alegrar a la comunidad afroperuana (en alusión a Lundu). Esto es exagerado.”⁹ This attack on *El Negro Mama* impacted Afro-Peruvian celebrities differently than those who lead average lives. What was at stake for these celebrities then were their livelihoods. Celebrities like Farfán fall into this trap of representation politics quite easily. Rather than acknowledge the harms that these representations show, it is far easier to accept the current structure and become complacent. The manner LUNDU approaches this is not asking to be accepted into the system at all. They are demanding change. This however, is merely stated to be “exaggerated” and therefore “unjust in removal.” Mónica Carrillo, in retrospect, relocated to New York after stating that she faced numerous threats after the ordeal.¹⁰ The matter seemed to be wrapped up after *Frecuencia Latina* made a superficial apology for the accusations, and Benavides promised to make “changes” to *El Negro Mama*.¹¹

What seems amiss then, is how racism or discrimination is defined within media-based contexts. Yet, it is not as if Perú does not legislation or protections in place, quite the opposite. *Ley no. 28867*, a modification of article 323 within the Penal Code of Perú, defines discrimination as a crime.¹² Alongside *Ley N°276670*—which created a framework for what constitutes an act of discrimination—there is a legal precedent established for a crime motivated by hate on the basis of race, sex, political affiliation, etc. The problem here is not that there are no protections, but that they are not applied to their fullest extent, if at all. Interestingly, in 2017, a new modification was introduced through Legislative Decree No. 1323. This modification of Article 323, considers both physical and mental violence manifested from discrimination of people through the internet or

⁹ (EDUCACIONENRED.PE 2010)

¹⁰ (PERÚ 2015)

¹¹ (“Jorge Benavides le haría cambios a su personaje ‘Negro mama’” 2010)

¹² Código Penal, Ley no. 288867, Presidente de la República, (2000).

other means.¹³ Although these laws have been modified a number of times to better reflect the needs of people subject to discrimination, the interpretation of what counts as discrimination remains disconnected from the law. The modification introduced through Legislative Decree No. 1323 should have been a beacon for cases like the one LUNDU proposed, although it did appear much later in 2017. However, *El Negro Mama* was still allowed to remain on the air despite these laws and this modification; which seemed specifically tailored to counteract discrimination and the physical/mental violence that resulted from it through the internet or television. Nonetheless, the unfortunate reality is that *El Negro Mama* remained a returning character on up until 2020.

Research Problem and Relevance

However shocking this incident seems to be, it is not the first instance of Blackface performance in Perú or other parts of Latin America. Jorge Benavides is hardly the first or last instance of this performance, which is extremely concerning. *Boquellanta* in comic strips (Perú), *El Soldado Micolta* on television (Colombia), ads that use Blackface or articles that have appalling descriptions of Afro-descended people. It is abundantly clear that anti-Blackness is a deeply ingrained problem throughout, which results in a *devaluation* of Blackness. This devaluation is critical to note, since *El Negro Mama* is devalued constantly throughout his presence on television.¹⁴ The distinction made between devalued Blackness and racism is needed, due to the persistent erasure and violence inflicted towards Black people *globally*. While this thesis does distinguish between the two, credence must be given to the specific harms Black communities face, particularly since this thesis begins with *El Negro Mama*. *El Negro Mama* is different in that his character is *consistently* on television and has been for approximately twenty-five years. This is the longest and most popular example of media representation that a “supposedly” Afro-

¹³ (“El Delito de Discriminación En El Perú: Avances y Retrocesos En Sus Veinte Años de Vigencia Como Tipo Penal | Alerta Contra El Racismo” n.d.)

¹⁴ (“Racist Stereotypes in Spanish Language/Latino/a Media · Racist Stereotypes in Spanish Language/Latino/a Media · Race & Ethnicity in Advertising | America in the 20th Century” n.d.)

Peruvian character has gotten. The character survives almost any bad coverage it receives. Although various viewers and supporters make claims of knowing the character is fictional and is not intended to be filled with malice, the experiences of Mónica Carrillo and others like her cannot be ignored. *El Negro Mama* is a fictional character that presents himself as Afro-Peruvian, a role that is given almost no sustenance.

Where is this disconnect coming from? How is this allowed in the media, when there are protections in place against discrimination in Perú? What can organizing against characters like *El Negro Mama* accomplish? Chiefly, what is there to be done?

I intend to engage with *El Negro Mama* and another character, *La Paisana Jacinta*, both of which are created and portrayed by Jorge Benavides. *La Paisana Jacinta* is also subject to being an essentialized character based on stereotypes of a presumed Indigenous Andean woman from *la sierra* (mountains). Throughout this thesis, I use Indigenous and Andean interchangeably to reflect are closely related the two are *generally* for people in Perú. Although not all Andean people self-identify as Indigenous, it is overwhelmingly common for Peruvian citizens to assume they are Indigenous—particularly so in Lima. This is the case with *La Paisana Jacinta* as well, she is *assumed* to be Indigenous and therefore is subject to projection. Therefore, I include *La Paisana Jacinta* because, in my reading, I have found there is scattered coverage on Afro-Peruvian experiences. Most articles concerning the alchemy of race in regards to Perú are tied to indigeneity. This is hardly surprising, though it is disheartening. Perú is a nation in the Andean region, and with a sizable amount of the population identifying as Indigenous or of Indigenous-descent there is much more presence.

Afro-Peruvians on the other hand are not accurately represented even in census data. Before the INEI survey in 2017, Afro-Peruvians were estimated to be 0.5% of the population.

However this estimation is from data recorded *in 1940*, and was not updated until 2017.¹⁵ Now, it is estimated that Afro-Peruvians are about 5% of the population, although census data can be tricky and is still not extremely reliable.¹⁶ All of this however, remains to be speculation solely because the resources needed to accurately present what Afro-Peruvians experience and need are missing. The reasoning as to why I am adding *La Paisana Jacinta* then, is to compare the treatment of both her and *El Negro Mama* through the media, its policies and direct action.

Brief Review of the Literature

The literary foundation for this thesis considers the works of a multitude of scholars from a variety of disciplines, ranging from history, anthropology, sociology and media studies. First and foremost, however, this thesis utilizes the ideas that Michel-Rolph Trouillot contributes in his classic work, *Silencing the Past*. While *Silencing the Past* makes poignant points about the production of history and how it is written, the core critique revolves around the silences present in these productions/presentations of history.¹⁷ Silencing history is enacted by people that were deemed powerless by the ruling group of that time. For Trouillot, this is in direct reference to the Haitian Revolution. Keeping this in mind, silencing refers to the methods of flattening aspects of history that are furthermore erased. This is not an incident but an intentional instance of power dynamics, politics and suppression.

The works of Carlos Aguirre and Jesús Cosamalon add to this historical analysis by providing the context of the transfiguration of race as a concept in Perú. Aguirre's work, *Agentes de su Propia Libertad*, provides an in-depth social history of African enslaved and their descendants in Lima during the early 19th century. The core argument of the book presents them

¹⁵ ("After Decades of Erasure, Afro-Peruvians Will Finally Be Counted in the National Census" 2018)

¹⁶ This is particularly true in Latin America. As Reginald Daniel has mentioned extensively in his book, *Converging Paths*, the framing of questions regarding race is heavily reliant on the respondents view of themselves.

(G. Reginald Daniel 2007)

¹⁷ (Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995)

as active members in the movement towards abolishing slavery. Abolition of slavery in Perú was a gradual process, it was not officially abolished until 1854. Aguirre argues this is for a variety of reasons, from scarcity of labor to differing situations for the enslaved in urban and rural areas. The most meaningful contribution that Aguirre made towards this type of literature was illuminating that the enslaved did organize towards liberation in Perú. This distinction is necessary, although it is muddled with some contradictions. While it can be confusing to learn that some African slaves did not want full freedom, due to the varying freedoms some had in certain regions, it is important to include in order to avoid creating a monolith. What I found to be most helpful was how Aguirre provided in-depth charts and graphs throughout his book, which is beneficial in establishing a sense of continuity behind the historic struggle of Afro-Peruvians to the current struggle presently. The question remains as to why is it that these people are still subject to ridicule, when they have been foundational to the nation?

Cosamalon also provides meaningful commentary on the socio-racial politics of 19th century Lima in his book *El Juego de las Apariencias*.¹⁸ Cosamalon speculates that it was not necessarily that racism and discrimination were incompatible with the new idea of the Peruvian republic. It was that since race was seemingly superseded with class status that it was subject to a sort of alchemy. This reliance on social and economic mobility allowed for the illusion of equity, without much thought to what this meant for those without access. It was this distinction that allowed for racism and discrimination to be ingrained into a systemic issue. There is a sense of pride in Cosamalon's writing that suggests that his use of sociological theories surrounding the permeable nature of race is uncommon in this type of analysis. As a historian, Cosamalon makes it clear in this book that 19th century Lima viewed the "whitening" of skin as a sort of "game."¹⁹

¹⁸ (Cosamalon, Jesús. 2017)

¹⁹ Ibid.

Appearances within the past are what drive perception about race; attributes like education, wealth, or even your spouse all fit into this performance. This makes use of the materials available, such as 1860 census data, certificates for marriage, taxes and the like. While the book is astounding in covering the components behind shifting race definitions, when we call it like we see it, I was wondering what more could be said about the Afro-Peruvian population that lived in Lima at that time. 1860 census data for example, does not include any indication of an Afro-Peruvian label, it is extremely limited. The centrality of Lima in both books also was prominent in my reading, because it demonstrates how Lima serves as a focal point for the shifting meanings of race.²⁰ Urban space allows for race to remain dynamic, in whatever fashion it may be available to the actors of this period—which to me is what both authors were trying to achieve.

As mentioned previously, the literature overwhelmingly pertains to approaches that evaluate the histories that the Indigenous populations of Perú have dealt with. This is for good reason, considering the deeply embedded thought that Peru is in reality a nation tied to their Indigenous past. In contrast, Indigenous peoples throughout the history of Perú historically have had a tense relationship with both the colonial and nation states. This is informed by their connection to ideas such as ‘naivete’ or as ‘obstacles to modernity’ that academics like Cecilia Méndez are thoughtful of when engaging with these pasts. In Méndez’s article *The Power of Naming*, she critiques the ethnicization of the *Iquichano* identity that primarily existed during the monarchist uprisings.²¹

Méndez also questions their positionality by paralleling this past with the more contemporary occurrence of murder of eight journalists in the village of Uchuraccay. This analysis deeply helped with this study not necessarily being concerned with chronology, but

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ (Méndez 2001)

rather how these historical processes and sources illuminate what should be acknowledged—their involvement in the creation of state. Méndez’s other works that I engaged with for the purposes of this study also examine the harsh reality of where these Indigenous populations are given credence, and where they are not. In *Incas Si Indios No* for example, Méndez places emphasis on the idea of the creole nationalist conservative attachment to an imposed social hierarchy, which was encapsulated through the lens of satirical poet Felipe Pardo.²² Pardo heavily discriminated against the Indigenous population in his writings, which was tied to his opposition to the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation, which existed briefly from the years 1836 to 1839. Marshall Santa Cruz, the leader of said confederation, envisioned a confederate state with the premise of an internal market integrating both territories (Bolivia and Perú). This went against what Pardo favored, which were ties between Perú and Chile. This discourse then highlighted the importance of ideologies and media outlets (newspapers), which Pardo used to aid in the formation of this type of nationalism; which is tied to ‘race’ and social hierarchy. In *De Indio a Serrano* Méndez doubles down on the ideals that shaped the creation of the label *serrano*, which has a history of harmful stereotyping which still results in tangible violence in the present.²³ This particular article helped me better comprehend the idea of racialized geographies and tied it in with images that helped ‘fix’ these notions about Indigenous people.

I have also made use of the pioneering work of fellow graduate students and their Master’s theses. Miguel Becerra delves into the subject matter of media representations of Afro-Peruvians in Perú, along with connecting the historiographical foundation of Blackface in Perú with the United States’ influence. Becerra moreover placed emphasis on the components of the erasure of Afro-Peruvian history and utilizes this in order to gauge an understanding of Peruvian humor and how it relates to racism.²⁴ The thesis of Ana Lucia Mosquera Rosado in comparison

²² (Méndez, Cecilia 1996)

²³ (Méndez 2011)

²⁴ (Becerra, Miguel 2010)

focuses on an analysis of *El Negro Mama* through textual analysis. This is done to garner an understanding of media representations of Blackness in Perú.²⁵ Mosquera Rosado does so with the intent of establishing a foundation for future studies that pertain to media representations of racialized figures, and I use her study to better inform mine. Khrlobian additionally presents excellent work on the racial anxieties exhibited in 1970s Colombia, specifically Cali, through the press using Hale’s framework of *el indio permitido*.²⁶ Khrlobian provides a distinct methodology that I found useful in determining the direction of this project. Khrlobian’s focus on racialized geographies as well as governmental actions discuss their impact on the folklorization of the Afro-Colombian population. This is a critical contribution to my understanding of how media sources present Afro-descendants as devalued “others” throughout Latin America. Although I do use “other” and “otherness” throughout my study, it is tied to the devaluation of dignity that Afro-descendants and Andean/Indigenous people are privy to in media. “Otherness” is to refer to how Afro-descendants as well as Indigenous/Andean people have been blocked from entering the main geography of the nation, and relegated to a secondary geography instead—not fully belonging but still managing to fit within the borders imposed upon them physically and personally.

Tying back in the concept of *el indio permitido* that Khrlobian uses in her thesis, Hale additionally presents an idea of what is permitted within the neoliberal framework of Guatemala (which is reflected throughout Latin America). Hale accomplishes this by focusing through the lens of Indigenous activists creating and organizing for better material and social conditions, combatting neoliberal policies present.²⁷ Khrlobian has taken that concept and repurposed it to reflect the realities of Afro-Colombians instead. However, this concept that Hale presents is a

²⁵ (Mosquera Rosado, Ana Lucía. 2019)

²⁶ (Khrlobian 2019)

²⁷ Neoliberalism refers to market-oriented reform policies that are reliant on privatization and austerity. This ideology has the goal of diminishing state-influence over the economy. This is an ideology that has historically ravaged Latin American countries, causing extreme gaps in wealth and resources for citizens.

comment on how neoliberalism and the government's investment in national image advises how they interact with racialized groups—in this case the group is the Maya.²⁸ In granting them a metaphorical “seat at the table” governments like Guatemala, in Hale's findings, actually depoliticize the intention of those they choose to integrate. By being calculated in how to use these concepts, I must also acknowledge the gap that rests between articles that scarcely pertain exclusively to Afro-Peruvians as opposed to the relatively new budding literature on Indigenous people throughout these disciplines.

In any case, these ideas are important to consider when looking to examine race dynamics in Perú, but do not account for the Afro-Peruvian history that is embedded within the shared national history. Academics like Tamara Walker add specificity to the enslaved African and free populations in Lima in the 18th century, and in turn succeeded in articulating the importance of visibility in the perception of race (and by extension Blackness).²⁹ The African enslaved initially were dressed as a display of wealth and success by slaveowners. When this was banned, the practice remained as a manner for descendants to negotiate respect. This in turn, impacts their *geographical realities*; in other words, where they are anticipated to be and how this influences their lived experience. Other academics like Rachel O'Toole also examine the importance of Africans and their descendants, specifically in her book *Bound Lives*.³⁰ O'Toole does so in showing how Indigenous people and Afro-Peruvians navigated their status within the legal *castas*. Placing the history of Indigenous populations aside Afro-Peruvians, as those who bound to one another through a mutually-beneficial relationship, is rare and hardly written about. This particular book holds a special place in this thesis, because it not only did the work of

²⁸ (Hale, Charles. 2004)16-21.

²⁹ (Walker, Tamara, 2017)

³⁰ (O'toole 2012)

placing the two together as interconnected, but in that it validates my argument that *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* are linked.

One of my main critiques of the literature surrounding these topics, is the fact that a majority of work within the United States relies on sources written in the English language. This creates a gap of knowledge for those who seek sources, but have difficulty finding them. By not acknowledging other works, academia is doing a great disservice to the populations it claims to “bring light to.” Given that the United States dominates in the production of knowledge, this lack needs to be tended to because it is essentially erasing other wisdoms. Although works from Perú regarding Afro-Peruvian history are present, I found that what I encountered did not discuss media representation as a distinct form of power or violence. Many provide historical examination of particular events and its ties to the present, yet the study of media is limited.³¹ This is not acknowledging the works of other academics as well, works that do not pertain to Perú, but do pertain to Afro-descendant experiences in Latin American contexts. Works like that of Ferrer, Fick, James, Da Costa, or Daniel. Reading those works were also critical in understanding how Blackness as a concept is international, and how these frameworks will coincide with one another given their shared colonial past with Spain. It must not be mistaken that the Afro-descendant or Indigenous populations within Latin America are copies of one another. It is quite the opposite. Though similar, these countries have different contexts, language and histories surrounding them.

This thesis makes use of all these works by placing the core idea of race as a permeable concept and considers the power of images and visuality in relation to it. Engaging these texts will grant this thesis the backbone needed to present my own argument that Afro-Peruvian erasure is prevalent in how media disregards the violence *El Negro Mama* inflicts within Perú. By

³¹ One work that is accessible in the Peruvian context is LUNDU's *Observatorio*, which this thesis will mention and analyze later on. (LUNDU 2010)

extension, analysis of *La Paisana Jacinta* presents how in being superficially integrated in the “official” nationally recognized history and fabric of Perú, discrimination in media is not taken as seriously as it should be. By examining images of racialized people, the clear history of imagery is notable. Considering Deborah Poole’s concept of visual economy from her book *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, it is important to examine how images provide an impetus for the transfer of meanings throughout our world.³² Images and race are closely related to one another. What Deborah Poole asserts is that within this relationship between the two, *visual economy* is what constitutes differing meanings and ideas surrounding race. Visual economy is a description of the phenomenon of image transfer, and how these images interact, shift, and ultimately inform ideologies that they are intrinsically connected to.³³ However, this should not be confused as solely an idea delineating the ways images interact, but also the ways in which images ultimately hold power because of this interaction through media. I use visual economy as the basis for understanding media representations, particularly with racialized (mis)representations. It is through the transfer of these images of *La Paisana Jacinta* and *El Negro Mama* that enable such relentless harm towards the people they dishonestly and indirectly represent. It is the interaction between the audience and medium that grants such adverse consequences to real people.

Benjamin Orlove’s article, *Putting Race in its Place*, delineates the importance of geography when it comes to engaging these images furthermore.³⁴ By explaining the visuality of geography, Orlove makes the point that order is directly tied to the geographical space that a person inhabits. By taking control of the image associated with geography, the order of said geographical space—be it physical or spiritual—is intact.

³² (Poole, Deborah 1997)

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ (Benjamin Orlove 1993)

A prominent example of this concept is in chapter 3 of *Vision, Race, Modernity*, which examines Anastasio Fuentes' attempts to center the "importance" of Lima.³⁵ This comes to fruition in his propaganda aptly titled *Lima* in the mid-19th century. This propaganda relied on a collection of images and watered down information about the capital city. This was ultimately done to appease European nations, since Perú at the time was a nascent republic seeking recognition after gaining independence from Spain. However, the content of this piece of propaganda was so particularly specific in that it blatantly erased the majority of inhabitants.³⁶ *Lima* and its success hinged on the fact that it erased Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous people, people who were more than present at this particular moment in time. This deeply invested practice is not particularly surprising when the burgeoning eugenics movement of the early 20th century is also taken into account. Nancy Stepan argues that Latin American nations did not merely rearticulate these ideas like Europe had assumed, but created new conceptions— like *la raza cósmica* that José Vasconcelos posited in México.³⁷ Ideas tied to race do not begin in the 19th century. They are however, amplified significantly and tied to *national identity* throughout this period. The concept of *la raza cósmica* has been criticized for being exclusionary towards African descendants and their ancestors.³⁸ Vasconcelos, in his fixation on race mixing, additionally essentialized components of Indigenous people in this conceptualization. In sum, he used only what he deemed worthy, placing emphasis on the European component of *la raza cósmica*.³⁹ Not fully considering the implications of what this would mean for the people he modified to fit his conception, he vocalized the idea that the mestizo was the superior result within *mestizaje*. This later on would dominate conversation when considering Latin America.

³⁵ (Poole, Deborah 1997)

³⁶ (Poole, Deborah 1997)

³⁷ (Stepan, Nancy 1991)

³⁸ (José Vasconcelos 2007)

³⁹ (Miller 2004)

This is critical when considering more contemporary versions of erasure, which is what *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* are accomplishing.

In this discussion regarding race and images, Kathryn Burns states that imagery and visuality are components that attempt to “fix” race in only one position.⁴⁰ The reasoning for the relevance of this topic is not solely fixed upon the ideologies of race, but how imagery counteracts its fluid nature. The contexts of these particular characters—from their setting, creation, reception—all funnel into the conception of *racismo silencioso*.⁴¹ This concept, coined by Marisol de la Cadena, explains that racism within Perú is not explicitly demonstrated by phenotypic traits. Rather, racism slips into other components that marginalized people “arguably” emulate—her examples discussing the campaign of the *indigenista* movement which related lack of education (implicitly) to race.⁴²

El Negro Mama and *La Paisana Jacinta*, as two racialized entities, are relevant to this conversation because they represent contemporary practices of *racismo silencioso*. I track how all of this ties to the overall national framework of Perú. It is not necessarily a question of who belongs, but rather why and how is such suppression of Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous history allowed? Exposing these practices also reveals how the Peruvian public—which overwhelmingly self identifies as *mestizo*—is involved (implicitly or explicitly) in this process. The insistent idea that the nation of Perú is “modern” give these caricatures of an Afro-Peruvian man and an Indigenous woman, who are deemed obstacles to modernity, less of a foundation to demand equity in media representation. This deeply entrenched belief dates back to Perú’s formation as a nation in the 19th century, as noted by multiple Peruvian historians.⁴³ Modernity entails a strictly biased ideology that centers practices that benefit European nations.⁴⁴ All this aside, what is key

⁴⁰ (Burns, Kathryn. 2007)

⁴¹ (De la Cadena, Marisol. 2014)

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Namely, Nancy Stepan, Cecilia Méndez, Marisol de la Cadena, Carlos Aguirre, etc.

⁴⁴ (Stepan, Nancy 1991)

is to consider here is how media representations flatten and manipulate how people view certain groups in a concise manner, effectively causing them to internalize these beliefs, despite allegations that state otherwise.

Interpreting how the *reaction* that was garnered through *El Negro Mama's* removal is important in understanding the longevity of the character. Because of the defensive, violent reaction the public exhibited towards Carrillo and those who dared to critique *El Negro Mama*, following his trajectory as a character is relevant in understanding the character as a (mis)representation. According to LUNDU, Afro-Peruvians account for approximately 7-10% of the population, and bear a majority of harmful stereotypes that manifest in media outlets.⁴⁵ Regardless of this approximation, it is important to place value on how disproportionate and unjust these representations are. Furthermore, the centralized position of Lima within this fictional work serves as a reminder of the racialized geographies we are all fraught with, and must be acknowledged as critical in surveying these characters.⁴⁶ Certain types of people *must adhere* to the geographical places they are *imagined* to be.

This relevance also interacts with what images provide in the transfer of meaning throughout our world. By providing this critique this study questions the mobility of power within these interactions. This is a point that is questioned in multiple texts, but not specifically within the Peruvian context. Perú as a nation benefits from the national imagery that it had built surrounding the images of 'Inca past' that haunts the imaginations of its citizens.⁴⁷ This investment in this belief is needed to comprehend how it reflects the importance of power in differing contexts. Therefore, it is important to also consider the impact of interacting with racism

⁴⁵ (LUNDU, 2010)

⁴⁶ (Benjamin Orlove 1993)

⁴⁷ (Greene, Shane. 2007)

as a monolith. It does not work towards actual change toward racial equity and does the work of separating components of what makes racism function as openly discreet as it does in Perú.

Consequently, the questions that are relevant to this study investigate how does the context within and outside the show illustrate these representations, and how do they relate to the image Perú? Why is *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*, throughout their trajectories, still considered hallmark characters within the show, despite activist efforts to label the show as racist? How different are the representations between the two respective characters, given the context of each racial grouping they “represent”? Is *La Paisana Jacinta* treated with more care than *El Negro Mama*, and how are these intersections between the two telling of the commitment to fair representations? All these questions inquire about the constructions I placed in mind, and generally relate to the *imagined community* that Benedict Anderson posits.⁴⁸ There is a vested interest in maintaining this imagined community that Peruvians partake in, which is completely intentional. In order to make sense of the discomfort that accountability presents for them, they must abide by the rules presented in their imagined community—any shift will present issues for those invested.⁴⁹

While it is imperative that this study analyzes these circumstances in order to reveal the relevance of it all, it is also important to recognize how these manifestations, while only providing a snapshot of racialized tensions, is positioned in the *visual economy*. It is germane to understanding the mechanisms present in Peru.⁵⁰ Overall, what I am arguing is that it is not necessarily that media representation can grant all the power in improving material conditions—there is danger in relying solely on this premise. What I am arguing is that, historically, the media has had the power to flatten what the nation considers to be outsiders, or devalued citizens, and that this power is extremely prevalent in Peruvian media today. If media representations

⁴⁸ (Anderson, Benedict R. 2006)

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ (Poole Deborah. 1997)

ultimately do not matter, why bother creating such an outwardly violent presentation of *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*? In this thesis I am adding (mis) in front of representation, in order to *make it clear* that these (mis)representations are not only inaccurate but are disproportionately impacting the people they claim to (mis)represent.

Methods and Sources

I analyze the trajectory of *El Negro Mama* in all three Jorge Benavides' shows alongside *La Paisana Jacinta* in the two chapters that follow (Chapters 2 and 3). I believe it is imperative I include both characters in my research because of what they both represent in terms of racialized manifestations. This is done to note if any differences are present in the treatment of *La Paisana Jacinta* when to *El Negro Mama*. I also focus do this in order to document how they are characterized in all of Jorge Benavides' shows on *Frecuencia Latina: Noticias JB*, *El Especial del Humor*, *La Paisana Jacinta* and *El Wasap de JB*. The hope of doing so is in order to formulate a comparative analysis of their understandings of race; comparing stereotypes Blackness in relation to Indigeneity. In doing so, this study aims to examine the nuanced differences within the mechanisms of race and how these two characters are perceived along one another. This is accomplished by establishing the character traits during their first instances of airtime on *JB Noticias*, elaborating further in *El Especial del Humor/La Paisana Jacinta*, and how they have changed in *El Wasap de JB*.

In charting this specific trajectory, the study intends to showcase how the differences are noticeable and connect the sources within the context of their creation.⁵¹ The main general defensive outcry during 2010 was the claim that *El Negro Mama* was not racist but rather a satire or parody.⁵² This relies on multiple factors, but remains securely placed in the fact that *El Negro Mama* was and continues to be a beloved character that is inextricably linked with the sentiments

⁵¹ A majority of them are clips accessed through YouTube.

⁵² ("Jorge Benavides Defiende al Negro Mama y La Paisana Jacinta de Criticas." 2010)

of his audience. Subconsciously, the audience must have felt there were was nothing wrong with *El Negro Mama*. Their defensive nature and rage comes from the possibility of being seen as racist for enjoying *El Negro Mama*, which ironically resulted in the creation of hate pages meant to attack LUNDU for stirring everything up.⁵³ This is the relationship that this study keeps in mind when asking how Blackness is portrayed in contemporary Perú, as well as how *El Negro Mama* is considered a “not racist” figure.

Chapters 2 and 3 rely on the transcription of clips accessed through YouTube. Twelve clips are sorted from two categories: by leading character in the sketch and the time period of the clip (*Noticias JB*, 1994-2001, *El Especial del Humor* 2004-2015, and *El Wasap de JB* 2016-present). This uses random selection, two clips per time period will be chosen. This results in the analysis of six clips for *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* respectively. Because of the limitations of this study, any further analysis beyond these twelve clips will be limited in order to give more attention to the material at hand. I will be using the technique of textual analysis to analyze these clips. Textual analysis refers to the understanding of language and symbols found in texts, in order to examine how components of life are understood within its specific context.⁵⁴ While these video clips are not strictly textual, they comply with the requirements of this technique. By using NVIVO’s transcription and coding service to interpret these videos and characters, I will be able to comprehend the full picture of what these two characters offer in this discourse. Coding refers to creating a database or links between observations made in the video, which will be primarily done through NVIVO. Understanding the intention of these clips as ‘Peruvian humor’ is critical in how I, the researcher, engage with them.⁵⁵ In order to gauge an understanding of the content itself, it is necessary to additionally analyze opinion pieces, news

⁵³ (“Afro Peruvian Leaders Receive Violence Threats After Protests over Racist TV Characters” 2010)

⁵⁴ (Hawkins Morey Jennifer. 2018)

⁵⁵ (Becerra, Miguel 2010)

media articles and blogs to comprehend the audience that both characters were intended for. I examine critiques during their time on the air as well.

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I analyze policies meant to protect disadvantaged groups in media through two case studies: *El Negro Mama* in 2010-2013 and *La Paisana Jacinta* in 2019-2020. I review the arguments that each party uses, the avenues they utilize to reach their end goal (permanent removal) and the result. The fourth chapter is needed in order to record and honor the work organizing accomplishes within shifting media-based spaces. I accomplish this by analyzing two different documents in depth—*Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29* and *Proceso N°00798-2014-0-1001-JM-CI-01* and the aftermath of the latter document. *Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29* shows the dispute between LUNDU and the *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, which is from 2010 to 2013. *Proceso N°00798-2014-0-1001-JM-CI-01* is a court case between the IDL (*Instituto de defensa Legal*), *Frecuencia Latina* and, by extension, *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*. This is to give further context as to how activist efforts work in combatting discrimination in the media. I also supplement my analysis of these two documents with articles, and different statements of these activist/legal groups (LUNDU and the IDL) .

Pursuing this topic is reliant on the power structures in place that the media establishes and perpetuates. In Perú, the ministry in charge of this is the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones*. However, most of the entities in charge of media disputes are privatized depending on the medium. The committee in charge of *Frecuencia Latina* is known as the *Tribunal de Ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, which is in charge of the ethical production of television and radio shows.⁵⁶ This is important to establish. It is not as if Perú does

⁵⁶ (Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión, n.d.)

not have policies in place to deter media discrimination. It is *interpretation* that is key here, which is what I expand upon in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

In brief, the literature on the process of race formation and its relationship to media in a contemporary context is lacking. While there are numerous works surrounding Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous history, concerning racialization through media or press, these works relate to each group separately. While each group does experience varying components of racialization, there needs to be work done on connecting the two together. They relate to one another and I argue have a shared history in Perú's visual economy. It is important to acknowledge this piece, in order to make sense of what constitutes discrimination in media currently with racialized caricatures, like *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*.

