

STEVIE RUIZ

California State University, Northridge

LONG BUI

University of California, Irvine

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## Unearthing Racial Histories of Sexology in the Global South

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**ABSTRACT** Race, war, and geography remain unmarked domains within the historiography of sexuality. This article analyzes the work of Joseph M. Carrier, a seminal figure who helped develop the study of homosexuality. In this article, we examine the ways Carrier incorporated studies of various populations from the Global South, from Vietnamese refugees to Mexican MSM (men who have sex with men). In his attempt to collect knowledge about subaltern groups—first as a RAND Corporation researcher and later as an anthropologist and epidemiologist—Carrier shows us that the genealogy of homosexuality studies is not clear-cut. It is situated across multiple spaces of (inter)disciplinary power and knowledge. By comparing these trans-regional areas of study, we examine the ways in which Western social scientists can draw research from one social context into another. **KEYWORDS** Gay, Global South, HIV/AIDs, Mexico, Race, Sexology, Vietnam War

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In the United States, the study of human sexuality tends to rely on a familiar historiography. It usually follows the medicalized criminalization of homosexuality around the turn of the twentieth century and proceeds to the removal of sexual orientation as a mental illness category by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 1975, moving toward the HIV/AIDS era. In the geographic imaginary of sexology and its history, queer people of color are marginalized from view, as is the global (south) context through which the field's genesis came to be. This oversight demonstrates the failure to recognize the imbricated ways in which communities and populations outside an Anglo-American context have underpinned the contemporary American study of sex, sexual identity/orientation, disease, and sexual minorities. In the following, we provide a critical assessment of one major thinker to demonstrate this point. Commenting upon the pioneering life and work of Dr. John M. Carrier, the first person in the United States to conduct doctoral-level field research on male homosexuality, this article recognizes how Carrier's decades-long research on modern homosexuality operates through the specter of Third World difference as a "dense transfer point for relations of power."<sup>1</sup>

Through his pathbreaking ethnographic research on Mexican and Vietnamese men, Carrier became not only a notable groundbreaking figure in sex studies, but one whose deep interests in homosexual men forms the basis for the interdisciplinary study of sexuality writ large. We believe this scholar's vexed intellectual pursuits in Southeast Asia

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1. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012), 103.

and Latin America are symptomatic of larger political forces such as the tense relationship between the First World and the Third World, between scientists and their subjects, between gay scholars and the homophobic academic-military-industrial complex. In light of all this, we argue that a comprehensive historiography of homosexuality should not only be sensitive to the transnational dimensions of race, place, and space through which such scholarship is garnered.

If homosexuality bears fertile grounds in a complicated imperialist history as many queer scholars and others have shown, it is personified by anthropologist Joseph M. Carrier.<sup>2</sup> Like many queer anthropologists of his time who often chose to investigate foreign “others” as their vested sites of field study, Carrier’s highly embodied the role of both the empirically rigorous scientist who also embodied the outsider position. As a professor starting to come to terms with his sexual identity, Carrier pushed the boundaries of what counts as knowledge and how or where it happens. Carrier’s queer positionality within academia is complicated by his relatively privileged position as a middle-class white man in the Ivory Tower. This insider/outsider status marks our initial object of interest in a man who brought various people at the margins and in the periphery into the spotlight. This article situates and brings together seemingly disparate archives found in Carrier’s collections held at the University of Southern California (USC) on his sexuality research and his research on the Vietnam War held at the University of California, Irvine. In other words, we relate his personal experiences in the field as a RAND analyst, which was not explicitly about sexuality or gay people, to his later published work as a professional anthropologist in the United States-Mexico sexual borderlands. By providing an overview of this anthropologist’s life work as one “micro-genealogy” of the larger field of anthropology/sexology, we seek to contribute to the growing work on intersectional queer histories, recognizing how all types of people are queered in global knowledge-production.

## RACIAL HISTORY IN SEXOLOGY

In this same section, we explain our methodological premises based on a review of scholars who help formulate alternative approaches for studying contemporary sexuality and historical studies of sex. While the field of sexuality studies is new, there is emergent research in subaltern gender and sexuality studies (e.g., works by Rinaldo Walcott and Svati Shah among others).<sup>3</sup> While scholars of various backgrounds have been fascinated by sexuality and especially homosexuality, great interest in sex within public health, sociology, and anthropology came fully into being only in the 1990s after the early HIV/AIDS crisis. Before, the study of gay male sex and sexuality was still heavily frowned upon and there were few studies that received mainstream attention, aside from major

2. Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan, *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (New York: NYU Press, 2002); Sanjay Srivastava, ed. *Sexuality studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

3. Rinaldo Walcott, “Homopoetics: Queer Space and the Black Queer Diaspora,” *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, eds. McKittrick, Katherine, and Clyde Adrian Woods (Cambridge: South End Press, 2007), 233–46.

works under Freudian psychoanalysis and the famous Kinseysian study of male sexuality. In general, gay life was not only kept secret, but studies of gayness were actively censored or politically persecuted during the McCarthy-era Cold War red scare smear campaigns that conflated communist espionage, national subversion, and threats to the nuclear family with homosexual desire.<sup>4</sup> Under the glare of conservative social mores, (homo)-sexuality remained a controversial, illegitimate object of study and research and was heavily frowned upon with scholars restricted from pursuing such “puerile” topics, making Joseph Carrier an exception and pioneer for his time.

