

## Emma Coronel and the *buchona* femininity in social media. Towards ways of redefining women in drug trafficking<sup>1</sup>

*Emma Coronel y la feminidad buchona en redes sociodigitales. Hacia formas de resignificar a la mujer en el narcotráfico*

*Emma Coronel e a feminilidade buchona nas redes sociodigitais. Rumo a maneiras de redefinir as mulheres no tráfico de drogas*

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This text analyzes discourses about Emma Coronel, Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán’s wife, and the *buchona* femininity on Instagram and TikTok. Using netnography, it approaches sociodigital networks to address the relationship between drug culture and gender, involving sociocultural, economic, political, historical, and technological components. Practices and discourses that participate in the construction of *buchona* femininity are identified. However, erotic capital is questioned as a form of resistance in the drug world.

**KEYWORDS:** *Buchona* femininity, gender, net-narco culture, social media.

*Este texto analiza discursos sobre Emma Coronel, esposa de Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, y la feminidad buchona en Instagram y TikTok. Empleando la netnografía, se aproxima a las redes sociodigitales para abordar la relación entre la narcocultura y el género, implicando componentes socioculturales, económicos, políticos, históricos y tecnológicos. Se identifican prácticas y discursos que participan en la construcción de la feminidad buchona. Sin embargo, se cuestiona el capital erótico como una forma de resistencia en el narcomundo.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Feminidad buchona, género, net-narcocultura, redes socio-digitales.*

*Este texto analisa discursos sobre Emma Coronel, esposa de Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán, e a feminilidade buchona no Instagram e no TikTok. Utilizando a netnografia, aborda as redes sociodigitais para abordar a relação entre narcocultura e gênero, envolvendo componentes socioculturais, econômicos, políticos, históricos e tecnológicos. São identificadas práticas e discursos que participam da construção da feminilidade buchona. Contudo, o capital erótico é questionado como forma de resistência no mundo das drogas.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Feminilidade buchona, gênero, net-narcocultura, redes sócio-digitais.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to identify discourses in social media associated with the (self) representation of gender and narcoculture based on visual and audiovisual content about Emma Coronel; considering that social interaction through the digital environment has taken an important role for the study of the construction, production, distribution, dissemination and consumption of cultural content (Villaplana & León, 2022) in this case of narcoculture and remembering that cultural and media industries react to local and global market needs (Karam, 2018; Thoreau, 2022).

## DRUG TRAFFICKING: A CULTURAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHENOMENON

In order to study narcoculture and gender as an interrelation, it is necessary to contemplate the context of meanings, as well as to analyze and question the cultural constructions in relation to drug trafficking (Estévez, 2013; León, 2019), a corporation that participates in different social spheres (Wainwright, 2018), including political and, of course, economic ones.

In Mexico, the relationship between drug trafficking and the political system was evidenced in the case of Genaro García Luna, who was head of the Secretariat of Security in the government of Felipe Calderón (2006-2012), and who led the so-called “fight against drug trafficking” or “the war on drugs”. It is worth mentioning that García Luna was convicted for his ties to organized crime on February 21, 2023 (BBC, 2023a). Organized crime’s relationship with the state has also been notorious. In 2021, Emma Coronel admitted her participation “in the plot to orchestrate Chapo’s escape in 2015, and revealed that she was involved in the payment of \$4 million in bribes to Enrique Peña Nieto government officials in 2014 and 2016” (Hernández, 2021, p. 291).

On the other hand, socially, drug trafficking has become a commonplace. In everyday life, imaginaries about the drug trafficker, the narco-world and women in drug trafficking are in circulation, which have been encouraged by the consumption of cultural products (Becerra, 2018; León, 2019; Mercader, 2012; Mondaca, 2014).

From the dynamics of consumption has derived the so-called narcomarketing; a market strategy that has recovered the Colombian and Mexican contexts of Pablo Escobar and Joaquín Guzmán Loera, respectively, to turn them into brands and profits for the cultural industries (León, 2019) and that has also been replicated for other organized crime figures.

In dialogue with this idea, new technologies also construct and reproduce social imaginaries that contribute to the representation of women inserted in the narco-world, or who aspire to be, but that also turn narcoculture into a way of inhabiting life, the body and gender.

### SOCIOCULTURAL AND COMMUNICATIVE STUDIES ON DRUG TRAFFICKING

It is recognized that drug trafficking has been a social phenomenon addressed in the social sciences for the study of violence, consumption and masculinity (Vásquez, 2017). Here, a brief review of the state of the art is made to account for how, particularly from communication, efforts have been made to recognize how cultural industries legitimize and reproduce symbols and cultural meanings that validate the ideas of women and the feminine in the narco-world.

Mondaca et al. (2015) recognize that, despite identifying female empowerment efforts in drug trafficking, the male vision maintains the objectification of women. Although they participate as hired assassins, bosses, money launderers or mules, the tendency continues in the narco-world to “convert women into a market object as an offer for the charm and complacency of men” (p. 183). In particular, the authors focus on the study of narcocorridos and how they serve to promote social imaginaries; they also highlight the role of social networks as platforms for the expansion of music.

Narconovelas are another form of cultural industry that reproduces how gender and social violence are normalized and represented as cultural patterns in organized crime. For Hernández and Pech (2020), these types of visual narratives recreate an idealized world in which ethical and moral values are put into play to legitimize violence.