El Negro Mama and *La Paisana Jacinta* do not exist in a vacuum. Both of these characters present an opportunity to look at their reception, core makeup and how they manage to survive calls for removal. Both are created and portrayed by the same person, are racialized caricatures and have differing results with actions towards their removal. Media based expressions are protected, and in the case of Jorge Benavides, the violence present from these expressions are as well. Media is not an abstract idea that has no material consequence, yet it is a problem that remains to be debated heavily—in this case by *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* and the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones*. This is unfortunately a wrong that activists shoulder with their organizational work towards creating a less violent space in media. The systems in place clearly rely on their own interpretations without much regard for the people that *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* impact. In presenting the makeup of both characters and relating it to activist work, I argue media violence can only be dismantled with direct action. I remain firmly committed to the notion that the ruling classes in charge of constructing and controlling national narratives will not shift its wrongs willingly. They

cannot advocate for change unless they divest from the systems they established that causes such violence to occur.

“Soy negrito pero tengo mi cerebritito.”

“I may be Black but I have my little brain”

El Negro Mama, JB Noticias

Chapter II: *JB Noticias*, the Skeleton of Success

In 1994, the Peruvian television channel *Frecuencia Latina* began airing a variety sketch show by the name of *JB Noticias*. This show centered characters created by actor and comedian Jorge Benavides, hence the JB in the name. *Frecuencia Latina* at this particular point in time, had made a fairly recent transition 4 years prior. In the early 1990s, the channel catapulted itself from a small local reach (within Lima) to a nationally broadcast television station—one of the first of many at that time.⁵⁷ This transition is important to consider, since in 1994, *JB Noticias* would take charge and elevate the channel’s ratings somewhat significantly. Jorge Benavides had veteran status, making the investment in his show much easier for the station. He had made television appearances the decade prior, most of them being comedy centered variety and game shows. His brothers, small collaborators on the show, also had experience with the entertainment industry. This made the foundation of *JB Noticias* stronger as the show began to take shape. The collaboration between Benavides and *Frecuencia Latina* thus proved to be mutually beneficial. This is apparent in how beloved Benavides’ characters became to the Peruvian public over the course of nearly thirty years.

JB Noticias was the show where they both made their debut and garnered popularity. The structure of the show overall is that of a variety show, which includes comedy skits and a steady rotation of characters. Although *JB Noticias* would end its run in 2001 due to stagnant ratings, Jorge Benavides would have other shows follow shortly after with the same setup and characters — *El Especial Del Humor* (2004-2015), *La Paisana Jacinta* (1999-2015), and *El Wasap de JB*

⁵⁷ (“Frecuencia 2, ‘Un canal aparte’ (1983) - ArkivperuArkivperu” n.d.)

(2017-present). His characters from *JB Noticias* would remain and transform throughout the years. Jacinta became popular enough that a spinoff based on her character was released on *Frecuencia Latina* in 1999. Mama retained his popularity as well, despite demands by multiple Afro-Peruvian advocacy groups to have him removed from the show, as briefly explained in the previous chapter.

In conversation with journalist Eduardo Adrianztén, former University of Santa Barbara alumnus Miguel Becerra illuminates how this particular type of comedy and racial stereotypes blend in together due to the nature of Peruvian humor. Both Becerra and Adrianztén make the observation that the degrading nature of humor—which tends to focus on shortcomings—takes precedence in the conversation of racism in the media.⁵⁸ In other words, when allegations of racism in the media are made within a comedic or satirical medium, it is much more difficult to qualify a show as racist in the view of the typical viewer. United States based paradigms surrounding Blackface take precedence here; in fact, there is no full understanding of the translation of such images within Latin America.⁵⁹

One of the first instances of Blackface in Perú did not start with Mama. Multiple iterations of ‘The Fool’ archetype have existed long before him, using comic strips as their medium, causing the rise of characters like *Boquellanta* in 1952.⁶⁰ Taking this record of Blackface performances like Mama into consideration, as well as the liberal use of satire in comedy, it does not take much to understand why any of Benavides’ shows are viewed as successful.⁶¹ Given their satirical approach to contemporary figures/issues and the script’s wordplay, and focus on caricatures of average citizens of Perú, they were almost guaranteed to be

⁵⁸ (Becerra, Miguel Ángel. 2010.)

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ (Sagástegui, Carla 1967)

⁶¹ This additionally applies to (mis)representations in contemporary US in regard to even second-generation Latin Americans, like the play *Tres Viudas en un Crucero*. (Clealand, Danielle. 2018)

a success. With this in mind, the organized efforts of national and smaller organizations for racial equity feel empty. Retiring Mama permanently has been proven to be extremely difficult, especially as his character grew in popularity throughout the 1990s, 2000s and 2010s.

The relevance of pursuing a comparative study focusing on Mama and Jacinta is pressing. It not only focuses on the ideologies of race, but additionally provides an analysis of the dynamic between race formation, gender, imagery and defining violence. This dynamic, I argue, presents race as situational and is based upon the geopolitical context that both entities exist in. Mama and Jacinta illuminate an outsider presentation of what their racialized characters embody. This, and the interstices of their setting, creation and reception all contribute to a silent yet pervasive form of racism.⁶² These characters remain relevant partially due to the harsh reality that, despite protest, contemporary definitions of violence still allow for their existence. I use violence as a concept in order to understand the impact these characters have, and the variety of harm they cause. My assertion is that regardless of how they have and might possibly shift in their presentations, the core makeup of these characters and the harms they reproduce will remain. This includes not just the performative components of the two, but the national roles they have been given as obstacles to modernity. It is as if this belief that because of this lack of contribution towards progress gives the audience members license to mock *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. Those representing modernity being those within the imagined visual representation of *mestizo* or white elite classes.

Yet, this does not mean Jorge Benavides' actions are without consequences, however successful he might be with this particular formula. The connections between the racialized geographies of Mama, his permanence in media and ties to history only make the need to content analysis all the more urgent. Exploring the multiple facets of Mama in Benavides' performance of

⁶² (De la Cadena, Marisol. 2014)

the character, along with the dialogue and visuals that accompany it is not a luxury but a necessity in order to establish what is to be done in the face of media (mis)representations.

Methodology and Structure of the Chapter

Before this section describes this chapter's methodology, I want to revisit how Mama is presented to the audience. Mama is visually presented as a dark-skinned Afro-Peruvian man, approximately middle-aged and dressed plainly. The makeup and prosthetics used for Mama is jarring and exaggerative. His makeup is significantly darker than his actual skin tone, with attention especially drawn to his lips and nose to reflect the imagined features of a person of African descent. His wig resembles a small afro and in earlier iterations of Mama, black rubber gloves are used in lieu of body makeup. Even presented as plainly as possible, the choices surrounding Mama's visual appearance are extremely upsetting and important to remember as these clips are analyzed.

The main objective of this chapter is to observe, record and reason with the situations in which Mama as a character is placed in, along with his visual presentation. I am using NVIVO's transcription and coding service to help analyze this data and record patterns established throughout the run of Mama on these shows. NVIVO as a service provides storage for files uploaded, transcription services and the creation of codes.⁶³ What codes entail within this service is the possibility to create themes prevalent in the data in order to quantify the density of the code's presence. The reason for choosing to quantify the data as opposed to other methods is to provide a succinct representation of what themes are present within the study. Quantifying the data also allows for the flexibility of presenting the number of instances a character might have engaged with a certain theme. Additionally, I opted for the clips in this chapter to be randomly

⁶³ ("NVivo Transcription" n.d.)

selected, in order to provide a more baseline understanding that regardless of the content selected, there are still instances of violence reflected in these (mis)representations of Mama.

In the initial sourcing of video clips, there were sixteen total that followed Mama. All of these clips were sourced on YouTube and based on the availability and the limits of this study, six were randomly selected from this pool. The reasoning behind using six clips total is to account for analysis of two clips per show that Mama played a significant role in. Therefore, I will analyze two clips from every show Mama appears on, signaling the changes that happened over the course of nearly three decades (1990s-2010s). This type of content analysis on Mama is not a new occurrence, however I feel that it presents a foundation for future study of not just Mama but the contemporary performances of Blackface within Latin America.⁶⁴ This is in conjunction with recording how Mama has changed throughout the decades and the context the character was/is operating under.

I initially began this specific study by transcribing the videos in order to be accurate in my observations. After I transcribed all the videos I began to notice specific themes found in each of these clips. It should be noted that due to the poor quality of some of the clips I accessed via YouTube, that some key quotes may have “[???” present. This is to signify the lack of clarity due to the poor quality of some of the clips I accessed via YouTube. Therefore, I had to rely on context clues at times to piece together the core plotline or meaning of the transcript. Visual components such as dress, makeup and movement within these clips are used to piece together the context of the situation as well.

While observing the initial sixteen videos in this study, the themes that presented themselves most frequently were *class, conflict, violence, degradation, deviance, otherness, sexuality, stupidity and humor*. *Humor* as a code is mainly used to note when a situation is found

⁶⁴ (Mosquera Rosado, Ana Lucía. 2019)

to be funny by the live studio audience present during the recording of the sketch. I use this as a signal to other codes present in the list of codes and whether the reactions to these codes are “positive” or “negative.” Positive means the laughter resulted from an instance in the sketch where Mama is not degraded. Negative means that laughter resulted from Mama being presented as a fool throughout the sketch.⁶⁵

The other codes are defined and utilized in the following ways. *Class* is used when there are visual and auditory observations that signal towards Mama’s status as impoverished. The difference between *violence* and *conflict* is solely based on whether there was any physical violence present in the clips. If there was physical violence, then the altercation is coded as *violence*. *Conflict* on the other hand is a code I found to be needed, since some interactions between Mama and other characters have a significant amount of tension. This does not appear at all times, which is why the separate code was necessary. *Degradation* is coded when other characters are mean towards Mama based on what they perceive to be true about his nature. Therefore, *degradation* is an instance where Mama is bullied based on characteristics that he cannot necessarily control like his class status or race. In relation to this definition of *degradation* (for the purposes of this study) *otherness* then is coded when Mama is marked as an “other”—this is based solely on secondary character’s reactions to him and the, remarks or gestures they make is tied to him being a devalued member of society.

Deviance as a code refers to the instances where Mama is engaging in unlawful activity such as stealing, scamming or even lying to get the results that he desires. This is the only use of *deviance* and does not fall privy to Mama’s status as deviant from any societal norm.⁶⁶ *Stupidity* and *sexuality* are straightforward as codes. *Stupidity* signals instances where Mama is *perceived*

⁶⁵ For the purpose of this study, degradation is defined as a moment of humiliation or shock when a positive attribute is granted to Mama.

⁶⁶ This decision was made in consideration of Poole’s examination of what deviance means for portraiture during 20th century Peru. (Poole, Deborah 1997)

to be unable to comprehend a situation or is deemed “uneducated/stupid” by another character. Mama himself is not a stupid character, and actually is quite clever when it comes to scamming others. However, the context of each clip shows us that it is not Mama’s perception of himself that matters, but what others perceive him to be. The code *sexuality* is used to record times when Mama makes lewd comments/jokes towards any particular character in the clip, including himself.

The structure of this chapter is relatively straightforward. Firstly, all three eras (or shows) will be divided into sections. Each section includes a summary of the corresponding clip that will be shown to give a clear idea of what is happening in the sketch. The summary will be in-depth, and will consider the transcript, visuals and the context of the period the clip was produced under. Visuals will be referenced due to either their striking contrast, what it provides to the overall performance and audience reactions. After describing the two clips separately I will discuss the codes presented, the density of the codes and what implications they possibly have or could have for the future of the character. The end of the chapter will provide an analysis of how this correlates with the events that occurred surrounding the character. Density of the codes as well as percentages are sometimes present within the analysis of each clip. This is calculated using NVIVO’s service, which serves as a database for all recorded codes. These percentages specifically present the density that each code was used within a particular clip, which I find to be useful in further understanding the core makeup of Mama. Special attention will be given to the period following the 2010 controversy with LUNDU in order to better answer this question: what is considered discrimination (violence) in the media and what level is allowed to be present? Also, what constitutes violence in these media-based contexts?

JB Noticias

El Negro Mama JB Noticias; 1996

In this clip we witness multiple crossovers between five of the main coding classifications used in this analysis. We get a sense of Mama as a character and establish his actions, character premise and development. This is accomplished through his actions, dialogue, appearance, and in some cases musical accompaniments. In this first clip, what is immediately noticed is Mama walking around in what seems to be a small store. The “Mission Impossible” theme song plays in the background. This theme song, for whatever reason, is a prevalent element throughout *JB Noticias*. Its main use is to seemingly highlight Mama performing deviant actions and was only used in *JB Noticias*, it was discontinued in later shows. Mama is shown grabbing a loaf of bread before running out of the store to avoid getting caught.

Outside, Mama runs into Rodolfito, whom we as the audience can assume is Mama’s friend or acquaintance. Almost immediately Rodolfito’s response to Mama is made clear, he makes sure his body faces away from Mama—indicating a sort of level of discomfort. The two begin an exchange and Mama commences to run a scheme. During this particular era of Mama as a character, Mama’s schemes are almost always accompanied by the ‘Mission Impossible’ theme. Mama tells Rodolfito that the rolls of film he is looking for within the store are expensive—at 150 soles each. Rodolfito does not bother to check if this is true or not, which speaks to Mama’s cunning nature. Mama then proceeds to tell Rodolfito he can obtain 5000 rolls of film for 500 soles, but only if Rodolfito allows him to secure them alone. “Apariencias” is a prevalent word thrown around in this exchange, which shows that Mama is worried about ‘appearances’ ruining his scam. Rodolfito concedes, only driven by the possibility of a good deal.



In the next scene, after Mama manages to convince Rodolfito to secure the money and a plaque, Mama rushes into a gym where a bunch of women are found exercising. The scene is introduced by them making remarks about losing weight and its importance. The key word being *rollos* which translates to “rolls” in English. Mama enters the gym and after making a biting remark to one of the women about her appearance, Mama begins to advertise an imaginary product called ‘plaque’ that will get rid of fat in no time. The women hand Mama money for the product, to which he exclaims he has to make the transaction with another seller (Rodolfito) in order to secure the product.

It is noted here that Mama while regarded as “stupid” takes full advantage of both parties in order to guarantee his own success. He additionally takes advantage of women in his scheme, targeting their insecurities surrounding their appearances. After selling this imaginary product to the women, Mama heads back to Rodolfito with them following. In order for this plan to work, Mama makes sure that both the group of women and Rodolfito stay apart. He first takes payment

⁶⁷ (alexannefrank n.d.)

from Rodolfito who is convinced that the women have the rolls of film that Mama promised him. Meanwhile, the women anticipate Rodolfito having the weight loss cream. In this situation, Mama has removed himself, only acting as a middle man. Once he receives the money from Rodolfito, Mama quickly runs away. There is an exchange between the group of women and Rodolfito that shows how Mama used *rollos*, an ambiguous term only solidified by context, to trick both into buying products that do not exist.⁶⁸ Rodolfito begins to scream that *El Negro Mama* or the Black idiot has scammed them, and the women join him in his public lament.

In this clip there were more instances of *deviance*, which resulted in nine references coded, for a total of 5.60% density coverage. Although the theme of the clip is most definitely based on Mama's *deviance* or cunning, class tensions were clear between the three parties (the group of women condensed into one for sake of this study).

My main reasoning for including class in conversation with race is because of the wealth of literature that shows a correlation between the two. The specific frame of reference for this study is focused on Oliver Cox's study in his text *Caste, Race and Class* and Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*⁶⁹. Their use of Marxist ideology to pinpoint how Blackness and class are interconnected are particularly useful in understanding the relationship embedded in our understanding of the material conditions of Black people. I also wish to include the important detail that the racialization of the working class is not necessarily exclusively tied to the exploitation of the Black body through capitalist extraction. However, I find that it is critical to comprehend how Marxism can explain the ties between Black labor and how it ultimately became racialized in our current reality.

According to both Cox and Robinson, it is clear that the conception of race is based around the Black body and, ultimately tied to their labor production value. Marxism is pertinent

⁶⁸ *Rollos* in this instance means either "stomach rolls" or "rolls of film."

⁶⁹ (Robinson, Cedric J. 2000)

to a variety of studies that investigate race, due to its ability to explain social hierarchy in relation to the political economy. It is in both Robinson's and Cox's works that Marxism is used to explain this aspect. Their use of Marxism exclusively delegates attention to those external political and economic structures complicit in the exploitation of Black labor. Race is a result of extractive, patriarchal, and capitalist labor dynamics, rooted in global market economy and slavery, and conflict is a result of these hierarchies of power attributed to race throughout the globe.⁷⁰ This analysis demonstrates how *power* is critical to the dynamic between slavery and its imprints being present within all societies that participated and benefitted from slave trade and beyond. It is, after all, a global system that has its echoes still felt even in other lexicons. The enslavement of both Africans and Indigenous peoples in the Americas also attests to the *process* of racialization. In understanding both Marxist analysis of the exploitation of labor and the process of racialization imposed by colonialism, we can gather an understanding of the precarious position that Mama is fixed in within this sketch comedy format.

In a country like Perú, where the system of capitalism exists, there is a *superficial* emphasis placed on the separation of race and class—much like other capitalist countries. Although the desires of the elite classes tend to decide the destinies of those who were forcibly subdued and erased, the state also has a stake in this creation of the “other”. The national history of Perú was constructed in the transitional period between viceroyalty and republic during the 19th century. Although the story has historically left both African and Indigenous people out of this narrative of belonging, superficial changes happen. The government's statement of acknowledgment which details their role in the suffering of Afro-Peruvians throughout Perú's history in 2010 is one example.⁷¹ However well-intentioned the statement was, it did not change anything of significance. Furthermore, there is less said about how, historically, enslaved people

⁷⁰ (Cox, Oliver C. 1948)

⁷¹(BBC News 2010).

in Peru did manage to impact their own destinies. Though in principle, the republic tried to create a society where everyone was seen as citizens, with laws supporting this statement, colonial perceptions linger.

In this space of constant degradation and erasure, enslaved Africans in Perú from before the nation's independence and afterwards, are still transfixed in a precarious geography created by the republic. The same applies to Indigenous peoples who live in Perú as well. Although this notion of “belonging” is prevalent in these conversations, *geography*, as stated by Katherine McKittrick, is not solely a physical space. Human geographies, as she explains, are alterable and created by connections between race, sex and power. I found that her definition is germane to this conversation, because it relates geography as a space that is not concrete but forged by experiences and history.⁷² It also grants attention to the power and agency that these people had in simultaneously existing in a forced geography, while forging their own from self. Mama is clearly a (mis)representation of these lived experiences, however his material conditions more or less reflect the strain that these connections have. Therefore, the transformation of such a real sociopolitical issue being used as comedy is *extremely* violent. Plus, given that there is a conditioning to devalue Blackness, to perceive it as natural. The audience, in turn, cannot see this as an issue. I hypothesize that this is due to the fact that these histories, geographies, experiences are continually erased. Because of this, and the lax definition of what constitutes violence, there is not much causing divestment from this belief that Mama is not violent. LUNDU’s campaign and pushback in 2010 shows that.

The need to include class in studies focusing on race is not complementary but essential although the context is different, especially with the formation of race. When Mama engages with other characters, he is not doing so based solely on his racial expression but also based on his

⁷² (Katherine McKittrick 2006) p xviii

working-class background, and the need to survive. While I doubt Jorge Benavides considered this fully in his creation and performance of the character, it is apparent that Mama being poor is a huge factor in his deviant behavior. In the passage below, the other characters notice the scam that Mama has pulled on them, and resent him for it.

Excerpt

RODOLFO 05:27 Hola. Hola. Hola. ¡Chicas! [¡si!] ¡Baje para dar el plaque!

GROUP 05:33 [fighting over who gets product first]

RODOLFO 05:44 Aquí tengo el plaque.

WOMAN 1 05:48 ¡¿Qué cosa?! Este es el plaque, qué plaque?!

WOMAN 2 05:49 Oiga señor no le hagas gracioso.

RODOLFO 05:51 ¿Como?

WOMAN 2 05:51 Justo no tiene que ver una crema que es para bajar de peso-

RODOLFO 05:56 ¿Para bajar de peso?

GROUP 05:57 Claro que si.

RODOLFO 05:58 Y ustedes tenga que darme los rollos de película-

GROUP 06:00 ¿De película? ¡Estamos hablando de estos rollos! [gestures to belly rolls]

RODOLFO 06:11 ¡Ay no! ¡No les robaron! [¿quien?] ¡El Negro Mama! [screams]

Mama 06:16 seré negrito, pero tengo mi cerebritito- mama [laughs]

(Coding Stripe: Deviance)

English Translation

RODOLFO 05:27 Hi. Hi. Hi. Ladies! [yes!] come down so I can give you the plaque!

GROUP 05:33 [fighting over who gets product first]

RODOLFO 05:44 Here I have the plaque!

WOMAN 1 05:48 What the?! This is the plaque, what plaque?

WOMAN 2 05:49 Look sir, don't try to be funny here.

RODOLFO 05:51 How?

WOMAN 2 05:51 This has nothing to do with the cream that is for weight loss-

RODOLFO 05:56 For weight loss?

GROUP 05:57 Of course!

RODOLFO 05:58 And all of you have to give me rolls of film-

GROUP 06:00 We are talking about these rolls! [gestures to belly rolls]

RODOLFO 06:11 Oh no! He robbed us! [Who?] The Black idiot! [screams]

Mama 06:16 I might be Black, but I have my small brain - Mama! [laughs]

Ultimately, what this clip does is set up a foundational understanding of Mama as a character from the very beginning. I am establishing the class component of Mama as a character to further develop how class and race are essential to one another. It also reinforces the idea that

Mama, as an Afro-Peruvian man, can only belong to an impoverished geographical reality.⁷³ In this study they are characteristics that are the majority of time linked. The codes are clear in this assertion since “Class” is the code with highest density within this clip.

Mama & Gianmarco; 1997

This clip opens with popular musician and guest star Gianmarco playing the Pink Panther theme on his guitar, while sitting in the street. Mama enters the frame, sneaking around Gianmarco. This is coded not only as *deviance* but also as *degradation*, since it is implied from the start that Mama is a shifty character due to the music and his careful movements around Gianmarco.

Mama gets increasingly closer and eventually taps Gianmarco on the shoulder; he is taken aback—becoming alert as soon as he sees Mama. This could be interpreted as Gianmarco reacting based on shock. However, given how Mama is visually striking against the basic backdrop and Gianmarco (who is phenotypically white) more can be interpreted from his shock. Perhaps the most telling signal of his reaction is how immediately defensive he becomes when he notices Mama, despite Mama reminding him he is playing in the middle of the street—which is not a private space. Because the sketch comedy show is set in Lima, there is value in observing how urban spaces shift perceptions of people based on appearance. Case in point, Lima is an urban area and as such is subject to different realities than other geographies. Racialized geographies are a key component in race making, especially in Peru where territories are marked distinct from one another—order is needed in this process.⁷⁴

The mobility that the urban space provides, definitely informs on how to navigate urban areas. “Boundary trouble”, as Tamara Walker describes it in her book *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima*, applies to this notion. If we briefly consider and apply

⁷³ (Katherine McKittrick 2006) ix–xxxi.

⁷⁴ (Walker, Tamara 2017) 21.

how boundary trouble is a historic parallel particularly in Lima, it makes sense as to why Gianmarco was so taken aback by Mama. Conversely, if we again consider McKrittick's utilization of geography as not only space but connection, we can gather that Mama's existence within that boundary is a process of social concealment and dehumanization.⁷⁵ By binding him to a space and condition, Mama is subject to the two. As astutely put: "...a location through which a moving technology can create differential and contextual histories."⁷⁶ The process continues through this sketch.

Mama was in an *unexpected place* within Lima's urban landscape and his clothes were pivotal in facilitating that mobility to these *unexpected places*. Mama is always dressed plainly in battered clothing, his outfit never changing throughout *JB Noticias*. His clothes signal his class so plainly to those inhabiting the public space around him that boundaries are interpreted differently between Mama and Gianmarco. His clothing sharply contrasts the setting and Gianmarco, evoking an idea that his reality is dreary in comparison to others. It also is important to note that Gianmarco *visibly grimaces* as at the time of Mama's arrival, showing his discomfort of having Mama near him.

⁷⁵ (Katherine McKittrick 2006) xii.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*



In any case, what is clear is that Gianmarco felt the need (for the purposes of this sketch) to put his defenses up when he realizes he is not alone. They have an exchange of words about Gianmarco’s popularity as a musician, to which after gaining some trust, Gianmarco confides in Mama that he is overworked. Mama at first says he cannot help, but changes his mind after realizing an opportunity to steal from Gianmarco. The “Mission Impossible theme” plays again once he realizes this opportunity. Mama decides to tell Gianmarco that he actually knows someone who is a writer. The rest of the clip consists of interactions between the two characters—the main coding themes pertaining to Class. Gianmarco does not hesitate to remind Mama of his fame or his musical ability, and laughs when Mama questions whether any of this is the truth. In this clip, as previously established in the clip prior, class tensions are more apparent because of the public setting of the scene and how established Gianmarco is within Perú. Gianmarco laughs at the fact that Mama is unaware of his popularity, which is most likely another violent take on how stupid Mama is. This is not due strictly to his race but his class status

⁷⁷ (*El Negro Mama y Gianmarco (Bailando La Pantera Rosa)* - YouTube n.d.)

as well and possibly Mama not having access to enough media source to put two and two together.

In the end Mama does end up with the money from his scam; but Gianmarco seems unworried as if to say he does not care—unlike the other characters from the previous clip who were shown to be enraged by Mama’s tricks. This reveals the disparity between Mama in relation to a relatively wealthy person (Gianmarco) as opposed to other characters (Rodolfito and the group of women) who do not have as much access to capital.

Of the nine possible codes that could have appeared in my coding, five were present. The five that present included: *humor, otherness, sexuality, class and degradation*. As mentioned before, *humor* acts as a cue for instances that the audiences found particularly humorous in the sketch. In the first clip, which is titled simply as *El Negro Mama JB Noticias*, there were three codes that overlapped with *humor*— *otherness, deviance, and sexuality*. *otherness* resulted in five references; *deviance* had nine while *sexuality* only had one. What this reveals is that of those three codes that coincided with *humor*, *deviance* by far resulted in the most laughter. The audience found the sketch most funny when the “Mission Impossible” theme played with Mama on screen. Anytime Mama was engaging in deviant acts, it was as if the audience felt included in a taboo secret that the other characters were not privy to.

When Mama is concerned with appearances in order to curtail Rodolfito and the women from finding out his scheme, there were moments of laughter from the live studio audience— this is tied to the *otherness* code. Otherness refers to each time Mama was noted as an outsider from the mestizo normativity in the show, and in this first clip this was mostly done himself. It seems to imply that Mama could be acutely aware of his circumstances as an impoverished Afro-Peruvian man, which is why in his first scheme he involves Rodolfito and the group of women guarantee success. Sexuality only really comes into play once when Mama makes a lewd remark about the appearance of a particular woman from the group he plots to scam. This type of humor

is not groundbreaking, but does establish from early on that Mama does engage in lewd jokes in order to draw out some laughter from the audience. In future sketches in this study, we witness how in response to partnership, *sexuality* spikes up. It is as if to say that Mama is incapable of love, and any form of intimacy must be defined exclusively as sexual in nature in order for it to mesh with the reality Benavides created.

In this clip, *Negro Mama y Gianmarco*, humor was found in Mama's *otherness*, *class*, *degradation* and *deviance*. The code with the *most* references of those four was *otherness*, with a total of ten references. This is due to the fact that Gianmarco treated Mama as an *other* (from the established norm) throughout almost their entire interaction, even when Mama was not seen as a threat to Gianmarco.⁷⁸ This is noticeable when Gianmarco confides in Mama. The audience found this dynamic very amusing, on top of Mama's scheme to scam Gianmarco. Deviance has less importance here in comparison to the previous clip, with four references. It seems that Mama was not as shifty with his actions as he was with Rodolfito and the group of women. He still uses another person to mitigate the scam— this time an imaginary person who is a composer— but Gianmarco does not seem to mind. *Class* and *degradation* are on the lower end of the spectrum with four and two references respectively. Mama is not openly degraded in this clip; however, it is implied that Gianmarco views her as inferior on some level through their interactions. Whether the audience related to Gianmarco would not be surprising given how jarring his appearance and personality is in comparison to Mama—as if to say “I am glad I am not like him!” Moreover, both the character's class status presents *class* as a consistent code in both clips due to its relationship with racialized geographies.

⁷⁸ This is following Judith Butler's use of the Other in reference to Body, which is a concept that is utilized heavily in regards to gender and race. In this particular instance, Gianmarco and Mama are opposite sides of the spectrum in terms of race. (Judith Butler 1993)

What the clips illuminate in conversation is how critical Deviance, Class and Otherness are in terms of characteristics that Mama expresses. Although the other codes are also important as well, these main three serve as a primary base of the character. In my finding, it is when Mama is deviant, and ultimately seen as an Other due to his race and class, that the audience finds him the funniest. As we continue on the second section concerning *El Especial del Humor*, the three must be observed closely to note any changes in the makeup of Mama as a character.

El Especial del Humor

As I have established in the previous section, Jorge Benavides follows a generic formula for his variety shows. This is accomplished by placing emphasis on satirical commentary, which is performed by over exaggerated caricatures that follow different archetypes. However, as I have recorded and analyzed, Mama possesses traits that are interpreted as negative — such as *deviance* or *stupidity*. On top of this, the visual component of this representation of his appearance— is continually dramatized through makeup and clothing. Taking into account the power dynamics behind Jorge Benavides feeling *comfortable enough* to act as a Black man, there are many components of (mis)representation present here. The generic formula does not change in *El Especial Del Humor*. The main point of this section is to record, through the next two clips, how different Mama is interpreted after the 2010 controversy. His character eventually faced temporary suspension in 2010, which is a tremendous deal considering his popularity at the time. While both clips are from 2010, I intend to use the findings from *JB Noticias* as a foundational understanding of the character. This also includes seeing if there are any changes present in the way Mama is portrayed.

Ana Lucía Mosquera Rosado's thesis places sole focus on Mama's trajectory as a character in relation to the cultural and political ramifications of that trajectory. Mama was saved from the controversy that LUNDU brought to light in 2010 solely because of the support that Benavides was able to receive. This support included not only his viewers or the station, but

Afro-Peruvian musicians and athletes as well.⁷⁹ It is critical we separate this small population from the rest of the Afro-Peruvian population, because they are celebrities with more economic and social mobility. While Afro-Peruvian actors like Carlos Vílchez and Martín Farfán have not candidly shared their experiences within the entertainment industry, we can assume that they decided to go with the path of least resistance. What would it mean for Afro-Peruvian celebrities in the spotlight to share any negative experiences they might have had?