Despite his importance to the formation and advancement of sexuality studies, it is also important to recognize Joseph Carrier’s privilege and power at a juncture when women and minorities had not yet entered the ranks of the academy in large numbers due to racial/gender discrimination. The ascribed intellectual authority of educated white men to enter the ranks of the professoriate and draw broad conclusions about racially oppressed and vulnerable societies gives invitation for us to critically investigate how scholars, despite being also somewhat marginalized subjects themselves, are invested with enormous social and cultural capital. Many theorists already highlight the problematics of Westerners studying the non-Western subject. Their insights demonstrate how Carrier’s research contributes to the reflexive anthropology of gay/queer men and the ways the Western gaze can and/or cannot study “alternative” beings. There is writing on the methods and origins of anthropology as rooted in colonialism insofar as “colonialism should not be regarded as a matter of military invasion and colonial exploitation; it should be seen as a practice of the imagination through which dominated populations are represented in ways that produce ethnicization/racialization, sexualization, and cultural difference.”<sup>5</sup> At the same time, research on marginalized sexualities requires an engagement with those who are “queered” in other ways via the mere process of knowledge-production. Key theorists who advance our understanding of the global politics of knowledge-production include postcolonial critics such as Homi Bhabha, Jasbir Puar, Trinh Minh Ha, and Arturo Escobar.<sup>6</sup> They argue that sexualized “otherness” or the difference assumed between modern subjects/identities and alternative ones is tenuous and should be further deconstructed. Subjects can be essentially queered through race or class and even geography.

Scholarship produced by white male gay scholars holds consequences for how the non-white subject is imagined or represented as queer. Queer scholars Eng-Beng Lim and Hiram Perez argue that the primitive, exotic, or “brown” male body is commodified and fetishized by gay popular and academic culture as an object of consumption; they suggest that there needs to be more vigilance regarding the fixing and inscription of non-white

4. Kyle A. Cuordileone, “Politics in an Age of Anxiety: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949–1960,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 87, no. 2 (2000): 515–545.

5. Lena Eckert, *Intersexualization: The Clinic and the Colony* (London: Routledge, 2016), n.p.

6. Arturo Escobar, “Development and the Anthropology of Modernity,” *The Postcolonial Science and Technology Studies Reader*, ed. Sandra Harding (Durham: Duke University, 2011): 269–289; Homi Bhabha, “The Commitment to Theory,” *New Formations* vol. 5, no. 1 (1988): 5–23; Trinh Minh-Ha, “The Totalizing Quest of Meaning,” in *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 29–50; Jasbir Puar, “Mapping US Homonormativities,” *Gender, Place & Culture* 13, vol. 1 (2006): 67–88.

brown bodies within universalizing abstract formulations of queerness.<sup>7</sup> While Perez critiques queer theory and Lim considers performance studies respectively, their observations can be extended more broadly to consider the field of gay and lesbian studies in the social sciences, which includes sociology, urban studies, anthropology, and other modes of intellectual inquiry. One must therefore locate how theories of sexuality emerge and the global-historical conditions by which knowledge about nonnormative groups is manufactured according to institutional and national imperatives.

Beyond the conceptual premises about the Global South are historical ones. It has been argued by historians of gay life in the United States that urbanization and industrialization enabled modern gay identity and culture formation insofar as the development of cities and their zones of during the nineteenth century or perhaps earlier.<sup>8</sup> Medical standardization of the body, the popular ascent of scientific discourse, and technological breakthroughs in the Western world enabled a new dualistic paradigm to emerge with homosexuality separated from heterosexuality. Howard Hsueh-Hao Chiang throws light on the geopolitical entanglements upon which queer theory and what he calls “empires of desire” are founded.<sup>9</sup> Chiang recognizes that sexuality is a social construct, and there is no such thing as a monolithic gay and lesbian history, but a globally differentiated mode of representations forged under sites of contestation.<sup>10</sup>

No longer understood as sexual acts and behaviors but as a networked mode of existence, he says, the growing scholarship on the homosexual, which almost exclusively focused before on white middle-class men, provided the blueprint for the construction of “other” nonnormative subjects. Rather than undertaking a recuperative project of unearthing the marginalized voices of Third World subjects to bring them into visibility, translating their lived experiences as the “raw material” for First World theorizing, a major task of queer scholars today, to borrow from Martin Manalansan, is to reveal the queer modernities that lie within (and against) Western formulations of queer modernity. Like Manalansan, we do not believe the origins of gay liberation and identity begin with the story of urban whites in places such as New York spreading to other parts of the world by way of American democracy and globalization processes.