Literary novels have also been used to study the processes of construction of women’s power in the narco-world. In addressing

this type of cultural industries, Carrillo (2020) speaks of narco-empowerment; which is a way of gaining power through violent practices such as murder and kidnapping. Through the study of music, Mondaca (2004) has shown the historical participation of women in the narco-world. Situated in the perspective of gender and cultural studies, the author identifies women in the drug trafficking business as cruel, vengeful, powerful, violent and controlling.

Previous studies show how cultural industries reproduce meanings about women's participation in the narco-world. The same happens with music, narconovelas and novels, as they portray how women seek a place and empowerment in organized crime. However, these forms of exercising power are rooted in male expressions of violence. Likewise, it is observed how gender violence continues to be legitimized and normalized in the narco-world. In other words, despite efforts of resistance, women remain trapped in violent worlds, in which they can be either victims or victimizers.

## NARCO-CULTURE AND NET-NARCO-CULTURE

Drug trafficking becomes part of everyday life and culture from the media, in the consumption of film, television and social media. For example, Telemundo or Univisión with narconovelas, coverage and interviews with actors and drug trafficking figures; Netflix addressing narcoculture in series; and the music industry with narcocorridos, narcorap or Mexican regional, among others (Alzati, 2019; Thoreau, 2022; Villaplana & León, 2022). The media are there to propagate practices, meanings and identities.

In this paper, the concept of narcoculture is taken up again under two ideas: as a “set of practices that make up a certain way of life and, on the other hand, in the sense of the aesthetic registers that are produced from the context of drug trafficking” (Correa, 2022, p. 183). From the second, derives the narco-aesthetics (representations and cultural forms) visible in narcoserries, narcocorridos and narcoliterature (Correa, 2022), or notorious in the modification of the body (mainly female) (Pressly, 2021).

Both ideas about narcoculture are embedded in the “construction of narratives and representations that are partly fed by the media and

artistic forms” (Correa, 2022, p. 183). In this regard, Rincón (2013) states that “we all carry a narco inside..., the narco allows small capitalist happiness; it imagines progress, freedom, equality; it promises the comfort of free time, women, entertainment and social figuration” (p.2).

Web 2.0, characterized mainly by the formation of communities and social media, provides the approach, conformation and propagation of cultural and identity expressions, discourses and trends associated with drug trafficking (Villaplana & León, 2022), which derive in the so-called net-narcoculture. In this way, the web is constituted as the largest platform for the distribution of cultural content, there is also where the products that legitimize the “hyperconsumerist” society are generated, which refers to gore capitalism (Valencia, 2010), in which “bodies become a commodity, and their care, conservation, freedom and integrity are related products” (Estévez, 2013, p. 231).

Similarly, it is from viral contents of drug trafficking in social media, which may even be published by people from organized crime (Thoreau, 2022), that violence, drug use and the perception of women from a heteropatriarchal perspective are promoted. Thus, narcoculture expands in offline and online everyday life.

*“AY VIENE LA BUCHONA VESTIDA Y A LA MODA”.*

#### BUCHONA FEMINITY

The song “La Buchona”, by Chuy Lizárraga, says “Here comes the buchona dressed and fashionable; her nails decorated, her mouth well painted”. The song is part of the cultural industries that construct and reproduce forms of femininity; it is a way of thinking about women in narcoculture and also an expression of gender identity. Thus, the media and technologies disseminate, at the glocal level, codes of how masculinity and femininity are understood as ways of regulating gender and sexuality (León, 2019).

The construction of the female body encompasses historical, social, cultural, political and economic dimensions. Women’s bodies have been transformed, but also their use and representation (which includes the role of selfies and the ways of taking and “promoting” as well as (re) signifying one’s own body and gender in social media), as happens with

women in the narcomundo who fulfill roles in power relations (León, 2019; Mondaca, 2014).

The way in which the image of women in narco-trafficking is constructed, interpreted and disseminated is part of gender identity, and these acts “conform to an expected gender identity or challenge that expectation in some way” (Butler, 1988, p. 527); that is, to what is thought, expected or, even, idealized of women in organized crime.

For this text, buchona femininity is understood in the same way as expressed by León (2019). Buchonas are “women immersed in the Mexican narcoculture and function as erotic-affective partners of men involved in drug trafficking” (Villaplana & León, 2022, p. 170); who, based on ideas of Marcela Lagarde, start from capitalistic subjectivities, since they enter a market with the rent or sale of the body, to ascend or be successful and have benefits in the narco-world (León, 2019).

The term “buchona” characterizes women with a physical appearance, both facial and body, derived from cosmetic surgery, flashy clothes and luxury accessories. In fact, although narcos often choose buchonas as girlfriends, many do not have direct links to drug trafficking, but rather adopt this style as a fashion statement (Pressly, 2021). The most representative example of a “buchona” woman who does not belong to the narco-world is Kim Kardashian’s style (Hernández, 2021; Infobae, 2021; Pressly, 2021).