While this particular situation has not revealed what this path would entail, the fear of penalty is enough to prevent such things coming to light. This separation of celebrity and an average civilian shows us how superficially these entertainers try to separate themselves quietly. By agreeing with the narrative that Benavides sells with Mama, they are complicit in the harm that Mama causes. If in any case they do not agree with what Mama represents or does, these celebrities merely affirm that Mama is a work of fiction and therefore does not impact them in their day-to-day lives. As Mosquera Rosado states:

“Cultural hegemony also needs a consensus to be maintained as a mechanism of social influence, and the permanence of Negro Mama in the national television was then justified by the comedian who personifies him by referring to the acceptance that he considers the character has. This acceptance extends also to the Afro-Peruvian community, since one of the strategies of the comedian to defend the existence of the character was to *request the support of Afro-Peruvian artists who publicly advocated for the permanence of this character, highlighting his humorous aspect and criticizing the public rejection from Afro-Peruvian social movements and advocacy groups, thus delegitimizing their public actions,*”⁸⁰ (emphasis my own).

⁷⁹ Most coverage on these statements that I could access were covering what male celebrities were saying, I did not find Afro-Peruvian women making these same statements.

⁸⁰ (Mosquera Rosado, Ana Lucía. 2019) 56

This is precisely why I make the distinction between the celebrity and the average person in this “acceptance.” A key point in Mama’s redemption is placed on the opinion of Afro-Peruvians who have achieved success financially as well as socially. This superficial redemption relies on this fact. In reality, Mama does not even remotely represent any facet of success at all—quite the opposite in my finding. When considering the work of Mosquera Rosado, it is imperative that the acknowledgment of celebrity endorsement is different from the reality that a majority of Afro-Peruvians experience. Although their status as celebrities does distance them from these experiences, it does not diminish them, rather it causes them to feel included within the “in-group” to a certain degree.

When engaging with this cultural hegemony on which Benavides relies to back up his actions as Mama, context must always be considered. Heated debate regarding racial (mis)representations may become concerning, especially in terms of how race is presented in extremely popular media formats such as this one. Benavides effectively used one reality to supersede another, and it worked marvelously for him. As Mama continued to thrive on open air broadcasts, Mónica Carrillo of LUNDU had to flee for her safety.⁸¹

El Regreso se El Negro Mama; 2010

This particular clip is interesting in that it marks the return of Mama after the character’s suspension in late 2009/early 2010.⁸² As noted in previous sections, there was little to no penalty for Mama’s presentation of Afro-Peruvians. This is despite the immense groundwork that Mónica Carrillo and her advocacy group LUNDU gathered throughout those years from 2010 to 2012.⁸³

This clip possesses the largest number of codes thus far in this study, with references towards: *deviance, humor, stupidity, degradation, sexuality, otherness* and even *violence*. In the

⁸¹ (PERÚ 2015)

⁸² (BANDERAPERUANATV5 n.d.)

⁸³ This work is manifest in LUNDU’s Observatorio, which this thesis covers in Chapter 4.

face of assured confidence in their innocence, it seems that Jorge Benavides opted to showcase all facets of Mama's character in this sketch. The clip itself presents Mama in a comedic manner, the main premise of the sketch being that he is United States President Barack Obama. When this clip begins, we see Mama in the Oval Office speaking to his assistant. Mama is dressed in professional attire. This attire consists of a two piece suit, a button up shirt, tie and dress shoes—which is radically different from his usual attire of worn polo shirts, work pants and sneakers. The setting of the Oval Office is also different from the usual setting Mama is presented in, which is the streets of Lima. This is a jarring juxtaposition in comparison to Mama's usual occupation of public spaces within Lima. It is as if Mama is given something he has not been shown to enjoy in the previous clips in this study. What he is enjoying is not only privacy, but actual ownership of land.

The sketch starts with Mama speaking with Toro Marica, who can be read as of Indigenous descent or Andean, although it is not completely clear. The dialogue between the two relies on a small joke, but the implications of Toro Marica being an “other” is made clear in his mode of dress. Toro Marica is dressed in garments that Benavides believes to reflect that of a peasant worker in the *sierras* (mountains) of Peru. While he leaves after this short encounter with Mama, I felt it was imperative to include how sneaky it was for Benavides to implement another marginalized person within this supposedly positive context of Mama being seen as a president. The rest of the plot of the sketch focuses on the assistant character of the sketch asking for advice about how to improve his chances with pregnancy, to which Mama answers in his signature raunchy fashion.

What Mama tells his assistant to do about this very intimate issue is to obtain three items: French perfume, a transparent item (that could not be transcribed properly due to the poor audio quality) and a cell phone. He explains that the perfume should be used liberally, while the transparent item quickly follows. The item that causes the most contention is the cell phone,

because after being asked “what it is for”, Mama responds “the cell phone is so you can call me, so I can give her a shot.”

This crude line is a clear reference to sex, which is not a new subject for Mama. Sex as a theme is common and is one that is introduced early on in Mama’s progression as a character.⁸⁴ Having sex in tandem with other undesirable traits —like deviance or stupidity— only elevates how crudely presented Mama was, at least in this instance. It is an affront not only because Mama was informed about this issue in confidence, but because of how taboo it is to express sexual desire towards a Black person. In Latin America, we witness various examples of Black women being hyper-sexualized, whereas sexual desire towards Black men is seen as against social conventions.⁸⁵ So, the insult is double-sided, causing a fit of rage from the assistant to shake Mama violently. The scene begins to blur. This is when it is revealed that the entire scenario was a dream. There was no reality where Mama was president of the United States, he is very much the same street dwelling character that he always has been. This is to be expected after all, this is a comedy sketch show, and Jorge Benavides will not make substantial changes when in the eyes of the public, he was and is innocent of anything pertaining to racism via Mama. The clip closes with Mama waking up in the middle of the street and explaining his dream to a stranger. When the episode is about to end, the same man who played his assistant in the dream holds him at gunpoint. It turns out that Mama did make those comments to this man, making the violence in his dream to actually be true.

Throughout the sketch we witness Mama jokingly get called “Mr. President” multiple times, each time followed with laughter from the live studio audience. The code *humor* in this

⁸⁴ In Miguel Becerra’s finding, some of these scenarios even include homo-eroticism which is dialed down in later iterations of the character, such as this one where the main focus of the sexual desire is the wife of his assistant.

(Becerra, Miguel 2010)

⁸⁵ (Lewis 2019)

instance resulted in five references. Up to 21.24% of the coverage in this short clip shows how humorous the prospect of Mama being president apparently is—*humor* was simultaneously recorded with this joke exclusively. The density is actually quite high in comparison to previous codes, which shows how humorous the joke was for the audience.

El Negro Mama Coca Traficante; 2010

The second clip in this section amassed controversy due to the themes of the sketch, which coincidentally followed the 2010 scandal of “*El Camion Herpes*”. In essence what had happened was that a security agent for the Ministry of Transport managed to drug his coworkers by offering soda laced with sleeping pills, leading to the embezzlement of two million soles. This particular case is significant for two reasons: the agent was identified as Afro-Peruvian and Jorge Benavides has produced a sketch with Mama reenacting events close in nature to the ones of the controversy.⁸⁶ The background of this particular scandal is important to mention as Mama’s acts of deviance seem to double following his temporary removal.⁸⁷

The setting of the sketch pans to customs, which can be assumed to be at the border. I make this assumption due to the situation Mama is placed in in the sketch. He is at a court with a judge and a lawyer present, under suspicion that he trafficked cocaine into Perú. When questioned whether he has trafficked cocaine before, Mama sounds taken aback as if it were acceptable to do so.

Excerpt

JUDGE 00:04 Si usted transportaba coca?

EL NEGRO 00:06 Sí, señor juez.
MAMA

⁸⁶ I did not choose this particular clip since all my clips are randomly selected, but Mosquera Rosado has a section in her thesis dedicated to this sketch for further insight.

⁸⁷ (silverio n.d.)

JUDGE 00:09 Caramba. ¿Y desde cuándo?

EL NEGRO 00:11 Todo el tiempo la transportada. Desde que trabajé con el señor Bulgakov.
MAMA

JUDGE 00:16 Díganme, ¿y la policía nunca la agarró con la coca?

EL NEGRO 00:19 Sí, varias veces.
MAMA

JUDGE 00:20 ¿Con la coca?

EL NEGRO 00:22 Sí, con la coca. ¿Cuál es el problema señor? La policía no me decía
MAMA nada.

JUDGE 00:27 Obvio está el problema. Imagínese que busca la policía y no le agarra
nada. Dígame, cómo vendía la coca.

EL NEGRO 00:35 ¿Como?
MAMA

JUDGE 00:36 Tú vendías coca.

EL NEGRO 00:38 Oiga señor, un momentito, yo puedo ser muy antero. Pero yo a mi mujer
MAMA no la vendo a nadie señor.

(Coding Stripe: Deviance)

English Translation

JUDGE 00:04 If you have transported coke before?

EL NEGRO 00:06 Yes, your honor.
MAMA

JUDGE 00:09 Damn. And until when?

EL NEGRO 00:11 I transported it all the time. Since I started working for Mr. Bulgakov??
MAMA

JUDGE 00:16 And tell me, the police never caught you with coke?

EL NEGRO 00:19 Yes, many times.
MAMA

JUDGE 00:20 With coke?!

EL NEGRO 00:22 Yes, coke. What is the problem sir? The police never said anything to me.
MAMA

JUDGE 00:27 Obviously that's the problem. Imagine if they did look and caught you with it. Tell me, how did you sell the coke?

EL NEGRO 00:35 Huh?
MAMA

JUDGE 00:36 You, how did you sell coke?

EL NEGRO 00:38 Hold on sir, one moment, I can be really dense. But I have never sold my
MAMA woman to anyone sir.

(Coding Stripe: Deviance)

This particular set of dialogue exchanged between Mama and the judge on his case showcases how dense Mama is characterized. There is confusion. Yet, when it is clarified that Mama means his wife, whose name is Coca, there is a sigh of relief. Of course, this adds another layer to how out of place Mama seems to be in the situation.

LAWYER 00:55 Señor juez, esta confrontación es una pérdida de tiempo hombre. La única coca que había en este proceso, en esta confrontación, era mujer acá del zambo. Y encima la coca no era blanca, sino negra. Carajo.

(Coding stripe: Otherness)

English Translation

LAWYER 00:55 Your honor, this confrontation is a waste of time. The only coke present in this process, in this confrontation, was the wife of this Black man. And on top of that the coke was not white, but Black. Shit.

As shown in the dialogue above, Mama is referred to as “zambo” as opposed to his name by his lawyer. “Zambo” is a term commonly used in Perú to refer to a Black person. On top of this, there is a double entendre present. The lawyer states that the “cocaine was not white, but Black— shit,” as an aside. There is not *one instance* where either the judge or the lawyer refer to Mama by name in this clip. Although in *El Especial del Humor* Mama began to be referred to as Mama (which means “idiot” in Peruvian slang) as opposed to *El Negro Mama* (The Black Idiot), the fact that neither professional figure even refers to him by name is curious but not the least bit surprising. Infractions against Mama are constantly committed. This open refusal to call Mama by name, which is already insulting, parallels what Mónica Carrillo of LUNDU had expressed—all she wants to be respected and called by her name.⁸⁸

This imposition of *otherness* was already clear when Mama was stopped for suspicion of trafficking cocaine. It does not stop there. Even his alleged wife is degraded in the midst of Mama becoming increasingly isolated. In instances where Mama tries to speak, he is overpowered by his lawyer, who ironically is trying to prove his innocence with such disregard. This is apparent when Mama begins to fumble again and mentions an obscure dish called ‘*cola de gato con huancaína*’. It is not until Mama is fully pardoned that he slips up—at this point to be expected by him if you consider previous clips—and reveals he actually did traffic cocaine, but under a different name.

This particular clip makes the most reference to *deviance*. However, the coding stripes for *stupidity* and *otherness* also appear relatively often. *Otherness* accounts for three references. However, a particular reference, which covered about 10.94% of the episode, was the segment

⁸⁸ (PERÚ 2015)

where the lawyer is repeatedly speaking over Mama when he is to prove his innocence to the judge. *Stupidity* follows close behind with three references, 4.58% in coverage. The largest swath of it being when Mama mistakes the *coca* that he is being questioned about as his wife *Coca* and not actual cocaine. Even though the audience knows that Mama does not have a wife—at the very least she did not make an appearance in the clips I observed—the judge and lawyer do not. This begs the question of whether Mama was not actually showcasing *stupidity* but rather, being cunning by attempting to deflect what they are trying to zero in on. This whisper of cunning is short lived, however, when Mama reveals that he did, indeed, traffic cocaine.

Amongst these two clips, there are overarching codes present as anticipated. The code with the most presence in both clips simultaneously is *otherness*, which is to be expected given the plotlines of these clips. They center primarily on how Mama is an “other” in a “positive” instance (being President of the United States) and a “negative” instance (trafficking cocaine).⁸⁹ Both instances, no matter how different, generated the same response of laughter from the audience according to the *humor* code. Yet, in the positive instance, the clip titled *El Regreso del Negro Mama*, the three references resulted in 14.55% coverage—the highest coverage observed in this particular era. This leaves the impression that when Mama is presented in a “positive” manner it makes the situation he is placed in much more humorous, as opposed to his usual antics.

I believe this finding is the most relevant of all the other codes that were present (*deviance, sexuality, stupidity and violence*), because it clearly exemplifies how the audience *feels* about Mama. Although anyone can make the assumption that the audience views Mama as a stupid, poor Afro-Peruvian man, he is funniest when he is presented in a “positive” light. Any upward mobility for Mama relies on ridicule. He is out of place, away from the perceived Black

⁸⁹ I place quotes around ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ because I do want to qualify one instance as being more morally correct than the other. I am following societal standards when qualifying either/or.

geography that Black people can only exist in a negative light (at the very least within the confines of this sketch comedy). He is not only an “other,” but is seen as an anomaly. His existence and pushback against this Black geography within this clip presents this tension of pushback, which does not favor Mama. The buildup to this particular episode has presented him as such.

The feeble attempt to point out how the show would function if Mama were presented positively is noted in the audience's response. They even take this “positivity” back at the end of the clip, not straying too far from the reality in which Mama is presented. Based upon these two clips, *otherness* is the key code in this era. The reality that Benavides creates is one that is unshakeable, since this episode marks the *return* of Mama from his suspension.⁹⁰ Therefore the message is undeniable. Whether or not Mama is seen as racist (or more specifically anti-Black) by Afro-Peruvians, the reality where the audience has placed him in will not be shaken. Mama will remain the same as he always has, if only shapeshifting as the next section demonstrates.

El Wasap de JB

El Wasap de JB (2017-present), is the most recent ongoing installment in this string of Jorge Benavides backed shows. The previous section mostly focused on the possibility of change in Mama's presentation, with focus on the 2010 controversy and temporary suspension as the cause. Resoundly, the answer is no. Although the image of Mama in this show is different from the previous two, in that he is not openly regarded as stupid based on his race, there are still questions raised on how Mama morphed to fit in the sociopolitical climate of the time. While this could be interpreted as a net positive, it does not account for the audience's knowledge of the character. Mama has been around for nearly three decades and there are signs that prompt racist interpretations behind Mama's general traits. Additionally, Jorge Benavides still acts as Mama in

⁹⁰ (Baudrillard, Jean. 2012) 521- 549.

Blackface makeup, the effort behind the aesthetic more seamless as opposed to previous iterations — such as Mama wearing literal black rubber gloves to signify Blackness. Taking the sketch of Mama trafficking cocaine into account, it is difficult to separate either aspect from this most recent installation. Overall, Mama’s character morphed into a new micro-aggressive (mis)representation of an Afro-Peruvian man. The codes that spiked with this study make this clear. It is the persistence of Jorge Benavides reiterating that he is not guilty of discrimination in these sketches that is a cause for concern.

El Negro Mama encabezó reclamos de empadronadores por falta de pago; 2017

This clip is approximately 12 minutes in length, with Mama being present for approximately 10 minutes. This episode presents a satirical lens to what the creators of the show felt were caricatures of people who need aid. Of course, Mama is present in this clip for the majority of the sketch, which is not surprising given his track record as a character who is a deviant and impoverished.

The main source of contention is the 50 soles (approximately \$16 USD) that are supposed to be distributed among those seeking aid. Although 50 soles do not translate into much in the United States context, it truly underscores the *dire* circumstances that these characters face. Mama is shown in this particular light as someone who is facing a strained relationship with his wife—of course this is a lie. Mama compulsively lies in almost every sketch examined in this study. In this sketch and the next it seems he also lies about having a career as an engineer, which results in laughter.

The plot of the sketch is not as solid as previous sketches. Yet once again, Mama does showcase some deviant behaviors when he scams another person out of 100 soles (\$32 USD) for his spot in line, claiming that it is a good deal. Keep in mind here that the amount promised to those in line is 50 soles. Consequently, Mama is actually exploiting this person on top of

doubling what he would have made if he just waited in line like everyone else. Almost immediately after he closes the deal, he leaves the scene and is done with the clip for the day.

Clearly, there are a lot of themes present in this sketch, however brief they may be. This is due to this sketch's length being the longer of the aforementioned sketches. Throughout the video (even after Mama left) there were various instances where these secondary characters are conveyed as impoverished. Class as an element/code is mostly used in a humorous manner, with little substance to the actual causes of poverty. A majority of the sketch was an amalgamation of arguments between the people in line and the tense relationship they had with the public service worker that is supposed to serve them. Mama is no exception and almost blends in with the crowd, if it were not for his jarring appearance - his makeup and bright clothing to signal that he is the main character in this sketch.



The following excerpt generates the most response from the audience aside from the scene with the scheme that Mama orchestrates.

⁹¹ (*El Negro Mama Encabezó Reclamos de Empadronadores Por Falta de Pago - YouTube n.d.*)

EL 04:41 Señorita, yo soy ingeniero [laughter] hidromántico [laughter] experto en
NEGRO pintura, peloritana señorita. Y así soy el [???] de carro. Y mi esposa es
MAMA recontra celosa, señorita. Y como no ha regresado con los 50 soles ella piensa
que yo mido con la querida señorita, tengo un problema grande en mi hogar
todo por los 50 soles.

(Coding Stripe: Class, Deviance)

Translation

EL 04:41 Miss, I am an engineer [laughter] a hydraulic one [laughter] an expert of
NEGRO Peloritan paintings. And this is how my car situation is. And my wife is very
MAMA jealous, miss. And since I have not returned with the 50 soles she thinks I am
involved with this young lady, I have a huge problem at home all for 50 soles.

The fact that this excerpt generated a strong response indicates that the previous finding of Mama encompassing *any* ‘positive’ attributes— that is positive according to societal standards— is amusing. Granted, this is also due to the fact that Mama has a following as a character, and that his character archetype falling into the category of ‘Fool’ insinuates that he is irredeemable.⁹² Throughout the course of the clips examined thus far, Mama is characterized repeatedly as a pathological liar. His lies distinguish him as a person who always deceives and takes advantage of others, the antithesis of honesty and hard work—which is already a dangerous dichotomy to engage in. Here Mama is not only creating an alternate reality where he is a hydraulic engineer, but one where he is an art enthusiast as well. His lie begins to become even more ridiculous when he keeps stating that his wife is jealous, and as we all know at this point, Mama makes reference to his “wife” only when necessary.

Being married, as Mama has figured out, is another component granted to someone who is seen as “worthy.” Not having a wife and lying when he finds it necessary, typifies him as

⁹² (Sammond, Nicholas. 2015).

someone who does not have a sense of respectability or commitment. A wife in this sense then, is necessary for Mama to lie about in order to have some type of access to the aforementioned traits. Having such exuberant lies be told by someone who is waiting in line for government aid only points to the irony of it all, causing the audience to follow and laugh at Mama making a fool of himself once again. What is shown here is Mama trying to embody, what he has found to be, respectful positions in the view of others. It is as if Mama is making a hollow attempt to be respected, only to never reach this goal.

Of course, another key excerpt in this particular clip is of course Mama once again fooling someone into believing his lies. This particular scheme seems to be even more dastardly given the context of the episode. A recurring theme that follows Mama anywhere he goes, he possesses the tact for outsmarting an unsuspecting person, but not for much else.

Excerpt

MAN 5 08:42 Si, si, sí señor, ¿qué pasa?

EL NEGRO 08:50 ¿No quiere comprar mi cola compadre? Primero estoy ya.
MAMA

MAN 5 08:55 ¿Que me podría vender tu cola?

EL NEGRO 08:57 Te lo vendo compadre. [Mission impossible theme plays in background]
MAMA Tengo una semana allí sin comer nada.

MAN 5 09:02 Asu madre, sigo porque con esta gente mira la cantidad.

EL NEGRO 09:06 Hay como 15 mil compadres. A toda la vuelta.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:08 Si no, no, no llegaría.

EL NEGRO 09:10 ¿Quieres ser primerito compadre? Te lo vendo.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:13 Ya pues. ¿Cómo sería la nota? ¿Cuánto sería?

EL NEGRO 09:18 Mira, compadre, por ser para ti, y me ha caído bien... 100 solecitos
MAMA compadre.

MAN 5 09:25 Asu... 100 soles? Pero no me podía hacer una rebajita?

EL NEGRO 09:29 Ya no más compadrito.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:30 No, no, no, no te molestes, no te abandones. T-te pago el 100 no? Porque
estoy por 100 soles junto y apa. Ya ya [gracias compadre] allá está la cien
lucas.

(Coding Stripe: Deviance)

English Translation:

MAN 5 08:42 Yes, yes, yes sir, what happened?

EL NEGRO 08:50 You want to buy my place in line buddy? I'm already first.
MAMA

MAN 5 08:55 Can you sell me your spot?

EL NEGRO 08:57 I'll sell it to you buddy. [Mission impossible theme plays in background]
MAMA I've been here for a week and haven't eaten.

MAN 5 09:02 Holy shit, I follow because just look at all the people here.

EL NEGRO 09:06 There's at least 15 thousand people. They are wrapping around.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:08 Yeah huh, yeah I won't make it.

EL NEGRO 09:10 So, do you want to be first, buddy? I'll sell it to you.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:13 Yeah well. How will this work? How much will it be?

EL NEGRO 09:18 Look buddy, for you, because you struck me the right way... 100 soles.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:25 Holy- 100 soles? Can't you lower the price a little?

EL NEGRO 09:29 I can't go any lower, buddy.
MAMA

MAN 5 09:30 No, no, no, don't get mad, don't leave. I-I'll pay you the 100 right? Because here's the 100 soles and there, done. There, there. [Thanks buddy] There's the 100 soles.

This trick is about as predictable as any Mama scheme at this point, but it remains a key trait that he possesses. This is the result of decades of investment in Mama, which primarily serves as a reminder of the binary that Mama is functioning within. The binary being the audience's collective imagination. No matter how much Mama is toned down to fit the current sociopolitical climate, he will always remain "The Black Idiot."

Mama ayudará al alcalde Flacuñoz en su lucha por imponer el 'pico y placa'; 2019

In this sketch, Mama is present throughout as the advisor of the mayor of Lima, the capital city of Peru, in regards to the public transit system's reforms.⁹³ He is masquerading as an engineer with knowledge of the situation of public transit although it becomes clear that he is ill-equipped in dealing with the reporter's questions during his interview. Yet, because Mama is quick on his feet, he often finds a way out of the hole he dug for himself. This pretty much summarizes the clip, since most of the dialogue is Mama being asked a question that he then

⁹³ (Latina.pe n.d.)

misinterprets. The reporter questions as well as Mama rearranging his words to somehow feign expertise.

The ending of this particular clip is another play on words for which Mama is known for at this point; basically, he asks the reporters if they would like a “consolation” which in Spanish translates as *consuelo*. The reporters, visibly irritated with Mama’s antics, say no. It is then revealed that Consuelo is actually the name of a conventionally attractive woman. The reporters regret their decision and Mama walks away with his Consuelo, laughing at them. This is particularly new— Mama almost never succeeds with women. Yet, it does beg the question of whether Jorge Benavides purposely did this to half-heartedly show the progress Mama has made as a character throughout the decades.

At his core, Mama will seem to remain in his own level as the quick-minded fool, who mocks everyone as a means to offset his reality as an impoverished Afro-Peruvian man. The excerpt below perfectly highlights this. Mama is mocking his supposed boss while tricking him into believing he (Mama) is a professional in terms of combating traffic congestion.

EL NEGRO MAMA	03:42 La restricción vehicular llamada pico y placa todavía continúa. Y ese es el mensaje al alcalde Falcuñoz.
REPORTER 1	03:53 Ay caramba, ¿por qué ah?
EL NEGRO MAMA	03:54 El pico es porque el alcalde tiene buen floro.
REPORTER 1	03:57 ¿Ya?
EL NEGRO MAMA	03:57 Y la placa es porque él es tan flaco, que le tienen que sacarle una placa a los pulmones.
REPORTER 1	04:05 Encima lo del pico y placa ¿entonces?

EL NEGRO 04:07 De todas maneras.
MAMA

(Coding Stripe: Stupidity, Deviance)

English Translation

EL NEGRO 03:42 The vehicular restrictions called ‘peak hours and license plate’ will still
MAMA continue. And that is the message of mayor Falcañoz.

REPORTER 1 03:53 Oh damn, why is that?

EL NEGRO 03:54 The ‘peak’ is because the mayor has a big mouth.
MAMA

REPORTER 1 03:57 Really?

EL NEGRO 03:57 And the ‘plate’ is because he is so skinny, that they need to take an x-ray
MAMA to check on his lungs.

REPORTER 1 04:05 On top of the ‘peak’ and ‘plate’ then?

EL NEGRO 04:07 In any case.
MAMA

Between the two clips, there were five codes that coincided: *class*, *conflict*, *deviance*, *otherness* and *sexuality*. The first three however were the most prevalent of the five codes presented when intersecting with *humor*. While Class was present predominantly in the first clip due to its subject matter, it shows up in a different way in the second clip. That is when Mama is pretending to be of a different class status than he actually is—marking him as an other. The opposing codes show a tense relationship that Mama seems to engage in from time and time again. The tension between Mama actually being impoverished and living on the margins of society, and him pretending to be someone he is not to move himself past those margins.

Of course, deviance appears consistently throughout all these clips which I will expand upon later in my findings. Conflict is not as common but I found it to cover a significant portion

of both clips during this era. The rationale behind my not coding previous clips as *conflict* is based solely on the fact that most of the conflict that Mama faces in clips from *JB Noticias* and *El Especial De Humor* is fleeting. There is no substantial amount to result in coding classification; however, this is not the case with these two clips here. The first clip has a majority of references signaling *conflict*, not only due to the subject matter but also Mama further instigating this conflict. In the ten minutes Mama is present in the first clip he exacerbates it three times. Mama has not done this in any other instance, and it seems that he does it to anger the public officer regulating the stipends the public receives. In the second clip, Mama calms down the conflict that occurs about halfway through the clip, when the protests disrupt his interview. This act on his part however, is self-serving. These instances lead me to believe that there is minimal change occurring with Mama's progress as a character. What is presented here is a *shallow change* to Mama's character, which is drowned out with the staple traits that he has shown to have *always* possessed.

Findings

My findings mostly concentrate on codes, and how they are interpreted given the context provided throughout the first and second chapters. The density for codes are as follows:

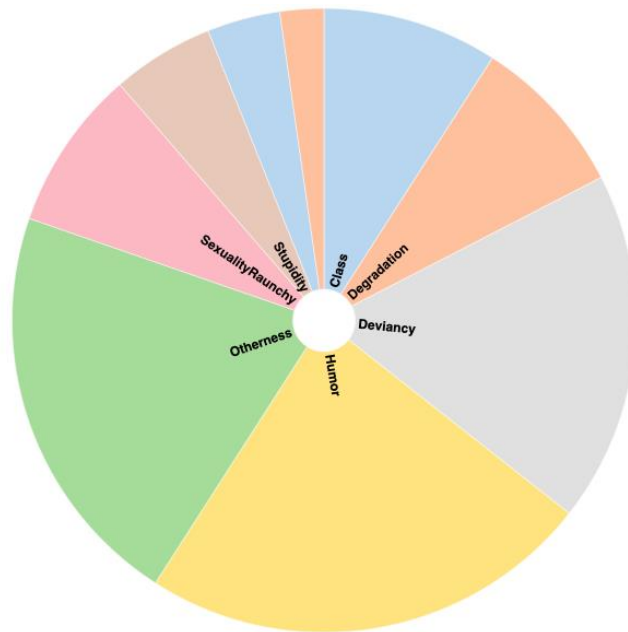


Figure 1. Distribution of codes by times used throughout this study. (Graph by author)

As visually represented here, of the codes there are two major themes in Mama's trajectory, were *humor* and *otherness*, notwithstanding given its purpose of signaling when other codes were found to be humorous. The most prevalent code was *otherness* with an aggregate number of twenty-eight references made over the trajectory of this small study. Second was *deviance* with twenty-four references made throughout the study. *Class*, *degradation* and *sexuality* resulted in twelve, eleven and eleven references respectively. Neither of the three hit the same threshold as *otherness* and *deviance*.

Otherness and *deviance* both appear consistently throughout all six clips that were coded, and each carry very specific traits or instances that Mama as a character elucidates.

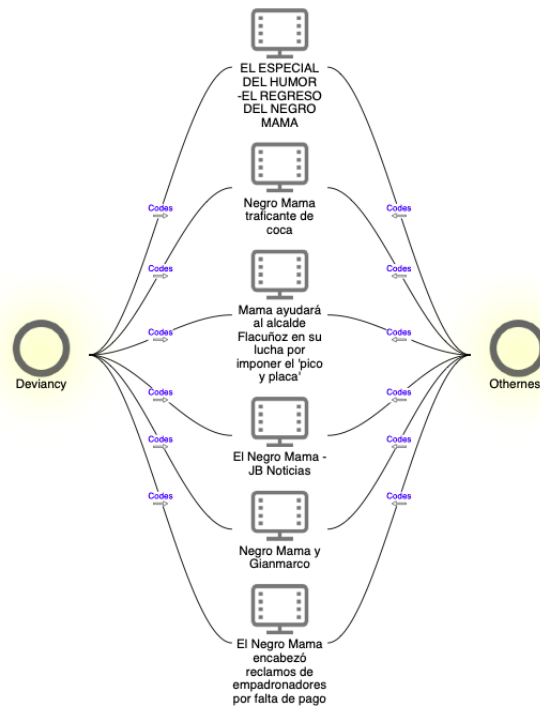


Figure 2. Videos with ‘Deviancy’ and ‘Otherness’ present. (Graph by author)

What this can mean is that while Mama has a variety of traits and situations surrounding his character throughout the run of these three shows, *otherness* and *deviance* are core principles that make this character work. Of course, *class*, *degradation*, and *sexuality* are also important to his formation, but neither of those three are as persistent in his DNA as a satirical characterization of “The Black Idiot.” The three add dimension and are in conversation with *otherness* and *deviance* in one way or another, and deepen either of those two codes.

