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Abstract

This article examines Bad Bunny's performance during the 2026 "Super Bowl LX" halftime show, reading it as a media event that challenges discourses on migration policies, nationality, and *Latinidad* (Latin American identity) in the United States. By performing predominantly in Spanish and incorporating references to Latin American culture, the Puerto Rican artivist stages an act of aesthetic-political resistance and insurgency. We seek to investigate the potentialities evoked by this event as an artistic production that brought media visibility to a context of necropolitics and xenophobia in the United States. Methodologically, we draw on event analysis (França & Lopes, 2017; Quéré, 2005; Simões, 2014) and bring it into dialogue with debates on artivism, corporeity, and necropolitics. The analysis is structured in five stages: (a) description of the event and its framings; (b) an account of the meanings produced by different social actors; (c) identification of the pragmatic background that shapes its public reception; (d) characterisation of the public problems raised by the event; and (e) analysis of its normalisation, examining the persistence of its effects and the longevity of its capacity to affect. Future studies will explore the final two stages in greater depth to further investigate public reception, as well as the contest over the normalisation of resistance in confronting anti-immigration policies in the United States. We argue that the meanings produced by the performance emerge through the artivist's corporeity and his presence within a global media and sporting event. We find that Bad Bunny's aesthetic-political performance brought visibility to historically marginalised experiences, exposing fractures in political discourses on migration and belonging. By confronting the patriotic tradition associated with this United States event, amid increasingly restrictive State migration policies and intensifying xenophobic discourse, his performance reveals artivism's potential to confront necropolitics and, ultimately, enact symbolic resistance in contemporary public space.

Keywords

event, artivism, Bad Bunny, corporeity, necropolitics

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Resumo

Neste artigo, investigamos a performance de Bad Bunny no espetáculo do intervalo do "Super Bowl LX", de 2026, compreendendo-a como acontecimento midiático, que tensiona discursos sobre políticas migratórias, nacionalidade e latinidade nos Estados Unidos. Ao realizar uma performance majoritariamente em espanhol e com referências à cultura latino-americana, o artivista porto-riquenho inscreve no palco um gesto de resistência e insurgência estético-política. Buscamos investigar quais as potencialidades evocadas por esse acontecimento enquanto produção artística, que trouxe visibilidade midiática a um contexto de necropolítica e xenofobia nos Estados Unidos. Em termos metodológicos, recorremos à análise do acontecimento (França & Lopes, 2017; Quéré, 2005; Simões, 2014), articulando-a aos debates sobre artivismo, corporeidade e necropolítica. A análise se estrutura em cinco etapas: (a) descrição do acontecimento e de seus enquadramentos; (b) narração dos sentidos produzidos pelos diferentes atores sociais; (c) identificação do pano de fundo pragmático que orienta sua recepção pública; (d) caracterização dos problemas públicos suscitados pelo evento; e (e) análise de sua normalização, observando a permanência de efeitos e longevidade da capacidade de afetação. As duas últimas etapas serão mais exploradas em estudos futuros, para aprofundar a investigação da recepção pública, bem como da disputa pela normalização da resistência quanto ao enfrentamento das políticas anti-imigratórias nos Estados Unidos. Entendemos que os sentidos produzidos pela performance são engendrados pela corporeidade do artivista e de sua inserção em uma cena midiático-esportiva de alcance mundial. Verificamos que a performance estético-política de Bad Bunny acionou a visibilidade de experiências historicamente marginalizadas, tensionando fissuras nos discursos políticos sobre migração e pertencimento. Ao confrontar a tradição patriótica associada ao evento estadunidense, em meio a um contexto de recrudescimento das políticas migratórias estatais e de intensificação de discursos xenófobos, sua apresentação revela a potência do artivismo no enfrentamento à necropolítica e, no limite, à prática de resistência simbólica no espaço público contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave
acontecimento, artivismo, Bad Bunny, corporeidade, necropolítica

Introduction

Musical performances, as productions of visuality, can operate in the political sphere by enabling images to serve as vehicles for narratives and as spaces where meanings surrounding identity and belonging are contested. This is the case with the performance by Benito Antonio Martínez Ocasio, known by his stage name Bad Bunny, at "Super Bowl LX" in 2026. On this occasion, his performance reached approximately 124.9 million viewers (Nielsen, 2026), an unprecedented global audience. By performing almost entirely in Spanish and foregrounding Latin culture, the Puerto Rican artivist challenges the United States' patriotic logic that is structurally embedded in the traditional

National Football League (NFL) event. His choice of language and stance create a performance that celebrates Latin American culture in a contemporary context marked by restrictive policies and measures to combat immigration in the United States (Chade, 2025).

To investigate corporeity and the production of meanings arising from the event constituted by Bad Bunny's performance during the NFL's "Super Bowl LX" halftime show, as well as its media coverage, the research question seeks to understand how this performance can be understood as an artivist practice of resistance to migration policies directed at the bodies of Latin American migrants in the United States.