What was believed to be temporally and culturally absent in the non-West before the “arrival” of Western homosexual discourse sets a neocolonial epistemological rubric in which non-Western societies are defined exclusively in terms of same-sex object choice (especially the choice of white men) irrespective of other social variables, and the “conceptual space” for homosexuality to be singled out as an independent problem separate from say Western colonialism, American imperialism, etc. Gay American scholar

7. Eng-Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens: Spellbinding Performance in the Asias* (New York: NYU Press, 2014); Hiram Perez, “You Can Have My Brown Body and Eat It, Too!” *Social Text* 23, no. 3–4 (2005): 171–191.

8. John d’Emilio, “Capitalism and Gay Identity” *Families in the US: Kinship and Domestic Politics* (1983): 131–41; Chauncey, George. *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994).

9. Howard Chiang, “Tensions of the Past: Frames of Reference and the Trouble with Modern US Queer Historiography, 1976–2007,” *NeoAmericanist* vol. 4, no. 1 (2008): 1–26.

10. Howard Chiang, “Empire of Desires: History and Queer Theory in an Age of Global Affect.” *Critical Studies in History* 1 (2008): 50–71.

Dennis Altman has been a major proponent of the “global gaze/global gays” paradigm, in which he proposes that there are transnational connections between homosexuals in different countries, reflective of a nascent global gay culture.<sup>11</sup> He conceptualizes the notion of “global sex,” a critical gesture toward queer collectivity that moves from sexuality as a visible marker or identity toward “sex” as a fluid process that crosses space and time, a problematic terrain for all kinds of colonial encounters. Addressing sexuality studies’ blind spots follows the observations of anthropologist Ann Stoler who demonstrates the ways (neo)colonial erotic arrangements and affective relations operate among different individuals in a sexualized colonial context, and boldfaces the importance of critiquing archives with an attention to postcolonialism and empire.<sup>12</sup>

Critical methodological approaches developed by Michel Foucault and cultural anthropologist Johannes Fabian are instructive here. Foucault provides a reading of the power-knowledge in volume I of *History of Sexuality*, where he finds that since the nineteenth century there has been the rise of a *scientia sexualis* based on a Western positivist production of “truth” as opposed to the *ars erotica* or erotic arts found in ancient societies and in Asia. This division, he argues, is a false ruse since the West has merely sublimated and not got rid of its eroticism for the sake of science (even if he cannot comprehend the East’s own form of sexual modernity). Power appears less as a system of pure repression than a “sexual mosaic” and “an economy of manifold pleasures” that cannot be contained by negative mechanisms of exclusion.<sup>13</sup> In *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Objects*, Johannes Fabian claims that anthropologists, despite their well-intentions, create distance between themselves and their “objects of study,” where the latter are “frozen in time” through empirical descriptions of native people who are rendered non-modern while the author remains “distant” despite their social intimacy or proximity to subjects.<sup>14</sup> Fabian’s insights about knowledge-production, subject-formation, and temporality obviate anthropology’s early historical claims on the study of human sexuality insofar as the sexuality of the racial other gives value to Western scholars’ construct objects of study. Both Foucault and Fabian are attentive to the negativity at play within the productivity of knowledge-production, and their insights draw us into the intellectual genealogy of one scholar in order to make sense of the larger history of sexuality.

#### THE COLD WAR LIFE OF A NONNORMATIVE SCIENTIST

Joseph Carrier’s life is best summarized in his archival biography for his stored research materials at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive. It is reprinted here in its entirety to showcase the eclectic and convoluted trajectory of his professional life.

11. Dennis Altman, *Global Sex* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 2001).

12. Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

13. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 21.

14. Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Joseph Michel Carrier (b. 1927) was a counterinsurgency specialist for the RAND Corporation in Vietnam, a researcher on herbicide use in Vietnam, and an anthropologist specializing in the analysis of homosexuality among Mexican and Vietnamese men. Educated at the University of Miami (BA, 1950) and Purdue University (MA, 1952), he gained employment with the RAND Corporation in 1956 as a research analyst. In 1962 and 1965–1967, Carrier was detailed to South Vietnam, where he assisted anthropologist Gerald Cannon Hickey's research on the Highland peoples and conducted fieldwork on Viet Cong morale and defection. Carrier returned to the United States in 1968 and entered the graduate program in anthropology at the University of California at Irvine. However, despite his doctoral research on homosexual men in Mexico, Carrier could find no positions in sex research after earning his PhD in 1972. With Hickey's support, Carrier found employment as a staff officer for the National Academy of Science's Herbicide Study Group, for whom he gathered data on the effects of US operations in Vietnam which used herbicides to defoliate forests to expose enemy compounds and poisoned Viet Cong food supplies. In 1974, Carrier helped author a working paper on the effects of these programs on the Vietnamese Highland populations. After his time in Vietnam, Carrier worked as an evaluator of California law enforcement programs (1973–1987) and was Chief Social Scientist for the Orange County Health Agency AIDS Community Education Project (retired 1992).

