Mariquitas on the march in San Pedro de Alcántara, 22 January 1969: an unlikely, rural Stonewall

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Abstract

A Spanish Civil Guard report is to be found in the Historical Provincial Archive of Malaga, where a number of signs proclaiming the 'day of the liberation of the queer' in the small town of San Pedro de Alcántara in January 1969 are transcribed. This article analyses the historical ramifications of this multi-layered report, arguing that the contents of the document, its explicit articulation of gay identity and its demand for emancipation came at a crucial time during the Spanish Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975). By examining the connections between tourism, the policy of 'opening-up' in the second half of Franco's dictatorship, and the changing, yet still very conservative, attitudes towards sexuality in the Spanish 1960s, this article emphasises the existence, importance and agency of smaller, rural LGBTQ communities in general, and of the San Pedro de Alcántara case in particular. This paper analyses the original document, focusing on queer humour, political allegiances and resistance. The article proposes a reconstruction along and against the grain of the rich network of influences that led some LGBTQ people in San Pedro to display signs in defence of their own sexuality and beliefs amidst intense persecution by Franco's regime.

Keywords: Spain, 1960s, tourism, queer, LGBTQ history, rural history, microhistory, queer archives

In the Civil Government files kept in the Malaga historical archive, there is to be found a police report about a series of handwritten notes demanding the liberation of *mariquitas*[1] in the small town of San Pedro de Alcántara near Marbella on the Spanish Costa del Sol.[2] While this document, dated early 1969, has already been the focus of others' attention, such as the Pasaje Begoña community project, the *Malaga Paradise* fanzine and the collective La Juana in San Pedro de Alcántara, the historical ramifications of this multi-layered report are analysed here in detail for the first time. The report was drawn up by the Information Service of the Malaga Civil Guard, one of the main bodies for maintaining order and investigating potential civil threats under the dictatorship of Francisco Franco (1939-1975). The document transcribes the contents of the declarations posted around the streets of San Pedro de Alcántara on 22 January 1969. This article argues that the contents of the document, its explicit articulation of gay identity and its demand for emancipation came at a crucial time during the dictatorship. The

end of the 1960s in Spain represented a certain degree of ambivalent 'opening up' accompanied by renewed repression of social movements, but also fast-changing gender relations and shifts in power within the structures of the regime. The demand for queer freedom in early 1969 in this small Andalusian town is significant given the international context of women's liberation. It also foreshadows much larger contestations about gender and sexuality to come, notably the Stonewall riots of June 1969.

The posting of the handwritten notes came to the attention of the local police, who then informed the Civil Guard, which in turn informed the Civil Governor of the province. The mayor of neighbouring Marbella, Francisco Cantos, under whose jurisdiction San Pedro de Alcántara falls, was also apprised of the contents of the notes and his opinion on them was sought by the provincial authorities. As well as proclaiming the international day of the *mariquita*, the notes, as transcribed in the police document, are unique in providing an insight into emerging, subjective and self-aware queer identities. Not only do their authors demand recognition for their sexual identity ostensibly from the local population and the authorities, but they also differentiate themselves from other expressions of homosexuality that were current at the time.

The report of the Civil Guard

The main body of the document describes how on 23 January 1969 six notes, handwritten in ink and, to judge by the report, mainly in capital letters on the reverse side of six sheets torn out of a Ronda Building Society calendar, appeared on building walls on several streets in San Pedro de Alcántara. These posters were then collected on that very day by the local police who in turn transferred them to the Civil Guard.

The report ('nota informativa' in Spanish) transcribes the contents of the posters, alternating capital letters and lower-case letters seemingly according to the way the messages were written in the original source itself. The order in which these texts were presented was presumably in the order the authorities found the posters, but there may be other reasons why they were assembled in this fashion. Unfortunately, no further details about this incident have been found yet in either Marbella's municipal archive or Malaga's historical archive. Neither the Marbella local police nor the Civil Guard retain incident reports or historical archives. Among these messages some quite extraordinary claims and demands were made, which we translate into English below.

- "*MARIQUITAS* ON THE MARCH. WE ARE NOT 'MACHO' BUT WE ARE MANY: TOGETHER WE WILL BEAT PREJUDICE 22-1-69, DAY OF THE *MARIQUITA*.
- "WE DON'T ASK FOR MARIHUANA, WE ONLY WANT LA JUANA [rhyming with marihuana] TO LEAVE SOME MEN FOR US (if there are any left)
- "LADIES, DO NOT TAKE THEM ALL FOR YOURSELVES BECAUSE MEN ARE ALSO FOR US: EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES, 22/1/69, 1ST DAY OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE QUEER. UP WITH THE THIRD SEX!!
- "22ND OF JANUARY DAY OF THE EMANCIPATION OF THE *MARIQUITA* – COMMUNISM, NO MARIHUANA NO!, WOMEN FOR THOSE WHO WANT THEM MEN YES!!
- "THE *MARIQUITAS* OF SAN PEDRO (we are many) WE PROTEST AGAINST THE RISING COMPETITION OF THOSE OF ESTEPONA AND MARBELLA AND WE DECLARE WAR TO THE PROFESSIONAL *MARICAS* (More than 80% of those called 'MACHOS' 22ND JANUARY 1969. DAY OF THE *MARIQUITA*

With regards to authorship, it is yet uncertain whether the notes were written by a group of people or just one single individual. There were rumours about a same-sex wedding party on the day the signs were displayed, suggesting a group origin. This would also explain why it was considered so important that the mayor of Marbella was invited, or perhaps intervened, to express his opinion to the Civil Governor. There is knowledge, if still incomplete, of a queer community in San Pedro de Alcántara who gathered around a bar called Bar Dragón, where drag queen events were held until 1973. This locale was fictionalised by the author Miguel Ángel Parra in his novel *Miss Dragón*.[3] Parra explains that he interviewed the main characters in order to write his novel. Perhaps surprisingly, the author clarifies that the bar 'was not completely clandestine' because the owner's 'father was a civil guard and they would turn a blind eye'.[4] Additionally, the bar was not frequented only by gay people, but also by celebrities, townsfolk, and members of the jet set, for whom the Marbella area was fast becoming a desired vacation spot. The mixed crowd points to the fact that the attitudes towards queerness at a local level may have been more tolerant than elsewhere in the country at the time.