While; the buchona femininity consists of:

The set of physical, symbolic, axiological and mental elements and characteristics of women who live or aspire to insertion into the Mexican narcoculture, which has as its norm the sex-gender dichotomy, immersed in a heterosexual hegemony, and where the idea that power lies with the masculine prevails. It should be noted that there will be hierarchies among women with buchona femininity (León, 2019, pp. 31-32).

As part of such physical characteristics, body modification is assumed. There are strategic locations in Mexico, such as Sinaloa (Pressly, 2021), Baja California (mainly Tijuana) and Guadalajara (León, 2019), which participate as main venues for aesthetic surgeries. However, the extension of buchonas aesthetics to other

territories speaks to how cultural industries operate to reproduce and legitimize imaginaries of women in the narco-world.

For León (2019), through their aesthetics and body, women defy the role of submissive woman and acquire benefits from their erotic capital; the fact of abiding by that buchona femininity, turned into fashion, is a way to survive and a strategy of power, giving openness to fend for themselves and be socially and economically successful.

From this perspective, Emma Coronel is the representation of the woman of the *narcomundo* (narcoworld) in resistance; she uses her erotic capital, appears in the media and, by her own decision, in the social media she assumes the role of influencer, as a form of narcomarketing. In global capitalism, buchonas women can achieve success with the dissemination of their images in social media; they can expand their influence, resignify their aesthetics and link themselves to other areas of the market. In short, “they can enter other markets such as fashion and the beauty industry from their body exploitation” (León, 2019, p. 162).

On digital platforms, buchonas women can break away from the roles of mother-caregiver and trophy-object-prize. Young women inserted in the narcoculture can use advertising in social media (Srnicek, 2018), which will help as a narcomarketing tool, because, as León (2019) says, they collaborate in global advertising, where buchonería goes from the local (particularly Sinaloa) to the global; for example, under the vision of woman-object and as producers-consumers of a lifestyle; with certain identity, values and behaviors.

## WOMEN AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

The beginning of women’s participation in drug trafficking is identified with the figure of Ignacia Jasso, known as “La Nacha”. With her husband, Pablo González “El Pablote”, she distributed drugs in the 1920s in northern Mexico. “La Nacha” led the drug business; she had the image of a charitable woman, of a loving mother of short stature, dark, robust skin and a bun hairstyle (Olivas, 2021). However, she was also known for making harsh and violent decisions, including homicides (Santamaría, 2012).

By 1940, Manuela Caro appeared, “the first and most important narco boss in the history of Sinaloa” (Santamaría, 2012, p. 21). She stood out for her business skills and for using airplanes to transport drugs. Dolores Estévez Zulueta, “Lola La Chata,” was another woman in the history of drug trafficking. In the 1950s, she was known as the “empress of the underworld in Mexico”. Originally from La Merced, she came to dominate drug sales in Mexico City (Olvera, 2022).

Although little is known, the names of María Elena Silveira (in Baja California), Consuelo Sánchez (in Mexicali) and Eloísa Higuera (in Calexico, California) are also mentioned in the history of drug trafficking. They coordinated and managed drug trafficking in the north of the country (Santamaría, 2012). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women stood out in organized crime for their business skills, but also for their constant exercise of violence.

Years later, the participation of artists and beauty models in the narco-world will be observed. Virginia Hill, known as “The Queen of the Mafia”, distinguished herself for her beauty and her dealings with officials close to the government of Miguel Aleman. She negotiated the trafficking of opium gum from Mexico to the United States (Santamaría, 2012).

Historically, in the narco-world, women appear as administrator-leader, mother-caretaker and trophy-object-prize. In the first, it is observed how women adopt masculine characteristics for their performance in the narco; while in the last two, women are seen as the property of men, increasing the risk of violence towards them (Pressly, 2021). These roles show social divisions of labor: the woman-object-trophy-beauty queen as the power of the boss, as the mother-virgin who honors hitmen (Rincón, 2013) and as the boss-administrator of violence and drugs.

### WHY THE EMMA CORONEL CASE?

Already in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in the context of digital culture, it is possible to identify the case of two women with important positions in drug trafficking, and with different levels of “hierarchy in the buchona femininity” (León, 2019, p. 141). First we have Claudia Ochoa, “La Emperatriz Ántrax,” who holds the insignia of “the buchona

businesswoman” (León, 2019, p. 143), due to her erotic capital that helped her rise both socially and within the cartel. She was one of the first buchonas who decided to use social media for self-representation. Her fame arose from the dissemination of photographs with firearms, cars and residences. In 2019, she was found dead in her home (Infobae, 2021).

Emma Coronel, El Chapo’s wife, is the most powerful buchona woman “from her hierarchy as the wife of high-ranking narco” (León, 2019, p. 141); thus, she belongs to the narco bourgeoisie, to the highest level of aspiration and power (León, 2019). What does belonging to the buchonas hierarchy imply? First, a feminine identity. With Emma’s case, it is recognized that presence, body and physical appearance are tools to express success in the narco-world.

#### “THE FIRST LADY OF SINALOA”. EMMA AND MASS MEDIA

In 2021, in the United States, Emma Coronel Aispuro was sentenced to three years in prison on drug trafficking and money laundering charges. Although the sentence represented the downfall of the “Kardashian of Sinaloa,” she could be free in September 2023 (Bedoya, 2022).<sup>4</sup> For some people, as Hernandez (2021) explains, Emma Coronel is a symbol and example of being born from the bottom and reaching the pinnacle of success. She was born in the United States, but lived in a town near Canelas, Durango, located in the “Golden Triangle”, ideal for organized crime and drug cultivation.