Joseph Michel Carrier, Jr., enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1945 but received early discharge after the war. Carrier was recalled by the Marines to complete his tour as a sergeant and later returned to the states to receive a Master's in Economics from Purdue University and the next year traveled on a Fulbright Scholarship to India, researching the economic effects of energy resource distribution in the country's northeastern region. In 1954, he taught geography at the University of Miami, his alma mater, then later joined the RAND Corporation and its overseas enterprises. As a United States counterinsurgency specialist in the 1960's, Carrier was stationed in Saigon and worked primarily for one of the most powerful American policy think tanks and non-profit organizations that offer research analysis and data-collection, funded by the United States government. During his years of employment, the young researcher maintained a photo archive of young Vietnamese friends and lovers, many posed in recurring motifs of romantic sleeping poses, bathing together and holding hands (figure 1). Such poses gave us not only evidence of male-to-male everyday life, but "as a whole to express the subtle homoerotic fascination of a white man in a strange country."<sup>15</sup> Despite being marginalized in his academic profession for his sexual identity, he managed to insert a queer sensibility within the hyper/heteromasculine context of military fighting. In short, the war machine enabled sexual and intellectual possibilities that could not heretofore have been made possible.

The Cold War was a major watershed moment for science, despite ongoing problems with studying sexuality. The role of social science in the Vietnam War reveals an important link in the formation of queer anthropology within militarized settings. A deeper

15. Sarah Grøn, "More Danh Vo Works at the Gallery," Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.smk.dk/en/visit-the-museum/news/artikel/endnu-mere-danh-vo-paa-smk/>.





FIGURE 1. *Archive of Dr. Joseph M. Carrier 1962–1973, 2010*  
(Photograph by Danh Vo)

critical engagement with the work of anthropologists shows both complicity and dissidence. Another forefather of queer anthropology was Walter L. Williams who had difficulty getting grants to study homosexuality. He ingeniously used a grant to study gender relations between men and women in Indonesia as a way to actually interview Thai gay activists. The openly gay scholar eventually published work on two-spirit Maya in Mexico, and Navajos, Lakota, and Omaha in the United States. Despite the difficulty of researching sexual variance and diversity, Williams talks about gayness as an advantage of being seen as an “insider” within sexual minority spaces, despite being a foreigner.<sup>16</sup> He justified having sexual relations in the field, but got arrested for possessing child pornography and having lewd conduct with minors in the Philippines.

Carrier displayed true curiosity toward a foreign culture in more ways than one. As a closeted gay white man coming to terms with his sexuality, the sight of Asian men or boys touching or caressing one another was deeply stimulating to his burgeoning sense of queer male identity, but which in the cultural context of Vietnam means little more than showing physical affection. The cognitive dissonance between what is gay behavior or not has much to do with the rising negative stigma that arose with the policing of male-on-male contact and touching, which in the North American Cold War context did not just epitomize a deviant homosexual threat, but a red menace that undermined the heteronormative stability of Anglo-American national domesticity.<sup>17</sup> While many straight military soldiers and service workers took advantage of the thousands of prostitutes working

16. Williams, Walter L., “Being Gay and Doing Fieldwork,” *Out in the Field: Reflections of Lesbian and Gay Anthropologists*, ed. Lewin, Ellen and William Leap (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 70–85.

17. Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

in Vietnam, gay soldiers and civilian workers had to be more discreet within the strait jacket of American military culture and life.

Within the orbit of Cold War geopolitics, quotidian human relations always take on particular vexed meanings. The construction of militarized masculinity constructed places like Thailand as localized places of AIDS, Third World exoticism, and a hyper-sexualization attributable to Southeast Asia.<sup>18</sup> Vietnam presented a sexual frontier shot through with rampant violence and ripe with illicit erotic affairs that mediated the boundaries between foreigners and Southeast Asians with smaller lithe, less hairy bodies that could be construed as feminine. Carrier fell into the category of those Americans fascinated by or obsessed with the Vietnamese as part of the complex uneven relationship between sexualized gendered Third World bodies and First World invading ones. The United States military command and its technological apparatus asserted multiple forms of conquest that sought to control and study a foreign society about which there was little prior information or even cultural awareness.

The United States war in Vietnam was more than a military hotspot but also a site for the mastery of scientific knowledge, from which the United States could learn about the Vietnamese as a way to regulate or manage them. Sex as a technology of power/knowledge came to define the social mores and sexual conduct of the United States military and its support industries. Joseph Carrier inhabited a sexual political economy, where Americans could meet Asians. A few of the photos taken by Carrier during his time there included the well-known Vietnamese diasporic artist Danh Vo who later settled in Denmark as a refugee after the war. Decades later, Carrier tracked down Vo at the latter's art gallery and showed him the photographs, which gave the artist a glimpse into his early years in Vietnam. The two men began both a personal and creative relationship where Vo would exhibit these photos and even display Carrier's last will and testament at exhibits, while Carrier promised to give all of his possessions to Vo. Such demonstrated acts of love and friendship bespeak the deep emotional ties built during times of conflagration and hatred.