Class is a code that is the most prevalent in this conversation with the core principles of Mama, reinforcing my assertion that class is inherently tied to race. Perú as a nation has a predominant *racismo silencioso* that De la Cadena posits in her work centering the *intelligentsia* movement of the early 1900s (and how this developed in the decades that followed).⁹⁴ Class is a condition that has been used to hide or disguise racial realities. De la Cadena focuses on

⁹⁴ (De la Cadena, Marisol. 2014).

indigeneity for a reason, it is critical to remember that the basis for the creation of race in Perú began with the contact made between Indigenous groups prevalent at that time and the Spaniards, since before Perú's inception as a nation.⁹⁵ Relating this to Mama, then, seems to be clear, when his race was not a visible factor for his character *his class was*. His continual degradation as a character and bursts of sexual references and innuendos are not as obvious, but remain present throughout his trajectory.

The foundation for Mama was made abundantly clear in the clips I processed, where Deviance, *class* and *otherness* are the key expressions Mama uses to perform— an assertion I made in the first section. Taking into account the fact that the clips I analyzed from the *El Especial Del Humor* era are from 2010, I unfortunately do not have any clear idea of how the beginnings of that era in 2004 panned out in comparison to *JB Noticias*. What I do have, however, is data that compares the two. As I have mentioned before, there is little change, if any, to Mama after his suspension. What happens with Mama, is that his antics are dialed back just a little bit. Nothing too transformative to anger his longtime fans, but also not exactly the same character as he was before. There might be fewer instances of references to the code *stupidity*, but in reality, there are other facets that are at work here that do the work of categorizing Mama as an other. When *El Wasap de JB* was released in 2016, Mama was more cohesive in his visual presentation of an Afro-Peruvian man. The makeup is cohesive and the wardrobe becomes less monotonous and plain. Yet, Mama still functions directly with *deviance* and *otherness* as his driving forces. What I make of this, atop audience support, is that the perception of deviance and otherness of Afro-Peruvians is internalized as well as normalized. It is as if the discourse around this topic is tied to national identity, with Mama as a clear prevalent example.

⁹⁵ (Contreras, Carlos and Marcos, Cueto 1999)

What is to be made of this data then, is that Mama is a character that *at his core* cannot be reformed until racist (mis)representations are no longer an issue. Even when faced with threats of removal, Mama and Jorge Benavides shift focus somewhere else with secondary traits, keeping the two core principles in mind. The reality that Jorge Benavides imagined and created for Mama cannot change, for if it changes Mama will not be Mama but rather, a completely different character. With the investment of *Frecuencia Latina* and audiences all over Perú, there is little pressure, besides that of activist networks, to change.

Conclusion

As stated by Downing and Husband's study on the role of race within media (specifically concerning Ireland in 1968), "Evaluating the roles of media in [the] conflict is not therefore something that can be done simply by a content analysis... It is their cumulative impact over generations that needs to be the primary focus."⁹⁶ Mama is no exception to this rule. With continued support from fans of his early days, to fans now who might be engaging with him for the first time, his impact is still significant and in the lives of his fans, bystanders and critics. The idea that ideas surrounding race are passed down, with media outlets inflame these perceptions further. While this chapter focuses on content analysis, it does so to establish a data driven foundation to elucidate how Mama operates, and backs up how Mama *cannot be reformed* to become more sensitive to racial issues. Even if the violence of his outward appearance is subtracted from the equation, his core attributes and their relationship with humor are still present.

The future of Mama is not completely clear. With the removal of fellow character Jacinta (which we will discuss in the next chapter), one question remains: could it be possible that Mama

⁹⁶ (Downing, John., and Charles. Husband. 2005) 92.

is still able to be active on network television with policies against racism in the media in place?⁹⁷

There are many avenues to be explored, and each of them more unpredictable than the next. But the message is clear: in order to get rid of this manifestation of anti-Blackness, Mama has to be completely removed from the air. The brand of humor this character promotes has to be studied further in order to comprehend why Peruvian humor hides racism, and what resources can be used to counteract and unpack the implications of adopting this style of humor. How can we, collectively, reimagine a new reality devoid of this caricature in order to effectively destroy the ones Jorge Benavides and his predecessors/contemporaries have built?

⁹⁷ In 2013 Frecuencia Latina was fined a fee for the racist stereotypes they engage in. ("Peru's 'El Negro Mama' TV Station Penalized | New York Amsterdam News: The New Black View" n.d.)

“Qué mala suerte que lo tengo!

Hasta ahora no pude encontrar trabajo...”

—La Paisana Jacinta, La Paisana Jacinta (the show)

Chapter III: Who is La Paisana Jacinta?

As mentioned in the previous chapters, Mama is not the only racialized caricature present within Benavides’ network of shows. The second character in this thesis’ analysis, *La Paisana Jacinta* (henceforth Jacinta), presents various similarities and differences to Mama. Much like Mama, Jacinta debuted as a recurring character in *JB Noticias* in 1996. Her character—also portrayed by Jorge Benavides—represents a “satirical” version of an Indigenous woman. Her name, which contains the word *paisana*, is in reference to a person who is from the same area; like a neighbor, an acquaintance or friend.⁹⁸ This small word is absolutely different from *El Negro Mama*, which contains the word *mama* referring to an idiot. Right away, there is a notable difference in the manner that Mama and Jacinta are introduced within the show. Jacinta additionally is generally understood to have a backstory. This backstory places emphasis on her need for financial stability, necessitating her migration to Lima from southeast Perú. Mama does not have a backstory and is automatically assumed to be impoverished. This distinction alludes to the general idea that Jacinta’s backstory is a widely accepted one. Despite Benavides’ statements that Jacinta is not an accurate depiction of an average Andean woman, he has made the claim that Jacinta is a presentation of the reality of , “...*la mujer que migra a la capital en busca de trabajo, pero que se ve obligada a pedir limosna y vender golosinas en los semáforos.*”⁹⁹ Accepting that this portrayal is inaccurate, however, is a drastic understatement.

⁹⁸ Depending on the context, *paisana* can have different meanings, based on context or location. In Perú, it can also refer to a person from the mountains or a person of indigenous descent.

⁹⁹ Translation: “...the woman who migrates to the capital in search of work, but is forced to beg and sell sweets at traffic lights.”

The physical aspects of Jacinta’s appearance, alongside her wardrobe, present a harsh image. Benavides cross dresses as Jacinta, displaying her build as stocky and androgynous. Benavides additionally wears makeup a couple shades darker with copious amounts of blush, blacked out teeth and a black wig styled in braids. Jacinta’s character is consistently dressed in the same brightly colored outfit with “Andean” patterns splattered across the fabric; the outfit resembles that of what is commonly seen in Lima—a blouse, long skirt and a shawl. These makeup and wardrobe decisions already indicate strongly discriminatory undertones. The fact that Jacinta’s cheeks are flushed pink, signals to the stereotype that Indigenous people have flush faces due to the atmosphere of the *sierra*. The blacked out teeth seem to allude to the idea that since Jacinta is poor, then she cannot afford proper dental care. However, given that she is not the only impoverished person in the show, yet has been shown with blacked out teeth consistently for more than 20 years—I find that hard to believe. Much like with Mama, Benavides showcases a startling presentation of Jacinta that can only be understood if presented side by side.



Despite her appalling appearance, Jacinta’s character remained on the ensemble cast for *JB Noticias* until 1999. Her appearance was not found to be an issue at all. Due to her skyrocketing popularity on *JB Noticias*, her character was given a spin-off show that same year. This

(“La BBC Califica de ‘Denigrante’ Personaje a La Paisana Jacinta | MUNDO | EL COMERCIO PERÚ” n.d.)

¹⁰⁰ (Espectáculos LR, *Benavides alongside his character La Paisana Jacinta*, 2020)

popularity allowed Jacinta's character the opportunity to be seen as the protagonist of her own proper "reality", detached from an ensemble cast, which is something Mama was never afforded.¹⁰¹ From 1999 to 2015, for nearly twenty years on primetime television, Jacinta appeared as the star of her own show aptly titled, *La Paisana Jacinta*. The format was the same as *JB Noticias*, only that Jacinta was the protagonist of every sketch. Hundreds of episodes dedicated to Jacinta, as well as a feature length film (2017) that has accumulated 47,000 views nationally during opening weekend, speaks to the popularity of her character with audiences.¹⁰² Despite this, the show *La Paisana Jacinta* formally ended in 2015, and from 2016 to onward Jacinta was incorporated back into the Benavides' sketch comedy format, rebranded as *El Wasap de JB*.

When comparing the pushback of Jacinta's character to the criticism surrounding Mama, there are significant differences. It is not as if Jacinta did not receive any criticism for her portrayal of Andean women. In fact, various claims made by audience members, advocacy groups or state-funded institutions like the *Defensoría del Pueblo*, and lawyers from the IDL (*Instituto de defensa Legal*) argued that Jacinta is a violent, dishonest representation of Andean women. Studies conducted by *Defensoria del Pueblo* state that in recent years there has been a need to promote state institutions led by Andean groups—primarily in areas like health and education. Additionally, the *Defensoria del Pueblo Perú* places emphasis on the dire need for dialogue between the state and Andean people.¹⁰³ This is not without reason. Approximately 25.6% of the Peruvian population identifies as Indigenous/Indigenous descent.¹⁰⁴ That is one out of every four people throughout the country. Alejandro Toledo was the first president that identifies as a person

¹⁰¹ This is in reference to Baudrillard's conception of what constitutes reality; this is to mention that Jacinta is given another alternate reality to operate under that is separate from an ensemble cast which is significant. Baudrillard, Jean. 2012. "The Procession of Simulacra." In *Media and Cultural Studies: Keywords.*, 521–49. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

¹⁰² (PERÚ 2017)

¹⁰³ ("Pueblos Indígenas" n.d.)

¹⁰⁴ However, we must also take into consideration that this data can be subject to the complex issue of self identification. Other surveys have found the demographic to be 80%, therefore it varies. (Welle (www.dw.com) n.d.)

of Indigenous descent as of 2020, and yet his administration still receives criticism for their superficial implementation of Indigenous people into the government. His most notable initiative, INDEPA (*El Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de Pueblo Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperuano*), was thoroughly criticized, primarily because it held little power in relation to other organizations.¹⁰⁵ Alicia Abanto, then deputy for environmental and Indigenous issues for *Defensoria del Pueblo Perú* presents the issues plainly. She states that racial discrimination, exclusion, poverty, inequality and threats to their ways of life and their territories are the main challenges faced by Indigenous people in Perú.¹⁰⁶

Despite the tensions that the government has with Indigenous citizens, and Jacinta's polarizing (mis)representation, her character remained popular and on the air.¹⁰⁷ In order to counter critiques, Jacinta would appear in press conferences surrounding the relaunch of the character, or on talk shows—much like Mama¹⁰⁸. These cautionary actions meet the requirements of the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, which aligned itself with the assertion that neither character is *materially harmful* in their presentations. With support from audience members, it seemed that Jacinta was like Mama, deeply embedded in the memories of the audience, and therefore protected. If we were to briefly consider Mama's popularity in comparison to the media giant that Jacinta is, it is relatively clear that the audiences of *Frecuencia Latina* favor Jacinta over Mama. While both provide such horrid (mis)representations of two historically marginalized groups, Jacinta's makeup as a character seems to provide a comfort for her audiences. Her popularity is unmatched with her other cast members.

¹⁰⁵ (Greene, Shane. 2007)

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ (Diario La República 2020)

¹⁰⁸ Jacinta has appeared on *El Valor de la Verdad* with Beto Ortiz, and Mama has also been on Jaime Bayly's talk show surrounding his 2010 controversy against LUNDU.

I hypothesize that because of the persistent Incan past imagery locked in Perú's identity as a nation, there are much more open instances of fetishization present with Jacinta as opposed to Mama. Jacinta, by extension, subconsciously epitomizes the *idea* of what Andean women are like. The racialized geographies that Jacinta partakes in is paradoxical in this sense—she is simultaneously relegated to the *sierras* of southern Perú, yet is accepted within populous cities like Lima. She is an “other” perpetually, yet still fits the narrative of the “reality” that Benavides presents. This obsession with Jacinta as a character should not be mistaken as a positive. That would be undermining the history of racialization and violence that Indigenous people endured (and continue to endure), on top of the exotification of their existence. Jacinta serves more as a reminder of the persistence that racism and sexism have, even when there are “positive” feelings associated with a certain character.

This differs from Mama in a significant way. Later on in the chapter, we get a grasp of how different Jacinta is portrayed and presented as opposed to Mama. Mama, as shown in the previous chapter, does not change from his core *deviant* and *otherness* traits. He is beyond reformation or development, and yet manages to present a general idea of how Afro-Peruvians seem to be perceived. This possibly hints toward the lack of coverage on Afro-Peruvians and their contributions to Perú as a nation. This is plain to see if we consider the stark differences in census data for Indigenous people and Afro-Peruvians. As opposed to the 25.6% of individuals who identify as Indigenous, approximately 10% consider themselves to be Afro-Peruvian or of African descent (according to census data).¹⁰⁹ This lack of accurate coverage for the Afro-Peruvian populations fits in seamlessly with the narrative Benavides creates.

Because Mama is one of the few (mis)representations in Peruvian media, coupled with the insistent belief that Afro-Peruvians are extremely scarce, his character is accepted with much

¹⁰⁹ (“PERÚ - INEI:: Perú: Resultados Definitivos de Los Censos Nacionales 2017” n.d.)

more ease. There is less legitimacy associated with protests against his character (in the eyes of ethics committees) because there is no harm detected from his performance, despite the reasoning behind these protests in the first place. Mama's storylines do not shift significantly, and overall, he is still viewed as an idiot. As Trouillot notes in his book *Silencing the Past*, the erasure of the histories is not from a lack of evidence, but rather from a corrupted power structure that *allows for erasure*.¹¹⁰ It is not that Mama exists in a neat vacuum, but rather that the history associated with Afro-Peruvian presence is suffocated with revisionist ideals of the nation's past. Jacinta, on the other hand, fits into this revisionist idea. The idea itself however, only accounts for the exotification of her character, it does not fully accept Jacinta as she is. Her differences are cause for ridicule in these shows, and it is unfair to present her acceptance as positive. Popularity is not a solid indicator for progressive ideas, and in the case of Jacinta, she is anything but.

Methodology and Structure of the Chapter

The methodology of this chapter will be exactly the same as the methodology in the previous chapter. I observe, record, and reason with the situations that Jacinta as a character is placed in. Two clips per show will also be examined, resulting in 6 examined clips in order to note the changes that happened over the course of nearly three decades. Like with Mama, I transcribed these clips out of a batch of sixteen videos that I sourced via YouTube, and began to record specific themes found in each of these clips. In instances when the clips had poor audio due to the quality of the videos on YouTube, I had to rely on context clues to piece together the content of the sketch which may appear as [???].

The codes remain the same as in the previous chapter: *class, conflict, degradation, deviance, humor, otherness, sexuality, stupidity and violence*. I opted for this in order to uniformly analyze both characters. Any differences will also be recorded. *Humor* is still used to

¹¹⁰ (Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1995)

note when a situation is found to be funny by the live studio audience present during the recording of the sketch. I use this as a signal to other codes present in the list and whether the reactions to these codes are “positive” or “negative.” “Positive” meaning the laughter resulted from an instance in the sketch where Jacinta is not degraded, which I do not view as likely. “Negative” meaning that laughter resulted from Jacinta being presented as a fool throughout the sketch. There is a shift in how *sexuality* as a code is interpreted in reference to Jacinta, because of the fact that in these clips Jacinta rarely makes a sexual innuendo on purpose; rather, these types of jokes are made to seem accidental. Additionally, there are rarely any instances where Jacinta is viewed as attractive, it seems *sexuality* for Jacinta remains to stay defined as an accidental reference to sex. Therefore, in this chapter, *sexuality* includes times where sexuality was/is imposed on Jacinta in addition to any lewd jokes Jacinta makes about other characters.

The structure of this chapter is the same as the previous one. All three eras (or shows) will be divided into sections. Within each section a summary of the corresponding clip will be shown to give a clear idea of what is happening in the sketch. The summary will be in depth, and will consider the transcript, visuals and the context of the period the clip was produced under. Visuals will be referenced due to their striking contrast, what it provides to the overall performance, and audience reactions. Discussion of the codes presented will follow, focusing on the density of the codes and their implications. The end of the chapter will present overarching themes and will note the transitions of Jacinta in relation to Mama and what this says about their presentations, characters and overall popularity with Jorge Benavides’ general audience.

JB Noticias

Adivinanzas de La Paisana Jacinta (La Flor de Erda); 1996

In this short clip, we are introduced to Jacinta for the first time. The scene opens with Jacinta washing clothing by hand, singing a song to herself that results in some laughter. She is joined by another woman named Flor, and the two exchange pleasantries. It is established then

and there that the two are friends, given that Flor is extremely informal with Jacinta. Both of them wear attire that imply that they are both Andean. Flor's wardrobe is not as vibrant as Jacinta's but still carries the same elements such as the cut of the fabric and bright accessories, such as her hat. Flor's hair is also styled in braids, similar to Jacinta.



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Flor complains to Jacinta that she is extremely bored with working, and Jacinta who is still working diligently, asks her if she would like to hear some riddles. Flor exclaims excitedly that she would, and Jacinta follows with a series of riddles that can be taken as lewd in nature. In response to every riddle Jacinta tells, Flor attacks Jacinta either verbally or physically. Jacinta each time has to explain her riddle afterwards, all of which turns out to be innocent. Every time this happens Flor apologizes for thinking lewd thoughts. By the end of the third riddle however, Jacinta is tired of Flor getting angry with her and stops. The clip ends there.

Although this is a short clip, we do gather some information about Jacinta and her relationship with Flor. Jacinta is depicted as a working woman, who is innocent by nature and can be characterized as naive. Flor seems to be less naive, but still falls within this category. In both characters, naivete is used to present them as innocent women. It is this use of naivete that the running gag of the sketch relies upon, Jacinta's riddles would not be as funny otherwise. In

¹¹¹ (Omar Barreto Fernandez n.d.)

discussing naivete, it must be acknowledged that it is a classic stereotype attributed to Indigenous people. If one were to consider this, both women's naivete is not a positive trait but rather one that is assumed to be true. There are other examples of naivete being used to describe Indigenous people, however the most infamous being the murder of eight journalists in 1983.

These murders were categorized as a bleak misunderstanding, since the villagers claimed that they believed the journalists to be affiliated with *Sendero Luminoso*, a dogmatic Marxist-Leninist-Maoist group that suffocated and terrorized the rural regions of Perú throughout the 1980s and 90s.¹¹² The report on the manner, written by novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, classified the event as such. Although there was speculation on whether this report was accurate, the main consensus was that it was the truth. I bring this up to make it clear that naivete is not a trait that absolves Andeans of crimes. Rather it is a trait that can be used to benefit the nation when applied to certain events.

I mention this incident to show how deeply embedded naïveté is as a stereotype attributed to Indigenous people. It also indirectly benefits whoever is applying it. This stereotype of naivete persists in different forms, and it is clear that it continues to be accepted. Both Jacinta and Flor are uncomfortable with discussing sexual matters openly, to them it is taboo. Their imposed naivete assures the audience that the fact that Flor reacts so strongly to Jacinta's riddles is to be expected. This is where the humor resides, between the stereotype and pushing it enough to the point where it is seen as ridiculous.

The codes present in this short clip are quite numerous, and include the codes *class*, *conflict*, *degradation*, *otherness* and *sexuality*. The plot of the sketch is relatively straightforward and mostly depends on the audience's understanding of what an Andean woman acts, talks, and looks like. This indication is intricately based upon the varied representations of Andean women

¹¹² (Mayer 1991).

throughout the history of Perú—before nationhood and after. If we were to examine the meaning behind terms used to describe Indigenous peoples within Perú, it becomes glaringly clear that they are used as methods of silencing their own proper histories within the national context. Now common terms that describe indigeneity within the colonial or republican context brings forth a history of degradation.

Terms such as *serrano* or *indio* are case in point. Since both terms had undergone a transitional period in use, in this case from former colonial titles like *indio* to *serrano*, media sources such as newspapers have always held the power to make such terms common.¹¹³ These terms transformed *alongside* media within the visual economy, as photographs became increasingly popular in use.¹¹⁴ Within this short clip we can foretell the popularity of Jacinta in the years that followed. From this guess, we can attribute Jacinta’s popularity with her character’s ability to present herself in the reality that audiences have built. Just as Mama fits into the archetype of ‘the fool’ Jacinta fits into the archetype of the naive Indigenous domestic worker, oftentimes a woman.¹¹⁵

Other examples can be named in this presentation of the Indigenous women throughout other facets of Latin American media like Mexico’s *La India María*.¹¹⁶ In Perú specifically, there is a particular plotline present within *novelas* in the latter half of the twentieth century where an “Indigenous woman” moves to an urban area (oftentimes Lima) from the mountains. These shows often will have a white woman in braids and a long skirt portray Andean women, like *Simplemente María* (1969), *Natacha* (1991), and *Luz María* (1998). This choice in wardrobe for Jacinta, as mentioned previously in this chapter is essentially the same as the women from these *novelas*. As mentioned by Iliana Pagán-Teitelbaum in her article, *Glamour in the Andes*:

¹¹³ (Cecilia Méndez Gastelumendi 2011)

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ (Bogle, Donald. 2016) 9-14.

¹¹⁶ (Tumbaga, Ariel Zatarain. 2020) 759–772. 6

Indigenous Women in Peruvian Cinema, when Guillermo Rossini began to imitate Indigenous women for comedic purposes in the 1970s and 1980s, the image of what an Andean woman was like began to shift. The *chola* character became extremely popularized, such as Jacinta. Pagán-Teitelbaum furthermore states that “... Peruvian writer Dante Castro (2005), [states that] these characters are pathetic mockeries of Andean women that reveal ‘an intercultural and interethnic conflict that is always resolved in favor of hegemonic culture.’”¹¹⁷



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Benavides is not the first to perform as an Andean woman, but rather is within a list of comedians who feel come from a place of power allowed by the media to appropriate Andean/Indigenous women. As Pagán-Teitelbaum states, even the most well-intentioned portrayals of Andean women fall into this trap of still playing out the same message that the aforementioned works have done—in order to succeed one must assimilate.¹²⁰ Jacinta not being concerned with assimilating is partially responsible for her becoming an “other.” I imagine that audiences find the lack quite amusing. Usually, men feel vindicated in portraying an Andean woman, like Ernesto Pimentel in his portrayal *Chola Chabuca* (pictured above). Conversely, white women will portray Andean women as feminine such as the 1969 novela *Simplemente*

¹¹⁷ (Iliana Pagán-Teitelbaum 2012)

¹¹⁸ (BOCÓN 2021)

¹¹⁹ (RETRO TV 2019)

¹²⁰ Ibid.

María (pictured above). Andean women in these (mis)representations are either not feminine at all or have to be in close proximity to whiteness to be considered feminine. Jacinta is the former.

The performance behind these characters is reliant on audience perception of these racial and social classes. On top of them being presented by Benavides, they fit into the almost formulaic success of the JB franchise.¹²¹ What was less anticipated were the codes of *conflict* and *sexuality* that were heavily present in the performance. Most of the references made to the code *humor* were related to these two codes, and although *degradation* is also present, it is mostly cued with the visual appearance of Jacinta rather than her actions or words.

These codes are present in not only the riddles (*adivinanzas* in Spanish) but the interactions between Jacinta and Flor. Their presumed naivete around sexual situations is attached to the conflict that follows. *Sexuality* as a code is not presenting Jacinta as a person with sexual desires, but rather as a person that is flustered by the mere thought of it—though this is far more present in Flor. In the following transcript that has been codified with both *sexuality* and *conflict* codes present, Jacinta is sharing a riddle that could be misinterpreted with sexual connotations and Flor’s reaction is the basis for the laughter that follows (coded as *humor*).

LA PAISANA JACINTA Mide 25 centímetros. [laughter] de un lado tiene pelo,
(01:59): [laughter]...

FLOR (02:12): 25 centímetros? ¿Es todo? [screams] Ahora no! [begins to fight
Jacinta]

LA PAISANA JACINTA El cepillo mide 25 centímetros según el pelo. Si usted le peina el
(02:28): pelo?? [laughter]

¹²¹ In reference to all Jorge Benavides’ shows which are all accounted for here: *JB Noticias*, *La Paisana Jacinta*, *El Especial del Humor* and *El Wasap de JB*.

FLOR (02:42): Oy, no se que está pasando por la cabeza, pues deja, disculpa.

English Translation

LA PAISANA JACINTA (01:59): It measures 25 centimeters. [laughter] on one side there is hair-
[laughter]

FLOR (02:12): 25 centimeters? That's it? [screams] That's enough! [begins to
fight Jacinta]

LA PAISANA JACINTA (02:28): The comb is 25 centimeters, and there's hair. Don't you comb
your hair?? [laughter]

FLOR (02:42): Oi, I don't know what's going on in my head, well drop it,
forgive me.

JB Noticias La Paisana Jacinta - 1996

In this clip, Jacinta is shown attempting to board a bus while being denied entry by the fare collector. While the reason is not made clear, it is likely Jacinta did not have enough money for the bus fare. Because of this, Jacinta begins to bawl and hits the fare collector repeatedly until she is allowed entry. Once she is allowed to board, she does what Benavides has stated is the reality of Andean women— she reaches into her bag and begins to sell candy. This scene is not particularly shocking, selling goods like candy on public transport is common in public spaces like buses. When she boards, the vibrancy of Jacinta's shawl in comparison to the people surrounding her in the bus stands out. Soon after Jacinta boards and walks through the bus, the other characters begin to grimace openly. These facial expressions, as well as outcries of disgust, gesture that it is Jacinta that is causing the issue. From these reactions, it can be inferred that

Jacinta smells bad. It is possible that she does not have access to running water, which fits with the fact that Jacinta is poor—as established by her backstory.



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Jacinta does not seem to notice the group's disgust towards her and continues to ask for monetary donations in exchange for her goods. The grimaces do not stop, but rather increase with her continued movement. Jacinta does not acknowledge any of this, even when comments are made towards her stench later on in the clip.

When Jacinta notices that her attempt to make money through the sale of candy is not working, she pulls out a pan flute. She then loudly declares that she will begin to perform. She mockingly plays the flute, which results in an uproar of laughter from the studio audience, and wins the approval of the other passengers. Jacinta displays a range of emotions and movement throughout this performance. In one instance, Jacinta cries while she plays. Her facial expression during this instance places her blacked out teeth on display, which causes even more laughter. Despite the harsh reality that losing teeth is a sign of poor dental care, which is not solely the fault of the individual, that does not matter here. What matters is that Jacinta is performing for the other bus passengers. Overall, her appearance and actions are for everyone's benefit. Jacinta

¹²² (cayopolus n.d.)

makes money and the passengers are entertained. While there seems to be no humiliation on Jacinta's end, the laughter and jeering of the passengers suggests otherwise.

When other passengers begin to complain about Jacinta's pan flute performance, she switches her routine and begins to sing. She pulls out a *guiro* to accompany her song, which focuses on the problems of a husband and his wife—giving preference to the husband. Jacinta stops this song and asks for monetary donations. Once she collects money, she begins to perform a different song. This song receives positive responses since it is a popular song. Jacinta's performances cause more laughter from the people in the bus. Satisfied with this outcome, Jacinta begins to try to sell candy again. However, the women seated at the front of the bus begin to all appear uncomfortable when Jacinta walks around asking for donations. This is when the fare collector asks who would like to get off at a certain stop, to which one of the women jokes that the person who smells should, obviously referring to Jacinta.

The jokes do not end there, and the woman making the jokes continues to verbally attack Jacinta—making fun of her smell, appearance and jabbing at her clothes as well. The camera pans to Jacinta, who does not seem to be saddened but rather enraged by the comments. Jacinta begins to cry, which causes discomfort, and the woman who initially made the jokes tries to apologize. The woman tells Jacinta she is simply a jokester and meant no harm. This does not go over well with Jacinta. Jacinta begins to talk to the woman and directs an insult insinuating that this woman is some kind of “whore”. Possibly fearing being reprimanded, Jacinta exits the bus quickly, causing an uproar of laughter.

The codes in this clip vary; however, the main codes that are present throughout the clip are *otherness*, *class* and *degradation*. *Stupidity* along with *violence* are aligned with *humor* in the case of this clip, despite both not having a thorough presence. These two codes are what the audience reacts to the most, since *humor* is tied to their presence, along with the expressions of these codes manifesting through Jacinta.

When Jacinta enters the bus there is conflict almost immediately, since she did not have the proper bus fare to board in the first place, on top of her being unwelcome due to her stench. Visually the audience gets a sense of Jacinta's stench due to the reactions of the other passengers, cuing her impoverished status. *Suciedad* (filth) is a stereotype that has a deeply rooted connection to indigeneity, and it is extremely prevalent in this clip. Because the development of Perú as a nation heavily relied on the idea of modernity, the wrong assumption that the Indigenous are resistant to modernization is also tied in. This of course, resulted in a *variety* of different traits that gradually became associated with Indigenous people. *Suciedad* is tied to class in this sense, due to the fact that poverty and lack of education became attached to indigeneity as the nineteenth century progressed. All this culminates into the knowledge that the audience believes they possess—Indigenous people from the mountains are dirty and unworthy. Jacinta by simply smelling bad, reminds the passengers of this thought, causing them to have confirmation bias. They feel that they are justified in their treatment of Jacinta because of this one instance.

In comparison to the previous clip, this is the first instance within this study that we are able to witness the violence associated with class antagonism, particularly since none of the passengers seem to even tolerate her. Jacinta is clearly not characterized as a timid person, and this clip seems to establish a precedent as we will see further along in this chapter. Her loud performance along with begging for money almost causes her to become the antagonist in the perspective of the passengers, since she is exiting loudly without fear. If we consider this interpretation of the clip then, the reason *stupidity* is coded in relation to *humor* is not necessarily because Jacinta herself is stupid, but rather that she is assigned this characteristic by those around her.

Being assigned or recognized as *stupid* by the other characters in this sketch is crucial to understanding how and why she is also presented as a someone who is devalued. Jacinta's appearance is startling since her clothing, hair and phenotypic appearance do not match the

wardrobe of the other characters. It is as though she is markedly different from them, and in fear the passengers begin to taunt her. Her performance becomes solely for their amusement in this instance. Despite her performing for their entertainment, her stench, or class status, is something that cannot be rectified. In essence, it seems that in order for other characters to be comfortable with Jacinta being loud and present is to degrade her. This is accomplished through shaming her impoverished reality and calling her stupid. The most prominent of these instances of shame, which for almost the entirety of the clip, is demonstrated through visual cues. At the end when another woman comments on Jacinta *needing* to get off the bus due to her stench, this shame intensifies. This is when the unspoken knowledge of Jacinta's class status starts to be openly revealed as a negative characteristic.