An analysis of the terminology used in the text to refer to sexual dissidence is helpful to understand the perspective of this community. The main signifier used to convey their identity is 'mariquita', a term derived from 'marica' that, in turn derives from the proper name 'María'.

As Javier Fernández Galeano explains, 'the semantic root *maric-* combines with different suffixes to […] convey gradations of scandal'; these different terms, however, must not be understood as exclusively essentialist positions, but rather contingent on context.[5] The term 'homosexual' is absent in the document, possibly because of its connections to a pathologising view of same-sex relations. Interestingly, the authors of these notes use the term 'third sex', popularised earlier in the century by Magnus Hirschfeld in his book *Berlin's Third Sex*. As well as familiarity with such 'scientific' studies on homosexuality, the term may also reflect more popular understandings of homosexuality as a third subject position outside of 'normal' manhood. This phrase is an example of what might be termed a strategically essentialist understanding of sexual orientation, as it suggests it may be something inherent to some individuals.[6] This idea is connected to notions of authenticity, inauthenticity and even perversion: it allows for a defence of same-sex desire based on a biological inevitability, whilst also leaving room for those who may choose to engage in these acts willingly, who would then be considered perverts. This logic was often utilised as a legal tool to avoid harsher punishment when confronted with criminal prosecutions.

The term 'marica', in contrast to the more positive and contestatory gloss placed on 'mariquita', is used in the document in a negative way in the phrase 'maricas de profesión', professional queers. Such a comment hints at a lack of authenticity or openness being associated with 'professional queers', who try to pass as straight or 'masculine men' and, therefore, who are also able to lead a 'normal' life and enjoy a successful career. There may, therefore, also exist a class dimension to this critique. In turn, 'mariquitas' are those who admit to not being masculine; the text insinuates that they are being true to their authentic selves and are prepared to take the consequences of their actions. In a very short space, San Pedro queers managed to provide a comprehensive taxonomy of their own community, reflecting variety but also divisions within it.

We argue that the San Pedro document displays a vernacular 'mariquita' role, which fulfilled certain functions, opening a window to different genders and positionalities. The analogy between the binary '*mariquita/marica'* to the English femme/butch is useful to understand the function of these labels in the San Pedro community. Gayle Rubin defined this structuring mechanism of gender in the lesbian community as 'ways of coding identities and behaviors that are both connected to and distinct from standard societal roles for men and women'.[7] Rather than criticising the femme queer for their closeness to femininity, the San Pedro notes twist the analogy to cast their criticism on to the professional 'maricas', those who fancy

themselves as butch ('machos'), but who the authors equate to 'mariquitas', those who are 'visibly' queer and do not hide this fact. The signs connect to the broader idea that the femininity of the 'mariquitas' was inborn (hence, they could not help themselves), as opposed to the masculinity of the 'maricas' (also the more 'masculine' so-called 'maricones') whose sexuality had become perverted and were therefore susceptible to correction, especially in the eyes of the heteronormative majority.[8]

The use of the term 'professional' could potentially be reminiscent of prostitution. This is a possibility as there is some evidence about same-sex prostitution in the Costa del Sol in the early 1960s.[9] At the same time, perhaps more in line with the tone of the signs, however, the messages point at men who have sex with other men while keeping their masculinity and/or heterosexuality intact. This logic was not uncommon at the time, though it is possible that some money or favours were exchanged. Rather than about sexuality, this reflects a social role, following Mary McIntosh's definition.[10] The most striking feature of this document is its vernacular self-awareness, distant from medical, academic discourses, as well as the individuals' ability to contest given beliefs and prejudices. Popular notions are displayed, crisscrossed to some degree with legal and medical terminology. These ideas may be seen as problematic if we look at them with our current awareness. However, in the words of Jeffrey Weeks, 'homosexuality cannot be seen as existing in a timeless configuration, and contemporary forms have traceable historical roots'.[11] Therefore, the structuring and linguistic mechanisms of queer communities are historically bounded and can only be judged and understood in connection to their sociohistorical materiality.

As stated above, the posters described in the police document were related, rumour had it, to the local gay community's celebration of a wedding between two men. While homosexual marriage was a long way from being considered a possibility, this 'spectral', 'fake' or even 'parodic' wedding would have been significant for both the participants and wider San Pedro society. The details of this apparent ceremony have not yet been found. On the one hand, there is evidence of handwritten declarations that were allegedly displayed after the supposed wedding, proclaiming the liberation of queers.[12] Yet on the other hand, it is clear that a wedding between men in a society where such a construct did not even exist would be impossible if not apocryphal: is this not therefore an excellent example of the cultural importance of 'low theory, the small, the inconsequential, the antimonumental, the micro, the irrelevant' and 'queer failure'?, as Jack Halberstam asserts.[13] This was an event that, in reality, was a non-event. Despite not being capable of enjoying any legal endorsement, it must have been significant for

the people involved; a micro event of importance for San Pedro's LGBTQ community. The shimmering, 'now-you-see-it, now-you-don't' quality of this wedding confirms Tze-Yin Teo's claims that 'justice is constituted by the haunting of what is not there and may never be there […] the non-event articulates some material stakes of the immaterial'.[14] Thus, the wedding haunts the present for its claim for justice as its very phantasmagorical expression – like a ghost that can only be seen with the blanket of historical documentation– and demonstrates the way queer histories are to be found in recondite archival and chronological cracks and fissures.