During his time in Vietnam, Carrier made a mark for himself as a savvy collector of crucial information about rural populations as part of the United States mission to turn Vietnam into a safe regional bulwark against communist infiltrators and covert operations. Diplomatic historian Jefferson Marquis argues that the Vietnam War was more than a military war but a war of knowledge, so much that United States Defense Secretary Robert McNamara called the Vietnam War the "social scientists' war."<sup>19</sup> The United States government's interests in managing and studying foreign peoples in order to build a strong base of knowledge against the unknown specter of a global communist threat fueled the growth of disciplines such as area studies (i.e., African studies, Asian studies, Latin American studies), which devised places such as Southeast Asia as a kind of large-scale case study and "field site" for gathering data that was not only academic in nature but served state interests in dealing with what is collectively known as the Global South,

18. John Nguyet Erni, "Epidemic Imaginary: Performing Global Figurations of "Third World AIDS," *Space and Culture* vol. 9, no. 4 (2006): 429–452.

19. Jefferson Marquis, "The Other Warriors: American Social Science and Nation Building in Vietnam," *Diplomatic History* vol. 24, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 79.



the poor decolonizing nations that comprise the southern hemisphere as opposed to the Global North.

American social scientists were formative to the United States foreign nation-building project, including demographers, economists, area studies scholars, geographers, political scientists, and anthropologists (United States intelligence agents would sometimes pose as researchers to get the inside details on village activities). It was the first modern high-tech war, where computer giant IBM was called in to help with the statistical accounting and data-collection related to the war effort.<sup>20</sup> Just as scientists such as Carrier were part of a larger effort to comprehend and penetrate Vietnamese society in order to symbolically capture or categorize it, the generals and politicians supportive of United States intervention in Vietnam considered the local people an inferior backward people who could not rule themselves, serving as the “white man’s burden” to uplift and modernize.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the Vietnam War was not simply a military enterprise but a scientific project in empirical research and knowledge accumulation, where the United States sought to possess, control, surveil, and tame foreign entities through imperial logics of “information-gathering.” In this endeavor, Joseph Carrier helped write the major study and government memorandum entitled *A Profile of Viet Cong Returnees*, published in 1968, in which he presented statistical data collected from July 1965 to June 1967.<sup>22</sup> It detailed the type of people who defected from the Viet Cong (VC) under the *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) project that sought to induce VC supporters to defect. In monthly progress reports, he outlined the characteristics of these former enemies, most of whom were young civilians turned guerilla members for the communist militia.<sup>23</sup> Prepared for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense/International Affairs and the Advanced Research Projects Agency, the memorandum was instrumental in not only establishing Carrier as a researcher of the highest order but giving the United States more vital tools to enhance its broad war arsenal and capabilities. The study did little to alleviate the structural reasons for why people turn to communism, such as antipathy toward Western imposition, but it gave the United States greater insight into discerning how poor natives turn that route and how to mitigate against it.

During his time there, he had sexual liaisons with Southern Vietnamese male soldiers, and Carrier was stigmatized by high ranking officials during his service as an army personnel due to that. After he was discharged, he worked in collaboration with the United States military in South Vietnam as a government contractor with the RAND Corporation, one of the world’s largest weapons manufacturers during the Vietnam War. As a doctoral student and later professor, Carrier developed sexual behavioral studies that explained patterns of sexual gratification among queer Vietnamese men. During his

20. Dan E. Feltham, *When Big Blue Went to War: A History of the IBM Corporation’s Mission in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War (1965–1975)* (Bloomington: Abbott Press, 2012).

21. John Foster Dulles and Richard M. Nixon, “Taking Up the White Man’s Burden: Two American Views.” *Vietnam and America: A Documented History*, eds. Gettleman, Marvin E., Jane M. Franklin, Marilyn Young, H. Bruce Franklin (New York, NY: Grove/Atlantic Press, 1995).

22. Joseph Carrier, *A Profile of Viet Cong Returnees: July 1965 to June 1967* (Santa Monica: The RAND Corporation, 1968).

23. Jake Blood, *The Tet Effect: Intelligence and the Public Perception of War* (London: Routledge, 2004), III.

return trips to Vietnam, he was known to have intercourse with his research subjects in documenting their behavioral patterns of sexual pleasure. He went on to continue his research extending his geographical focus into Mexico where he studied the sexual habits of young adolescent and adult males.

Despite working for the RAND Corporation from 1956 to 1968 as a research analyst and counterinsurgency field specialist in Vietnam, Carrier was then told of his dismissal from his job for economic reasons. Truth to be told, his fellow employees in Saigon reported his suspected homosexual affair with a South Vietnamese Air Force officer to his superior. RAND and the United States considered homosexuals a national security risk and so Carrier departed from the company without proof of this affair. Resignation gave Carrier the opportunity to return to school to pursue his doctorate in anthropology at the University of California at Irvine. Metzger was open to a graduate student doing research on male homosexuality, but advised Carrier to avoid mentioning homosexuality when applying to the graduate program. Following Metzger's suggestion, Carrier focused on the sexual behavior of poor "mestizo" or mixed-race men in Mexico under the auspices of the United States National Institute of Health.