Accordingly, we analyse viewers' comments posted during the live broadcast of "Super Bowl LX" on the NFL's YouTube channel, together with the first news report on the event published by the three most influential news outlets in the United States' media ecosystem (Newman et al., 2025): Fox News, CNN and *The New York Times*. We seek to understand how public opinion was expressed in the comments and how it was activated by the meanings conveyed through the headlines.

We employ event analysis (França & Lopes, 2017; Quéré, 2005; Simões, 2014) and a theoretical discussion grounded in the concepts of "artivism" (Correch, 2019; Freitas, 2019; Raposo, 2015), "corporeity" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2011; Porpino, 2018) and "necropolitics" (Mbembe, 2011/2018). Understanding that the meanings produced by Bad Bunny's aesthetic-political performance emerge in and through his body during the performance, we aim to investigate the potentialities evoked by this event as an artistic production that brought media visibility to a context of necropolitics and xenophobia in the United States.

Theoretical Framework

Artivism as a Practice of Cultural Resistance

In contemporary society, practices that bring art and activism together are becoming increasingly widespread. The artist is no longer merely a creator of aesthetic objects, but also a producer of meanings and a participant in struggles for concrete social change (Groys, 2014). Artivism lies at this intersection, in the intrinsic relationship between art and politics, fostering a transformation in the perception of reality that can give rise to insurgencies (Rolnik, 2018) and challenge power relations (Raposo, 2015). It is a hybrid practice, a political strategy that, through collective action, mobilises aesthetic experience to produce forms of resistance and expand the possibilities for social transformation (Serafini, 1999). According to Vieira (2007), artivism can be understood as art committed to political engagement that interprets the world by promoting particular interpretations and/or distances itself from reality by rejecting dominant forms of economic and communicative performativity. In other words, it is an art that not only denounces but also intervenes actively.

According to Correch (2019), multiple artivist practices emerge in territories marked by postcolonial relations, since artivism can potentially challenge hegemonic narratives. In contexts shaped by the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2005), different forms of domination

and power continue to operate in the governance of contemporary society, conditioning the unequal management of life and death. In this sense, necropolitics (Mbembe, 2011/2018) is the direct effect of a coloniality that governs life and determines which groups are to be protected and which are to be treated as threats. In this scenario, migrants frequently become abject bodies (Butler, 2009/2015; Kristeva, 1982), who are often subjected to policies of control, surveillance and exclusion. In this study, we examine necropolitical logic through the lens of United States' migration policies.

Within this context, artivism acts as a tool for confronting colonial narratives. Through art, racialised and marginalised bodies can produce forms of resistance and alternative epistemologies that extend beyond denunciation and also function as instruments of intervention, capable of generating insurgencies and reshaping collective understandings of how reality is interpreted. Artistic production with political content acts as "an aesthetic-political response to the apparatuses of extermination" (Freitas, 2019, para. 2). Against this backdrop, certain musical performances operate as artivist practices which, through language and corporeity, challenge and re-signify modes of representation of historically marginalised populations. The body, voice and presence can enact symbolic resistance on stage against contemporary mechanisms of exclusion and death.

Necropolitics in the United States

Examining modes of exercising power and forms of contemporary domination, and engaging with the concept of "biopower" (Foucault, 1979/2008), Mbembe (2011/2018) argues that it is essential not only to understand the management of life but also to discuss the management of death. It is urgent to examine the mechanisms through which power produces the death (both physical and symbolic) of certain subjects, in order to understand the social dynamics that expose subalternised individuals to violence and the systematic abjection of their existence. From this perspective, the author develops the concept of "necropolitics" to designate policies that determine who should live and who should die, considering the State as a sovereign agent that manages the life and death of subjects.

Biopower, therefore, employs necropolitical instruments to assert itself and control the mortality of its citizens, creating structures designed to bring about the destruction of certain subjects through war, resistance, the fight against terror, and the construction of a common enemy. Certain social groups are regarded as abject and subjected to conditions of marginalisation and vulnerability, being constantly abandoned and exposed to violence perpetrated by the State itself, thereby making the lives of these populations less protected and less worthy of mourning. From this perspective, sovereignty is exercised both through the capacity to govern life and through the power to determine who may live and who may die.

In developing the concept of "necropolitics", Mbembe (2011/2018) examines this logic through historical experiences such as colonialism, slavery and Nazism, demonstrating how different regimes of power, guided by State sovereignty, have subjected populations to violence, abandonment and death. In this study, we use the concept to

understand contemporary migration policies, specifically those of the United States, characterised by intensified border control, surveillance, and securitisation. Today, the intensification of anti-immigration discourse contributes to the criminalisation of human mobility. It constructs meanings that portray migrants as a social threat and an undesirable otherness, thereby legitimising practices that render their lives precarious, such as the exclusion, detention and mass deportation of immigrants in the country (Chade, 2025).