Regardless of this instance that is intended to *silence* Jacinta, Jacinta does not falter. Rather, she retaliates in a verbally violent manner, after feigning hurt feelings and causing the woman who taunted her to apologize. The apology in of itself is not a substantive apology. It is a superficial one, one that relies on the understanding that it was from a place of humor, and as such there should be no hurt feelings. Jacinta turns around and yells insults at the woman and runs away, which is coded as *violence*. Jacinta's running away can be interpreted as her escaping any potential consequences for her actions. This is her way of preserving her safety since she attacked someone who is in a higher position within the social hierarchy. Whatever the case, it is not taken seriously since the woman she insulted seems to find her anger amusing, and laughs at the prospect of Jacinta exhibiting these feelings.

The reasoning behind coding this particular moment as both *degradation* and *violence* lies in the fact that Jacinta is not a timid character and does not take the verbal abuse of others. Yet, this grants a false sense of empowerment, one that is not material. Jacinta still felt the need to run away, and only gained the satisfaction of getting the last word. As a character that faces situations like these throughout the trajectory of her career, sketches like this are disempowering.

La Paisana Jacinta

At this point in time, Jacinta had amassed so much popularity as a recurring character on *JB Noticias*, that she became the center of her own show. This clip, dated as 1999, shows the transitional period of Jacinta's development. Jacinta's role from a supporting character on an ensemble cast to protagonist is quite significant, given that her character debuted just three years prior. While it is shorter than the rest of the clips, it very much encompasses the same theme as the previous clip. Jacinta is out of place, again.

Paisana Jacinta Limosna - 1999

The scene opens with Jacinta walking into a restaurant that is set up to appear to be upscale, with a full bar and clientele that appear affluent. Before Jacinta can enter, however, the bartender interferes, possibly to avoid a scene. As mentioned before, this is a common occurrence. The comfort of the clientele of the restaurant seems to be of the utmost importance to the bartender, since he intervenes almost immediately when Jacinta appears. He does so by informing her she cannot be allowed inside. In response to this, Jacinta begins to exaggerate her facial expressions, which appear to be upset. Her desperation is doubled when she speaks, since she uses a defeated tone to speak to the bartender. The bartender tells her again she cannot enter after hearing her plea and continues to physically escort her out, while using the term *cholita* to refer to her "affectionately".¹²³ This altercation clearly makes the women in the restaurant uncomfortable, which alarms the bartender.

This does not fare well for the bartender, because shortly after this, Jacinta switches from desperation into aggression. She aggressively hits the bartender with the stick that she is holding and curses him out. The women who are in the center of the frame are alarmed, and demand that the bartender allow Jacinta entry into the restaurant. Jacinta clarifies that she is not going to beg

¹²³ *Cholita* uses the suffix *-ita* denoting affection. It is a Peruvian specific slang term which stems from the term *cholo* or *chola*. These terms are used in Perú in reference to people of indigenous descent, or people who are from the mountains.

for money as she enters. She approaches the women and asks if she can take the seat next to them, which is initially denied because it is intended for someone else. Jacinta begins to hit the table with the stick and cusses the women out, taking a seat against their wishes.



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After this, the audience begins to witness tensions form between Jacinta and all the women that are seated around her. Almost immediately, once Jacinta is seated, all these women begin to gesture that she smells bad, again referring to *suciedad*. When Jacinta is handed a menu by the bartender, who is now trying to help her, the growing resentment from the affluent women grows. The bartender assures Jacinta that she can order whatever she wishes, and one of the women makes a comment. This comment is very much targeted toward Jacinta reading as Andean: “*Con toda la llama que se ha comido, que más va a comer?*”¹²⁵

This comment is similar to the clip prior, which insinuates that Jacinta is an outsider. Jacinta’s facial expression becomes sullen, while the other women in the group laugh. The bartender intervenes and scolds the women, asking them to stop, while comforting Jacinta by telling her that they are *criollas* who are trying to upset her. In this instance, *criolla* is a term that he uses to describe their status. While *criolla* is contemporarily used as a term denoting a higher

¹²⁴ (alexannefrank n.d.)

¹²⁵ Translation: “With all the llama she’s eaten, what else will she eat?”

social status, historically it is a term that was conceptualized during the colonial era. The use of the term *criolla* is interesting here, since during its inception it was used by enslaved Africans to distinguish between those who was from Africa and who was born in the Americas. It was later appropriated to categorize the *casta* to which Spanish descendants born in the Americas belonged. Within this context however, *criolla* is a means to identify the upper strata of social classes—those who truly belong. Due to the bullying Jacinta is subject to in this clip, it is apparent that she is being ridiculed to remind her of her lower social class as opposed to the women around her. The bullying does not stop as the other women begin to comment on *what they imagine* to be Jacinta's diet such as *vicuña* (similar to llama) and *mote*. These comments are not widely accepted, as we can see background characters cringing at the scene. The pettiness that these women exhibit, due to Jacinta forcibly taking the seat intended for their friend, is very clear. After having had enough of this, Jacinta walks away with a hurt expression. The bartender seems upset by this, and scolds the women, since it was clear that they intended for this to happen. He asks what the women will order, and Jacinta comes running back saying, "*Con todas las RATAS que comen, ¿qué más podrían querer?*," before quickly running away.¹²⁶ The audience laughs, and almost exactly like what happened in the last clip, the women seem more amused by this comment than hurt.

Out of the 6 clips examined throughout this small study, this is the only clip where a secondary character, in this case the bartender, defends Jacinta after being humiliated. Although this is one of the shorter clips examined, there is an immense amount of tension within the sketch between Jacinta and the other characters—who are affluent women labeled as *criolla*. I attribute *conflict* as the most dominant code present, due to this tension as well as how uncomfortable the

¹²⁶ Translation: "With all the RATS they eat, what else could they want?"

situation was. This is also considering that a majority of the clip showcased Jacinta having conflict with the bartender in the first half, and with the affluent women in the second half.

The name of the clip—*Jacinta Limosna*—refers to Jacinta asking for charity; this is what *limosna* means in this context. Because it is not favorable to ask for charity in these spaces, Jacinta's arrival alone already caused undeniable tension between her and the clientele of this restaurant. This is precisely why the bartender had initially blocked her entry, although he was unsuccessful. Jacinta in particular possesses a trait that is not necessarily common, but is critical in establishing her as a character. This trait being her confidence in herself to get what she wants using any method she deems necessary. This is clearly present when she begins to engage in violent behavior to be allowed entry, as well as when she forces a seat amongst the women who advocated for her entry. *Violence* almost completely defines Jacinta in this clip; however, it is not without some reason. Jacinta forced herself inside the restaurant because she was denied entry as soon as she entered. She became violent with the women when they refused her a seat, and again when they began to verbally abuse her. Because Jacinta does not adhere to being respectable within this environment, she is punished. The clip itself gives the impression that Jacinta is somehow being made an example of, despite it being a humoristic setting.

Images and commonly believed misinformation throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries present the Indigenous person separate from Perú. Because of this, they become part of an imaginary outside world that is almost separate. Novelas and comedies rely on this separation to serve their narrative purpose, as well as push the commonly held belief that Andean women are “others” left behind in the world by fault of their own. However, if the seizure of their lands is acknowledged alongside this process of separation, it is clear that the groups in power are at fault.

Guillermo Nugent, in his book *Labrietno de Choledad* presents this issue as separate from racism, and rather, uses a term coined by José Carlos Mariátegui to describe this power

imbalance: *gamonalismo*.¹²⁷ *Gamonalismo* derives from the word *gamonal* that translates to a landowner, which refers to the exploitation of the Indigenous population usually by wealthy elites who are white. Nugent throughout the book makes it a point to refer to Mariátegui due to his use of *gamonalismo* to relate to the abuses of the Peruvian government towards Indigenous people. By using this logic, Nugent makes it clear in his book that the issue is not one of racism, but rather one that relies on *gamonalismo*. Land ownership or localized power dynamics creates an uneven hierarchy within the social structures of Perú, which relies on *tones* not *races*.

By relying on tones, or phenotypic appearances, there is a more chaotic manner of delegating the social strata a person might belong in. Jacinta phenotypically resembles an Andean woman in the view of the women at the restaurant. Her racial identity is not viewed as ambiguous in the slightest if we were to consider the visual economy of this particular type of image, which as mentioned earlier is almost exactly the same for any media (mis)representation of an Andean woman. The images translate as such, and parallel with the use of *tones* to present a story. Further, Nugent has stated in an article he wrote following almost 30 years after the publication of his book that there is more to social hierarchy than exclusion, but rather that inclusion as well presents itself as an intense experience. As stated:

“Este es el tipo de situaciones que prefieren evadir quienes se apresuran a considerar el racismo como la principal patología pública del país. Si no nos situamos en los términos de inclusión/exclusión negar la exclusión supone afirmar la inclusión. Pero los ordenamientos jerárquicos proceden de distinta forma: la inversión y la complementariedad son los rasgos característicos de las prácticas. Grupos que se encuentran en los últimos escalones de la subordinación

¹²⁷ (Guillermo, Nugent 2014)

en determinados momentos o espacios asumen una posición representativa y emocionalmente intensa."¹²⁸

Jacinta's inclusion and popularity superficially present the illusion of inclusion, yet her (mis)representation in this space simultaneously allows for an intense position within it. This is what is present within this scene of verbal abuse, although Jacinta was allowed entry it was *included* given that she was still subject to subjugation, which resulted in intensity. Although I do not wholeheartedly agree with Nugent's stance that racism is not the sole issue here, which would erase the dynamics racial classification provides as well as dismiss the power it possesses, his use of *gamonalismo* can be used to comprehend how the power structures disenfranchise these groups. and how *tones* present itself within the social hierarchy are useful.

The primary definition of racism within the view of *Frecuencia Latina*, Jorge Benavides, the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* and fans of Benavides is extremely limited. It relies on the idea that racism is personal, and not structural. The notion that racism can harm a group of people in a systematic manner is not widely acknowledged, which is why it is difficult to prove the harm these (mis)representations cause. However, *gamonalismo* neither fully accounts for the harm that racial categorization caused, nor for Afro-Peruvian people who are also impacted by discrimination, albeit in a different way. Comparing Jacinta to Mama in terms of this particular type of abuse, Mama does not get treated the way Jacinta did in the previous clips examined. Jacinta is physically barred from entering two different places, a bus and restaurant. In each instance the following happens: Jacinta asks for charity in a public place, she is confronted by other people (usually women), and a conflict

¹²⁸ "This is the type of situation that those who are quick to consider racism as the main public patología of the country prefer to avoid. If we do not place this in the terms of inclusion / exclusion, denying the exclusion implies affirming the inclusion. But hierarchical arrangements proceed in a different way: inversion and complementarity are the characteristic features of these practices. Groups that are in the last steps of subordination in certain moments or spaces assume a representative and emotionally intense position." ("«El Laberinto de La Choledad», Casi Tres Décadas Después | Nueva Sociedad" 2021)

between Jacinta and people who confront her ensues. Mama is never placed in a situation like this, and although he is harassed it is not in the same isolated manner that Jacinta is subject to. Jacinta, so far then, is characterized by how inconspicuous she is and how it creates discomfort amongst other people.

A significant portion of the clip had three common codes that simultaneously sprang up from the climax of the conflict between Jacinta and the women. This is the part of the clip where they begin to verbally attack her. These codes—*degradation, class, and otherness*—shine through when considering the content of the jokes these women made, as well as the context behind them. In this clip, Jacinta is only trying to order a meal that is paid for by the bartender, who is read as Afro-Peruvian, and it becomes ugly quickly. These women begin to talk aloud about what Jacinta could possibly want to eat, given the large portion of food she has already eaten. *Llama, vicuña* and *mote* are common herding animals in the mountains, and they are sometimes offered as food to tourists in Cusco.

Conflating this with Jacinta's diet is extremely indelicate, since it places a huge supposition towards Indigenous people in general. Whether these animals are offered in dishes is irrelevant, because by making this statement these women are over-simplifying a facet of Jacinta's identity. They are doing so in order to humiliate Jacinta, especially since it is likely other customers may think the same as these women do. By weaponizing a particular trait about Jacinta to humiliate her, it is clear they are trying to harm her to receive what they want. This could be seen as an extreme measure, since components like Jacinta's appearance, actions and stench have not barred her from entry. In other circumstances it would have, which is obvious from the beginning when she is almost escorted out for trying to enter the restaurant.

This altercation showcases how Jacinta is considered an "*other,*" but also how her *class* status is inextricably intertwined. It is not only that Jacinta is a *paisana* (common person, mountain woman) but that she is also a poor Andean woman. This causes such an adverse

reaction from these women, manifesting as *degradation*. The bartender is not exempt from this, he too in the beginning tried to keep Jacinta away. When Jacinta leaves, they exhibit no remorse for what they did; even when they were chided by the bartender, or when the other customers were silently judging. This lack of accountability in this space allowed them to feel justified in treating Jacinta this way. All of the people present seem to have to share the perceived reality that Jacinta does not really belong within this space. Jacinta is not existing within her *racialized geography*; she is existing beyond where she is imagined to be. This is seen as a threat, and as such, she is treated as one—no matter how cruel.

La Paisana Jacinta - Jacinta Llavera - 2004

This episode (#146) is set in 2004. At this point, the show *La Paisana Jacinta* is a popular show enjoyed by a sizable audience. The episode begins with a theme song, followed by Jacinta walking through a residential area in Lima. Jacinta laments that she is unable to find work—making the quick joke that she should become an Argentinian national and work in TV. She asks loudly to the audience where she can find the “key to success”, while stopping at a booth that makes copies of keys. She says out loud, “If I can find the key to that door, I can succeed.” The owner of the booth hears her, and thinking she is talking about a literal key, begins a conversation with her. When it becomes clear Jacinta is not a customer, rather someone who is out of work, the booth owner offers her employment. It is prudent to mention here that the relationship and dynamic established between these two characters becomes prevalent throughout the episode. This dynamic involves Jacinta misunderstanding what the booth owner means, and the booth owner aggressively losing patience with her.

Jacinta accepts the position and the booth owner (henceforth referred to as Boss) teaches her about making copies for keys. Jacinta is confused throughout the entire process and keeps cracking jokes throughout the lesson, even saying that the key without the ridges (*dientes* in Spanish which literally translates to ‘teeth’) is named Jacinta like her—which is an obvious joke

about her lack of teeth. After this short lesson, the first customer approaches. He states his need for a key, which confuses Jacinta. She attacks him by grabbing his arm and holding it against his back. This misunderstanding causes the customer to yell out, and when he is let go, he is expressively angry, calling Jacinta a “barbarian” and threatening to call the police. Boss manages to calm him down, and the customer leaves in a huff. Boss scolds Jacinta explaining what he actually meant. After this, he tells Jacinta he has work to attend to and leaves her in charge of his booth, threatening her if she causes any other issues.

There is a quick cut to a woman who is locked out of her house. She arrives at the booth and asks Jacinta to make her a copy of her key. Jacinta is confused by the phrasing of this sentence and fumbles with the key, clearly not knowing what she is doing, which causes the woman to get annoyed with her. When the woman expresses that she needs water, Jacinta begins to fumble around again and shows her a *llave* for water (this ends up being a nozzle for a hose and not an actual key). The woman is annoyed once more and leaves. Jacinta makes a degrading comment about the woman, commenting that loose women are like that, which causes some laughter. This comment is a pattern present in Jacinta’s interactions with women deemed attractive by societal standards. It has occurred twice in the clips examined thus far, and seems to be implying that Jacinta is someone who struggles with her insecurities and is a jealous and petty person.

The next customer is a man who got locked out of his car. He confides with Jacinta about his issue. Although Jacinta seems a bit lost by what the request requires, she follows him to his car. He shows her and she examines the car and begins to yell out for the key as if it’ll answer, which angers the man a little. Jacinta assures him she can get the key out and the man, trusting her, leaves to make a call. Jacinta stares at the car after he leaves and says “well, I have to do it.” and picks up a brick. The frame fades to black and when it fades back in, the man is shown witnessing Jacinta breaking his car window with the brick. He yells at her and Jacinta gets

confused by his anger, telling him she told him what she was going to do. Her logic is that with a broken window the man can never forget the key in the car again. This only angers the man, who continues to yell which angers Jacinta. She loses her patience and begins to hit him causing him to run off.

When Jacinta returns, Boss is waiting for her. After checking in with her, he quickly dismisses himself again. Jacinta makes a comment about his sex life as he leaves saying, “¡Adios quince minutos!” and laughs again. When she is alone, she begins to lament her life. She sobs aloud and says that she has nothing to warrant needing a key—not a home, car or anything of value. An older man arrives, dressed in white robes with a white beard and soft spoken voice. He comforts Jacinta and asks what’s wrong. As she tells him all about her woes, she makes clear references to Catholicism and its values. This conversation implies that this man is an actual saint, specifically San Pedro, and is almost solidified when he hands her an antique looking key as payment for her services. Jacinta is confused by this sentiment, not fully realizing who he is, and thanks him anyways as he leaves the scene. Boss returns immediately after this short exchange, and demands to know what Jacinta was up to at that time. She tells him she was talking to a man and Boss affirms that she was not, that she was alone because he was watching her. She tries to explain herself for not charging the man, and Boss is affirming that there was no man and accuses her of messing around. Once this is resolved however, Boss pulls out a paper telling Jacinta there is another customer waiting. This time Jacinta has to go to this customer’s house, since the customer left her infant son inside the house and locked herself out. He seems to find the situation humorous, yet when Jacinta arrives the woman is inconsolable.

She takes her to the front door, and the woman begs her to hurry. Jacinta makes the comment that she smells something burning. This confuses the woman until she realizes she left the iron on. This causes her to freak out even more, since it could harm her son, and Jacinta is thus placed under more pressure to hurry. Smoke begins to leave the windows of the house, and

as the woman grabs Jacinta. Jacinta does not like this pressure and slaps the woman, yelling at her to calm down her nerves because it is interfering with her work. Jacinta then remembers that the key that San Pedro gave her might help, and uses it to open the door. Jacinta runs inside to grab the infant, jokingly grabbing a teddy bear. She runs back inside and retrieves the baby, saving him. After everything settles, a firefighter arrives citing that there were calls of a fire and Jacinta sends him off saying his services are not needed—this is obviously not the case since the smoke coming out the house is increasing. The woman states that Jacinta saved her son, and Boss arrives to praise her. He asks how she did it, and when she explains it was the key San Pedro gave her, Boss does not believe her. Jacinta does not like this and pleads with San Pedro in the sky to give her more keys to open more doors, and a giant set of keys falls from the sky into her hands, shocking everyone.



Right from the beginning of this clip, the producers of the show wasted no time presenting the continuation of Jacinta’s image and character from *JB Noticias*. Before the theme song plays there is an emblem in the middle with Jacinta’s smiling image imprinted on the screen. The background is colorful and possibly based on Andean style fabrics and the message of “*ya rigrismus*” front and center. This phrase is a manipulation of the technically correct phrase “*ya*

¹²⁹ (Milagros Martinez n.d.)

regresamos” which translates to “we will be back” in English. This manipulation is a direct example of the type of image they want to present of Jacinta, as an Indigenous woman who does not have proper mastery of Spanish, and relies on the phonetics of spoken language to get her message across.

This particular frame is one that needs to be examined further, since it overwhelmingly relies on Jacinta's being incapable of speaking “proper Spanish”. There is a strong reference to Quechua in this phrase “*ya rigrismus*,” that seems to admonish and ridicule the way Spanish can become infused with Quechua, one of the most prevalent Indigenous languages in Perú. The assumption can be made that the producers do not know Quechua, and by presenting this cheap take on Quechua influenced Spanish, they partake in violent actions against Indigenous people. The term used to describe this type of Spanish speaking is the term *motoso*, which can be defined as the phonetic difference present in Spanish spoken by Quechua-dominant speakers. However, this term is not necessarily positive and presents a hegemonic view of how Spanish is supposed to be spoken, because of the fact that it is often used negatively. As Virginia Zavala and Claudia Almeida state regarding this term, “*Lo que resulta nuevo en la esfera política peruana con el objetivo de racializar, reubicar y sobre todo silenciar a personajes de la política que son vistos como potenciales amenazas al orden neoliberal imperante.*”¹³⁰ By attaching this form of spoken language to “Indianness” it is not only associating being Indigenous with “improper” Spanish, creating a feature that is considered to be true, but it is pushing the objective of silencing.

Therefore, linguistics play a pivotal role in Jacinta’s characterization, and as a result, impacts how she is perceived by the audience. As Casillas et al explain in reference to their media study of Sofía Vegara’s character on the US sitcom *Modern Family*, “...‘vocal body,’ refers to all aspects of a person’s speech, such as perceived accent(s), intonation, speaking volume, and word

¹³⁰ (“La emergencia del ‘motoso terruco’ en la política peruana” 2021)

““What is new in the Peruvian political sphere is the aim of racializing, relocating and, above all, silencing political figures who are seen as potential threats to the prevailing neoliberal order.”

choice.”¹³¹ It is Jacinta’s vocal body that presents itself within this frame of the clip, and the exaggeration of her accent and intonation that serves to *depoliticize* her.¹³² Jacinta embodies various traits that are politicized such as her impoverished status as a domestic worker, a migrant and her overall lack of resources. By taking this one aspect of Jacinta’s use of language along with visual components such as her hair, makeup and clothing choices, Benavides and his team manage to prompt the audience to focus on the *implied* naivete that surrounds her identity as an Indigenous woman. In order to make her palatable, she must be depoliticized.

This observation is critical in comprehending how the characters and audience members signal her naivete as a key trait to Jacinta’s character. Jacinta rarely gets anything right in this clip, but in the moment that she does end up being correct it is seen as fluke or misunderstanding.

BOSS 24:16	Paisita es una heroína! Sinceramente, la bebe está bien. Gracias a Dios paisanita que lo pudiste salvar.
LA PAISANA JACINTA 24:21	Sí, pues. Bueno, también gracias a San Pedrito que me lo dio esa llave que te lo conté.
BOSS 24:26	Ay Jacinta. ¿Tú sigues con tus alucinaciones?
LA PAISANA JACINTA 24:28	No, no son alucinaciones. Ay San Pedrito no lo creen, más bien cuando puedas me mandas una llavecitas, para abrir otras puertas
BOSS 24:36	¿Con quién hablas?
LA PAISANA JACINTA 24:38	Con San Pedrito. Jaja!

English Translation

BOSS 24:16	You are a hero! Sincerely, the baby is fine. Thank God you could save him.
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¹³¹ (Dolores Inés Casillas, Juan Sebastian Ferrada, and Sara Hinojos 2018): 61-88. pp 63.

¹³² Ibid.

LA PAISANA Yeah well. Well, it's also thanks to San Pedro who gave me the key that I
JACINTA talked to you about.
24:21

BOSS Oh Jacinta. You're still going about those hallucinations?
24:26

LA PAISANA No, no they are not hallucinations. Oh San Pedro they don't believe me,
JACINTA it's more helpful if you send me more keys, so I can open more doors.
24:28

Who are you talking to?

BOSS
24:36

LA PAISANA With San Pedro, haha!
JACINTA
24:38

Jacinta also contributes to harmful jokes that are about her, even making the comment that her and the clean key are the same because they are both missing teeth. It is within these small instances that illuminate how Jacinta has changed from her aggressive nature observed in earlier clips. Jacinta now reacts differently to humiliating situations, she is not as aggressive as she once was, although it is subtle. This is indicative of the transformation that Jacinta had undergone to become a less threatening character. While she is not necessarily a timid character in this iteration, the instances where *stupidity* as a code spikes up in comparison to previously studied clips —where it rarely presented itself—is a change nonetheless. *Humor* also correlates heavily with *stupidity*, and while there is laughter in situations where Jacinta is subject to *degradation* by her Boss, it does not compare to the audience reaction when Jacinta is shown being “stupid”. What these observations imply is the shift from Jacinta being initially presented as aggressive to her presentation as someone who is aware of her own stupidity and joins the other cast members in ridiculing herself. What can be interpreted from this is a decision made on the production end is to effectively depoliticize Jacinta further in order to prevent any potential backlash. While I myself would not be surprised if backlash had occurred on a small scale during

the early 2000s (this clip being from 2004), there was little indication that Jacinta was going to be shut down anytime soon.

El Wasap de JB

La Paisana Jacinta abrió su nuevo negocio junto a su amigo Cojinova - 2017

Due to stagnant ratings, *La Paisana Jacinta* was cancelled in 2015 after nearly two decades on the air. Because of this, Jacinta was reinstated into the ensemble cast of *El Wasap de JB*. In this ten-minute clip, Jacinta is opening a new business and is selling her wares to a variety of characters. This plotline completely contrasts previously examined clips that center Jacinta not being able to procure employment, since now she is not only employed but also an employer.

The clip begins with Jacinta yelling out that she is selling fresh fish for a good price, and wondering to herself when the worker from the employment agency will arrive. The worker, whose name is Cojinova, shows up shortly after. Jacinta seems a little displeased with the agency's selection, and Cojinova informs her that he is the only worker available for this job. They have a short exchange, where Jacinta realizes Cojinova knows very little about fish, since he failed to bring her the specific fish she had asked for. She chides him and cannot believe he is ill informed and proceeds to shrug it off, since she needs help with her new business. This interestingly follows the same pattern as the last clip, but reversed. Where Jacinta was not well versed in making copies of keys, now she is the expert of her own business.

When the first customer enters, he immediately recognizes Jacinta and greets her. Jacinta tries to move on from the interaction and asks him what fish he wants. The customer walks behind the booth and makes the observation "people say that not many people change." He subsequently asks for *raya* which is a type of fish. Jacinta rolls her eyes and asks him why he has not changed and proceeds to get the *raya*. To counter this, he asks for a fish that resembles him in an effort to confuse Jacinta. Jacinta proceeds to give him *cachema* which is a type of fish that she claims he has always enjoyed. He is happy with this choice and when he tries to pay Jacinta she

tells him the fish is free, a gesture of courtesy. The first customer leaves, and Jacinta again scolds Cojinova for not helping her out and only standing idly by. She begins to sharpen her knives. The audience notices how Cojinova is also looking for a knife to use, but to no avail, and proceeds to laugh.

A scantily dressed woman enters the scene and makes the remark that she's cold, causing an uproar from the audience and a shocked expression from Jacinta. Jacinta follows with a sly comment, saying that for this woman it is summertime. The woman exclaims that she forgot her coat. Jacinta asks her if she is cold to which she replies that this particular outfit is her warmest one. Laughter ensues, and Jacinta moves on to ask her what she would like and the woman asks for *guitarra* (which also means guitar). Jacinta, genuinely trying to help her, tells her she has only one and tries to bring it out since it was not displayed. She jokingly asks Jacinta to play a *vals*, which is a popular music genre in Perú, and laughs. Jacinta is not amused by this joke, and the woman tells her it is just a joke to ease up the tension. Jacinta makes a snide remark about her appearance which diffuses the situation. The woman gets serious and asks Jacinta what type of fish she recommends for *sudado*, which is a common cuisine made with fish. Jacinta tells her that the *sudado* will come at a cheap price for her since she has *culantro* (also meaning cilantro) which is a play on words to signify the woman's shapely bottom. Both begin to point at each other and the woman, obviously upset, grabs the fillet of a random fish on display and runs—leaving Jacinta shocked.

Following this interaction, an older man who usually appeared in *La Paisana Jacinta*, shows up. Jacinta is truly shocked at this and immediately states “*estas vivo*” to the man. He laughs and begins to laugh even harder when she says “*qué lástima*” to the news of him being alive still. He ignores her and asks if she has *congresistas*. Jacinta scoffs a little and asks him, surely he means *cangrejos* (crab), which she has plenty of. The customer repeats that he is not mistaken and wants *congresistas*, Jacinta then asks if he is from another country because she is

unfamiliar with what he is asking for. He states that *congresista* is more Peruvian than *chicha morada* and Jacinta apologizes since she does not carry any. He yells out, “you don’t sell *cholos?*” and runs out, leaving Jacinta with a shocked expression on her face.

It seems Jacinta is not given any time at all to recover from these interactions since a new character walks into the scene. This person seems to be famous in Perú judging by the audience yelling out to them, although I could not identify who this person is specifically. In any case, the customer asks for *chita* and Jacinta seems discouraged at this point, asking her if she has a joke planned like the previous guests. The customer seems confused by this sudden projection, and asks again clarifying that she wants to fry *chita*. If not, she is open to Jacinta’s recommendations. Jacinta recommends *cabrilla* and picks another fish that is clearly labelled as *choro*. The customer tries to correct Jacinta, causing Jacinta to angrily ask her who knows more about fish. The customer points out that the label shows that *cabrilla* is another fish and gestures towards it. This confuses Jacinta who asks Cojinova for help clarifying, yet he is unable to get a word in since yet another customer shows up and begins to ask Jacinta for assistance.

He asks Jacinta for *carne de ballena* which is shocking to everyone in the scene since *carne de ballena* literally means “whale meat.” To add to the confusion, the customer shows disappointment since he wanted the head for his cat. Jacinta asks for his help identifying the *cabrilla*, the customer agrees looking at the fish. He points to the other customer, making the joke that she looks like a fish. He leaves the scene immediately after. The other customer, frustrated, leaves since her question was not answered.

Lastly a reporter arrives, and asks Jacinta if she remembers her. Jacinta is tired at this point, and looks to the side asking how they are doing with time, which breaks the fourth wall. The reporter seems upset by that comment and tells Jacinta that they have two minutes left, also asking her to cooperate. Jacinta asks for the audience’s opinion and they begin to count down, the reporter struggles to keep the scene going. She yells out asking for *borracho* right when the

audience countdown ends, looking to the side and smiling. She begs Jacinta not to kick her out and Jacinta allows her to stay, asking her what she wants. The reporter tells her that she is looking for *borracho* in order to make *parihuela*. Jacinta suddenly remembers that the reporter paid for the *borracho* in advance and apologizes. She tells her that since she assumed she was not coming, the *borracho* got sold. This upsets the reporter who demands the *borracho* she paid for. Jacinta looks around and sees Cojinova, grabs wrapping paper and begins to wrap him up like a fish. Cojinova asks Jacinta what is going on, and the audience laughs since it is implied that Cojinova is a drunk, which is another play on words since *borracho* also means “drunk”. The reporter seems okay with this and takes Cojinova away with her.