While hostilities in Vietnam intensified, Carrier from 1969 to the spring of 1971 decided to conduct research in Guadalajara, observing and interviewing Mexican men who had sex with men (MSM). Recognizing that his initial topic choice of studying working-class men in United States urban centers, Carrier took on the more exotic choice of studying men in Mexico, which would have a bigger impact on the field. This was the first doctoral-level anthropological field research focused on homosexual behavior, but after earning his PhD, Carrier had little prospects for an academic position in sex research given the political conservatism at the time. He then served as a staff officer at the National Academy of Science, examining the effects of the toxic herbicides such as Agent Orange utilized by American military forces in South Vietnam. Such work on the biopolitics of war—tied to environmental concerns, demography, and socioeconomic history—would overlap temporally with work on public health in Mexico, and thus the global connections between Mexico and Vietnam was made. From 1973 to 1987, he found part-time employment evaluating experimental law enforcement programs in California, a job nature that allowed Carrier to continue his academic research, extending the scope of his fieldwork into Mexican sexual communities.

#### **GEOGRAPHICAL INTIMACIES: STUDYING SEXUAL DEVIANCE IN MEXICO**

The AIDS epidemic during the 1980s gave import to Carrier's work and his important work on homosexuality gave public health officials early insights into an undocumented, understudied population that heretofore had been ignored. Carrier later joined the Orange County Health Agency AIDS Community Education Project (ACEP) to develop effective sex educational materials for the men of Mexican descent in Orange County, retiring in 1992. In 1995, the culmination of more than twenty-five years of his research led to the publication of *De Los Otros: Intimacy and Homosexuality among Mexican Men*.



FIGURE 2. Joseph Carrier Papers, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive

In his final year with ACEP, Carrier conducted an ethnographic study of the sexual behaviors of Vietnamese gay men. Altogether, his impressive body of work on Mexican and Vietnamese men allowed service providers to create and implement HIV/AIDS educational programs, while contributing enormously to the social science on sexual behaviors of queer men. As a foremost academic expert on sex, Carrier trained and supervised (and informally mentored) a number of students who went on to expand the field of sexuality studies in a number of disciplines. In his rich trove of research materials, Carrier amassed an impressive archive of publications, correspondences, scholarly literature, field notes, pamphlets, and other documents related to activities in places such as Vietnam, India, Brazil, Mexico, and Japan. Pamphlets in his collection of papers, for instance, included erotic images of Mexican men kissing on the cover of a Mexican magazine with coverage focusing on AIDS activism (see figure 2). His far-ranging excursions and interests brought him into close contact with people from all types of backgrounds, while giving future scholars and the public a snapshot of sexual histories in the non-European world. Such work on Third World sexuality advanced the scope of scholarship on homosexuality by showing how it was more than a problem of nature or society but a natural phenomenon with varying social dimensions found across the world. But while Carrier brought the study of sexuality writ large to the forefront of public consciousness, the problematics of his research must be critiqued since they emerge out of particular arrangements of power with Carrier holding a particular status vis-a-vis those queer subjects in the developing world, who were both different from and similar to him.

Joseph Carrier took a keen interest in Mexican men who have sex with other men, after being fired from the RAND Corporation and completing his PhD. His major seminal work is the monograph *De Los Otros: Intimacy and Homosexuality among Mexican Men*, a detailed account of sexual practices and bonds among Latino males in Guadalajara, Mexico. As a pioneering figure in the study of homosexuality, Carrier communicated frequently with many scholars, providing mentorship to younger scholars to greatly expand the field of sex studies and inspiring the rapid development of queer studies. Collecting materials from Latin American countries other than Mexico, Carrier was one of a few social scientists working on the behaviors of homosexual men along with contemporaries such as Steven Murray.<sup>24</sup> Though he initially wanted to study the sexual behaviors of low-income Black, White, and Latino men in southern California, Carrier believed an ethnographic analysis of men in Mexico would be more cutting-edge. Representing a quarter century of data gathering in Guadalajara, the book *De Los Otros* brings to light his observations along the highways in northern Mexico on the process of initiating sexual encounters (with the help of an Anglo-American gay friend) and the norms governing Mexican men's sex roles and acts. Diagramming the codes of male sexual preferences, Carrier finally came to fame as a scholar by documenting the ways femininity was linked to whether subjects were "passive" and performing oral or receiving anal intercourse viewed in the analogous inferior position of woman, and thus are more stigmatized by society than the "active" masculine subjects. He suggested that while in the United States homosexuality was often identified with effeminate men, in Mexico a man's masculinity was not imperiled by engaging in homosexual acts as long as one plays the role of the penetrator (for anal or oral sex), while the one who plays the passive role gets targeted and discriminated. The homosexual was not all men who engaged in same-sex intimacy, but the homosexual follows the subordinate position of the woman.