The sexual economy described above had a very real impact on people's lives, because being exposed as sexually dissident had serious social repercussions. For example, in the very year 1969, a man tried to commit suicide 'after the Guardia Civil threatened to parade him through the village so that everyone would know that he was a 'maricón'.[15] Examples like this explain why the signs' authors in the document are adamant to distance themselves from any sort of political movement ('Communism, no'), as a step towards acceptance by the community, and possibly, the political establishment.

Communism was one of the regime's obsessions. The dictatorship tended to conflate several scapegoats into one Jewish-Marxist-masonic-homosexual rhetorical mass. For instance, writers like the former police officer Mauricio Carlavilla del Barrio, in 1956, talked about the 'unquestionable objective affinity between the sodomite and the communist'.[16] This connection between left-wing politics, homosexuality and, more generally, any sexual dissidence was frequent in the imaginary of the dictatorship. This explains why the authors of the signs were concerned about being associated with what they probably considered an extreme political posture – in order to stand a chance of gaining even a small part of success, they had to come across as somewhat integrated in society, taking what could be termed a homophile position, whose objective was to integrate homosexual people as respectable members of society.[17] The report at hand lies at the crossroads between two political positions: the liberationist position developing in the late 1960s, early 1970s, and a more accommodationist homophile position, prevalent in Europe and America in the 1950s and 1960s. Of course, Spain had a lot of catching up to do: Franco's government implemented a policy of autarky and international isolation in its first two decades, leading to a context of extreme poverty that conditioned any attempts at political resistance.[18]

We must emphasise that what took place in San Pedro was *not* a parochial demand or protest. While some of the arguments used may seem outdated to us, the document's vocabulary and

phraseology show a knowledge of current affairs and of the state of sexuality and other demands in the world. For example, the phrase 'equality of opportunities' is used. At the time, that was a new concept that had been only recently aired in the International Human Rights Conference in Teheran in December 1968, to which Spain sent a delegation.[19] At the time, talking about 'equality of opportunities' can be interpreted as a radical political gesture, connected to the political turmoil of the times. The years 1968 and 1969 were both very turbulent for Franco's regime in Spain. The day the signs in our document were displayed, 22 January 1969, the newspaper *Sol de España* opened with an article entitled 'The hammer and sickle at university', which reported on 'grave student incidents in Madrid'.[20] Soon after, on 25 January, a state of emergency was declared by Franco's government, lasting three months, affecting some of the (very few) rights and freedoms of Spaniards. From a political point of view, the authors of the notes are not only trying to carve out a space for themselves by claiming a 'mariquita' identity; they are also differentiating themselves from other homosexuals (the 'profesionales'), aiming to make that identity palatable to others and demanding recognition from the public and the authorities. This differentiation is performed in opposition to another identity operating at the time, 'hippies and long-haired individuals' who were thought to be a problem for tourist areas. In Marbella, for example, mayor Francisco Cantos answered a survey in October 1969 that asked him whether the number of 'hippies and long-haired individuals' had decreased or increased, to which the mayor responded that it was decreasing.[21] Tourism became a source of worry and excitement for Spanish authoritarianism and the perfect opportunity for the queer protest action in San Pedro.

Tourism, consumerism and sexuality

The burgeoning tourist trade in Spain in the 1960s was a key influence in helping to create new social and sexual identities and modes of consumption. The spectacular creation of the mid- to late twentieth-century tourist industry in Spain was also different in nature and extent from the dynamics of the 'Grand Tour', popular among upper class individuals as a 'coming of age' journey from the mid-seventeenth until the mid-nineteenth century, which centred on the viewing of Renaissance art and architecture in France and Italy. Despite the Grand Tour's acting as 'a major institution of knowledge about European civilization and its cultural limits, marked by the outlying Ottoman empire',[22] Spain was left out of this particular circuit. The journeys organised by Thomas Cook also left out the peninsula. Those more recent reflections on travelling in the country were often imbued with exoticist annotations or a focus on the picturesque for example Rose Macaulay's *Fabled Shore: From the Pyrenees to Portugal*.[23]

Despite these absences and reductive accounts by foreigners on the subject of Spain and its peoples, the 'seduction of the Mediterranean' was deeply rooted in European cultural mentalities and was often linked to the perception of greater sexual freedom, particularly for non-heterosexual subjects.[24] This aspect was influential in the context of the events in San Pedro.

As Justin Crumbaugh has noted, the 'grand invention' of tourism by those sectors of the elites that favoured some *aperturismo* or 'opening up' was in part a response to the ailing economic situation in the country. It was also envisaged as a remedy to bring Spain further in from the cold into the western European orbit.[25] The new initiative aimed to provide much needed hard currency to lift Spain, which had been excluded from Marshall Plan finance, out of the economic doldrums of the 1950s. It also responded to rising consumer demand in primarily northern European countries, home to populations that had become used to enjoying a degree of post-war prosperity accompanied by the expansion of cultural values and curiosity and the search for pleasure of diverse natures. The supposed 'cultural revolution' of tourism in Spain fitted, therefore, with shifting priorities in the dictatorship and coincided with the forging of new alliances, exemplified not least by the rise to power of several figures from the elite technocratic Opus Dei to key ministries in 1957. The results, however, did not necessarily please all and were not, in any case, predictable. Deep mistrust of the regime's tactics was harboured especially by traditionalist sectors of 'National Catholicism' as any new socio-economic developments became snared up in rival positionings towards the move to 'open up'.