As Chade (2025) explains, these dynamics have become particularly visible in recent years, with the intensification of public debate surrounding Latin American immigration, which has frequently fuelled nationalist and xenophobic discourse. Migrants have increasingly been targeted by disinformation that associates them with negative issues such as public security problems, crime and violence. Thus, migration became a central theme of Donald Trump's presidential campaign in the United States, with threats and practices of mass deportation becoming a pillar of the country's political polarisation and mobilising meanings associated with fear and the reinforcement of "American" national identity. It is worth noting that the migration policies proposed by Trump target specific groups of immigrants, with Latin Americans — particularly Mexicans — being the most affected, according to data presented by the United States Department of Homeland Security (Oropeza, 2025).

Following his election victory in 2024, the Trump administration intensified restrictive migration policies, making them a priority on the government agenda. The measures included expanding deportation mechanisms, restricting humanitarian protection programmes, strengthening operations by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and tightening procedures governing the entry and residence of foreign nationals in the country (Clarke, 2025). From Mbembe's (2011/2018) perspective, these actions are more than administrative strategies. They can be interpreted as contemporary practices of necropolitical rationality, insofar as they produce forms of differentiation and classification that determine whose lives are recognised and protected while rendering groups of people deemed threatening more vulnerable. These practices are accompanied by discourses that reinforce meanings associating immigrants with a potentially threatening enemy to be fought, contributing to the stigmatisation of immigrant communities, particularly those of Latin American origin.

In this way, Latin Americans in the United States become a social group permanently marked as suspect, threatening, hostile and disposable. These different forms of managing life and death are legitimised by the State not only in the legal sphere but also amplified in the subjective sphere through the circulation of meanings and affects. Borders extend beyond physical and territorial boundaries and also operate as symbolic boundaries that classify and select bodies as "legitimate" or "illegitimate" in terms of national recognition, determining who may move freely, remain and belong to United States society.

Against this backdrop, Bad Bunny's performance during the "Super Bowl LX" halftime show acquires analytical significance. By taking to the largest media stage in the

United States and celebrating Latin American culture, the artist engages in an artivist practice that challenges and subverts hegemonic narratives of exclusion, reconfigures the struggles over meaning attributed to migrant subjects, and gives rise to forms of insurgency against regimes of truth that marginalise Latin identity. For Rolnik (2018), insurgency is resistance to the capture of life, understood as the recovery and reactivation of the subject's potential in the face of the colonial-capitalist regime. Thus, Bad Bunny's artivism materialises through his own artistic corporeity, transforming the body, voice and presence into instruments of political resistance and insurgency.

Corporeity and the Production of Meaning

If necropolitics operates through the unequal management of life and death, its effects are not distributed randomly. Rather, they fall more visibly on bodies subordinated through historical power struggles, which are exposed to the precarisation of life and constructed as "others". Understanding corporeity is therefore important for examining how certain practices of exclusion and belonging are socially produced, taking into account the historical and sociocultural processes through which certain bodies are made vulnerable and rendered "fundamentally devoid of a protective membrane" (Mbembe, 2020/2021, p. 157). What is at issue, then, is the condition of bodies whose abjection is not an individual state, but rather the effect of historical dynamics of racialisation and coloniality, which continue to play an active role in the unequal distribution of recognition and belonging, grounded in a Eurocentric view of being and existing in the world.

In Foucault's (1976/1988) account of "biopower", "the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constitute the two poles around which the organisation of power over life has developed" (p. 131). In other words, power struggles and hegemonic interests are regulated and enacted through bodies, through their practical and physical discipline, but also through their moral and symbolic discipline. In this context, it is useful to approach the body from the theoretical perspective of corporeity, which enables an understanding of the body not merely as a physical and visual representation, but also as an object and territory of power struggles, capable of generating meanings and, at times, subverting the logic of regimes of truth. Thus, corporeity is understood in terms of the relations of power and domination that precede and condition how subjects are recognised in the world, in different positions of social subordination and with different possibilities for existence.

According to Porpino (2018), the theory of corporeity "aims to contribute to an understanding of the human being that is not reduced to the dichotomies established in our culture. The reality of the body is complex, encompassing the dialogue between the multiple dualities of existence" (p. 20). From this understanding, corporeity can be conceived beyond the hegemonic structures of representation of the Western body, making it possible to conceive of the body as both a unity and a multiplicity. The body is the medium through which the world is perceived and transformed and, simultaneously, through which the subject perceives and transforms themselves. Although the body is

an object in the world, subject to the conditions of erasure, silencing, death and disposability systematised by necropolitics, it is also a condition of experience, a way of being and existing in the world, a means of producing meaning and, ultimately, a subject. From this perspective, the body is not merely a representation of physical materiality; it also encompasses how the subject experiences their relationship with the world, thereby making it possible to reconfigure the production of meaning as a space of recognition, belonging, and resistance.

For Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2011) phenomenology, the body and the world are made of the same fabric and interact through a reciprocal relationship. This reflects the principle of the simultaneity of antagonisms proposed by corporeity, which holds that the body and the world are one. In this sense, corporeity elucidates the simultaneities within the body while also understanding the relationship between body and world as dialogical and interconnected. Thus, artistic production and aesthetic experience are ways in which the body comes to know itself and transform the world, while simultaneously coming to know the world and transforming itself. All artistic creation is a manifestation and signification that originates in the body, with the artist's body on stage as the one that "also carries the expression of all the bodies and worlds that relate to that moment" (Dalton & Calazans, 2025, p. 13).