Between 2006 and 2007, the love story of Emma and “El Chapo” was born. According to Hernández (2021), the two met at a dance in Durango. However, the bond between the two became evident when she participated in a regional beauty contest and won. Emma’s coronation as beauty queen and her subsequent modeling career –would not have surprised anyone. The couple’s wedding took place in 2007

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<sup>4</sup> On September 13, 2023, Emma Coronel was released from prison in the United States after serving two and a half years of the three years she was sentenced to in 2021, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BBC, 2023b).

and, since then, the cultural and media phenomenon Emma Coronel began to take shape. The queen and influencer of drug trafficking, the Kim Kardashian of Mexico, pop icon of narcoculture (as Pablo Escobar was called [Rincón & Andrade, 2022]), the faithful wife of El Chapo (Sánchez, 2021), among others, are some of the nicknames by which she is known.

Emma Coronel, as Rincón and Andrade (2022) would say with the case of Pablo Escobar, became a pop icon, a queen, a celebrity, an image of admiration; a social and aspirational reference. She has been constructed mediatically, socially and culturally from the controversy of her relationship with “El Chapo” (Hernández, 2021); for example, in Wikipedia (2023) she appears as: “Emma Coronel Aispuro is a Mexican model known for her romantic relationship with Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzmán”.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, the image of the narcoculture icon has been consolidated, legitimized and reproduced in the cultural industries, such as music, series, soap operas and interviews in news programs, etc.; and also, from social media users.

Something characteristic of Emma Coronel is that she decided to go public in social media under her own criteria and despite conflicts with the Sinaloa Cartel (Hernández, 2021). In addition, since the imprisonment of Joaquín Guzmán (in 2016) she appeared on networks such as Telemundo or VH1 with reality shows and interviews (Hernández, 2021; León, 2019), and a series is already being prepared that will be called “Sinaloa’s First Lady”, by the company Paramount+ in Latin America (Redacción El Financiero, 2022)<sup>6</sup>; all this having a place in narco-marketing (León, 2019).

From these events, the source of the economic resources with which cultural content about drug trafficking is produced, distributed and disseminated is questioned; sometimes having the participation of the drug trafficker himself in the filming or promotion (Mercader,

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<sup>5</sup> Consulted on January 6, 2023.

<sup>6</sup> The latest information released about the series “Sinaloa’s First Lady” details that the story will tell the life trajectory of drug trafficker Joaquín Guzmán Loera under the main perspective of his wife, Emma Coronel. However, there is still no definite date for its release (Ruiz, 2022).

2012). For example, as mentioned by Rincón (2013), Edgar Valdez “La Barbie”, one of the most important criminals in Mexico, expressed that “he had spent \$200 000 dollars making a film about his life” (p. 17). Therefore, drug trafficking has not only woven relationships with social and political spheres, but also with the economic spheres of the cultural industries that, in sum, have signified the narco-world and the women inserted in it.

#### METHODOLOGY: THE STUDY OF FEMININITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA

The research has a qualitative approach and uses netnography (Kozinets, 2015) as a method for the study of virtual communities,<sup>7</sup> recognizing the digital context as the space of greatest diffusion of Mexican narcoculture (Villaplana & León, 2022).

From December 18, 2022 to January 2023 and from April 3 to April 16, 2023<sup>8</sup>, non-participant observation (Guber, 2011) was used as a technique to inquire into Emma Coronel’s official Instagram account and the most popular contents about her on TikTok. When we talk about non-participant observation it is to indicate the character of external observers, without any kind of incidence or collaboration in the community (Guber, 2011).

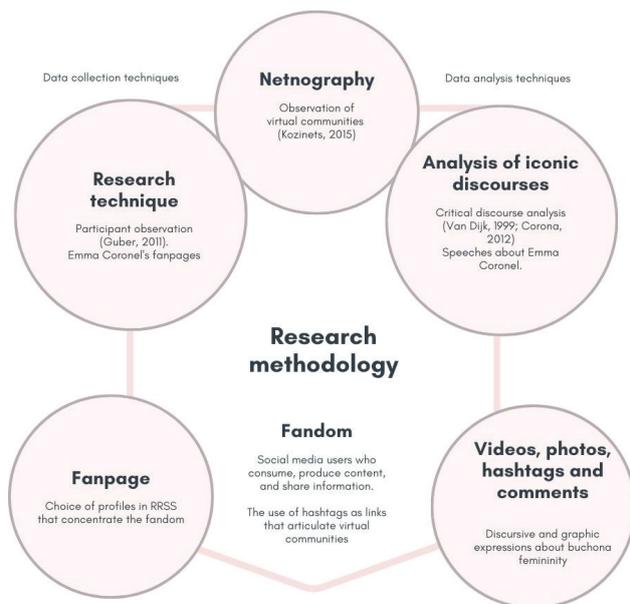
To study the buchona femininity in social media, we resorted to both discourse and visual analysis. The former is understood as a way to analyze “the way in which the abuse of social power, dominance and inequality are practiced, reproduced, and occasionally combated, by texts and speech in the social and political context” (Van-Dijk, 1999, p. 23). While the second recognizes images as social constructions; it is the analysis of iconic discourses (Corona, 2012). In short, a methodological model is proposed here for addressing femininity in

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<sup>7</sup> This research sees in the use of hashtags the strategy to articulate virtual communities in social media.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that there was no particular reason for deciding on the dates for the development of the methodology. However, the first stage was based on an exploratory exercise in both social media; while in the second stage it was decided to wait to identify a possible greater fandom among the community.