As the writer Manuel Vázquez Montalbán noted, one of the effects of tourism was the reshaping of 'both the understanding of Spanish culture and the image of the Franco regime itself'.[26] The rise of tourism, nevertheless, intersected with important cultural changes that were emerging within Spain at the time, not least in respect of gender relations. It also opened up space for new forms of resistance.[27] While the expression of any form of sexuality remained tightly controlled, changes in consumer habits intermingled with the demand for greater tolerance of a more comprehensive range of behaviours in tourist areas and these sometimes spilled over into daily life.[28] Indeed, there were certain locales where greater diversity and freedom were experienced. It was precisely localities near to Malaga, including Marbella and Torremolinos, where a relative 'relaxation of morality' was encountered and homosexuality became more visible.[29] These places offered the image of a renewed space for holidays, becoming much more desirable for international tourists.

The reinvention of Spain as a holiday destination was ultimately allied to Franco's bid for survival and constituted a further attempt to consolidate the triumphalist politics of the regime, assigning the memories of the defeated further to the past. Nevertheless, the perceived attractiveness of the Spanish *costas*, the greater mobility afforded by relatively cheap air travel and the desire to experience other cultures were such that new tourist areas experienced an influx of a diverse range of tourists seeking different types of vacations. As much as the lure of the beaches enticed gay men in search of partners, as homosexuality was often punished or completely illegal in tourists' home countries, it was in turn severely punished by the Spanish regime. The repression of homosexuality was, nevertheless, inconsistent, dependent on locality (the judge was much stricter in Seville than in Malaga, for example),[30] often harsher for working-class individuals,[31] and punishment was more likely to be inflicted on Spaniards who had relationships with Spaniards and on the Spanish partner when foreigners were involved.[32] The relationship in some locales on the Mediterranean coast, in fact, between homosexuality and tourism had already been established by the 1950s. A report by a Danish police officer in 1956 noted the fact that same-sex sex was for sale and that 'the trade was particularly rife in the countries of the Mediterranean coast'.[33] In the neighbouring country, as the British law reformer, Donald West, observed, 'a quarter of the male tourists visiting Southern Portugal are homosexuals seeking adventures and prepared to pay'.[34] In previous years, some spaces of greater freedom had been carved out along the coast near Barcelona, notably in Sitges, whose long-standing gay beach of L'Home Mort was established in the 1930s,[35] and in Ibiza,[36] providing an example of historical memory that endures until today.

From just over three million foreign and national tourists in Spain in 1953, by 1962 these numbered 12 million, more than half of whom (6.4 million) were foreigners.[37] In terms of the tourist economy on the Costa del Sol, Torremolinos led the way.[38] Here, a microcosm of touristy excess was able to gain a foothold as the novel by Ángel Palomino, *Torremolinos Gran Hotel* (Madrid, 1971) on the eponymous locality made clear and, more generally, James Michener's *The Drifters* illustrated for the Costa del Sol that very same year.

Sexual Morality: 'aperturismo' and social changes in the 1960s

General Francisco Franco's dictatorship was consolidated in 1939, at the end of the Spanish Civil War, when he claimed victory over the democratically elected government of the Second Republic (1931-1939). Franco was supported in his military endeavour by significant sections of the Catholic Church, which had seen its influence over state affairs diminish during the

republican years and desired the return of its traditional power. The Church became one of the main pillars of the Francoist regime up until the dictator's death in 1975 and beyond.

Sexuality during the Franco period has been portrayed as traditional and stable. Mónica García, however, warns us about the risk of homogenising sexual norms during the dictatorship, pointing instead to the instability that was generated by the tensions between power relationships and gender inequalities.[39] This instability is, precisely, what is seen through the cracks of the evidence presented; the ambiguity between the 'norm', represented by the authorities and social attitudes in this case, and the dissidence seen in the proclamation of the day of queer liberation. Geoffroy Huard, in turn, claims that archival research tends to prove that homosexuality was visible in public spaces during Francoism, and that the dictatorial regime's repression did not necessarily equate to a completely hidden life for sexual dissidents, although the very real repression exercised by the regime must not be forgotten.[40]

As Javier Fernández Galeano asserts, despite some liberalisation, the general tone of the dictatorship was arbitrarily repressive, especially of organised labour and political dissidence.[41] In the 1960s, people were arrested and imprisoned for years for proffering insults against Franco and the regime.[42] According to Gema Pérez-Sánchez, the regime maintained a 'preoccupation with criminalizing homosexuality and normativising gender along binary lines'.[43] The official moral position of the regime and the Church concerning homosexuality coincided with the Catholic catechism, encouraging 'homosexual persons' to remain chaste.[44] This moral position, however, was not all the regime stood for; there was an active drive to eradicate homosexuality from a legal point of view, as well as an attempt at 'curing' it from a medical position.

There were three principal developments that disrupted this repressive process. The 1960s witnessed a broad religious crisis regarding morality and the role of religion.[45] This was in part due to changes exogenous to religion entailed by the beat and hippy movements as well as women's liberation. It was also due to a transformation endogenous to the Catholic Church itself in the wake of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which, despite the opposition of traditionalist sectors, had a huge impact in Spain.[46] Accompanying such changes in the Church was an increased, if still shy by current standards, cultural and sexual tolerance fostered by a development of tourism.[47] A third process, both local and international, encompassed developments in what Rosa María Medina-Domenech has termed the 'Kinsey effect' and American influences in sexual matters,[48] which disrupted both conservative and progressive

psychiatrists' views on the negative consequences of the rise of consumerism after the period of autarky from the 1940s and 1950s.