Through Jacques Rancière's (2000/2005) notion of the "distribution of the sensible", art is capable of reorganising the sensible, creating new ways of seeing, hearing and feeling, bringing into the common sphere bodies, actions, discourses and voices that have been treated as invisible or inaudible and, ultimately, challenging the established sensible order. Thus, by sharing the sensible, we redefine and reorganise the systems of perception and regimes of visibility through which a community is not only seen, spoken about or heard, but, above all, recognised within a given social context. When historically subordinated bodies gain spaces of visibility, they produce shifts in the hegemonic sensible order. Art plays a central role in this process, making possible other experiences, narratives, and forms of sensibility that were previously excluded. Consequently, when a body historically constructed as an "other" occupies spaces of power, its presence can unsettle established meanings and reorganise the terms through which these bodies are recognised.

Bad Bunny's corporeity, as an artivist performance, is a space that denounces United States necropolitics and becomes a powerful producer of meaning by directing the audience's aesthetic experience and, in that moment, redefining what is visible, audible, and meaningful. More than a performance, his voice, body and presence mobilise struggles over meaning surrounding *Latinidad* (Latin American identity) and what it means to occupy the position of a Latin, racialised body constructed as an "other" in a country marked by persistent power asymmetries shaped by coloniality.

Methodological Approach

In this article, we adopt event analysis as our methodological approach to understanding Bad Bunny's performance during the "Super Bowl LX" halftime show, treating it

as a communicative phenomenon with the potential to generate collective affect and mobilise struggles over meaning around contemporary Latin American identity. More than a musical spectacle, Bad Bunny's performance brought emerging sociopolitical issues in the United States into view. We therefore understand the artist's corporeity not merely as a vehicle for the message conveyed through an artivist performance, but also as a space for political claim-making (Serafini, 1999) against necropolitics (Mbembe, 2011/2018).

The event perspective adopted in this study draws on Quéré (2005), França and Lopes (2017), and Simões (2014), who understand the event as extending beyond its factual dimension. In this sense, an event is not merely a fact situated in time or an everyday occurrence, but a social experience "with great power to affect, which raises concerns, demands choices and prompts actions" (França & Lopes, 2017, p. 73), as well as one that produces and transforms meanings in the subjective sphere of individuals.

In this way, when associated with the media, an event can produce interpretative ruptures in struggles over meaning, understood "as a scheme for perceiving and representing reality constructed by the media" (Simões, 2014, p. 177). It is not simply an account of reality disseminated by the media, detached from the facts that precede it. On the contrary, it is shaped by prior productions of meaning that influence individuals' experiences, within a temporal dimension that considers the past, present and future of these processes collectively. It is therefore an experiential process that engages audiences and establishes new subjective frameworks for collective issues.

Event analysis broadens the methodological scope for understanding Bad Bunny's performance at the Super Bowl as a cyclical communicative phenomenon, situated within media dynamics and the symbolic construction of events. This method examines the visibility of individuals' everyday realities, understanding the event as a device capable of reorganising collective perceptions, interpretations and affects shared in relation to social reality. It thus enables us to question how and why certain events affect audiences more than others, revealing the logic of selection, repetition and hierarchisation involved in their appearance in the public sphere. This is because "an event can reveal an unforeseen situation or expose the problematic nature of a particular topic or issue at stake" (Simões, 2014, p. 182), indicating that its symbolic force does not reside in the event itself, but in the productions of meaning that precede and follow it.

The choice of event analysis as our methodology is justified by the understanding that Bad Bunny's performance went beyond the limits of entertainment and can be understood as an artivist practice, bringing public attention to issues relating to coloniality, immigration, xenophobia and Latin American identity in the contemporary United States context. We analyse not only the performance itself, but also how it was perceived and interpreted, examining how struggles over meaning were reconfigured in public debate after the performance.

The *corpus* of analysis comprises Bad Bunny's performance during the "Super Bowl LX" halftime show, broadcast by the NFL in February 2026. The performance lasted 13 minutes and is available on YouTube (https://youtu.be/G6FuWd4wNd8). To investigate

the media response, we draw on comments posted on the YouTube video and the first news report on the subject published by the three most influential news outlets in the United States: Fox News, CNN and *The New York Times* (Newman et al., 2025).

In addition to event analysis, we use the theory of corporeity as a complementary analytical category to understand Bad Bunny's performance. Starting from the understanding that the body does not function solely as the foundation of the artist's action, we approach it as a political action, a discursive agent and a meaning-producing instance that connects aesthetic experiences with collective identities. We are interested in examining the symbolic potential mobilised by the artivist — including voice, gestures, stage design, language, costume and bodily presence — and how these elements contribute to the discursive construction of the performance and to the production of meanings surrounding *Latinidad*, as well as to narratives relating to immigration and necropolitics in the United States.