DIAGRAM 1  
METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGY



Source: Own elaboration.

social media.

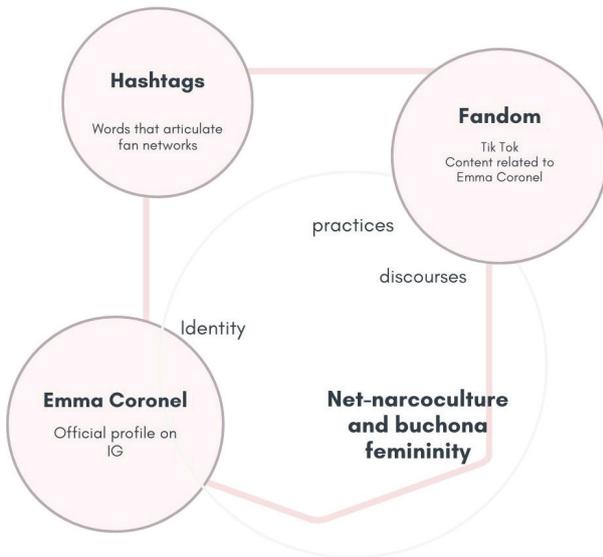
## FIELDWORK. APPROACH TO THE ICONIC DISCOURSES OF BUCHONA FEMININITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA

For the fieldwork, it was decided to use Instagram, since Emma Coronel has her official account on this platform, and TikTok, because it is the main social network on the rise among the community of users (García, 2023). Instagram was useful to approach the discourses on buchona femininity constituted by Emma Coronel herself. While TikTok was useful to observe the fandom, understood as groups of people, inserted in the participatory culture they consume, who create forms of

consumption, rewrite the stories and contribute to the economic value. In addition, the fan is understood in terms of Jenkins (2008), that is, we sought to observe the users who actively participate in the generation of content related to the aesthetics of “El Chapo’s” wife.

To talk about the identity, meanings and discourses around Emma Coronel, the netnography covered the observation of social media from two elements: the official account and the popular publications, articulated with the use of hashtags.

DIAGRAM 2  
PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION STRATEGY



Source: Own elaboration.

Elements for the analysis of the iconic discourses were derived from the participant observation: the plan, the predominant colors, the reactions and the copy.

## THE BUCHONA FEMININITY OF EMMA CORONEL'S INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT

On Instagram, @therealemmacoronel is Emma Coronel's official account<sup>9</sup>. It is a business profile with five posts and 788 thousand followers.<sup>10</sup> In the description, it states: "I do not answer direct messages". In other words, it is a one-way communication.

The first publication is a photograph of Emma Coronel dressed as a bride. In the image (medium shot) light tones predominate; both the background, as well as her skin, hair and dress are a representation of the woman who is about to get married. The photograph has accumulated 108 519 likes. The image is accompanied by the copy "Campaign Bride 2021 Lumen Salon" and with tags to those who participated in the dress, makeup and styling. Among the personalities mentioned is the Mexican designer Benito Santos. This reference highlights Emma Coronel's relationship with the fashion world in the country.

The second publication dates back to July 2, 2020, her 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. Emma Coronel uses the copy "Happy birthday to me" to share a photograph of herself. It is an image with predominantly dark colors, signifying power; she wears a golden crown, her hair is straight and her makeup features voluptuous red lips. In a medium shot is Emma Coronel, standing with her hands on her hips and looking at the camera, constituting a posture of power, security and defiance. Of the five posts in the feed, this one has the highest number of likes: 144 322.

"Happy Mother's Day" is the title of the third publication. El Chapo's wife celebrates Mother's Day. In the photograph, taken in close-up, Emma Coronel's face appears. Unlike the two previous images, in this one, there is a greater exposure of the body. Warm colors appear in the composition. Emma Coronel can be seen with straight hair and closed eyes; the shape and size of her lips stand out from the face. Likewise, the makeup highlights areas of the face and body such

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<sup>9</sup> Emma Coronel allegedly opened another Instagram account; however, it is not yet fully verified (Barrios, 2023). As of October 9, 2023, the profile has more than 18 thousand followers and two posts.

<sup>10</sup> Consulted on October 9, 2023.

IMAGE 1  
EMMA CORONEL, BRIDE



Source: Emma Coronel Aispuro (@therealemmacoronel), 2020e.