Medina-Domenech shows how the positive, liberating impact of Kinsey's research in Spain intersected not only with the regime's severe punishment of homosexuality through imprisonment (as well as torture and the stigma of being arrested), but also the emergence of a range of masculinities that began to proliferate.[49] These changing masculinities triggered anxieties, which in turn pointed to the different meanings that the 'sexual' and 'sexuality' had for people, their identities and their wider social world.[50] In turn, these shifts influenced narratives about marriage, which added to the traditional trope of submissive women, a parallel narrative supporting a degree of 'camaraderie' in marriage, inching towards an understanding of the wife as a 'companion' to the always authoritative husband, and within a framework that continued to emphasise sexual difference.[51]

Tourism and homosexuality in the press

Given its incipient economic importance in the region, it comes as no surprise that tourism was a frequent topic in the local and regional press during the 1960s and 1970s. It was a source of hope and excitement for many, as it promised to bring economic profit, but it was also viewed with circumspection by others because of its impact on traditional customs and habits. As outlined above, however, Franco's government in the 1960s had the objective of economic development at its forefront. In tune with those goals, there was a general emphasis on tourism and its benefits in the daily press of the Costa del Sol. This enthusiasm is evidenced by the creation in the newspaper *Sur* of a section entitled 'Here, the Costa del Sol', as well as the establishment of the English language magazine *Lookout.*[52] Tourism as a motor for economic development may explain why the references to the tourist industry in the press publications of local and regional newspapers in 1969 are mainly positive. Whenever there was a problem with tourism, it was often an isolated issue that was posited as something that could be easily solved.

When mentioning 'homosexuality' or 'inversion', the press of the period, evidently constrained by regime censorship and editors who were pro-regime, sought to distance these practices from Spanishness, effectively regarding them as deleterious foreign imports. Both *Sol de España* and *La Tarde*, the two main newspapers at the time, referred to foreign events, especially in the United States and the UK, such as when the press reported the legalisation of homosexuality in the UK in 1967. There is the occasional mention of homosexual activity in Spain in relation

to, for example, a 'strange sect of drug addicts […] mixing superstitions, drugs, homosexuality and abuse of minors'.[53] Other mentions referred to members of foreign nobility, or, in a joking tone, historical events. There are occasional notes about the arrest of homosexuals, such as the sanction to José Olea Blanco and Francisco Alarcón Bueno, who were fined and imprisoned for 'inversion' in 1964 in Seville.[54] This is, in addition, the very first mention to 'homosexuality' in either of the regional newspapers in the decade of the 1960s. Other than this somewhat occasional news, the regional press did not seem concerned about homosexual behaviour, neither was an open connection made between homosexuality and tourism. Indeed, tourism was largely proclaimed to be beneficial, an association that largely continues to this date.[55]

As the years go by, however, we see the association between tourism, homosexuality and drug use become firmer. The article entitled 'The case of the tourist industry' by Enrique del Pino in *Sol de España* finishes with the following, interesting if homophobic, remark – the first open mention of homosexuality and tourism in the year 1971:

> [W]e were told that the sun was already ours, partly because on this shore it is a matter of pride to be open and welcoming. But up to a certain point because, leaving aside drugs and homosexuality for a more clinical analysis, the Costa del Sol is part of the spiritual patrimony of our people and as such it must be insufflated with a definitive soul; the steel soul that it currently has does not belong to it.[56]

This tangential reference to sexual deviance was the closest these local newspapers would come to discussing homosexuality. No mention of the events of San Pedro would appear in either paper.

Queer archives: between loss, preservation and agency

With tourism and changing sexual mores providing fertile grounds for change, and with the San Pedro report having been passed from the local police to the Civil Guard and the Civil Governor, there is one further element on this heavily intertextual document that merits comment. At the bottom of the document there is a note that reads: 'Cantos says he believes it was a joke'. There is evidence to suggest that this Cantos was in fact Francisco 'Paco' Cantos, the mayor of Marbella. Paco Cantos intervened to convince the Civil Governor that this event was just a joke and not worthy of the authorities' attention. Additionally, Juan Carlos Reina, an important radio journalist in Radio Marbella at the time, was also involved in this intervention, according to his son Miguel Ángel Reina's blogpost.[57] Indeed, M.A. Reina claims that this event was reported on by his father in his programme on Radio Marbella.[58] Around these

rumours and archival silences, the questions keep growing: To what extent did the authorities actually believe it was a joke? Or did they just pander to the events because of Cantos's and Reina's respective positions in the local hierarchy? The archive only speaks so much; there are many gaps in our current knowledge about how this event was received and what the lines of communication were between the Local Police, the Civil Guard and Cantos. The archive does show, however, that the Civil Guard produced reports for a wide range of reasons, some of them prosaic. Around the late 1960s, a flurry of reports on signs protesting about different issues, including from members of the Falange who believed that Franco's regime had betrayed their core ideology, are found in the Malaga archive. The sheer variety and extent of these reports shows that the strategy of protesting using signs or stickers was common as an accessible and relatively risk-free DIY form of protest.[59]

Of course we must not forget the tongue-in-cheek, facetious quality of these signs. The degree to which the authors themselves took them seriously is hard to gauge; what is clear, however, is that the authorities did take them very seriously, even if repeating to themselves that it was a joke. The messages do have a funny, camp aspect to them. This was a dynamic process, with a large element of parody and excess that can be profitably viewed through a slanted, queer gaze.[60] We must emphasise that the parodic aspect of this performance can be seen as both a humorous, ironic critique of the queer community itself, and as a vehicle to convey, in a more palatable or direct way, the important claims that this community wanted to air, as utopian and camp as they may have looked.