Drawing on Quéré (2005), França and Lopes (2017), and Simões (2014), the analysis is structured around five methodological stages: description, narration, identification of the pragmatic background, characterisation of the public problem, and normalisation. Description involves framing the situation in order to identify the constituent elements of the event. Narration refers to the narrative process through which different social actors report and give meaning to the event, examining how particular interpretations are produced and circulate in the public sphere. At this stage, corporeity is mobilised as an analytical category and a starting point for engaging with other actors involved in the process, to understand how Bad Bunny's corporeity produces meanings and articulates discourses through the performance. Identification of the pragmatic background concerns the event's reception in public perception, taking into account the historical, political, economic, and cultural conditions that precede it. Characterisation of the public problem examines whether the event has sufficient public relevance to generate social tensions and collective mobilisation. Finally, normalisation examines the event's durability and limits, investigating its subsequent developments and its persistence in the social imaginary. Future studies, however, will explore the final two stages in greater depth to further investigate public reception, as well as the contest over the normalisation of resistance in confronting anti-immigration policies in the United States.

Applying these five stages helps us understand Bad Bunny's performance and corporeity not merely as a musical spectacle, but as a communicative and artivist event that produces meanings around Latin American identity, challenging and reconfiguring regimes of truth related to necropolitics and anti-immigration discourse in the United States.

Bad Bunny's Performance as an Artivist Event

We now analyse Bad Bunny's performance during the "Super Bowl LX" halftime show as an event, drawing on the five methodological stages proposed by Quéré (2005), França and Lopes (2017), and Simões (2014). Our analysis focuses on the artist's corporeity, the symbolic possibilities evoked by the performance and the meanings it produces.

Description

The "Super Bowl LX" halftime show was headlined by Puerto Rican singer Bad Bunny on 8 February 2026 at Levi's Stadium, located in Santa Clara, California. In addition to the artist, singers Lady Gaga and Ricky Martin took part in the performance, having been invited to feature in specific moments of the show. The Super Bowl takes place annually as the NFL championship final game and is considered one of the largest media events in the United States and one of the most widely watched events in the world. In its 60th edition, the broadcast reached about 124.9 million viewers, while around 71,000 people attended in person at the stadium (Nielsen, 2026). According to figures released by the NFL (National Football League, 2026), the event reached a peak audience of about 137 million viewers, making it one of the most-watched events in the championship's history. Lasting approximately 13 minutes, the performance brought together music, dance, stage settings and costumes to construct a narrative centred on references to Puerto Rican and Latin American culture.

The show opens with a singer holding a guitar in front of a sugar cane field and singing the phrase "how wonderful it is to be Latino! Today is a day for drinking", a catchphrase expressing celebration and pride in Latin identity. Bad Bunny's full name then appears on the stadium's large screen, accompanied by the words "the Super Bowl halftime show", marking the start of the performance. Wearing a white American football uniform and holding a ball, the artist appears among agricultural workers in the staged sugar cane field as he begins his performance.

During the first part of the show, Bad Bunny moves through different settings evoking everyday life in Latin America. Along the way, he passes a stall selling chilled coconuts, older people playing dominoes in a square, women having their nails done, female construction workers at a building site, a *piraguas* (shaved ice topped with flavoured syrup) stall, a taco stand, boxers, a jewellery seller and a couple during a marriage proposal.

Next, Bad Bunny performs on the roof of a house, while several Latin artists occupy the area beneath the structure. The artist then falls from the roof and moves through the house's interior, where a family is gathered, before emerging again. Outside, a group of dancers performs reggaeton and Latin trap choreography around a pickup truck, on top of which the artist continues to sing.

The show continues with further scenery changes. A line of musicians playing violins appears, while Bad Bunny interacts with the camera and the audience. Later, a real wedding is staged live, with Lady Gaga taking part.

She performs one of her own songs in English, adapted to a salsa rhythm, accompanied by the Puerto Rican band Los Sobrinos and several dancers. As the newlyweds celebrate and cut the cake, Bad Bunny and Lady Gaga dance alongside the guests to the song "Baile Inolvidable" (Unforgettable Dance). The artist then wakes a child sleeping among the seats at the ceremony.

The setting changes again as a group of dancers carries Bad Bunny away from the wedding. The new setting features commercial establishments inspired by Puerto Rican spaces, such as a barbershop and a small grocery shop. At this point, while the dancers

perform choreography inspired by salsa and dembow, an older woman hands him an alcoholic drink in a shop bearing the sign "conejo" (rabbit), with a Puerto Rican flag visible in the background.

The performance continues with the symbolic presentation of an Emmy Award to a child watching television alongside their parents. Next, Ricky Martin is seen sitting on a plastic chair and singing in front of a set featuring banana trees, in reference to the cover of Bad Bunny's album *Debí Tirar Más Fotos* (I Should Have Taken More Photos). In the background, workers positioned on electricity poles stage power cuts and fluctuations. During this sequence, Bad Bunny appears holding a Puerto Rican flag and climbs one of the poles while singing.