Jacinta continues to sharpen her knives until a final person arrives at the scene, this person saying that Jacinta knows what he came for. Jacinta realizes that he is implying that she owes him money. She begins to cry, and tells him she has not sold anything, and is not sure how to pay him. He remains firm and asks for the payment once again, prompting Jacinta to offer her *yuyo*, which has sexual connotations. The man seems okay with this arrangement and agrees. Jacinta grabs a random fish and hands it to him. She says that her debt is cleared since that is her *yuyo* and laughs running out of the scene.

This clip differs from the previously analyzed clips in a variety of ways, most notably due to the fact that Jacinta is not the center of ridicule. This is markedly different from previous clips where her humiliation was the basis for comedic interactions between characters. Rather, this sketch takes an improvisational approach. The appearing characters improvise their lines with the situational context being Jacinta’s first day as a business owner. As mentioned in my analysis of the previous clip, what is particularly interesting is the manner in which Jacinta treats women who are viewed as conventionally attractive. Jacinta has treated conventionally attractive women before as if they were promiscuous, which can be due to perhaps insecurity or fear that she will be verbally abused. The scantily dressed woman in this clip, for example, immediately was

La Paisana Jacinta Lavandería - 2019

This clip opens with what seems to be a callback to the former setup Jacinta had in the beginning of the character's career: her working in a laundromat, washing clothes by hand and singing old songs that imply that she is from the *sierra*. The song is not innocent however, and has sexual connotations, which is not new for Jacinta as a character. After she finishes her song two customers walk in, an older man and a woman who is much younger than him. It becomes apparent that the two are romantically involved as the sketch progresses. The man asks Jacinta if she can wash his clothes, since the laundromat that they usually go to is currently closed. It is prudent to mention that *lavanderías* in Perú are commonly set up this way, with a person who charges a fee to wash clothes for their client.

The man places emphasis on the fact that it is preferable that Jacinta has experience washing designer brands—which in Spanish is usually referred to as *marca*. This is important to mention because immediately after, Jacinta tells him that she washes clothes of any kind—of delinquents, kidnappers, whomever. Jacinta then proceeds to ask them what type of activity they are involved in, which insults them. This misunderstanding is key in Jacinta's type of comedy, one rooted in her misunderstanding of what people mean, since it is *implied that Spanish is not her dominant language*. This response shocks both the man and his girlfriend, who are offended that Jacinta had jumped to that conclusion. The woman intervenes by stating that they do not engage in any of those types of activities and in fact they are decent people. Jacinta is confused by this statement and asks the woman if she is not the *chica dinamita* (dynamite woman) that causes a ruckus everywhere she goes—a clear dig at this woman's appearance since it is revealed later that she was in an internet video that Jacinta had seen before. Again, Jacinta attacks another conventionally attractive woman, adding to this idea that she is insecure in herself.

The man gets in between the two, and the woman calms him down since he is unaware of the video Jacinta mentioned. It is pretty clear that she is shocked that Jacinta managed to notice

her appearance, since for the rest of the interaction she becomes anxious. After this is resolved, Jacinta begins to understand that the customers were referring to designer clothes, and tells the man that his clothes are not necessarily designer like he insists, but knockoffs that she has seen being sold in Gamarra, a neighborhood in Lima known for selling these types of clothes. Jacinta takes out a pair of underwear from the basket and begins to mention everything that is wrong with the garment - from the elastic, to the stiffness and “skid marks” that are present on the garment. This embarrasses the customer, and his girlfriend shows a shocked expression on her face. He asks Jacinta to please stop talking about the garments, and she rebuffs by saying he should clean himself better.

They move on from this quickly, and Jacinta asks him if he would like cold or hot water. He tells her it does not matter as long as the clothes are dried quickly. Jacinta takes offense by saying that she washes clothes quickly, drying them quickly is not what she specializes in. She insults the woman again by telling the man if he wants something dried quickly to ask his woman, who is so blonde she must’ve squeezed lots of lemons to maintain her appearance. This offends the woman who starts yelling at her boyfriend to defend her, since Jacinta has seemed to have crossed the line. The man tells her to calm down since they do not have any other option, and they both leave. Jacinta mutters under her breath that “*hay un rincón en el que puedes trabajar*” to the woman as she leaves.¹³³

Shortly after, another woman appears in a burgundy dress asking Jacinta if she can wash her—this is of course a literal translation. However, Jacinta does take this quite literally and puts down the hamper of clothes the previous customers gave her. She says, “*que suerte primero estoy lavando ropa y ahora me buscan como un veterinario,*” before grabbing a sponge and dousing the woman with it in an up and down motion.¹³⁴ The woman is taken aback and begins yelling at

¹³³ Translation: “There is a corner you can work at.”

¹³⁴ Translation: “What luck first I’m washing clothes and now I’m sought after like a veterinarian”

Jacinta, claiming that she was asking her to wash her clothes, upset that Jacinta has ruined her dress. Jacinta asks the woman why she is so upset if she was not clear, and the woman asks her in an accusing tone if Jacinta actually washes clothes. Jacinta gives a puzzling answer. She says of course she washes, she used to wash (or in our understanding “clean”) currency all the time. The woman looks confused and Jacinta continues to say that her husband used to exchange currency and she would clean the bills. This short story gets clarified once it's known that Jacinta means she literally washed the bills, as opposed to the other connotation of her illegally cleaning marked bills. She insults the woman again by saying she does not iron the way the woman does (which has sexual connotations) before changing the story to a childhood anecdote to cover her rude demeanor. The woman laughs dryly before leaving Jacinta her dress, walking out in swimsuit after Jacinta makes the offer (jokingly) to wash her dress for her.

Once Jacinta is left alone, she begins to wash the clothes, until another woman who looks similar to Jacinta arrives singing the same song as Jacinta. The two recognize each other and hug, Jacinta saying she hasn't seen Machica in a very long time. They catch up and begin washing clothes before they playfully push each other. This quickly escalates into shoving. They manage to calm down, and Jacinta begins reciting riddles—which is a common thing that Jacinta has done before—that contain sexual innuendos. This of course offends Machica as she begins to hit Jacinta before Jacinta manages to calm her down. The jokes are contemporary in topic—one of them mentioning former president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski. After this, Machica leaves and Sandalia, another friend, arrives. Sandalia begins to cry and recount her nasty breakup with her husband who has left her, while Jacinta lends her a comforting ear. Sandalia begins to wash her clothes excessively, making the comment that this is her only way of making a living. Jacinta playfully shoves her like she did with Machica.

However, Sandalia becomes enraged by this and begins to yell at Jacinta, saying that she deserves respect and she will get it. In order to diffuse the tension, Jacinta offers to tell another set

of riddles to entertain Sandalia, which of course garners the same response that Machica had given —offended and upset. Shortly after Jacinta explains herself and the true intent of the riddle, Sandalia runs out, remembering she left her stove on with grains cooking. Lastly another woman enters, Yucanchita, and hugs Jacinta upon entry. Jacinta makes the jokes that she looks like she’s hungover, which is not received at all by Yucanchita. They begin washing next to each other before Yucanchita mentions she is very bored —Jacinta looks at her and says “*esta broma ya acábo*” and leaves the scene, ending the skit entirely.¹³⁵



Almost every code utilized in this study has appeared at some point during the coding process of this particular clip. Because it is a clip dated from 2019, there is less coding density in some codes present, and in some cases the codes did not necessarily apply to Jacinta. Rather, Jacinta was the one partaking in degrading others with her quick witted remarks, which is not a new occurrence but is one that has increased in my observations of Jacinta’s performance in *El Wasap de JB*.

Conflict and *violence* here are intricately tied in the second half of the video clip, however *conflict* presents itself consistently throughout. *Otherness* is another key code that is persistent, given the nature of the setting and the task that Jacinta is performing. As mentioned in the summary portion, washing clothes by hand and paying others to do so is common within

¹³⁵ Translation: “This joke is finished.”

¹³⁶ (Alfárez Oficial n.d.)

Perú. It is also important to mention Jacinta's status as Andean as being read from her mode of dress. People who are likely to take in this work are Andean women from the highlands, partially due to their lower socioeconomic status, as most migrate as a result of poverty. The feminization of labor throughout the 20th century refers to this industrialization and globalization process, which demanded feminine labor exponentially.¹³⁷ Therefore, there is not only this need for employment, but the demand for labor exacerbated by industrial development as well.

It would be remiss to disregard the gendered component in the types of jobs women like Jacinta have access to. Most representations of Andean women within the media often portray them as domestic workers, hardly any are presented in other sectors of employment. While this is given attention with Jacinta alone, it is compounded with the appearances of her friends, who read as Andean like Jacinta. They are presented in the same wardrobe, with even the same hairstyles. One of her friends, Sandalia, even makes the passing comment that washing garments is her only source of income—especially with the disappearance of her husband, who abandoned her. Therefore, it is tricky to code *class* and *otherness* as separate entities, mostly because *otherness* can encompass *class* or become connected to one another. This is the case here, since on top of the stark differences in the performance and appearance of these characters, there is a *class* component that ostracizes them even more in comparison to Jacinta's clients in the first half of the clip.

A code that does not waver in its connection with the perceived naivete of these characters (namely Jacinta) is *sexuality*, which manifests mostly in Jacinta's riddles and the reactions that it produces. This particular bit is not new, in fact in the first clip that is analyzed in this study (dating back to 1996), it is almost exactly the same. Jacinta is with another friend who is presented as someone from the mountains (although if they migrated from the same place is

¹³⁷ (O'Brien 2009)

unclear), and the friend has a negative reaction to the riddles Jacinta presents since they can be misinterpreted as sexual in nature. This reaction causes the codes *violence* and *conflict* to arise.

This is especially since the women Jacinta deals with, Machica and Sandalia, are unable to tolerate any indication of sexuality that is deemed inappropriate to the situation. It is not necessarily that these women are lacking in sexual experiences, but that they are socialized to believe it is improper to discuss marking them as almost prudish in nature. Jacinta is not immune to this socialization, although she does seem aware of how her riddles cause her friends to react. In this case she even ventures to end the sketch right then due to the repetitive nature of these reactions. This awareness is also new if we compare it to older iterations of Jacinta's character, it is as if *Frecuencia Latina* is granting Jacinta some depth nudging longtime viewers to catch this slip.

Another small observation I have made in a previous clip is present in this clip as well. It seems that throughout Jacinta's trajectory as a character, she has a tendency to insult mostly white or mestizo women who are viewed as conventionally attractive. These interactions, while instigated by the other women in earlier clips, become unprovoked by the time we reach this clip. Jacinta has started to insult these women on the basis that they will either humiliate her or that they remind her of how insecure she is. This particular trait about Jacinta is remarkably present in almost every clip observed. It is as if Benavides is making the comment that Jacinta is jealous of women that are generally viewed as attractive. This gives the impression that white women are victims of women like Jacinta, which is immensely violent since Jacinta is portrayed by Benavides and lacks femininity. This tension between Jacinta and these women is significant because of these factors, and should be considered extensively when examining her character.

Overall, the aforementioned codes have the most presence, yet one code that has had little presence in the overarching study—*deviance*—is present. Since Jacinta's core character is interpreted as naive but honest, and does not encounter the *deviance* code as much as Mama

(examined in the previous chapter). Yet Jacinta even indulging details about her past that sound remotely deviant is intriguing enough given how far this study is in the analysis. This clip is dated from 2019, twenty-two years into Jacinta’s run on television as a performer. To have this slight shift is indicative of the changes that were to come, if not for the successful retirement of Jacinta from television in late 2020.

Findings

Below is a visualization of the codes based on density, with the bigger sections indicating their prevalence throughout the study. Like the case for Mama, Jacinta’s trajectory throughout the different iterations of the shows she was presented hinges on two core traits. These traits, *otherness* and *degradation*, were presented the most in line with *humor*. This means that in a majority of the instances where *otherness* and *degradation* were present, *humor* as a code would spike. Jacinta’s secondary characteristics however are more flexible than Mama’s, since they all are equally represented within the overall number of references made throughout the study. While some codes were not present in particular clips, each one amassed enough coverage in other clips causing them to even out.



Figure 3. Hierarchy of Coding Items Present (Graph by author)

What does such an observation illuminate in this particular case then? With the case of Mama, it was easier to interpret the variety of codes following the core ones as interchangeable given the context of when the sketch was produced. In short, the codes present throughout Mama's time on television *changed* as anticipated. What this hierarchy suggests for Jacinta is different, since there is almost even representation across the board, regardless of the era she is presented in. It is almost as if Jacinta has not changed in terms of content but rather was *re-framed* to fit into the context in which she was presented. This posits a variety of connotations, however for the purposes of this study I am choosing to focus on how this relates to Mama's case.

In the case of Jacinta, the character's status is strikingly different from Mama. Jacinta has much more popularity and her assumed racial status as an Indigenous woman is widely accepted within the fabric of the national imaginary for Peru. This is almost oppositional to Mama's existence, since Afro-Peruvians make up a smaller percentage (approximately 10%) of the population according to the updated 2017 census¹³⁸ However, this data relies solely on self-identification and can vary for either group—Afro-Peruvian or Indigenous. The percentage for Indigenous identification within Perú however is relatively high throughout the country. Therefore, Jacinta has much more pressure to fit into the template that is expected of her from the audience. Jacinta must embody these traits because otherwise she is not the character that was anticipated within the audience's reality. Her stance is much more rigid, whereas Mama has more freedom to change dramatically if need be.

¹³⁸ ("PERÚ - INEI.: Perú: Resultados Definitivos de Los Censos Nacionales 2017" n.d.)

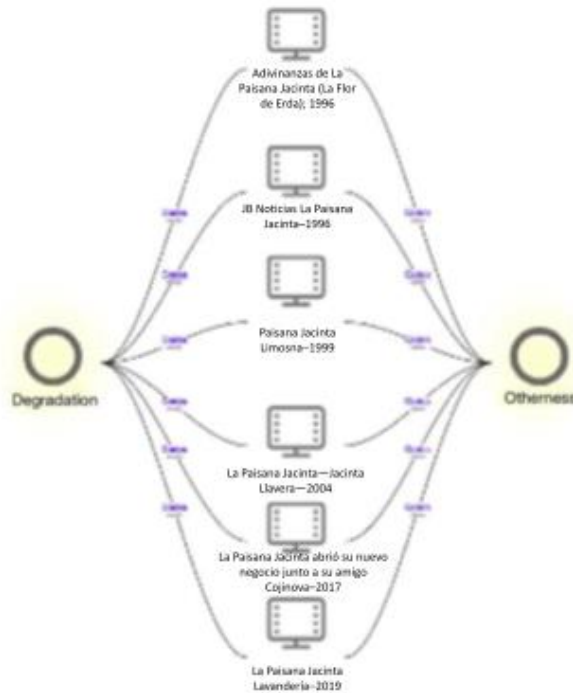


Figure 4. Videos with ‘Deviance’ and ‘Otherness’ present. (Graph by author)

This does not necessarily insinuate that Jacinta as a character did not change, because the truth is that she did. Her presentation as a character has changed radically if we take the earliest presentation of her character from 1996 and compare it to 2019. It is the codes that did not change in their usage, different definitions of what these codes embody is what caused this outcome in the data. This is less apparent in Mama’s case because the situational contexts that he was placed in remained repetitive in nature. Always being categorized as a *deviant*, using his wits to outmaneuver others are central to his makeup. It is a character trait that is part of Mama; whereas, Jacinta’s traits are not necessarily tied to her makeup. *Otherness* is a code that I had foreseen as core to Jacinta and Mama, however *degradation* was unforeseen. *Degradation* is not a characteristic; it is something that *happens* to Jacinta at a high rate at almost all times. Jacinta’s core depends on her being seen as an “*other*” and also on her constant degradation that stems from different contexts. Jacinta, according to this data, *has to be degraded in one form or another*

because if not she is no longer the character that the audience is invested in. The audience's relationship with Jacinta is one based on degrading her and the people she indirectly (mis)represents.

Furthermore, it must be noted that Mama and Jacinta, while different, encompass the same traits that previous media (mis)representations have inhabited. These types of racialized caricatures have been present in the media in the decades that precede them. The difference is that these characters have a significant amount of presence on television and in the audience's day-to-day lives, as well as criticisms within the past three decades. As Benavides has said, Jacinta is not an accurate representation of an Andean woman, nor does it claim to be. However, if we were to focus on technicalities with sensitive issues like racism and discrimination, we find ourselves complacent with the *intent* and not the consequences of the action. At the end of it all, the reason Mama and Jacinta were allowed to survive for so long is based upon this fact. That is, until 2020.

Conclusion

In November 15th of 2019, lawyer advocacy group *Instituto de Defensa Legal* (IDL), along with Andean organizers and community members Cecilia Paniura, Rosa Supho, Martha Quispe and Rosalinda Torres sued Jorge Benavides and *Frecuencia Latina*. They brought this lawsuit to the superior court of Cusco in order to appeal the removal of Jacinta from the air.¹³⁹ A year later, after multiple proceedings, it was decided that Jacinta was in violation of multiple articles present in Perú's legal system. The most prevalent arguments being that Jacinta promoted discrimination and dishonored multiple groups during her time on television. These efforts were fruitful due not only to the legal team's decision to sue *Frecuencia Latina* and Jorge Benavides on these grounds, but as well as the testimonies that the women along them presented. Shortly after, Milagros Mejía, Director of Public Relations for *Frecuencia Latina* made the broad statement that

¹³⁹ This will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, which focuses on the policies and actions of community organizers in response to these two characters. (PERÚ 2020)

Jacinta's show had not been aired for years prior, and that shortly after the lawsuit was first brought to court Jacinta had not been present in any sketches in *El Wasap de JB*. The overall message Mejía gave was that "Within meetings over content and programming, we decided not to air the character...We are very respectful of the commentary that the audience provides us."¹⁴⁰ Within the public relations statement regarding the Superior Court of Cusco's final decision, it was additionally revealed that they removed Mama simultaneously with Jacinta, all in conversation with Jorge Benavides, who was privy to the decision.

While this can seem like a final end to the (mis)representations that Jacinta and Mama espoused, there is much to be said about the work that lays ahead in terms of proper care in media representation as well as defining violence within these contexts. The fact remains that Jacinta along with Mama had been on the air since 1996, and despite various demands for their removal—which reached a climax in 2010—it took *nearly* 30 years to successfully remove both characters. What this particular situation is reminiscent of is the practicality of airing content that no longer generates profit for them. There was no remorse of what had happened, and the damage that had accumulated over the decades is left to heal on its own. This observation remains with the data this short study accrued, the distinct core *degrading* principles that fuel Jacinta are required for the almost formulaic result that was her success. Yet, regardless of all the facts that have been stated, the question remains as to why only a portion of those impacted expressed their disdain for Jacinta. Although it is a question that requires further study, it does highlight the discord within interpretations of what defines discrimination/violence in media.

Jacinta and Mama are not characters that exist in a vacuum, and their inception and progression as characters showcase that very fact. With their creation, Jorge Benavides was able to create an empire that expressed tropes that audiences found humorous: a naive Indigenous

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

woman from the mountains and a Black idiot making their way through the city of Lima. When others found the tropes to be hilarious and accurate, a significant number of groups found them to be violent and a threat to their very existence. This conversation continues in the next chapter, which contextualizes these movements further and compares the stark differences with how each case study—LUNDU and the IDL—navigated the channels to remove each character. It also places emphasis on the need for collective organizing in order to impart change to institutions and entities that fail to do the job, the entity in this particular case being the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*.

“Esto fue una decisión interna, siempre pensando en que tenemos que trabajar contenido positivo para la audiencia.”¹⁴¹

Milagros Mejía, Director of Public Relations for Frecuencia Latina. Regarding the removal of La Paisana Jacinta and El Negro Mama.

Chapter IV: What Constitutes Violence in the Media?

In 2010, the character El Negro Mama was met with accusations of encompassing racist stereotypes of an Afro-Peruvian man. Mama, as mentioned in the introduction and chapter 2, was a recurring character on two different shows, both created by Jorge Benavides. The show aired on Frecuencia Latina in the primetime slot, which catapulted Mama into immense popularity as a character.¹⁴² The claims mentioned were made by LUNDU, an Afro-Peruvian activist group led by Mónica Carrillo. Carrillo, a Communications graduate from the National University of San Marcos, has always focused on creating content that integrated the facets of her identity as an Afro-Peruvian woman.

By creating LUNDU (*LUNDU, Centro de Estudios y Promoción Afroperuano*) in 2002 with fellow colleagues, she aimed to accomplish “a cultural political proposal, providing alternative discourse on the issues of Afro-descendant people and with a clear anti-discriminatory stance.”¹⁴³ Their claims that Mama was a manifestation of racist stereotypes hinged on their own experiences as Afro-descendant Peruvians, and how pervasive the character was in terms of media representation. The issue was not only that Mama was a racist caricature, but that he was the most predominant representation of an Afro-Peruvian man broadcasted across the country. Mama in essence, harmed Afro-Peruvians by materializing these harmful stereotypes, namely by bullying and physical threats. The treatment that these activists endure is not isolated, but rather indicative of a larger systemic issue. Carrillo being able to count the number of racist insults she

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² The two shows were JB Noticias (1995-2004) and El Especial Del Humor (2005-2015).

¹⁴³ Translates to “LUNDU, Center of Study and Afro-Peruvian Promotion” (“Lundú, Centro de Estudios y Promoción Afroperuano” 2003)

receives in the streets of Lima on any given day, as she has mentioned in interviews, is case in point.¹⁴⁴

What exactly happened in 2010 then, when they organized with the clear goal of removing Mama from being broadcast was not particularly surprising but instead disappointing. LUNDU, as a group presented evidence to the ethics committee in charge of dealing with such complaints, as well as contact with the *Ministerio de Television y Comunicaciones* on the possibility of having their central goal achieved. On top of this, Carrillo gave interviews explaining the rationale behind why Mama was not an accurate representation but instead a harmful one to multiple news outlets. The attention they had received surged, which caused *Frecuencia Latina* to remove Mama from their show *El Especial del Humor*, to avoid any negative attention. However, the negative attention was not primarily focused on Mama. The negative attention became directed towards LUNDU, for bringing attention to Perú's racism, something that is silent and embedded into the overall society. As mentioned in the introduction, there are legislative protections against discrimination, and the most pertinent in the case of discrimination disseminated through media—Legislative Decree No. 1323—did not become solidified in legislation until 2017. Serving as a modification to Article 323, which is the original protection against discrimination, Legislative Decree No. 1323 includes acts of discrimination of people through the internet or other means subject to penalization.¹⁴⁵ LUNDU's case preceded this change, although it is difficult to ascertain what backing it would have given them, since laws that establish discrimination as a crime existed before then in 2000.¹⁴⁶

It seems that in a sense, the public state-owned stations that were utilized by private businesses like *Frecuencia Latina*, have been slowly subject to privatization. In 2016, an appeal

¹⁴⁴ (Lance Steagall 2009)

¹⁴⁵ ("El Delito de Discriminación En El Perú: Avances y Retrocesos En Sus Veinte Años de Vigencia Como Tipo Penal | Alerta Contra El Racismo" n.d.)

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

put forth by liberal-reformist political party *Acción Popular* proposed a change to some of the laws concerning television and media—this was received in 2018.¹⁴⁷ In passing, the proposal discussed the usage of public stations, and suggested that private stations should be allowed more access to radio waves in order to broadcast their content. This highlights a shift in privatizing public services like radio waves, implying that *Frecuencia Latina* was in a higher position of power due to their status as a business during their dispute with LUNDU. Although this specific piece of legislation follows 2010 by eight years, it gestures towards a sentiment that has been present since possibly before then. Despite *Frecuencia Latina* as a business, arguably had more access to protections than LUNDU. The reality is that *Frecuencia Latina* is a lucrative business that benefits from Mama and Jacinta, and has the support to continue profiting off their popularity.

When dealing with complaints within the media, ethics committees serve as entities that resolve conflicts and define the problems at hand. The particular committee in charge of LUNDU's complaint was formed by the *Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* (formed in 2004), which represents a number of groups within television and radio. Although it mostly promotes the development of groups like *Frecuencia Latina*, they do possess a committee called the *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, which is in charge of the ethical production of television and radio shows.¹⁴⁸ The *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, denied LUNDU's claims of Mama being a racist character. The committee's argument was that Mama was a character in a fictional comedy show, and since Jorge Benavides had stated no ill intent, there was not enough proof that the character actually caused material harm. The decision also relied on this detached idea that media has little impact

¹⁴⁷ (Acción Popular 2018)

¹⁴⁸ (Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión, n.d.)

on society, especially if it is fictional. LUNDU's demand to remove Mama in their opinion was extreme and unnecessary.

On top of this decision, Benavides also received support from Afro-Peruvian celebrities, serving retroactively as a beacon of what constituted racism. The removal of Mama was reframed to be seen as 'unjust' by entertainers like Carlos Vílchez, Pepe Vásquez and Martín Farfán. Vílchez, who worked with Jorge Benavides throughout his career, even stated proudly that Carrillo herself was the problem at hand with a 'misinterpretation' of what racism actually is, and that no one should be offended by a media personality.¹⁴⁹ The viewers of *El Especial del Humor* on the other hand, were rabid, a reaction that can be attributed to taking the claims extremely personally. Unable to view themselves as racist for enjoying Mama as a character as well as the content of the show, they began to show aggression towards members of the group, namely Carrillo.

Facebook pages filled with violent, racist hate speech against Carrillo and other organizers boomed, some having up to 9,000 members.¹⁵⁰ Carrillo additionally has mentioned that the discriminatory remarks she recorded being said to her in the streets daily doubled, some even becoming physical as people began to spat at her for her contribution towards Mama's brief scandal.¹⁵¹ Fear for safety became increasingly more valid than it already was. What these sorts of defensive statements supporting Mama entail is the denial of racist imagery present within his character. Vílchez and others went so far as to *deny having experienced racism*. This is not to say that the viewers of *El Especial del Humor*, Vílchez and other Afro-Peruvian entertainers are unaware of discrimination within Perú but rather how pervasive the superficial definition of racism was, and continues to be.¹⁵² The year 2010 was not the first time Mama had been subject

¹⁴⁹ (EDUCACIONENRED.PE 2010)

¹⁵⁰ ("Afro Peruvian Leaders Receive Violence Threats After Protests over Racist TV Characters" 2010)

¹⁵¹ (Henry Louis Gates Jr 2011).

¹⁵² (Luciano, Jose 2002)

to criticism, as mentioned before the character for a brief period of time in 2002 was suspended. This was accomplished by Jorge Ramírez, the president of ASONEDH (*La Asociación Negra de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos*) who pressured *Frecuencia Latina* in a more private manner. It seems as though LUNDU's much more vocal critique was not what was deemed as proper, as opposed to ASONEDH's approach.¹⁵³ When LUNDU briefly succeeded in Mama's removal from *El Especial del Humor* it came at a price. While Carrillo had taken action with her group to fight for the removal of Mama, the lack of actual change of the systems within Perú presented her case as a far-fetched attack against an icon. An icon that, if anything, serves only as a humorous device in entertaining *Frecuencia Latina's* audience.¹⁵⁴

Thus, 2010 was a pivotal moment. Negative presentations of Afro-Peruvian people are not a recent occurrence within image based forms of media, as extrapolated upon in Chapter 2, and were in reality a result of a translation of various ideas. Specifically, the pervasive existence of anti-Blackness present in these forms of media and the nuanced manner that they were presented to their target audience is something that has been examined.¹⁵⁵ The target audience of *El Especial del Humor* constituted a significant number of Peruvian citizens, people who delighted in the stories Mama performed without much thought towards the harm the character causes. Within the world that Jorge Benavides had built and performed within, the main defensive argument continues to be that there was no intention for harm or discrimination in these presentations. These characters (in reference to Mama and Jacinta) and their stories should just be accepted at face value, with no reflection towards the embedded meanings of how they are presented. Within this particular view, no consequences should be dealt out; it is unjustified.

¹⁵³ (Becerra, Miguel 2010)

¹⁵⁴ (EDUCACIONENRED.PE 2010)

¹⁵⁵ (Becerra, Miguel 2010).

Keeping this in mind, LUNDU's central objective during this particular moment in time haunts this story. Their goal to contribute to the formation of a more sensitive public opinion regarding the existence of racism in Peruvian society, and that Afro-descendants suffer the consequences, was not met in 2010.¹⁵⁶ Instead, it was as if LUNDU predicted the treatment they would receive for this objective, which only serves to highlight the urgency of this particular issue. What makes LUNDU stand out from other Afro-Peruvian groups such as Jóvenes Afroperuanos Ashantí and others, is their specific focus on media and communications in terms of equity. LUNDU has conducted short studies on racism in the media prior to 2010, it is after all what they used to support their argument. It was after then, when they were met with criticism for displaying a "lack of evidence" and "unclear definitions of racism" by the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* (henceforth CSQ-SNRTV) that they doubled down, publishing a longer study which examined 8,767 newspaper articles in 2012.

The clear intent of LUNDU's study was to further define their definition of racism after having experienced rejection of the former version, which was aimed towards removing Negro Mama (and Pasiana Jacinta) off the air in 2010.¹⁵⁷ While it was published in 2012, it showcases the clarification of their claims by defining certain phrases as being attached to race and ethnicity. This study, called the *Observatorio LUNDU*, identifies its mission to be a revision of public media, which *alerts* the presence of discrimination and racism against Afro-descendants.¹⁵⁸ The *Observatorio LUNDU* revised and analyzed six nationally circulated newspapers. By taking into account the utilization of racial adjectives, the intent of reproducing stereotypes and racial prejudices and sexist/misogynist applications, LUNDU identified hundreds of markers, which meet the criteria, as shown below:

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ (LUNDU 2010) 5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid p 7.



Figure 5. Type and number of sources analyzed throughout the study from March 2011-September 2012.¹⁵⁹

LUNDU traced six newspapers within this year and a half long study, which resulted in a significant amount of discriminatory content coming from stories relating to sports (66%) and entertainment (31%).¹⁶⁰ It is apparent that LUNDU has done (and continues to do) the work in order to mark racist or prejudiced coverage of Afro-descendants, while trying to define violence to fit the standards of the government and ethics committees. LUNDU presented this study to the *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* once again and received the acknowledgment that Negro Mama was indeed racist in 2012, two years after the 2010 incident.¹⁶¹ It is harsh that despite this ruling in 2012, with the presentation of this study, that LUNDU ultimately was still unable to permanently remove Mama from the air. Defining violence in relation to humor, as this thesis has mentioned throughout, it is much more complex than what a committee can ascertain. Additionally, their reliance on self regulation, which mainly relies on the content to be regulated by the creators/networks themselves, causes complaints like LUNDU's to dissipate. Self regulation is not necessarily the problem here but rather its

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p 7.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. p 11.