IMAGE 2  
EMMA CORONEL, PORTRAIT

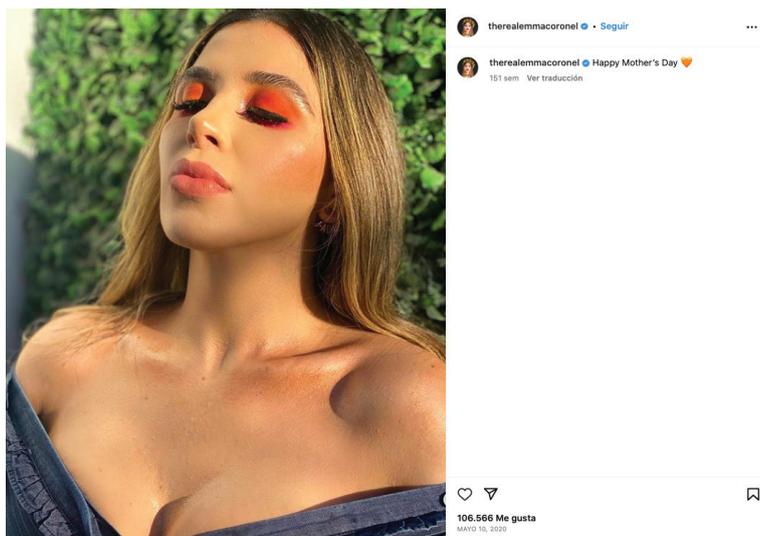


Source: Emma Coronel Aispuro (@therealemmacoronel), 2020d.

as the nose, cheekbones, collarbone and chest. The image constitutes an understanding of being a mother. Being a mother equals an aesthetic, a shape of the face and body.

## IMAGE 3

EMMA CORONEL, MOTHER



Source: Emma Coronel Aispuro (@therealemmacoronel), 2020c.

“Happy Valentine’s day” is the title of the fourth photograph on her Instagram profile; taken in close-up, shades of white, beige and blue predominate; it shows the chest and collarbone; while the makeup highlights cheekbones, nose and jaw, configuring a face shape. This publication speaks of an understanding of Valentine’s Day associated with a particular aesthetic and body shape. It breaks with traditional images of February 14 (flowers, hearts or Cupid); in this case, the expression of love is Emma Coronel herself. The publication has 110 859 likes. It is the second photo with the most positive reactions, which speaks of the legitimization, both of the message and its meanings, among the fandom.

IMAGE 4  
EMMA CORONEL, VALENTINE'S DAY

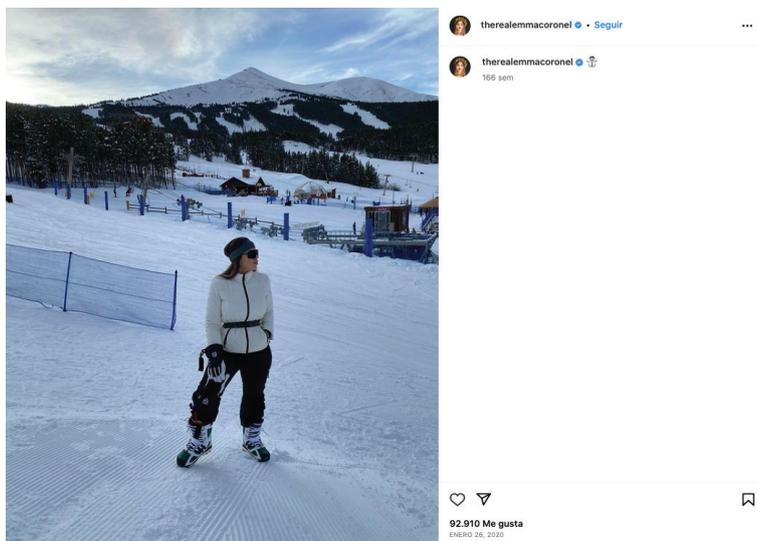


Source: Emma Coronel Aispuro (@therealemmacoronel), 2020b.

In the oldest publication of her feed, Emma Coronel uses the emoji of a snowman to spread a winter landscape. Unlike the rest, in this image the protagonist is the background; it is a ski park with cabins and mountains. Emma Coronel appears in full body; no facial details are visible, but there are elements that communicate social status such as the practice of an upper class sport and the necessary clothing (suit, boots and glasses) for skiing. The photograph, characterized by gray and white tones, has 92 910 likes.

Emma Coronel's official profile articulates meanings and representations about being a wife (girlfriend), lover, mother and woman, from the point of view of those who, in a curatorial exercise, decide what to show and from what frame in their social media, based on representations associated with luxury, but mainly with an aesthetic configured by the body and the face. In short, a representation of buchona femininity, characterized by her erotic capital, her power, her

IMAGE 5  
EMMA CORONEL, LUXURIES



Source: Emma Coronel Aispuro (@therealemmacoronel), 2020a.

success as a woman and mother, and her rejection of submission. As León (2019) points out, the value of the body is appreciated, turned capital, in which its performativity is one of power. In social media, the spectacularization and commodification of the daily life of the narcoculture is appreciated, becoming a reference for many women.