A final point to highlight is that the queer subject who speaks in the San Pedro document is only seen through the screen of a police report, which conforms a closely woven tapestry of texts. This metaphor is useful to understand the way hegemonic ideology works, because the basis of the tapestry, its support, the document itself is produced by the police, the coercive power of the State. The messages of San Pedro's queer community appear inserted in the textual framework of a police report, informing the Civil Governor of the event in a criminalising way. The threads used to knit this tapestry are made of a combination of vernacular ideas about sexual dissidence and medico-legal notions of homosexuality.

This produces an inherent paradox, for we are only able to hear those voices because of the report, which at the same time is an indictment for their criminal status at the time. This is an affective instance of what can be called a foreclosure of the queer subject in the archive, adapting this psychoanalytic notion from the work of Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak.[61] This

foreclosure, or rejection of both an idea and an affect (for the authorities denied both the idea of the queers marching but also rejected the affect that may have produced in the establishment and society at large by claiming it was a joke) prevents the authors' access to the position of narrators in their own lives. Furthermore, the mayor of Marbella gets to sign off the document vicariously, through the handwritten note a clerk wrote at the bottom of the page. The irony is obvious here for these messages have been transmitted by the very coercive apparatus that sought to quash them. However, by dint of the same process, we are only able to see them through the eyes of the authorities, for no trace of this event has remained anywhere else.

As historians of marginalised minorities, we are forced to access our object of study through third party representations that are steeped in the often-discriminatory politico-social hegemony of the times. Our approach is informed by Fernández Galeano's *Queer Obscenity*, where the author insists on the importance of acknowledging the 'traces of the state persecution of sexual "minorities"', as they 'provide the documentary ground for keeping the state accountable for its historic crimes and building the collective memory of non-normative sexual communities'.[62] Therefore, careful deconstruction and awareness is needed to understand the little evidence we do hold, and to work through and around these documents so that we can get a better picture of the situation and agency of rural LGBTQ+ communities, their relations to their neighbours and to the politics of the Francoist regime in the hinge period of the late 1960s.

Conclusion

In her account of the ways in which the demand for homosexual liberation coincided with and contributed to the social transformation in Portugal during the Carnation Revolution in April 1974, Joana Matias emphasises the need to gauge the importance of the 'exceptional' as well as fully contextualising the conditions of its emergence.[63] As she states, while homosexuality was evoked by some as part of a process that would end the dictatorship, challenge patriarchy and create a space for the flourishing of alternative sexualities, from within the very movement that sought to end the *Estado Novo* and colonialism, there were also those who dismissed homosexuality as a legitimate demand. The exceptional or apparently minor event becomes a means of interrogating broader historico-political processes. Focusing on the history of marginal groups helps us implement a historical practice that recognises that thinking through history is in turn a way of thinking through politics.

The perspective of local history adopted in this article reinforces the notion that a fragmented, barely reported upon set of events is capable of illuminating broader dynamics and can cast

light on a wide range of issues.[64] First, the posters handwritten by *mariquitas* in San Pedro show how emerging identities around same-sex sexuality were becoming consolidated and more self-confident even under the Franco dictatorship. The demand for queer liberation prevailed against the more domesticated or accommodationist expressions of same-sex desire, dismissed by the San Pedro gays as conformist or 'inauthentic'. While also employing the trope of radicalness and ostensibly rejecting any association with communism or hippie drug use, the *mariquitas* of San Pedro also declared the naturalness of homosexuality and its legitimacy as a sexual desire and what Foucault termed a *mode de vie* where friendship and sexuality can 'be shared among individuals of different age, status, and social activity'.[65] The camp playfulness of their posters were a call to arms as well as an act of defiance against the norms of 'National Catholic' Spain.

Second, it is important to note that the demands made in 1969 in San Pedro were connected to the exceptional space[66] – both a physical and cultural 'space of hope'[67]– that centred on Marbella and Torremolinos as 'tolerated' eccentric locales under the dictatorship, which was keen to open up the *costas* to international tourist finance as a means of softening the image of the regime externally. The San Pedro signs are evidence of a territory that bridges the rural and the cosmopolitan. It is an example of the tension between the global and the local in the study of queer and trans genealogies. The relative rurality of a place such as San Pedro may also have meant a greater margin for demonstrative acts of queer assertiveness.[68] The aspiration of the regime towards the total control of the population through repressive measures succeeded in many aspects of daily life, not least in respect of the control of alternative gender expressions and sexuality. Nevertheless, the consensus adopted by some sectors associated with the regime (notably the Ministry of Information and Tourism and critical currents within the Catholic Church) also permitted some breathing space that intersected with wider European and American shifts in behaviour, including the development of consumerism and the strengthening of oppositional political activism.

The aspiration of the regime to total control was never completely successful, permitting cracks in the dictatorship's façade and deep structures. This created, and was created by, a third and final dynamic that we comment upon here. While the 'Day of Queer Liberation' launched by San Pedro queers was exceptional for the period in Spain, it connected with emerging European demands for a more tolerant, democratic and inclusive society where gender questions and sexuality were high profile issues. San Pedro's queer texts or 'un/hidden transcripts' also coincided surreptitiously with the increasing confidence of resistance within Spain[69], not least

on university campuses but also in a reinvigorated illegal rank and file trade union movement, sparking a state of emergency in 1969. Catalan activists had forged links with French gay rights organisations in the late 1960s,[70] May 1968 was around the corner, anticolonial movements were in full swing and numerous 'revolutionary' gay organisations began to sprout in countries as far apart as Argentina, Britain, France and Italy. Suggesting a relationship of cause and effect between the posters in San Pedro and these wider processes would strain the limits of historical interpretation. However, when working with archives of marginal groups, the historian often needs to be creative in the use of often scarce evidence. As Sara Ahmed has said, '[i]f history in some sense is about the reachable […] then history can also be described as a process of domestication – of making some objects and not others available as what we "can" reach'.[71] What the San Pedro document can help us identify and understand is the existence of demands for queer liberation before the establishment of revolutionary gay organisations and before the riots that would constitute Stonewall. The events of San Pedro pre-date these later developments in Spain and beyond and, it can be argued, pre-figured them too.