¹⁶¹ Translates into the National Radio and Television Society in English.

exceedingly liberal usage by committees such as the *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* in their rulings of what can be defined as discriminatory content. Despite the body of evidence presented to them, in both the case of LUNDU and the *Instituto de Defensa Legal* (which aimed to remove Jacinta from the air), the *Tribunal de ética de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* did not view the evidence as sufficient to prove harms committed.

As referenced in LUNDU's *Observatorio*, "Peruvians relate to each other in hierarchies. [Our] racism is very complex because it has different variables. It persists, not in the evidence of the past, but in more subtle ways."¹⁶² The question here is not necessarily why is racism a part of the media, but more specifically, why are audiences able to relate to such characters without batting an eye. Violence relates to hierarchies, as the quote mentions, and within these tensions there is a subtlety in how racism functions within Perú. There is power involved, and it is certainly present given the number of laws that are in place which prohibit discrimination in media, as well as the public opinion of the audience. Yet, laws like *Ley N°276670* and *Ley N°288867*, are hardly applied. Radio and television face a similar issue, since they have empty protections also. The *Ley de Radio y Televisión N°28278* called for the creation of a Code of Ethics after all. However, these laws are practically empty and offer no real protection for those impacted by media (mis)representations. Remember, media mostly relies on mechanisms of self regulation, which constitutes a private board for such a public issue.¹⁶³

Therefore, when revisiting the controversy that surrounded El Negro Mama in 2010, I ask — what exactly happened? In what ways did this controversy reflect the difficulty of not necessarily defining racism, but the reach of its violence? How can violence be named when it is something that is not fixed, dependent on a variety of circumstances? In short, how can the work to redefine racism beyond personal prejudice and violence be achieved? It can begin by making

¹⁶² Ibid 14.

¹⁶³ Ibid 33.

sense of the work of those that strive for this change before us, in the case of this chapter the focus is on LUNDU and the IDL's (*Instituto de Defensa Legal*) distinct approaches towards the same goal—to remove a racist caricature from the air.

If we step back then, to 2005, the Peruvian government had conceived a new organization attached to the Vice Ministry of Interculturality within the Ministry of Culture. This organization, referred to as the *Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperuanos* (henceforth INDEPA) was meant to propose and supervise national policy in favor of the Andean, Amazonian and Afro-Peruvian groups. Additional functions included coordination with the regional and local governments in the execution of projects and programs directed towards the promotion, investigation, defense and the affirmation of rights in favor of these groups as well.¹⁶⁴ This body of the government, approved under the presidency of Alejandro Toledo Manrique, was intended to specifically serve these identified marginalized groups within the nation. While this agency had taken a considerable amount of time to come into fruition, there was some hope within its creation for change.

However, as Shane Greene explains in his article concerning the regional contexts of race in regard to Peru's efforts of state led multiculturalism, criticism soon began to arise against INDEPA for its superficiality within its stated mission. The critiques mainly stemmed from how the state categorized race within the boundaries of a *pueblo*. In doing so, however, Greene attests there is an implicit bias within the multicultural space towards the groups. As discussed in Chapter 2, in relation to Mama, the manner that these *pueblos* are conceived in the national imaginary is problematic. Labels such as the ones that Greene mentions erases the diversity of these groups, overlooking their heterogeneity. The imposed racialized geographies of Afro-Peruvians, for example, erases their historical contributions and migration. This applies to other

¹⁶⁴ (Ley del Instituto Nacional de Desarrollo de Pueblos Andinos, Amazónicos y Afroperuano 2005)

two groups as well—Andeans and Amazonians—however in the particular case of Afro-Peruvians the homogenization of their group provides little to no prospects for diversity. The grouping itself is additionally compounded with the burden of erasure, lack of consideration of identity and lack of respect and resources. This homogenization is in part due to the continued denial of Afro-Peruvians existing beyond coastal provinces like Piura or Chincha. Though there were political reasons behind the 1960s movement in Perú to present a unified nation of Afro-Peruvians, which followed the US model of the Black Liberation Movement, the idea of Blackness is still very much presented as a monolith.¹⁶⁵ That is, if it receives any coverage at all.

When taken into conversation with how Andean populations in Peru are subject to racialized geographies as well, there is a notable difference.¹⁶⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 3, the national image of Peru co-opted and reimagined the Incan past to fit nationalist narratives. The difference in presentation is clear when considering Andean populations because of this reality, which becomes an imposed ideal in the face of many people who are read as Indigenous, even if they don't identify as such. This erases the current conditions that Indigenous people face, like poverty and worker exploitation. These claims of practicing multiculturalism therefore are lacking, because they merely ask for tolerance. As explained further in this chapter, the limits of government intervention continues to produce a triad of communities—Andean, Amazonian, and Afro-Peruvian—where each community is ranked in order of importance with regard to the others. Furthermore, the “cultural” backing and value of the Andean groups in particular will serve them well within this structure, while others like Afro-Peruvians are perpetually erased.

¹⁶⁵ (Salcines, María Ágelica. 2004) 2

¹⁶⁶ Given the data that the Analysis Group for Development (Grupo de análisis para el desarrollo - GRADE) provides, the decision to identify as negro or Black is generally accepted, with more popular use spanning from Afro-Peruvian scholars or activists. (Benavides Martín, Máximo Torero, and Néstor Valdivia 2006) 66. (Greene, Shane. 2007)

As mentioned throughout Chapters 2 and 3, identifying something that has no ill-intent as racist within Peru proves to be difficult. This is due to the differing interpretations of precedents concerning discrimination in the media. While the findings in the previous chapters outline the central problems that are ingrained within the core makeup of these characters, there is no guarantee that an internal ethics committee such as CSQ-SNRTV or the courts will consider the evidence submitted in full when identifying violence and whether it is racially motivated. The critique here then lies in the limitations of internal ethics committees in identifying and defining racial violence, and that even “well-intentioned” bodies of government can still fail the communities it claims to protect. INDEPA’s multicultural mission had the objective marking tolerance as the goal, when tolerance itself does not address the issues at hand. INDEPA failed at its mission, only to later become one of the entities that the IDL (*Instituto de Defensa Legal*) sued in 2019 in the case to remove Jacinta from the air. What additionally arises is the question of how policy-based solutions impact Mama and Jacinta. Mainly, how have activist networks organized outside of the entities that regulate racism in the media? What is the impact that they leave? What does this say about the lack of lasting action against Mama or Jacinta for the better part of three decades?

Accordingly, the outline of this chapter is centered around two key struggles of removing both characters from the air. Said struggles highlight contemporary tensions surrounding Mama and Jacinta in terms of their presentations. Direct actions like the 2010 LUNDU case and the court proceedings that removed Jacinta from the air will be examined throughout this chapter in order to contextualize the data gathered from previous chapters. The following section provides further insight into the dynamic and impact that direct action has in creating alternative actions for minimizing discrimination in media. Next, this chapter will closely follow *Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29*. In *Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29* we witness the complexities of defining the violence of racism in the media, particularly with the case that

LUNDU had brought forward and its results. Afterwards this chapter will examine a second document, which follows the landmark case presented to the *Corte Superior de Justicia de Cusco* in the removal of Jacinta’s character from the air in 2020.¹⁶⁷

Legal and Direct Action

The act of direct and legal action is not something to be trivialized, especially in reference to the organization and mobilization of marginalized communities to improve their material conditions. The case of the direct action taken by LUNDU to remove both El Negro Mama and La Paisana Jacinta off television is no exception to this rule. Especially given the consequences of direct action when mobilizing against the normative state of society. While the actions of government entities like INDEPA, the *Ministerio de Cultura* or non-profit organizations with government backing like ASONEDH (*La Asociación Negra de Promoción de los Derechos Humanos*) are important to work with, reducing discrimination in media is not something that these agencies can grant alone. The sheer reality is that it is ethics committees and government agencies that *fail* marginalized communities, causing the *need* for direct action to take place.

This observation is hardly new, but is useful in unraveling the thread of this particular thesis: how racist imagery can persist in media and how direct action shifts these images over time with mobilization. As mentioned in the introduction, there are laws currently in place that defines discrimination as a crime.¹⁶⁸ *Ley no. 28867* and *Ley N°276670*—which supposedly acts as the executive component of *Ley no. 28867*—fail tremendously. In the 20 years since *Ley no. 28867* (which was established in 2000) there have been few instances where this law was applied.¹⁶⁹ It was not until 2017 that the law defined discrimination in media as part of it

¹⁶⁷ Superior Justice Court of Cusco.

¹⁶⁸ (Código Penal 2000)

¹⁶⁹ (“El Delito de Discriminación En El Perú: Avances y Retrocesos En Sus Veinte Años de Vigencia Como Tipo Penal | Alerta Contra El Racismo” n.d.)

protections. Afro-Peruvian organizer José “Pepe” Luciano viewed this inequitable state of affairs within the Peruvian state as a machine with four main mechanisms: the limitation of change being tied to electoral and representative politics, exclusion from educational institutions, the cause of labor and the limits of the judicial system.¹⁷⁰ My focus is on the first and last arguments presented in this declaration of action, which concerns the limits of government—in representation politics and judicial actions. Luciano states this very clearly by saying:

The first and most important of these mechanisms is that of the relative extension of citizens' rights; that is, the incorporation into public life of a large sector of Peruvians is *only restricted to the formal act of electing the representatives and authorities of the political system*¹⁷¹

The fourth mechanism relates to the attached idea that any government action proves to be inadequate for actual transformative change for marginalized groups. What Luciano is arguing then is the fact that change cannot be fully realized because of these two mechanisms present within the Peruvian government, which continue to exist within the daily lives of Peruvian citizens.

Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29

Considering this groundwork that Luciano and other Afro-Peruvian activists have established, it is pertinent to discuss legal resolution N°876, brought forth by LUNDU and approved in 2013. This will also be examined in relation to the *Ley de Radio y Televisión*

¹⁷⁰(Luciano, Jose 2002)

¹⁷¹ (Emphasis my own.) “El primero y más importante de estos mecanismos es el de la extensión relativa de los derechos ciudadanos; esto es, que la incorporación a la vida pública de un gran sector de peruanos solo se restringe al acto formal de elección de los representantes y autoridades del sistema político”, *Ibid.* p 13.

(*Artículo 76*), which resulted in a fine of 74.000 soles towards *Frecuencia Latina* from the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones* in 2013 as a result of this resolution.

On April 6th, 2010 LUNDU presented a formal complaint to the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* (CSQ-SNRTV). This complaint was specifically filed against the *Compañía Latinoamericana de Radiodifusión SA* (henceforth CLR-SA). CLR-SA is a subsidiary of *Frecuencia Latina International Limited, Inc.* and as such directly relates to the channel that airs *Mama* and *Jacinta*. The complaint mainly focused on an episode of *Mama* that aired on March 20th of that year, although later on in the document it is noted that LUNDU provided additional episodes where racism is evident in *Mama's* and *Jacinta's* performances.

Shortly after, on April 17th, CSQ-SNRTV presented *Resolución N°003-2010/CSQ-SNRTV*. This statement alleged that LUNDU's claims and demands towards CLR-SA were insufficient as well as extreme, noting that removal of *Mama* from the air is not a fit penalty for the evidence LUNDU provided. According to CSQ-SNRTV's Code of Ethics, the proper action in this case would be for a public apology, which they asserted is what CLR-SA had done for their representation of *Mama*. The gist of this alleged apology is based on their claims that CLR-SA never intended to offend anyone with their presentation of *Mama*. This apology is a common stance that all members within the group share, from Jorge Benavides to the executives handling the complaint. For the majority of the time this type of decision is labeled as sufficient enough to resolve complaints of this nature.

On November 25th, 2010, the *Resolución del Tribunal de Ética N°001-2010/TCQ-CSQ-SNRTV* was proposed which detailed the committee's reasoning behind their decision to mark the incident as resolved. This was based on the claims that the portrayal of *Mama* and *Jacinta* were *not intended to be harmful*, that removal of the characters and censorship violated CLR-SA's entitlements to Freedom of Speech and that LUNDU did not present a clear reason in their

complaint for removal. As mentioned in the previous sections which study LUNDU's *Observatorio*, there are specific definitions for the racism present throughout the media, which is a result of CSQ-SNRTV's statement. While CSQ-SNRTV acknowledged that the episode that aired on March 20th of 2010 was indeed discriminatory and harmful, because CLR-SA had apologized, there was no reason to continue with the claim made by LUNDU.

The process of presenting a formal apology is relatively straightforward and extremely simple, especially considering the type of violence CLR-SA is apologizing for. What the committee for CSQ-SNRTV requires for the acceptance of this apology is to make sure the apology is done publicly, explain the details behind the apology, finally followed by the actual apology itself. On December 14th of 2010 SNR-TV aired a special edition of the news show *90 Segundos*, announcing within the headlines what the apology was for. Following this announcement was the development of a news story explaining the decision that the committee had made.

Before this apology aired, on December 9th, the Tribunal of CSQ-SNRTV requested for the clarification of the *Cuarta Decisión*. This particular request for clarification was done to streamline the resolution process, since the *Cuarta Decisión* is a mandate geared towards airing on television/radio, which is what CLR-SA intended to do with their apology. This was needed in order to confirm the validity of the apology, as well as it being acknowledged by the laws in place that cover resolving issues of discrimination in media at that point in time. The Tribunal was claiming that the apology conformed to the definitions set by self regulation and the guidelines for public apology. Additionally, CSQ-SNRTV claimed that the mandate they put forth concerning the complaint did not infringe upon the rights of the Editorial Committee of *Frecuencia Latina*. CSQ-SNRTV ended this appeal by stating that they positively value the administrative conduct of their decision with the resolution, put forth on November 25th 2010.

CLR-SA supported this decision further on December 15th, requesting that the issue be resolved by archiving *Resolución N°001-201/TSQ-SNTV*.

It is abundantly clear that this type of infraction is not a new occurrence for both SNRTV's Tribunal Committee and CLR-SA. It seems that what both the aforementioned parties are aiming to accomplish is a fragile resolution. Although the definitions of discrimination, racism and anti-Blackness are not clear, they are not even debated here within these actions. Quite the contrary, these definitions are not defined wholly—only partially. The first decision made by the Tribunal Committee of SNRTV, which was to disregard the arguments that LUNDU made in their complaint must be taken into consideration. While we cannot be fully sure what led them to this conclusion, what we can be sure of is how swiftly the decision was made, as well as the arguments they presented to back up their decision. They marked LUNDU's claims and demands as insufficient, extreme and unfair. The harms that CLR-SA had caused, in their view, were not drastic enough to support the removal of Mama or Jacinta. Despite the information LUNDU had provided, as well as CLR-SNRTV's acknowledgement that the sketch aired on March 20th 2010 was indeed discriminatory, they were confident that it would not be secure enough to fully remove the characters.

The second course of action CSQ-SNRTV chose to take was also based on their set Code of Ethics. Although it was difficult for LUNDU to define what constituted racism in the media, it apparently was not difficult for their Code of Ethics to apply to the complaint LUNDU had made. The decision CSQ-SNRTV made was based on the overall *assumption* that their definition of violence was the only valid one. There are a variety of wrongs here with these two actions alone, both of which operate under this assumption. In relying on their preconceived perception of what would hold up in the courts and their own Code of Ethics, CSQ-SNRTV clearly had their own agenda in relaying this ruling. This relates directly with the *silencing* of LUNDU and their collective's hard work in producing the data to back up their argument, as well as their own *lived*

experiences as Afro-Peruvians themselves. Defining reparations should not be done by the group that is causing harm. Rather, it is a collective effort that those who have endured the harm leads, which is not the case here. The stagnant nature of the Code of Ethics itself is an issue, and possibly one of the most prominent in this case, as examined later on in this chapter.

On December 20th 2010, LUNDU issued a formal complaint against all the actions taken by CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA. The complaint contained statements that the apology in question was too general with no specificity on what they had complained about, and other two parties had opted for the option that best favored them. CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA did not bother to contact *anyone* from LUNDU to be in conversation with them regarding the apology. They also asserted that both CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA should go beyond what favors them to provide an adequate solution to their empty promises of resolving the issue at hand. This counter argument slowed down both CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA's hopes of closing the issue, causing it to extend further for at least another three years.

Months later, on April 8th 2011, *PID N°042699* was presented by LUNDU to CONCOR TV, an autonomous group that was created due to the *Ley de Radio y Televisión*.¹⁷² While the group itself does not have control over media outlets, it does have influence over what is “good media practice”. Since CONCOR TV is comprised of private and public entities (the media and the state) it is positioned as a neutral group that objectively looks at what is a “good media practice”. LUNDU's complaint denounced CLR-SA on the grounds that LUNDU was not satisfied with their public apology. This, along with the assumption that CSQ-SNRTV had made that the issue was resolved and properly acknowledged with their agreement that the March 20th episode they watched was indeed discriminatory. They also included their problems with a specific sketch that centered on Mama, reiterating their complaints with Mama and Jacinta and

¹⁷² (“Nosotros” n.d.)

that the Tribunal met the *bare minimum* stipulated by article 3 of their Code of Ethics. A month later on May 7th under the jurisdiction of article 76 of the *Ley de Radio y Televisión*, the decision was made that the administrative sanction that ‘resolved’ the issue of the apology was in breach of the law. The breach was due to the convenience of their sentence fully dodging an actual apology, with the dates of the resolution being before the date of the actual apology, giving the impression that they had already chosen to side with *Frecuencia Latina* in the matter. While the CLR-SA used *PID N°063374* to make the argument that they were not permitted to fully defend their actions against the full context of LUNDU’s arguments, this was not seen as legitimate and the ruling followed through anyway. On May 15th, CONCOR TV restated that CLR-SA breached the dispositions of LUNDU, and as such they would not abide by resolution *N°001-2010/TCQ-SNRTV*.

A full consideration of the Code of Ethics and the need to reframe their apology based on audience output were stipulated by both article 34 of *Ley N°28278* and article 98 of the same law, which states *the obligation of the Tribunal to incorporate the Code of Ethics and its mechanisms to the fullest extent*. After a back and forth between all parties involved, the solution resulted in a 74.000 sol fine (approximately 26,000 USD at that point in time) in August of 2013. Furthermore, the criteria necessary for such a breach to result in a fine were defined by article 83 of the *Ley de Radio y Televisión* as follows: *i) naturaleza y gravedad de la infracción, ii) daño causado por la infracción, iii) reincidencia en la infracción, iv) disposición del infractor a reparar el daño o mitigar sus efectos, v) beneficio obtenido como consecuencia de la infracción, vi) repercusión social, así como las características de la localidad donde opera, y vii) los aspectos demográficos y cantidad poblacional*¹⁷³. ”

¹⁷³i) nature and seriousness of the offense, ii) damage caused by the offense, iii) recidivism in the offense, iv) willingness of the offender to repair the damage or mitigate its effects, v) benefit obtained as a result of the offense, vi) social repercussion, as well as the characteristics of the locality where it operates, and vii) the demographic aspects and population size;
MTC p 19.

The definition of what resulted in this fine is essentially reliant on the severity of the offense, damages caused, if there is a relapse of said damages, the willingness of the offender to repair harm caused, the benefit gained from the offense, social repercussions of the offense and demographic factors. In this case with CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA it was clear that neither of the formerly mentioned parties considered any of the points. Additionally, conflict of interest and expediting their resolution aside, there is no indication of intent of examining the social repercussions of their resolution. What is interesting in this regard is that the last two points are clearly stated within the ruling, but not so much that it is taken into full attention.

The social repercussions were far more negative for LUNDU and its leaders, coupled with the lax efforts to accurately reflect the Afro-Peruvian population in media, this ruling is not necessarily a full win, partly because the Afro-Peruvian demographic was not accurately recorded. In actuality, at this point in time there had not been any data collected by the Peruvian government regarding the Afro-Peruvian population since 1940. The data gathered from that census additionally did not accurately capture the Afro-Peruvian population due to its phrasing and only presented 0.5% of the population as African-descended.¹⁷⁴ This phrasing in particular included a variety of names to identify as, such as *moreno* or *mestizo*, all of which were considered to be separate from one another.¹⁷⁵ These particular features in the resolution point to a bigger picture in determining the reach of the violence that racism and anti-Blackness holds within these documents, proceedings and the government as a whole.

The aftermath of Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29 stating that financial penalty is sufficient is not only an insult, but a misdirection towards the change LUNDU initially hoped for. Although it could be argued that the penalty of 74.000 soles is a positive step, it hardly

¹⁷⁴ In 2017, the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics (INEI) included an option to identify as African-descended. These results represented the first official data on the Afro-Peruvian population in 78 years. According to those results, roughly 4% of the total population identified as Afro-Peruvian (about 828,800 individuals). ("PERÚ - INEI:: Perú: Resultados Definitivos de Los Censos Nacionales 2017" n.d.)

¹⁷⁵ ("PERÚ - INEI:: Perú: Resultados Definitivos de Los Censos Nacionales 2017" n.d.)

reflects any mechanism towards transformative change in how discrimination is defined in media. What should not be missed is that this resolution happened due to a breach with article 76° of the *Ley de Radio y Television* and not with the evidence that LUNDU submitted when making the complaint. What they breached was the timing of the apology, which was accepted before it could be properly made to the public. In breaching article 76° it became revealed that there was a bias within in the Tribunal's decision to expedite the apology. Their mistake was in affirming that a public apology was enough and attempting to expedite that as a resolution even though the formal public apology had not occurred yet. This forces an acknowledgment that the definitions that constitute discrimination in media are, as this has said repeatedly, biased and inadequate. As stated in the document, "*Artículo 3°: La empresa COMPAÑIA LATINOAMERICANA DE RADIODIFUSIÓN S.A. debe abstenerse de incumplir las disposiciones del Código de Ética, bajo apercibimiento de imponer una sanción administrativa.*"¹⁷⁶

There are sanctions in place from this ruling that expressly prohibits CLR-SA from breaching the provisions to be made in the Code of Ethics, with warning of enacting administrative sanctions as well. All these sanctions however, follow the mechanisms Pepe Luciano criticizes in "*La discriminación en el Peru*¹⁷⁷ *actual.*" In comparison with the CLR-SA and the *Tribunal*, LUNDU has little choice or agency in how justice is defined or served within these administrative gaps. Gaps in this case refers to the indiscrete bias that the *Tribunal* showcased in their treatment of LUNDU's findings and requirements for reparations of the harm Mama as a character caused.

Considering all these circumstances then, it is clear that CONCOR TV vehemently disregarded LUNDU's concerns, and forced LUNDU into accept this resolution as a victory.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p 20. "Article 3: The company COMPANIA LATINOAMERICANA DE RADIODIFUSION S.A. must refrain from breaching the provisions done to the Code of Ethics, under warning of imposing a new administrative sanction."

¹⁷⁷ (Luciano, Jose 2002)

What the *Tribunal*, as well as the CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA stated in the forefront of their arguments were the 1) vague nature of what LUNDU defined as discrimination and 2) the *extremity* of the demands that called for Mama's removal from the air. While CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA discussed the vagueness of LUNDU's submitted evidence—which LUNDU included in their *Observatorio* and video of what they used in their study—their argument relies on their right to artistic expression.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, in order to back their claims about the alleged extreme measures LUNDU demanded in their complaint, they included that forcing the retirement of a work of fiction such as *Mama* is censorship. CSQ-SNRTV and CLR-SA's use of the word *extremity* in relation to LUNDU's demands for removal is used loosely and reflects how narrow their definition of discrimination is. In fact, it seems the only definition they use defines discrimination as an individual act that results in *immediate material harm*, with little regard to psychological or systemic harm. The fact remains that LUNDU catered their *Observatorio* to meet the specifics of the Tribunal hoping to prove the violence of *Mama* as a direct result of the devaluation of Blackness in Perú. These hopes with the particular case were not fully realized.

What this resolution reveals then is not only the extremely direct definition of discrimination, but how little agencies that are intended to protect marginalized communities like Afro-Peruvians seem to care about the direct input of said groups. While the Tribunal did acknowledge discrimination and later on agreed with LUNDU's argument in the *Observatorio*, they still managed to contain the resolution to fit their own needs. Their own set of rules, their people on these committees and their own interpretations on violence that frankly does not directly impact their livelihoods.

¹⁷⁸ (LUNDU 2010)

Although Mónica Carrillo and the rest of her colleagues did not gain what they had hoped for, their continued resilience with the case proves how significant direct action is in shifting dynamics, this case specifically focusing on the lack of intervention within media.

Proceso N°00798-2014-0-1001-JM-CI-01

Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29 serves as a brutal reminder that discrimination based complaints through the mediums of media and comedy are exceptionally difficult to pass as legitimate. Given the harsh diversion that LUNDU faced with *Resolución Directoral N° 876 2013 MTC/29*, as the previous section investigated, meaningful resolutions are rare to come by. CLR-SA and CSQ-SNRTV as a result of this resolution, both faced stringent penalties based on a breach of the *Ley de Radio y Televisión*. Yet, the actual appeal that LUNDU had made for the removal of Mama—and by extension Jacinta—remained fruitless.

That is, until November 15th 2019. On that day, the *Instituto de defensa Legal* (IDL) along with plaintiffs Cecilia Paniura Medina, Rosa Isabel Supho Callo, Irene Mactha Quispe Taboada and Rosalina Torres Marante, leaders of the Community of Canchis in Cusco, filed a suit at the Superior Court of Justice in Cusco. While this suit was received officially in 2019, Cecilia Paniura and the other plaintiffs originally filed a complaint in November 2014 because they considered that the content that was broadcast was racist.¹⁷⁹ It took five years for the suit to be officially filed, and six overall for the ruling. The suit itself was aimed towards CLR-SA, Jorge Benavides and even government ministries with the claim that the character *La Paisana Jacinta* is a degrading character that infringes on Andean women's honor and dignity.¹⁸⁰ The claim also states that the character created by Jorge Benavides caused material harm to these women. As long as *La Paisana Jacinta* continues to appear on open-air broadcasts, she will continue to cause harm to Andean women as a whole.

¹⁷⁹ (“Cecilia Paniura, sobre la sentencia del proceso de la “La paisana Jacinta”: ‘El señor Benavides se ha equivocado al hacernos ver como tontas’” 2021)

¹⁸⁰ (Carlos Fernández Echea 2020)

Holgado Noa, Hugo Arturo Castro Alvarez and Yuri John Pereira Alagón were the judges on the case. Despite Noa's position as speaker and her discordant vote, article 141° of the *Ley Orgánica de Poder Judicial* allowed for the votes of the other judges to take precedence. This resulted in the IDL's claim of discrimination being accepted in October of 2020.¹⁸¹ The main argument that Noa made in her decision to vote against the claim is that the demand was too immense, similar to the claims made by the Tribunal that handled the complaint of LUNDU against *El Negro Mama*. The vague nature of arguments such as Noa's also make references to protections that creators like Jorge Benavides have - the most commonly stated being freedom of creativity. Additionally, ministries such as the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones* contend that there was no need for the IDL to take this case to the superior court of Cusco. Their view was that judicial proceedings are pointless, given the self regulation protocols that handle complaints of this nature.¹⁸² Evidently, all the parties involved on the side of the defense felt that the claim itself was excessive. Despite the fact that the claim passed in the end, there was still notable pushback.

This decision passed with respect to the principal claim made by the prosecution (IDL and others) which declared: 1) there was harm caused by the show, specifically by Jorge Benavides, 2) the claims made by Cecilia Paniura Medina and others proved to be sufficient in showcasing said harm and 3) recommendations from the court to all ministries mentioned (mainly the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones*) properly to defend vulnerable populations — such as Andean women.¹⁸³ To have a court such as the Superior Court of Justice of Cusco rule in favor of this particular argument is not only unprecedented but monumental.¹⁸⁴ Especially if the

¹⁸¹Ibid p 4.

¹⁸² Ibid p 7.

¹⁸³Ibid p 8.

¹⁸⁴ I also wish to add that after this ruling, *Frecuencia Latina* appealed the decision at the Constitution Tribunal, with no success. I do not include it in the main text because I could not source the document from said trial.

complaint LUNDU filed nearly ten years prior to this particular case had been met with such hostility. This ruling proves that there was a shift in interpretation within the past ten years; albeit, with hesitancy.

After this ruling, CLR-SA (Compañía Latinoamericana de Radiodifusión S.A.), represented by Ana Santa María Alva, requested that the decision itself be voided. Essentially, CLR-SA disputed that the arguments made by IDL and their witnesses have no constitutional basis.¹⁸⁵ CLR-SA added that the statements and evidence the IDL submitted to provide a basis for their suit do not possess a solid backing. To make the connection between the harm caused by the show and their constitutional rights was a reach. CLR-SA additionally established that the opposing party had no definitive explanation of what constitutes human dignity, nor any material proof of the harm that they alleged that Jacinta caused to the constituents.¹⁸⁶ Much like the previous case study presented in this chapter, CLR-SA made the general claim that there is no correlation between harm and the character itself. It is a fictional work that serves as a creative expression of Jorge Benavides. IDL's calls for removal of Jacinta, much like LUNDU did with Jacinta, called for the removal of Mama as well. In short, the defense used the same extensively repetitive arguments they have been using since 2010. The characters are fictional, they do not cause harm, they are protected by Benavides' freedom of creativity and removing them is an extreme act that does not serve anyone.

If the last argument stated was true, then why were these groups like LUNDU and the IDL successively demanding removal? Moreover, when there have been multiple studies conducted by the same groups that are *experiencing the harmful effects of these characters*, how is it justifiable to make the general claim that there is no impact?¹⁸⁷ Clearly, there is a disconnect present here between the arguments that entities like CLR-SA, CSQ-SNRTV and others are

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid p 10.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid pp 17-30.

making and what is happening right in front of them, since to them it is business rather than harmful. If such ‘extreme’ measures could not be taken, then when would it be appropriate to? The IDL presented an evaluation of Jacinta as a character during this suit, taking the time to observe quite plainly how pervasive the character was in depicting racist stereotypes. Much like this thesis observes in Chapter 3, Jacinta was found to be discriminatory mainly in the manner that she: 1) spoke Spanish, 2) dressed/presented herself, and 3) characterized as poor, stupid and violent. A significant portion of their independent study found that Jacinta’s Spanish speaking was mocked the most. Since there is a pre-established belief that Andean people speak like Jacinta does, this particular trait was subject to the most ridicule.¹⁸⁸

The IDL’s argument summarized follows the logic that Jacinta is a breach of constitutional rights—one based on the basis of human dignity. As stated in the resolution document:

“En el caso de autos, se advierte que está en confrontación derechos fundamentales de un lado el alegado por la parte actora que es la ‘vulneración a la identidad étnica y, cultural, al honor a la no discriminación’ y a la igualdad de género; -estrechamente relacionado con la dignidad humana- y, de otro lado la parte demandada con la libertad de expresión...”¹⁸⁹

This is in direct opposition to the most telling detail in CLR-SA’s argument, which relied on the precedent set by the Constitutional Tribunal (the highest court in Perú), *expediente N.º 0905-2001-AA/TC*. In this particular document, the Constitutional Tribunal reviewed a case following the company the San Martín Saving and Credit Rural Bank against the judgment of the Chamber of the Superior Court of Justice of San Martín. This dispute began with the bank alleging that media outlet Radio Imagen, alongside journalists Ramón Alfonso, Amaringo

¹⁸⁸ Ibid 20.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid 30. “In the present case, it is noted that fundamental rights are in conflict on the one hand, the one alleged by the plaintiff, which is the ‘violation of ethnic and cultural identity, the honor of non-discrimination’ and gender equality; - closely related to human dignity- and, on the other hand, the defendant with freedom of expression...”