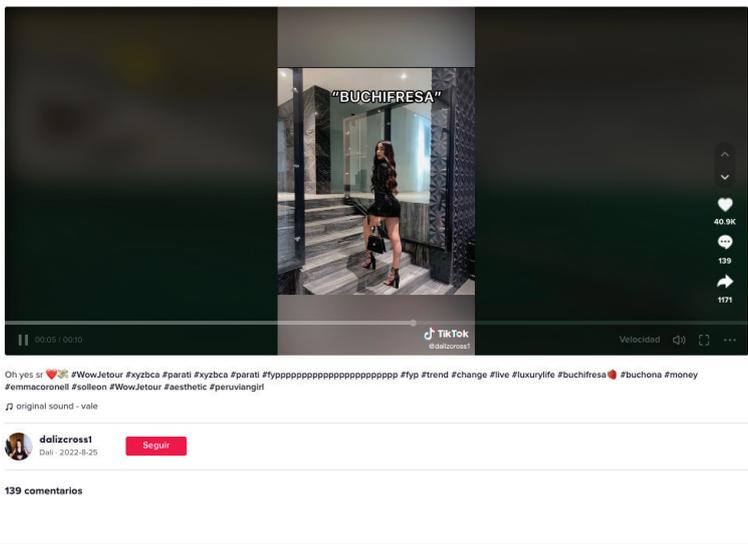
### EMMA CORONEL, FANDOM AND THE BUCHONA FEMINITY IN TIKTOK

To talk about the reproduction and resignification of buchona femininity, inspired by Emma Coronel, TikTok was observed. Using the hashtags #EmmaCoronel and #Buchona, we selected the most relevant publications. For the analysis of the iconic discourses, the number of reproductions, copy, music and images were considered. The remediation of content in social media about Emma Coronel allows making cultural expressions visible. The forms of interpretation and

signification are based on the objectification and performativity of the female gender in the net-narcoculture and modern capitalist logics (Mondaca, 2014).

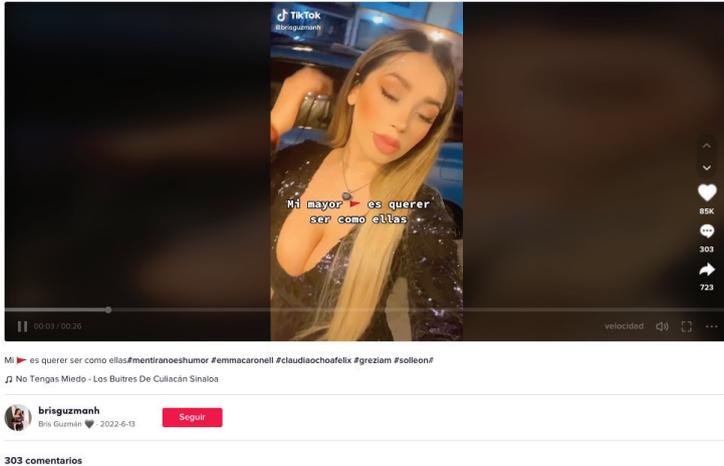
In TikTok, Emma Coronel’s fandom shares lifestyles, makeup, costumes, messages of admiration and respect; they also employ images, videos and music that are shared with the use of hashtags that articulate fan communities. “I lied to you, I don’t want to be aesthetic, I want to be... buchifresa”, with this message begins a video, in which vehicles, luxury clothes, jewelry and weapons appear. In the background, the song “Me gusta mi vida” by Manuel Rodriguez is played, which says “If a lot of Prada they look at me buying, spending money it is because we are crowned”.

IMAGE 6  
THE “BUCHIFRESA”



Source: Dali (@dalizcross1), 2022.

IMAGE 7  
RED FLAGS

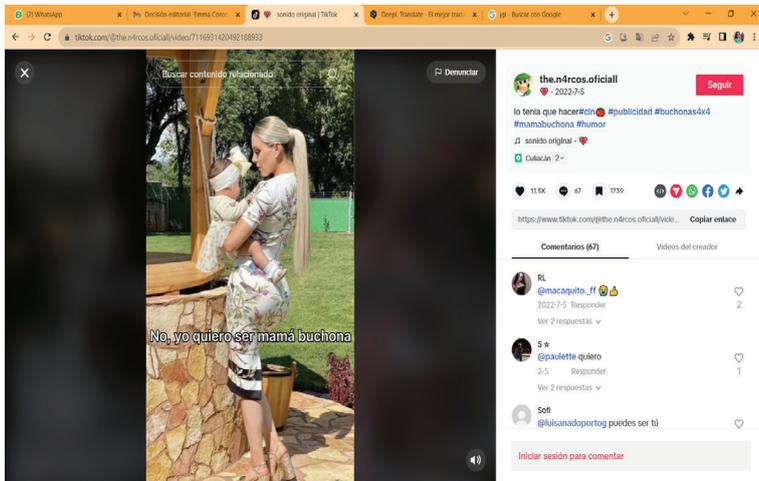


Source: B Guzman (@bguzman45), 2022.

The content produced by the fandom is articulated to the trends. “My red flag is wanting to be like them” is the text that starts a video that includes images of Emma Coronel, Claudia Ochoa Felix and the song “No tengas miedo” by Los Buitres de Culiacan Sinaloa in which you can hear: “Don’t panic anymore when I arrive in a convoy. Or that a squad with diamonds comes out of my pants. I’m not so bad, I also have a heart. Even if the government pursues me unchecked”. Thus, text, images and music reproduce the net-narcoculture.