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[1] *Mariquitas* is a Spanish word that can be translated into 'queers' or 'queens'. It designates gender deviance such as effeminacy and sexual dissidence, including same-sex desire.
[2] This document can be found in the Civil Government section of the archive, under the reference 12675/01. It displays a 'confidential' stamp and on the subject line it records the number 155 followed by the word 'varied' ('varios' in Spanish).
[3] M. A. Parra, *Miss Dragón*, (Lanzarote, 2023).
[4] M. A. Parra, personal communication via email, January 2025. Our translation.
[5] Fernández Galeano, *Maricas*, p. xxviii.
[6] The use of essentialism to make mobilise or make demands for a particular group of people with a shared marginal or oppressed identity was explored by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and then disavowed by this author in G. Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (Malden, MA, 2008), 260 as a tactic that had become in itself essentialised or which produced essentialist belonging.
[7] G. Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC, 2012), 472.
[8] D. Haller, 'Homosexuality in Seville', *SOLGAN*, 4, 3 (1992), 27-35, 33.
[9] J. Fernández Galeano, 'Is He a "Social Danger"? The Franco Regime's Judicial Prosecution of Homosexuality in Málaga under the Ley de Vagos y Maleantes', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 25, 1 (2016), 1-31.
[10] M. McIntosh, 'The Homosexual Role', *Social Problems*, 16, 2 (1968), 182-192.
[11] J. Weeks, 'The "Homosexual Role" After 30 Years: An Appreciation of the Work of Mary McIntosh', *Sexualities*, 1, 2 (1998), 131-152, 133.
[12] https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/cultura/archivos_html/sites/default/contenidos/archivos/ahpmalaga/Galeria/DocMes201810_12675_parte_Guardia_Civil.jpg
[13] J. Halberstam. *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham and London 2011), 21.
[14] T. Teo, 'Non-Event', *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 17, 1 (2017), 73-92, 74.
[15] Fernández Galeano, *Maricas*, 11.
[16] Quoted in J. Fernández Galeano, 'Is He a "Social Danger"? The Franco Regime's Judicial Prosecution of Homosexuality in Málaga under the Ley de Vagos y Maleantes', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 25, 1 (2016), 1-31, 12.
[17] J. C. Vázquez Parra, 'Las olas del movimiento LGBTIQ+. Una propuesta desde la historiografía', *Revista Humanidades*, 11, 2 (2021), 65-81.
[18] G. Román Ruiz, 'Mocking the Dictatorship: Symbolic Resistance in Everyday Life During Francoism in the 1960s', *European History Quarterly*, 52, 2 (2022), 179-199, 180.
[19] *Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights*, (Teheran, 1968).