*De Los Otros* provided participant observations and life histories of male informants he knew "intimately." While many anthropologists hide their secret liaisons with their study subjects, Carrier was honest about his sexual activities and proclivities. In his papers, for example, Carrier possessed photographic materials of Mexican informants who were photographed naked in his Pacific Palisades home. In the photograph taken of "Arturo de Guadalajara," Carrier documented the intimate stories and lived embodied experiences of Mexican migrant men who lived between the United States and Mexico (see figure 3). Despite its attempt to document the lives of poor queer brown men, the book's eurocentrism is evident in the lack of nuance within the author's conceptualization of Latino "machismo," the aggressive attitude and masculine behavior that agrees with traditional ideas about manhood. Like so many postmodern anthropological works, *De Los Otros* is as much about Carrier as it is about the subjects involved, and the ethnography resembles a personal memoir. Indeed, the preface even begins with Carrier discussing how and why he came to anthropology after expulsion from the RAND

24. Matthew Gutmann, *The Meanings of Macho: Being a Man in Mexico City* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996); Stephen Murray, *Latin American Male Homosexualities* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).



FIGURE 3. “Arturo de Guadalajara” photographed in Joseph Carrier’s home. Joseph Carrier Papers, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive

Corporation as a “security risk.” The confessional opening establishes scholasticism as a personal endeavor.

The social scientific approaches taken by Carrier were exhibited in his applied work in “the field,” which includes casual meetings with potential dates in bars and cruising areas, presents the challenges of conducting an “object” scientific study of sexuality, and the overlaps between empirical knowledge-production and imperial fantasy production, especially when frameworks for studying Mexican queer men based on object-choice and sex-roles comes from Euro-American academe. Carrier is cognizant of the pitfalls and perils of his research, recognizing his study sample as not generalizable to all MSM, taking readers through the negotiation process involved in navigating through informal social networks structured in the larger sense by the asymmetries between a Global South and Imperial North. Carrier talks about the sociohistorical influence of the Church and Mexico’s economic state in the determining of the sexual role-play of mestizos, whose Spanish and Indian cultural blend explains why Mexicans focus on the distinction between “inserters” (*machos*) and “receivers” (*jotos*) rather than the American division between gay and straight. Such distinctions relied upon the theory that Mexican male homosexuality was situational, recreating gender roles through insertion of penis-anal penetration. Anal penetration likely replaced the situational roles that Mexican men would have fulfilled in traditional gender roles assigned to chromosomal assigned sex.

Carrier’s division between “tops” and “bottoms” denied murky boundaries of sexual expression that likely existed among Mexican queer men. In the journal *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, for example, Carrier argued that Mexican men were reticent to “bottoming”



because it compromised their attachment to traditional masculinity. Due to such socio-cultural factors, Carrier explained, Mexican males engaged in same sex desire sought pleasure via penetration because of so-called sociocultural expectations.<sup>25</sup> Carrier's theory of sociocultural pressures relied upon his observations of Mexican mestizo men who balanced sexual gratification with the pressure to pursue heteronormative love in traditional Mexican societies. What Carrier overlooked was the range and diversity of masculinities that existed among sexual minority communities in Mexico. Such variant performances of masculinity among Mexican men historically have operated outside a male-female binary that relied upon Eurocentric gender binaries. The Muxe, for example, is an identity that is used among Zapotec communities in Mexico to describe transgender women who have been viewed as teachers and caretakers.<sup>26</sup> Whereas trans and queer identified men have been objects of ridicule, according to Carrier, the practice of asserting hyper-masculine roles was rewarded under a traditional patriarchal system.

The gay white gaze and cosmopolitan queer sensibility that Carrier used in his analysis mapped an uneven geography of sexuality among queer communities. In his empirical studies that were based upon social scientific theories of his time, Carrier viewed Mexican culture as an impediment to reaching full recognition and rights among queer men in Mexico. Thus, Carrier's analyses about how queer men express love, passion, and pleasures should be elliptically digested with a great deal of skepticism. As queer of color critique scholars such as Vanessa Panfil and Richard Rodriguez have demonstrated in their analysis about the variance of queer kinship in Latino communities, such diversity of gender and sexual expression has been increasingly made political as queer people have become more audible and visible in Mexico's public sphere.<sup>27</sup>

While many scholars cite the influence of Carrier on the conceptualization of Latin American same-sex unions, there has not been linking to Vietnamese sexuality and what it means to think about brown bodies through the gay white gaze. Sócrates Silva cites an article published by Carrier in the journal *Culture, Health, and Sexuality*, in which the scholar discussed the "dilemma of deciding to what extent his private sex life should be separated from his field research," while formulating his own rules about whom he should have sex with, which he never followed fully while working in the field.<sup>28</sup> As Silva further writes, the "boundaries between research and personal life often became rather blurry. . . . [S]ex research, regardless of the methodology, is always controversial, and is scrutinized for immorality in ways that other topics are not."<sup>29</sup>

One could fault Carrier for his sexual indiscretions with his subjects, but recognizing how homosexuality has been severely suppressed in the United States, Carrier blurred the

25. Joseph Carrier, "Cultural Factors affecting Urban Mexican Male Homosexual Behavior," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* vol. 5, no. 2 (1976): 104.