The fandom also shows aspirations about becoming a mother. “–Do you want to be a mom? –No, I want to be a buchona mom” is the text of another video which gives recognition to motherhood from the buchona femininity, constituted and represented from an aesthetic; a certain body molded under a dress showing luxury. The material, initially set to music with the song “I wanna love you” by Akon and Snoop Dog and later with “JGL” by La Adictiva and Luis R. Conriquez, obtained responses such as “I want to”, “I will be the buchona mom”, “I do want to be like that”, “I already saw myself” and “Goals”.

IMAGE 8  
BUCHONA MOM



Source: Itzel (@the.n4rcos.official), 2022.

Another category is makeup. In order to replicate Emma Coronel's features (eyes, lips, nose, forehead and chin), users use shadows, blushes, false eyelashes and illuminators. In one of the analyzed videos, the user shows the application of make-up so that the features acquire volume and aesthetics, while listening to the following fragment of the song "El 701" by Los Alegres del Barranco: "They are offering 10 million. For my head and my compadre's, in the United States they know".

The publications on TikTok, elaborated by fans, speak of lifestyles, aspirations, aesthetics and daily practices. The cultural representation of drug trafficking is associated with symbolic forms that help to give meaning to what happens in the environment (Geertz, 2003). The fieldwork confirms that narcoculture is a trend; it is a phenomenon that moves from the local to the global, popularized in places where organized crime is not part of everyday life (León, 2019; Villaplana & León, 2022).

IMAGE 9  
MAKEUP



Maquillaje inspirado en Emma Coronel [#makeup](#) [#emmacoronel](#)  
 📍 El 701 - Los Alegres del Barranco



**marianaarrayales**  
 MarianaArrayales · 1-26

Seguir

125 comentarios

Source: MarianaArrayales (@marianaarrayales), 2023.

The findings indicate that practices and discourses in the context of Web 2.0 allow the construction of symbolic elements of the narcomundo and narcoculture (Karam, 2018; León, 2019). For example, the fandom grants meaning, representation and identity to Emma Coronel, but self-representation is also appreciated from the significance as the wife of “El Chapo”.

Both on Instagram and TikTok, the publications represent Emma Coronel’s body and lifestyle (daily practices). On the other hand, there is the reproduction of the logics of buchona femininity thanks to social media, participating from the notion of advertising platforms (Smniecek, 2018), by, for example, recreating fashion, outfits or makeup. The fact that Emma Coronel has a presence in the digital environment speaks to the ways in which she negotiates with the role of women in the narco-world and with the logics of control in drug trafficking. This is related to the idea of “la mujer cabrona” (Herrera, 2019), which breaks the

behavior and submission in the narcoculture (patriarchal and sexist). There are also perceived forms of collaboration between women to achieve erotic capital, associated with the buchona femininity (León, 2019). Being a woman and being involved in the narcoculture implies playing with the construction of female identity; where not only the personal participates, but also the social, cultural and economic environment.

The videos usually have narcocorridos or narcorap as background music, typical of the “altered movement”<sup>11</sup>, related to the buchona femininity and the logics of narcoculture, since it is through music that the behaviors and ways of being and doing in this context are narrated (Alzati, 2019). Although in the fieldwork a fallacy was found: in social media the buchona body is exhibited without the violence of offline narcoculture.

On the other hand, the lack of regulation in the technological, cultural and media industries is evident, since talking about Emma Coronel implies drug trafficking. For Thoreau (2022): “the economies of attention shield themselves in the production of fashionable content and do not take social responsibility for the consequences that the glamorization of violence can bring socially at the g-local level” (p.45).

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this paper was to address the discourses of the buchona femininity in social media (articulated with Emma Coronel’s self-representation of gender and narcoculture), which present the woman-mother-caregiver who should not forget the attributes of the “housewife”, the woman as trophy-prize, but also as a woman who uses erotic capital to confront the heteropatriarchal logic of the narcomundo; conclusions that coincide with León (2019) and that, in turn, open reflections on what we will call here a false empowerment.

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<sup>11</sup> The “altered movement” or “sick movement” is a new musical trend and the evolution of the traditional corrido. It is characterized by the explicit violence of its lyrics. It is interpreted in the first person, which brings realism to the songs. Due to its format, it advocates violence (Fuentes, 2021).

The media-digital presence of the drug trafficker's wife speaks, in appearance, of the female body as a tool of power, of distinction, of social and economic success for herself and for the narcoculture. On the other hand, questions are raised to ask the purpose of the buchona femininity and how the body, converted into erotic capital, can reproduce logics of subordination in the face of a patriarchal economic system. In this sense, it is proposed to question the buchona femininity articulated to heteronormative logics.

Recovering the history of women in drug trafficking, it can be observed how some women leaders have had to adopt masculine characteristics (such as the exercise of violence) in order to manage and coordinate drug trafficking. In this same sense, in the context of digital culture, buchona femininity and erotic capital reproduce forms of violence articulated to the patriarchal system. Emma's body is embedded in the capitalist logic, which commodifies the body and the image. For women, by becoming objects of desire, the body itself is put at risk, since the young, voluminous and aesthetic body also has an expiration date.

Finally, this research favors approaches to other forms of representation of femininity, from performativity and self-mercantilization, associated with economic and social capitals. The task of promoting critical literacies in audiences to question the consumption of cultural industries that reproduce and legitimize aesthetics, from which there is a risk of legitimizing symbolic and everyday violence against women, remains pending.

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