At the end of the show, the artist says the phrase "God Bless America" and proceeds to name the countries of the American continent, while holding an American football bearing the words "together, we are America". At the same time, musicians playing tambourines and dancers carry the flags of the countries mentioned. At the end of the performance, the artist walks across the field as the large screen in the background displays the phrase "the only thing more powerful than hate is love", before Bad Bunny leaves the stage.

Narration

Taking Bad Bunny's body as our starting point, as the principal social actor producing and circulating meanings through this performance, we begin our discussion of the narrative process by analysing his corporeity and investigating whether, and how, other social actors are mobilised through his discourse.

Bad Bunny's performance at the 2026 "Super Bowl LX" brings Latin American corporeity to the stage in such a way that, beyond mere entertainment, it takes on a strongly political and transformative character. His Latin American body, subjected to State necropolitical apparatuses intended to silence or render it invisible, occupies the stage of one of the largest cultural events on the planet, challenging hegemonic racial norms. It is the body of a heterosexual Latino man, as he has stated in interviews (Lucca, 2026), yet one who breaks with stereotypes of masculinity in several of his performances and public appearances by dancing with pronounced hip movements and wearing fluid clothing, makeup, and painted nails.

In this appearance, Bad Bunny wears an American football uniform, evoking the event he is participating in and an important symbol of the United States. However, by wearing this outfit in a performance characterised by a strong sense of *Latinidad*, in which the central force and provocation of the show lie in Latino bodies and in the visual representation of spaces, times and subjects that differ from those upheld by United States necropolitics, his choice of clothing also becomes an act of boldness and resignification. It may also be understood as an initial attempt to draw audiences in, encouraging more people to observe and listen to the discourse of resistance enacted through his corporeity throughout the performance.

The singer's voice highlights his Latin origins, as his singing style emphasises the nasal quality characteristic of Latin music, alongside his decision to perform almost entirely in Spanish: "el espectáculo de medio tiempo del Súper Tazón" (the Super Bowl halftime show) is the phrase that opens the performance.

His minimalist articulation of words also makes his Puerto Rican accent evident. Even in written language, Bad Bunny reinforces this accent, as illustrated by the song title "NUEVAYoL", a written representation of the phonetic and cultural adaptation through which Puerto Ricans refer to New York. Furthermore, during the rap passages in his Super Bowl performance, the artist adopts a rhythmic, percussive delivery that departs from the conventions of this United States musical genre and once again brings his own subjectivity into the act of enunciation. Given that the voice is a fundamental component of the body, these vocal characteristics emphasise his Latin American corporeity throughout the performance.

The staging also carried strong Latin American symbolism, including a staged sugar cane field with agricultural workers, older people playing dominoes, a representation of a typical Puerto Rican home, female dancers performing *perreo*, a sensual dance typical of Puerto Rico, and couples dancing salsa. At the end of the performance, Bad Bunny carries a large Puerto Rican flag featuring a light-blue triangle, a shade that symbolises resistance, cultural pride and the independence movement, in contrast to the dark blue version adopted by the government and associated with alignment with the United States (Agrelo, 2020). The artist delivers a speech in which his body and voice enumerate the countries that make up the American continent, naming the North American countries last. In doing so, he re-signifies the famous United States phrase "God Bless America", while holding an American football bearing the words "together, we are America". By listing the countries starting with those of the Global South, his speech also reverses the perception of northern countries' superiority, as crystallised in the Mercator projection of the conventional world map. In the background, the large screen displays the phrase "the only thing more powerful than hate is love", while a crowd of people of different ages and body types carries the flags of all the countries of the Americas towards the centre of the "Super Bowl LX" field in an act of occupation and resistance. This staging underscores the artivist's aim of defending Latin America as an important, indeed predominant, component of the continent rather than as its periphery. Bad Bunny closes his performance with the song "DtMF", the title track of his 2025 album, jumping, embracing and shouting alongside his fellow performers until he is out of breath and his voice falters, signalling his strength and commitment to the cause.

In summary, Bad Bunny's corporeity and artivism emerge in the performance through his occupation of space, bringing the narratives of numerous other Latino bodies into his discourse. If United States necropolitics represents a hegemonic, dehumanising power directed at immigrants and Latinos, his body on the Super Bowl stage becomes a symbol of resistance, since, as Foucault (1976/1988) argues, where there is power, there is resistance. Through art and performance, *Latinidad* appropriates this symbolic territory, physically represented by the stage and metaphorically by the audience's

collective imagination, thereby creating an alternative space, a counter-space (Foucault, 1994/2009), that challenges or reverses the normalised order. Artivism is fundamentally constituted by counter-conducts, active forms of resistance to strategies for the domination of subjects, which create alternatives and possibilities for resistance. In this case, Bad Bunny's counter-conduct transforms the stage of one of the largest United States events into a counter-space.

Identification of the Pragmatic Background

To understand the symbolic potential of Bad Bunny's performance, it is necessary to consider the socio-historical conditions that preceded the meanings circulating around this event, which extend beyond an isolated everyday occurrence and make it relevant to collective understanding.