Gonzales and Hildebrando García Moncada, were spreading false news pertaining to their bank. This, the bank claimed, infringed against their banking rights and their guarantee of savings, hiring and stability of their workers. This particular appeal that the bank set forth begged the question of whether private entities were protected under the constitution, as well as whether their appeal could be considered censorship.¹⁹⁰ The Constitutional Tribunal, while acknowledging that private entities do have some protections under the constitution—such as the right to dignity—that the more pressing matter was the censorship. In this interpretation, intense protection must be given to freedom of information if the information disseminated has public significance. In their view, what Radio Imagen had done was not based on excessive or harmful expressions to the dignity of people, since what the bank had asserted (aside from their dignity) as rights were not viewed as constitutional rights.

Besides using CLR-SA using article 2.3 of the Peruvian Constitution which guarantees the right to freedom of information, opinion, expression and dissemination, without prior authorization or censorship, they also used *expediente N.º 0905-2001-AA/TC* to back their argument. This file explicitly stated that despite the violation of other constitutional rights, such as the rights to honor or dignity, these cannot be protected with character preventive or prevent social communication.¹⁹¹ What CLR-SA was relying on in this interpretation was the consensus that the Constitutional Tribunal had come to in *expediente N.º 0905-2001-AA/TC*. The interpretation being that whatever its nature, one cannot disregard the clause that prohibits prior censorship—despite it being considered harmful. However, this use of *expediente N.º 0905-2001-AA/TC* does not take into account that Jacinta is not a strictly private entity. The IDL, knowing that the nature of the clause stated clearly that Jacinta is not solely a fictional character, but rather a character based on that Jorge Benavides believed to be true about Andean women.

¹⁹⁰ (SAN MARTÍN CAJA RURAL DE AHORRO Y CRÉDITO DE SAN MARTIN. 2002)

¹⁹¹ (IUS 360 2020)

Undoubtedly, the plaintiffs (IDL) are argued that Jacinta is a manifestation of not only discriminatory attitudes embedded within Peruvian society, but that these attitudes cause harm to the population the Constitution claims to protect—Andean women. Taking this into account, it must be acknowledged that the interpretation of constitutional rights shifts accordingly to context and despite similarities, the key difference in this case and *expediente N.º 0905-2001-AA/TC* is creating a new precedent that has never been seen before.

What the IDL accomplished is monumental, but not only because they managed to remove Jacinta. The IDL, in essence, altered the definition of discrimination in media based on their stringent interpretation of constitutional rights. By defining human dignity in reference to precedents like *Sentencia N°0087-2005-PA fundamento 5*, the IDL was able to assert that the sentence defined human value and honor as a constitutional principle. What it also allowed for the IDL to use in their arguments throughout the case, is connecting this constitutional principle to the *obligation for the state to intervene when harm is inflicted*.¹⁹² This enables the protections of the afflicted as well as accountability of the systems/institutions that cause harm. Relating this to cultural diversity also strengthens the argument further, since it is widely acknowledged that Peru is a culturally diverse country. Citing *Constitución Política del Perú Artículo 2º*, “*Toda persona tiene derecho a su identidad étnica y cultural. El Estado reconoce y protege la pluralidad étnica y cultural de la Nación.*”¹⁹³ With these interpretations of legal precedents, the IDL makes a claim as to why these protections should be extended to discriminatory caricatures like Jacinta and Mama. The government has an obligation to protect this population, as well as others impacted by harmful actions. This obligation means that removing Jacinta or Mama is not an act of censorship, but rather an act of protection. Freedom of expression and creativity then is not at risk

¹⁹² (Carlos Fernández Echea 2020) 10.

¹⁹³ Ibid 10. “Everyone has the right to their ethnic and cultural identity. The State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural plurality of the Nation.”

here because the reach of such freedoms are only protected so long as they do not harm another person.

This application of protections towards removing such harmful fictive characters is also not a new practice, but rather one that is seldom used. The case titled *La Última Tentación de Cristo*, presented to the *Corte Interamericana de Derechos Humanos*, is a clear example of this.¹⁹⁴ On February 5th 2001, the decision was reached to shut down a film which produced anti-Semitic stereotypes. This decision, made after consideration of the manner the comedian dressed, the context of the movie and the actions performed all reached the conclusion that not all ‘artistic liberties’ can be protected by freedom of expression. There are religious protections that are being violated with the emission of the movie, and in part because of the Chilean government not necessarily viewing it as such, necessitated an inter-American debate on the matter.¹⁹⁵ The IDL followed the clear media examination tests needed to push their case—*proporcionalidad* and *idoneidad*—which highlighted a pattern of trauma that the plaintiffs supplemented with their statements. This was a given, since the evidence proved that Jacinta cannot be, and was never, a fictive work. Jacinta is based on the idea of what an Andean woman is like and impacts the lives of real life Andean women in different ways.

Therefore, when relating the IDL to LUNDU the only difference is the approach they each take. It would be remiss to fail to mention that each respective group discusses the other character in relation to their own, acknowledging the importance of having both removed simultaneously because they both cause the same harm. This acknowledgement on both parties reminds us that there is solidarity present because both characters are products of racism and the imagery attached to the idea of what Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous people look (and act) like. Every victory is a shared one.

¹⁹⁴ (Antônio A. Cançado Trindade, Presidente et al. 2001)

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid* p 35.

Conclusion

All this considered, the IDL was able to present a case that won and resulted in the removal of Jacinta, and by extension Mama. Although the removal of Mama along with Jacinta was a tactic to save face, it gave the end goal LUNDU had in 2010 some justice. The use of ‘some’ is intentional here. While it is wonderful that Mama was removed from the air along with Jacinta in 2020, it does not mend the violence LUNDU’s organizers had to endure. Additionally, it does not honor the true intent of their goal, which was to bring to light the discrimination that Mama poses. Jacinta was taken off the air with the power of the courts, Mama was taken off with fear of further scandal. This is a distinct difference and is one that should not be forgotten.

When revisiting 2010 then, LUNDU’s actions were not for naught. They were indicative of a bigger issue, one that was present since before Perú became a nation. As explained in chapter 1, a significant amount of Perú’s ideas concerning race/racism crystallized in the 19th century. What is so glaringly missing is mention of the Afro-Peruvian experience surrounding this conception. While the work of scholars like Carlos Aguirre give historical analysis of the abolition of slavery and the enslaved Africans’ autonomy behind this movement, there is little to be said about the understanding of race contrasting ideas of Blackness within the Peruvian context.¹⁹⁶ Blackness is essentially erased, and with continued work towards highlighting the struggles of Afro-Peruvians, what is said about this connection to their (mis)representation in the media? LUNDU grants this opportunity to examine this thoroughly. Although they have taken a different path than the IDL, one that relied on the Ethics Committee, I cannot help but ask if they would have the same success as the IDL had they gone to the courts? In Peru, race is not explicitly understood from a standpoint regarding Blackness. It is generally understood from a place that examines indigeneity, connecting it with a variety of external factors like education.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ (Aguirre, Carlos 1993)

¹⁹⁷ (De la Cadena, Marisol. 2014)

Despite the fact that LUNDU is instrumental to this work, it seems they will not get the recognition they deserve in the IDL's victory. Additionally, there is a need to acknowledge how the perception of vulnerability works here. In a sense, Andean women can be seen as in need of protection, a stark comparison to how LUNDU was treated in 2010. Presentations of Jacinta and Mama compare them slightly differently, where Jacinta can be seen as hard working while Mama is seen as lazy. This dichotomy is not definitive, but is worth mentioning in how such subtle differences can illuminate how disenfranchised LUNDU was during their dispute. The connection between the two disputes are there; the same arguments, the same antagonism but both with completely different results. The victory is intertwined, but the struggles it seems are not—at least not completely. The following chapter will conclude this study while bringing it all together: is there a difference in the treatment between these characters? What do these definitions of racism, discrimination and violence within the media tell us about the state of understanding race in relation to media (mis)representation? The absence of written words is stark yet offers a chance for redemption. One that focuses on how Blackness and indigeneity are affixed and separate in the view of media representation.

Las personas que no saben cómo somos las campesinas y ven el programa se ríen, se burlan. Pero así no es la mujer indígena andina. Nosotras trabajamos mucho. Somos administradoras, ingenieras en la chacra, cuidamos a los hijos. La mujer campesina está las 24 horas organizando, pensando cómo hacerlo mejor.

—Cecilia Paniura¹⁹⁸

Chapter V: Conclusions

As this thesis outlines, there are a variety of fractures within the media and their guidelines concerning discriminatory content within Perú. (Mis)representations like *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* managed to prevail on open-air broadcasting for almost three decades (mid 1990s-late 2010s), until their much deserved retirement. However, this small victory does not warrant dismissing how these particular entities, like the *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión*, allow for such content to remain practically unregulated. It also does not erase the fact that *Frecuencia Latina's* stake in the disputes mentioned in the previous chapter, is one centered on their business rather than actual concern for those who expressed discontent with *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. As mentioned in the fourth chapter, the media relies on the practice of self regulation, which places unfounded trust on small ethics committees to make decisions on what constitutes harmful content.

The recent dismissal of *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* reflects how delayed these processes are. Newly, media coverage of impactful events like the presidential elections still

¹⁹⁸ Translation: People who do not know what we peasant women are like, [they] watch the program and laugh and mock us. But that's not what the Andean Indigenous woman is like. We work a lot. We are administrators, engineers on the farm, we take care of children. The peasant woman is organizing 24 hours a day, thinking about how to do better.
(“Cecilia Paniura, sobre la sentencia del proceso de la “La paisana Jacinta”: ‘El señor Benavides se ha equivocado al hacernos ver como tontas’” 2021)

follow self regulation protocols. This results in erroneous stories about real life figures that are discriminatory in nature. Take for instance, the aforementioned presidential elections that Perú underwent in 2021. The conservative candidate, Keiko Fujimori (daughter of former dictator Alberto Fujimori), faced off against self-identified far-left primary school teacher Pedro Castillo of Cajamarca. Despite Keiko Fujimori having countless accusations against her citing corruption—such as money laundering, obstruction to justice, among other crimes—the media hyper-focused on Pedro Castillo due to his disconnected position from the military, economic and professional elite. He was the first presidential candidate to be in this position, which is alarming for the elite, on top of his affiliation with Marxist-Leninist party *Perú Libre*.

Previously, Castillo had not identified with leftist politics, and his current involvement with *Perú Libre* is not well established.¹⁹⁹ In fact, Castillo has sided with conservative stances earlier in the election, as well as his noted involvement with center-right political party, *Perú Posible*.²⁰⁰ Castillo is complex and has changed, which in the view of elites, is unpredictable. His shift from center-right to leftist politics reflects that. This shift as well as his affiliation with *Perú Libre* in a sense gave the media license to use fear mongering as a tactic to counteract his support. In trying to disempower Castillo throughout the elections (which ran approximately from April to July) media outlets began to project their perceptions of Castillo on him. Castillo is a *campesino* from Cajamarca. As mentioned in the introduction, it is common to view someone as Indigenous based off their heritage, where they are from, mode of dress or phenotypical appearance. Because Castillo is a *campesino*, in fact one of the first to make it on the presidential ballot, there are a myriad of assumptions that he is Indigenous or of Indigenous descent. The fact that Castillo has not openly identified as Indigenous did not matter. In an attempt to influence Castillo's lead in the elections, the media began to rely on racist imagery typically used against Indigenous people to

¹⁹⁹ (Holmes n.d.)

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

present him as naive, unprepared and in the way of actual change. Much like Jacinta, Castillo does not fit into the imagined national narrative that the elite had constructed. His *narrow* lead in the elections threatened so much; and as such, the media was permitted to do what it does best—cover the story from whatever angle they pleased.



Figure 6. Beto Ortiz on his show *Beto Saber* in April of 2021.²⁰¹

From April 2021 onward, Castillo’s background as a *campesino* transformed into a grossly assumed media circus. He became the center-fold of various stories that concerned politics, with deeply problematic mocking of what these outlets believed to be his heritage. Media personalities denouncing him while dressed “like him”, generalized statements that he had ties to *Sendero Luminoso* with no proof, statements that he was not a professional and therefore unqualified for the position—the attacks would not falter.²⁰² A couple months later, on June 6th, Castillo was announced the winner of an *extremely close* election. This was not taken lightly, and media coverage doubled down on their attacks. Fujimori, who had been attacking Castillo throughout the process, claimed fraud and demanded a recount of the ballots. For a month, tensions rose as attacks on Castillo continued to run rampant on media outlets.

²⁰¹ (Eduardo Abusada 2021)

²⁰² The commentary about Castillo’s alleged connections to *Sendero Luminoso* also stem from this widely accepted idea of the *terruco motoso*, which is mentioned briefly in chapter 3 of this thesis. (“La emergencia del ‘motoso terruco’ en la política peruana” 2021)

One of the most inflammatory outlets concerning this particular case is *Willax*, a channel that dedicates itself to the conservative perspective. One of their contributors, Beto Ortiz, recently became the center of scandal for incorrectly relating his desire to wield a firearm as “part of his culture”.²⁰³ Essentially, during a live broadcast, Ortiz pulled out a firearm with others present in order to make the connection.²⁰⁴ What led him to such a preposterous claim was the fact that *ronderos*—peasant patrollers who identify with Castillo—have expressed the right to wield machetes, as it is a part of their culture.²⁰⁵ Although *ronderos* use the machete as part of their daily life, and established their patrols in response to the violence that conspired between *Sendero Luminoso* and the government of Perú, it did not matter to Ortiz. Rather, what mattered was their mutually supportive relationship with Castillo, who was himself a *rondero*, and the fact that they were permitted to wield machetes while marching in Lima despite the harm they hypothetically could cause.²⁰⁶ Despite how deeply wrong it was for Ortiz to make such a baseless accusation, on top of possibly endangering the lives of those present, he was not penalized by any ethics committee. Afterwards, Castillo applied for a sanction against *Willax* to the *Ministerio de Transporte y Comunicaciones* for making unsubstantiated claims against him.²⁰⁷ Unsurprisingly, the claim was initially viewed as an attempt at censorship, which still takes precedence even when the information shared is inaccurate. Despite the large accusations made against Castillo, improper presentation of his identity and the incident regarding Beto Ortiz, it was made clear the media was still allowed free reign. To relate Castillo to incompetence, media outlets continued to refer to him as an *indio*, using his background as a *campesino* as vitriol.²⁰⁸ Even with the confirmation of his legitimacy as president on July 20th, the assaults continue.

²⁰³ (“Beto Ortiz: piden sanción para conductor por aparecer en TV con pistola” n.d.)

²⁰⁴ (El Búho pe n.d.)

²⁰⁵ (LR 2021)

²⁰⁶ (“Rondas campesinas, las patrullas comunitarias de Perú que integra Castillo” 2021)

²⁰⁷ (admin n.d.)

²⁰⁸ *Campesino* and *indio* are completely different terms that are constantly confused with one another. *Campesino* refers to a peasant worker while *indio* refers to an indigenous person, and is often times used as a slur. The two are not mutually exclusive, and Castillo has not once openly identified as Indigenous.

It is vital to make this connection between media coverage on Castillo and the content of this study, because the media's power and corruption has extensive reach. In order for the media to have such freedom to attack whomever they want with such discriminatory rationale; it is pertinent to remember that media regulation is strictly *privatized*. It is that even in instances that cover real life events, these attacks are not viewed as violent. This is deeply concerning. The basis behind Jacinta and Mama not being marked as problematic or harmful relied on the fact that they were works of fiction. Yet, even with public figures as recent as this year, media outlets still have full discretion to make exaggerated claims and harmful content. The reasoning behind this thesis was to find a way to understand why Mama was permitted to exist on television for so long. This snowballed into analyzing the silent social hierarchy present within Perú and how this relates to media imagery. Castillo is but one example.

In the introduction of this thesis, I expressed that there is a gap in understanding how racist (mis)representations impact communities at large. I also made the observation that in terms of how Afro-Peruvians are treated in coverage as opposed to Andean communities, there is significantly less coverage of the former. This led me to hypothesize that Afro-Peruvian's experience erasure much more intensely than Andean communities; and that Andean communities by extension have their issues superficially acknowledged by the state. However, when it comes to racism, media and how the two relate to one another, both groups are severely done wrong. Concerning the history of Perú's construction as a nation, both groups were suppressed heavily. Afro-Peruvians are believed to be scarce, and as such, insignificant. Indigenous/Andean communities on the other hand were considered to be mainly tied to Perú's colonial past. Because of these dominant ideas, it is much more difficult for the public to comprehend how natural it is to devalue *El Negro Mama* or *La Paisana Jacinta*. Throughout their existence, *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* had to exist as apolitical figures. They could not be representative of Perú, which overwhelmingly promotes tourism or gastronomy. Revisiting

the idea of *el indio permitido* is helpful in understanding the disconnect between public acts of racism and silent ones. As mentioned in the introduction, *el indio permitido* discusses what is permitted within the neoliberal framework of Guatemala.²⁰⁹ The concept of *el indio permitido* is similar to what is happening with *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. Both must fit into the narrative that is established about Perú by being apolitical. The manner in which these characters are treated is indicative of how the government interacts with these groups. In order to create a sense of harmony, characters like *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* are superficially incorporated into the systems activists aim to reform. They are granted shallow changes to their characters, as if they are redeemable. It is this false promise of improvement that supposedly satiates these demands for fair representation, when the only parties that are satisfied are the same ones blocking change. I cannot help but wonder how the media is not considered public? Does media not exist in public spaces? Where is the line drawn in these interactions?

There is failure towards understanding how muted these acts of racism are. Relating to other secondary traits—like education, class, cleanliness, language—is part of how racism exists quietly in Perú.²¹⁰ This on top of the media being permitted to remain self-regulated in their (mis)representations, is why it was extremely difficult to get *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* off the air. These connections were not seen as valid because they did not adhere to the belief that Perú is a positive example of multiculturalism. This general idea is passed down insistently, to the point where I experienced criticism for sharing the harsher realities within Perú such as these media (mis)representations. In one instance, I had another second-generation Peruvian express how I was presenting a negative view of Perú. Their issue was that I was not expressing the positives in its multiculturalism, and that because of this I was somehow betraying the country. Blindly supporting the idea that Perú is a multicultural utopia is not the support that it

²⁰⁹ (Hale, Charles. 2004)

²¹⁰ (De la Cadena, Marisol. 2014)

is framed as. It is being complicit in the harms that come with accepting this idea at face value, and the fact that it carries on even in other countries is not surprising but is disheartening.

In my observations of all these occurrences—from *El Negro Mama*, *La Paisana Jacinta*, the media, LUNDU and the IDL—I find that despite all the policies in place *intended* to protect marginalized communities, it is not enough. Intention is a dangerous concept when examining media (mis)representation. It is a concept that allows the state and media to remain complacent when people come into harm's way due to their incompetence. They did not *intend* to cause harm in their (mis)representations. They *intended* to protect both groups by implementing initiatives that remained hollow, like INDEPA. Because of intent, actual material consequences are disregarded. There is no connection, no following up with those intentions, which is extremely detrimental to those who received such empty words.

In the second and third chapters of my study, I began to analyze the core characteristics of both *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*. Using textual analysis to record the characteristics of both characters, I found the two are simultaneously related yet separate from one another. They have the same comedian performing as them, both are racialized caricatures of two historically oppressed groups and both have the same life span as television characters. Regardless of these similarities, I also understood that while both are racialized caricatures, they were distinctly different in their presentations and spirit.

In the second chapter, I focus solely on *El Negro Mama*. What I found in analyzing those six clips—which spanned the characters' runtime on television (1996-2020)—was that his core characteristics relied on *deviance* and *otherness*. Mama's position as an Afro-Peruvian man made it easier to present him as such. It is in using Mama as a token Afro-Peruvian with no connection to the lived experience of the Afro-Peruvians that he effectively erases. It is abundantly clear that the character's storylines and overall existence were without any basis or concrete examples. Although I can only speculate on who did Benavides base *El Negro Mama* off, it is obvious

from my findings that his character is restrictive. Mama is not allowed to transgress the stereotype of being a fool, he must remain a deviant and an outsider, otherwise his appeal will be lost.

The same can be said about Jacinta. In the third chapter I examined Jacinta following the same methods. Although Jacinta is extremely popular and fits into the archetype of the “chola” characters before her, her character seemed so defeated. Her boisterous personality, vibrant and startling appearance and charisma felt so empty. What I found was that Jacinta faced constant *degradation*. Her core traits focus on *otherness* as well, however her being degraded is not a trait. It is an actionable offense done against her, and in at least one-third of the clips examined she is degraded in such an open manner. It becomes toned down as time progresses, nevertheless, it persists in different forms.

One of the key differences between Mama and Jacinta was that both characters presented numerous instances of a particular trait that another lacked. In Jacinta’s case, the other traits (such as *stupidity*, *sexuality*, etc.) that contributed to her as a character shifted according to storyline, the only trait that did not impact her is *deviance*. Jacinta had extremely low instances of *deviance* throughout the clips examined in this study, whereas Mama was *defined by it*. Conversely, Mama was degraded in a more private manner in comparison to Jacinta. This does not mean to imply that he was not degraded, because he was, but rather that his character did not experience it as deeply as Jacinta. Mama was never banned from entering any establishment, nor was he subject to openly brutal ridicule because he was not placed in those situations. Most degrading comments made to Mama had to do with what others believe he lacks, like intelligence or reason. Jacinta faced degradation on various levels, from her identity as an Indigenous woman, her lack of “positive traits” to her impoverished condition. What can be made of these two contrasting presentations, is that each character has their own distinct way of being a perpetual outsider. Mama may have less public degrading moments, but his dignity is still tarnished by how deviant he is. Jacinta is almost constantly degraded which grants her little dignity, yet was the center of a

successful series. Both characters are “beloved” for what the audience perceives them to be, which is atrocious because of how damaging Mama and Jacitna’s reach is. They are both, as stated multiple times, manifestations of perceived racist ideas about the people they indirectly represent.

The fourth chapter follows two case studies, which both deal with the removal of each respective character from television. Each case is spearheaded by a different activist/advocacy group, each group utilizing a different approach to their end goal. This thesis examine the cases as they were presented to two different entities: the aforementioned *Comité de Solución de Quejas de la Sociedad Nacional de Radio y Televisión* (henceforth SNRTV) the Cusco Superior Court of Justice. Usually, ethics committees like SNRTV are the main authority on complaints with a media outlet. However, with the failure to comprehend LUNDU’s arguments against *El Negro Mama*, there is little hope in change coming from private ethics committees. I argue the *Instituto de Defensa Legal* (henceforth IDL) took notice of the overwhelming amount of power these committees have and proceeded to take a legal approach.

What I gathered from examining both these cases is that ethics agencies are sorely unprepared to handle the violence of (mis)representations, and were created to protect businesses like *Frecuencia Latina*. The battle that LUNDU faced lasted three years, and the end result was not removal of Mama from the air, but a fine of 74.000 soles (approximately 26,000 USD in 2013) directed towards *Frecuencia Latina*. As expanded upon in chapter 4, this was due to a breach in Article 76 of the code of ethics, which found that SNRTV pardoned *Frecuencia Latina* before their public apology could be made. This incident further clarifies how much SNRTV favored *Frecuencia Latina* and how they also mismanage protocols. Public apology is not enough, and as LUNDU had extensively discussed in their report, *Observatorio LUNDU*, Mama is harmful. Although later on SNRTV accepted Mama as racist presentation, they still sustained

the argument that it was not *intended* to cause harm and that in reality it did not impact much. It was not until CONCOR TV intervened that a penalty was officially dealt.

The IDL faced the same arguments that LUNDU had from both *Frecuencia Latina* and SNR-TV. On top of that, they were told (like LUNDU) that removal was extreme, that there was no basis for harm and—their most favorite argument—that removal is an act of censorship. Because of the nature of privatized ethics committees, and the fact that IDL had taken the case to court, they committed their efforts to “protect freedom of expression.” What the IDL had accomplished however, was not only obtaining the testimonies of a number of Andean women claiming that *Jacinta* is harmful to them and their families, but that it was the duty of the state to protect marginalized people who come in harm's way. In that sense, it was not censorship but the state fulfilling the obligation they have towards their citizens.

Now, to compare both case studies is complex, particularly because they included specific arguments to their case and the different bodies, they presented their arguments to. Yet, they still had the same core argument that media (mis)representation is violent, with the objective to remove a character from television. The success of the IDL pivoted off the work of LUNDU in their efforts to take down *El Negro Mama*. LUNDU was at the center of controversy in 2010, and although it was not what they envisioned, the fine of 74,000 soles did provide hope that more could be done.²¹¹ LUNDU's struggle speaks to the power of collective organizing, and also how difficult it is to be Afro-Peruvian within a nation that hardly recognizes them.

Although LUNDU testified their own experiences of racism due to the media, they were not given the attention and care they needed. They additionally received vicious verbal attacks from fans of *El Negro Mama*, which were extremely open as well as threatening. Regardless of the work they submitted, the testimonies they presented and how visible they were during that

²¹¹ (Karen Juanita Carrillo, n.d.)

time, they were still viewed as radicals who had no supporting evidence. The IDL may have faced the same arguments presented by *Frecuencia Latina*, SNRTV and the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones* but the coverage was less intense. They resolved their case in a year and got the result they worked for. Whether this correlates to the presentation of each character's perceived race—Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous—is not conclusive. However, to mark it off as pure coincidence, given everything this thesis has examined is also not a firm stance.

What this thesis hoped to accomplish was to present another work that takes the time to examine two different characters with immense popularity side by side. With the intention of showing that there is more to the different conditions of each character. This is tied intricately with Perú's social hierarchy, hegemonic revisionist national history and the restrictive policies each was subject to from private ethics committees. Because of this disparity, between intention and action, the organization of the people impacted is needed. Action against these injustices and the rebuilding of media practices concerning violence is needed as well. The dismissal of both Jacinta and Mama is a step in the proper direction. What is critical now is to pay attention and ascertain how to redefine discrimination and violence given the context in which they exist in.

What Now?

As made evident by this thesis' small scale analysis of *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta*, there is much work to be done by media entities—like the *Ministerio de Transportes y Comunicaciones*—to better understand, identify and gauge what constitutes violence. Violence in the sense of current ethics committee's standards is one-dimensional and considers only the direct and material aspects of the concept. If one is not physically harmed, and the content is found to have no ill intent, then that does not constitute violence in their view. However, this view is narrow and irresponsible. Violence can be abstract and manifest into psychological and physical trauma. As Cecilia Paninura expressed in an online discussion regarding the case that dismissed *La Paisana Jacinta* from the air, her children faced significant bullying under the pretense that

their mom is a dumb Andean woman like Jacinta.²¹² Despite the intent Benavides had for Jacinta to be merely a comedic tool (which is problematic as is) the ramifications of her presence resulted in the trauma that Paniura's children had to endure. More recently, on July 4th 2021, a 31 year-old Afro-Peruvian woman by the name of Luisa Anaí Medrano Bustamante was accused of robbery in Tai Loy, a small local market in Barranco, a district in Lima.²¹³ Luisa was transferred to the Barranco police station, based solely on the market's testimony with no evidence. The police station, acting wholly based on this testimony, then forced Luisa to undress in order to search her. Much like *El Negro Mama*, it was assumed immediately that Luisa was a delinquent. Found to be innocent, fellow community members protested outside the market on Luisa's behalf, stating that the market's handling of the matter was extremely racist.

Sadly, instances like these are not isolated from one another or from media (mis)representations. It is not solely media (mis)representations that create such a violent reality for Afro-Peruvians and Indigenous Peruvians; but it is media (mis)representations that enable it. Although discrimination is a crime defined within the penal code of Perú, which is supposed to counteract racism, there is a huge divide between that and what I detail here. For example, in 2019, the Council of Ministers approved a vague initiative prepared by the Ministry of Culture that aimed to prevent, eliminate and punish racism and racial discrimination in *any* of its manifestations.²¹⁴ Yet here we are two years later with derogatory images of Afro-Peruvian and Indigenous people present on open air broadcasting. The bill was aimed to counteract racism by providing resources to help historically disadvantaged groups, incorporating the crime of incitement to racial hatred in the Penal Code and prohibiting ethnic-racial discrimination.²¹⁵ The former can result in disciplinary offense by the Law of the Code of Ethics of the Public Function

²¹² (Diario La República 2020)

²¹³ (LR 2021)

²¹⁴ ("Aprueban proyecto de ley para prevención, eliminación y sanción del racismo y la discriminación racial" n.d.)

²¹⁵ Ibid.

and the Law of Productivity and Labor Competitiveness. This is not the first instance of the government using a vague initiative to counteract racism, nor will it be the last.

Yet, media is not understood as a public function despite its dominating presence in public spaces and in our daily lives. It does not qualify under this law, which results in instances like the ones regarding Cecilia Panuira and Luisa Anaf Medrano Bustamante. Those circumstances are compounded by the media, yet it is not viewed in this manner. Additionally, Perú has an Alert Against Racism Team designated to report instances of violence under the provisions of Law No. 29733, which does not account for the media.²¹⁶ It is not as if Perú is not aware of these cases of discrimination, but rather that it still regards media as trivial within the grand scheme of things. However, completely disregarding media within this spectrum of our lives and community is ignoring the immense impact it possesses.

There is much more to the complexity of this topic, such as the national history of Perú and its social hierarchy. Both of these contribute to the deeply embedded idea of who Afro-Peruvians and Indigenous Peruvians are. It is my hope that this thesis clarifies some of this murkiness in order to make the point clear that racism, anti-Blackness, anti-Indianness and all discriminatory offenses still manage to survive because they are viewed as a vanishing issue. That in making the personal impersonal, by relating media (mis)representations like *El Negro Mama* and *La Paisana Jacinta* as expressions of creativity rather than manifestations of racism, Perú has failed in protecting the disadvantaged citizens its constitution sought to protect. Privatizing such a large scale issue to a small board that protect big or private interests will not grant the change that is needed. Rather, dialogue with the people it impacts and complete change of these systems will.

²¹⁶ (“Crear Alerta | Alerta Contra El Racismo” n.d.)

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