[20] *Sol de España*, 22/01/1969.
[21] Historical Archive of Marbella, Mayor's correspondence.
[22] E. A. Bohls, 'Introduction', in Elizabeth A. Bohls and Ian Duncan (eds) *Travel Writing 1700–1830: An Anthology* (Oxford 2005), xiii-xxvii, xxvi.
[23] R. Macaulay, *Fabled Shore: From the Pyrenees to Portugal* (London 1949).
[24] R. Aldrich, *The Seduction of the Mediterranean: Writing, Art and Homosexual Fantasy* (London 1993). The 'sexual opportunities', often heavily freighted with colonialist perceptions, offered by the Grand Tour and more recent tourism are discussed in I. Littlewood, *Sultry Climates: Travel and Sex Since the Grand Tour* (London 2001).
[25] J. Crumbaugh, *Destination Dictatorship: The Spectacle of Spain's Tourist Boom and the Reinvention of Difference* (Albany, NY 2009), 15-39.
[26] Crumbaugh, *Destination Dictatorship*, 3.
[27] On the early period, see Ó. J. Rodríguez Barreira, *Migas con miedo. Prácticas de resistencia al primer franquismo. Almería, 1939-1953* (Almería 2008), and, for later, G. Román Ruiz, 'Mocking the Dictatorship: Symbolic Resistance in Everyday Life During Francoism in the 1960s', *European History Quarterly*, 52, 2 (2022), 179-199.
[28] García Fernández, *Dos en una sola carne*; Medina-Domenech; R. Abella, *La vida amorosa en tiempos de Franco* (Madrid 1996).
[29] R. Cáceres Feria, J.M. Valcuende del Río, J.C. Parrilla Molina, J-M. Pérez García, *El pasaje Begoña en la memoria LGTBI+. Libertad y represión de la sexualidad en Torremolinos durante el franquismo (1962-1971)* (Seville 2011), 24, 39, 42, 46, 49.
[30] Fernández Galeano, 'Is He a "Social Danger"?'.
[31] A. Díaz, 'Afeminados de vida ociosa: sexualidad, género y clase social durante el franquismo', *Historia Contemporánea*, 65 (2021), 131-162.
[32] Cáceres Feria, Valcuende del Río, Parrilla Molina, Pérez García, *El pasaje Begoña*, 23. Here, the authors draw on S.D. Pack's words in *Tourism and Dictatorship: Europe's peaceful invasion of Franco's Spain* (New York/Houndmills 2006), 146, to the effect that 'Spain's first openly homosexual taverns operated in Torremolinos, where the presence of an international clientele prompted regime authorities to turn a blind eye'.
[33] D.J. West, *Homosexuality* (2nd edn, Harmondsworth 1968), 128, who cites J. Jersild, *Boy Prostitution* (Copenhagen 1956).
[34] West, *Homosexuality*, 128.
[35] B. Jones, *Over 100 Years in the Gay History of Sitges*, DVD (Sitges 2018).
[36] O. Martínez and B. Dodge, 'El barrio de La Chueca of Madrid, Spain: An Emerging Epicenter of the Global LGBT Civil Rights Movement', *Journal of Homosexuality*, 57, 2 (2010), 226-248, 229 note that 'Many LGBT individuals and journalists during the Franco regime decided to leave major cities such as Madrid and found refuge in the small Island of Ibiza in the Mediterranean Sea', having drawn on F. Fernández Fernández, 'Ibiza-70: A community in rapid social transformation', *Cuadernos de Realidades Sociales*, 9 (1976), 151-196.
[37] R. Vallejo Pousada, 'Turismo en España entre el primer y el segundo boom turístico, y cambio de modelo (1951-1962)', *Estudios Turísticos*, 223 (2022), 21-57, 27.
[38] A.E. García-Moreno, C. Rosa-Jiménez, M.J. Márquez-Ballesteros, 'Lo banal como patrimonio de la Costa del Sol. Torremolinos (1959- 1979)'. *Pasos. Revista de Turismo y Patrimonio Cultural*, 14, 1 (2016), 253-273, 260.
[39] M. García, *Dos en una sola carne* (Granada 2022), 4.
[40] Huard, *Los Antisociales*, 169.
[41] J. Fernández Galeano, *Maricas,* 166.
[42] Román Ruiz, 190-194.
[43] G. Pérez-Sánchez, 'Franco's Spain, Queer Nation?', *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform*, 33, 3 (2000), 359-404.
[44] Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Huntingdon, PA 2000), 2357.
[45] García, *Dos en una sola carne*, 12.
[46] A. Brassloff, *Religion and Politics in Spain: The Spanish Church in Transition, 1962-96* (Basingstoke, 1998).
[47] García, *Dos en una sola carne* 10.
[48] R. M. Medina-Domenech, 'The sexual upheaval of the Spanish sixties: gender and sexual-affective diversities under Franco's authoritarian regime', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 24, 3 (2023), 339-357, 342.
[49] Medina-Domenech, 346.
[50] Medina-Domenech, 350.
[51] García, 111.
[52] C. Moreno Castro, J. A. García Galindo, "Periodismo y turismo en España entre la dictadura y la democracia," in J. A. García Galindo, J. F. Gutiérrez Lozano and M. I. Sánchez Alarcón (eds) *La comunicación social durante el franquismo* (Málaga, 2002), 539-556.
[53] *Sol de España,* 7/12/1971.

[54] *La Tarde,* 15/1/1964.
[55] E. Vega, 'Eva incluida', in J. Cuevas del Barrio and A. Néstore (eds) *Cruising Torremolinos* (Málaga, 2022), 71-93.
[56] E. del Pino, 'El caso de la industria turística', *Sol de España*, 30/3/1971, translation ours.
[57] M. A. Reina, *Juan Carlos Reina, un romance eterno con Marbella (VIII).* Available at: https://miguelangelreina.wordpress.com/2013/02/09/juan-carlos-reina-un-romance-eterno-con-marbella-viii/
[58] Unfortunately, RTVE (Radio and Television of Spain) have not yet found any recordings for this radio station in their archives (even though there should be recordings of most programmes since the 1960s).
[59] Historical Provincial Archive of Malaga, collection of Gobierno Civil de Málaga year 1969, box 6943, documents number 82, 93, 122, 3363.
[60] A. Mira, *De Sodoma a Chueca*, (Barcelona, 2004) 147.
[61] G. C. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 9.
[62] J. Fernández Galeano, *Queer Obscenity: Erotic Archives in Dictatorial Spain* (Stanford, CA, 2024), 149.
[63] J. Matias, 'Cravos cor-de-rosa: notas para o lugar das dissidências sexuais e de género na história da Revolução', *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, 133 (2024), 35-50.
[64] R. Cleminson and C. Hernández-Burgos, 'The purification of vice: early Francoism, moral crusade, and the barrios of Granada, 1936–1951)', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 16, 1 (2015), 95-114.
[65] M. Foucault, 'Friendship as a Way of Life', in P. Rabinow (ed), *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984, Volume One, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, trans. R. Hurley et al, pp. 135-140 (p. 138).
[66] On Torremolinos as a space where a vanguard atmosphere of permissiveness and diversity existed, see R. Cáceres Feria and J.M. Valcuende del Río, 'Turismo y homosexualidad en la España franquista: Torremolinos (1960-1971)', in G. Huard and J. Fernández Galeano (eds) *Las locas en el archivo. Disidencia sexual bajo el franquismo* (Madrid, 2023), 305-327, 315.
[67] D. Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh, 2000).
[68] J. Fernández Galeano, 'Mariquitas, "Marvellous Race Created by God": The Judicial Prosecution of Homosexuality in Francoist Andalusia, 1955-70', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 57, 3 (2022), 775-801, 777.
[69] J. C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven/London, 1990); A. Cabana Iglesia, 'Passive Resistance. Notes for a more complete understanding of the resistance practices of the rural population during the Franco dictatorship', *Amnis. Revue d'études des sociétés et cultures contemporaines Europe-Amérique*, 9 (2010), https://journals.openedition.org/amnis/265
[70] J. Jackson, *Living in Arcadia. Homosexuality, Politics and Morality in France from the Liberation to Aids* (Chicago, 2009).
[71] S. Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology* (Durham and London, 2006).