The "Super Bowl LX" show took place amid tightening United States migration policies and intensifying public debate over Latin American immigration. Against a backdrop of political polarisation, Donald Trump's second administration once again made migration a priority on the political agenda. The expansion of mass deportations, together with strengthened mechanisms for the surveillance and criminalisation of foreign nationals, became increasingly prominent in media coverage and in the discourse of different social actors (Chade, 2025). Alongside these institutional changes, these measures were also intensified and contested in the subjective sphere, through the circulation of discourses by political actors that consistently associate migrants with crime, insecurity and social disorder, while reinforcing nationalist discourses surrounding United States identity.

Given that most immigrants deported from the United States originate from Latin America, particularly Mexico (Oropeza, 2025), it is clear that these discourses particularly affect Latin American populations. The figure of the Latino immigrant is no longer represented solely in terms of a source of labour or humanitarian assistance, but is increasingly associated with meanings that construct them as an enemy "other" who must be fought. This construction of meaning helps legitimise practices of exclusion and the precarisation of life, which can be understood through Mbembe's (2011/2018) concept of "necropolitics".

This situation highlights how *Latinidad* has become the object of struggles over meaning within regimes of truth, owing to the growing demographic presence of these populations in the United States. On the one hand, there is an intensification of exclusionary nationalist discourses that seek to reaffirm United States legitimacy and restrict territorial and symbolic boundaries of national belonging; on the other, this context enables the emergence of alternative sensibilities and forms of resistance that celebrate the ethnic and cultural diversity that characterises the presence of Latinos in contemporary United States society.

As one of the country's largest media events, the Super Bowl holds central symbolic value in this process. More than a sporting event, the show functions as a privileged space for producing collective meanings. Historically, the halftime show has showcased

United States cultural values, serving as a powerful means of creating visual representations and narratives disseminated by the artists who perform in this public arena.

Bad Bunny's performance as an artivist intervention emerges at the intersection of these struggles, gaining particular significance as a milestone in the event's history. As the first male Latin American artist to headline the Super Bowl halftime show and to deliver a performance predominantly in Spanish, the artist goes beyond the boundaries of entertainment and assumes an artivist role, placing positive representations celebrating Latin American culture — frequently positioned as peripheral — at the centre of the largest stage in United States culture. In this way, the performance is not merely a musical show, but a political intervention that brought unprecedented visibility to Latino symbols and sparked new debates on immigration, belonging and identity across the Americas.

Characterisation of the Public Problem

In order to understand whether and how the event generated social tensions and mobilised meanings within public opinion, we analyse the comments posted on the NFL's official YouTube video of Bad Bunny's "Super Bowl LX" halftime show, as well as three news reports on the event published by major United States media outlets: Fox News, CNN and *The New York Times*. This analysis does not seek to provide an exhaustive account of the event's impacts and repercussions, but rather to identify elements that directly relate to the research problem and this study's objectives. Accordingly, we do not undertake a quantitative analysis of the YouTube comments or the news reports published by three of the most influential news brands in the United States (Newman et al., 2025). Instead, we adopt a qualitative approach, focusing on selected relevant responses and on the framing conveyed by the headlines and subheadings.

Among the comments on the YouTube video, the NFL pinned a post challenging viewers to name as many celebrities appearing during the show as possible. It has received more than 900 replies. Although the question does not directly encourage political reflection, the discussion draws viewers' attention to the fact that the vast majority of the celebrities featured in the performance, except for Lady Gaga, are Latino or of Latino descent. These include Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin, Chilean actor Pedro Pascal, and American rapper Cardi B, who is of Dominican and Puerto Rican descent.

Other user comments particularly praise the segment in which Bad Bunny names the countries of the American continent. Some describe it as the "boss's touch", while others thank the singer for giving Americans a free geography lesson. These comments satirise the common perception that people in the United States have limited knowledge of geography, while also highlighting a political discussion about the country's deeply patriotic culture and its lack of geographical and humanitarian awareness. Other comments celebrate the singer's references to Latin culture, such as the scene featuring a child asleep across three chairs pushed together during the wedding celebration.

Comments were also posted well after the performance date. In early May 2026, some users expressed their pride in being Latino. In early June 2026, one user commented

that they had cried intensely while watching the performance and that, although they spoke a language other than Spanish, they believed many people shared the hope that xenophobia would end. This highlights the event's broad reach and the intensity of affect mobilised by the artist's performance in confronting the mechanisms of necropolitics directed against immigrants in the United States.

We also examine media coverage of Bad Bunny's performance in the first reports published by Fox News, CNN, and *The New York Times* following the show. Fox News, in an article entitled *Bad Bunny's Super Bowl Halftime Show Ignites Trump's Fury, Divides Viewers* https://www.foxnews.com/sports/bad-bunnys-super-bowl-halftime-show-ignites-trumps-fury-divides-viewers), emphasised the polarisation of public opinion generated by the performance, highlighting a range of reactions, from praise for the cultural and identity-based plurality of the Americas to criticism from President Trump and viewers who were displeased by the predominance of Spanish during the show. The article's subheading highlights the word "frustrated", suggesting that the choice of Spanish went beyond a linguistic issue and became an identity marker that challenged nationalist conceptions of belonging to the United States, particularly following President Trump's statement that Bad Bunny's show "doesn't represent our standards of success, creativity or excellence". The polarised response reported by the news outlet demonstrates that the performance activated sensibilities already present in public debate concerning Latin American immigration and the defence of an Anglo-centric national identity.

CNN, in turn, reported on the event under the headline *Bad Bunny's Super Bowl Halftime Performance Redefined What It Means to Be an American Patriot* (https://edition.cnn.com/2026/02/09/entertainment/bad-bunny-america-super-bowl-liam-ramos), interpreting the artivist's performance as a political intervention capable of redefining United States patriotism. The meanings brought into contention thus reveal a public problem marked by social conflict and divisions over what it means to be American, from a positive perspective that understands America as extending beyond the United States and encompassing the diverse, plural unity of the American continent.

The New York Times, by contrast, focused its article on the "Best and Worst of Bad Bunny's Super Bowl Halftime Show" (https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/09/arts/music/bad-bunny-super-bowl-halftime-show-best-worst.html). By highlighting both the best and worst moments of the performance, the newspaper acknowledged the struggles over meaning that give the event a polarised and controversial character in public opinion, attributing significance to the political statements and symbols the artist mobilised during the performance. The event thus appears to have generated different sensibilities and prompted divergent public debates about the recognition of United States national identity.

The performance highlighted an issue that extends beyond Bad Bunny's individual experience and concerns millions of migrants who are continually positioned as foreigners and often regarded as enemies, even though they actively contribute to the country's socioeconomic development.

The media coverage of the performance demonstrates that the event brought a public problem into the open, prompting us to reflect on colonialism, identity, immigration

and the sense of belonging afforded to Latino populations in the United States. The media outlets analysed highlighted the political character of the performance, interpreting it as a response to the current anti-immigration context and the invisibility experienced by Latinos in the United States. In this sense, Bad Bunny's artivist performance transforms immigration issues into acts of insurgency that denounce xenophobia and necropolitics, bringing them into the sphere of collective concern.

Normalisation

At this stage, we seek to understand the event's limits and lasting power to affect audiences. Something that was once perceived as a rupture may gradually become integrated into systems of social signification, becoming intelligible and explainable as part of people's everyday lives. Although the event took place at a specific moment in the present, its effects may extend beyond the duration of the show and continue to circulate through news reports, videos, social media comments and media-produced content.

Having received widespread attention, Bad Bunny's performance is not confined to the immediate experience of the broadcast. It persists through the circulation of different media fragments of the show, which continue to be shared and reinterpreted, prolonging its presence in ongoing public debate. Its cultural impact thus brings messages that celebrate Latin culture and resist anti-immigration discourse to the fore, making them one of the main axes of meaning production surrounding the event. Bad Bunny's artivist potential therefore lies in seeking to disrupt necropolitical interpretations and framings, in order not only to create fissures in necropolitical logics, but also to generate affect and make forms of resistance socially intelligible and assimilable into collective experience.

Like any event, its capacity to affect audiences has temporal limits, and the struggles over meaning it mobilises do not immediately alter the political and institutional structures that sustain the exclusion of Latin culture and frame the public problems it brings to light. Nevertheless, the event continues to create fissures in dominant regimes of truth by legitimising alternative forms of representing Latin American identity. Thus, Bad Bunny's performance remains relevant not merely as a musical show, but as a communicative and artivist event that challenges hegemonic discourses and gives rise to forms of insurgency surrounding identity and belonging in the United States.

Final Considerations

In this article, we discussed Bad Bunny's performance at the Super Bowl as an artivist practice whose aesthetic-political dimension extends beyond entertainment, challenging anti-immigration policies and necropolitical framings directed at Latin American populations residing in the United States. The performance analysed demonstrated a form of Latin American symbolic mobilisation and insurgency, challenging regimes of visibility and belonging at one of the world's largest media events. We find that Bad Bunny's aesthetic-political performance brought visibility to historically marginalised experiences, creating fissures in narratives surrounding migration and belonging.

The event's repercussions show that struggles over meaning do not end with the performance itself. Although Bad Bunny's artivism shifted debates on belonging, identity, and immigration, much of the media coverage privileged the logic of public-opinion polarisation. Rather than normalising the aesthetic-political rupture brought about by the artivist, the media coverage analysed contributed to reinforcing polarisation itself, shifting the focus of criticism away from structures of exclusion and towards the confrontation between opposing positions. By challenging the patriotic tradition associated with this United States event, against a backdrop of increasingly restrictive State migration policies and intensifying xenophobic discourse, Bad Bunny's performance demonstrates artivism's potential to confront necropolitics and, ultimately, to enact symbolic resistance in contemporary public space.

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