26. Beverly Chiñas, "Isthmus Zapotec Attitudes toward Sex and Gender Anomalies." *Latin American Male Homosexualities* vol. 29, no. 2 (2002): 293–302.

27. Vanella Panfil, *The Gangs All Queer: The Lives of Gay Gang Members* (New York: NYU Press, 2017); Richard Rodriguez, *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicana/o Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

28. Silva, Sócrates, "Observing Homosexual Encounters: The Joseph M. Carrier Papers at the ONE Archives." Presentation at SALALM 54, Berlin, Germany, 2009, 7.

29. Sócrates, "Observing Homosexual Encounters," 7.



lines of professionalism to challenge the strict formality and “objective” artifice of sciences while speaking to the ethics of conducting research on racialized sexualities.<sup>30</sup> Carrier’s fascination with and affinity for brown and yellow men speaks not simply to the phenomenon of academic globalization, but politicized contact zones induced by American military interventionism around the world, and the heightened anxieties of the social sciences in a postcolonial world.

#### CONCLUSION: MAPPING AIDS IN LATINO AND ASIAN QUEER COMMUNITIES

In this final section, we connect Carrier’s work on Mexican and Vietnamese men with HIV/AIDS as a culmination of all his previous work in Mexico and Vietnam. We can determine the linkages made among populations living in and coming from the Global South. In his mapping of premodern sexualities of Vietnamese and Mexican men, he argued that sexual gratification among straight and queer men of color existed against the modern white male subjectivity and identity that emerged during the gay civil rights movements. We believe a critical assessment of his research history and archival holdings is significant because it provides the opportunities to radicalize gay history so that we may shed light on the geopolitical origins and sexual politics as to how white gay modernity unfolded across the twentieth century.

The onset of the AIDS epidemic brought sharp public scrutiny against the gay community. Equivalent to what was popularly known as “gay cancer,” any association with gay or queer identity was met with public ridicule. Carrier’s epidemiological work, indeed, carved out new spaces within the academe to understand the social implications that were attached to HIV/AIDS prevention. Without the stigma that was attached to HIV/AIDS, Carrier attempted to use his findings on male homosexuality in Vietnamese and Mexican communities in order to stop the spread of the virus. One of the failures of the Centers for Disease Control was the level of outreach specialists made to the gay and lesbian community. In particular, queers of color were most vulnerable because of the lack of information translated into their respective languages, Vietnamese and Spanish. His work is commendable at a time when public health officials attached stigma to the AIDS epidemic. In his later career, Carrier turned from anthropology to epidemiology and public health when he conducted surveys of the spread of HIV/AIDS among Vietnamese American and Mexican American men. Bringing his earlier work and expertise from Vietnam and Mexico into the study of diasporic subjects living in the United States, the scientist was able to bring the study of the foreign in the United States domestic sphere.

Overall, Carrier’s work, translated in both Spanish and English, was influential in delinking homosexuality from perversion, criminality, and prostitution with the effect of making sexual research and sexual minorities palatable to the mainstream. Co-authored publications moreover with United States-based Vietnamese American and Mexican American scholars allowed Carrier and later scholars to become more sensitive to the

30. Joseph Carrier, “Reflections on Ethical Problems Encountered in Field Research on Mexican Male Homosexuality: 1968 to Present.” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* vol. 1, no. 3 (1999), 211.

cultures of those populations to gather “ethnosexual” data.<sup>31</sup> Just as he found the “insertees” in Mexican male-to-male sex were feminized, his research data found that in the United States context, acculturated Vietnamese American men with a preference for Anglo men and the “bottom” in anal intercourse, were at the highest risk for HIV infection. He and his co-authors, Bang Nguyen and Sammy Su, found that the spread of HIV in the heterosexual population came through Vietnamese men’s sexual relations with female prostitutes in California, Mexico, Thailand, and Vietnam.<sup>32</sup> While not making internal cultural explanations for the sexual behavior of Asian men other than the wider economic advantages in choice afforded those who made it to the United States, Carrier gives much more consideration and autonomy to the new gay group on the scene, the *internacionales*, a group inspired by the gay and lesbian movement in Mexico able to play out their sexual roles. Overall, he argues that the dynamics of “queer” male life in Mexico falls under the pressures exerted by the family, which force men to escape to the urban cities or the United States. According to Richard Parker and Carlos Cáceres, Carrier’s research on “the social organization of same-sex relations in Latin America provided one of the primary sources for attempts to problematize the cross-cultural applicability of North American and Western European models of homosexuality and notions of gay identity.”<sup>33</sup> If anything, it becomes harder to say all gay identity is the same throughout the world, even if this relativism operates from a largely Western standpoint. Gay liberation and “coming out” is theorized as a region-specific phenomenon with many sociocultural variables. At the same time, HIV/AIDS was considered a mostly gay white male disease, and Carrier’s work brought to light the serious epidemic that was growing in communities of color, and how it was bound up with people’s sexual roles.

Carrier reached fame for profiling ethnic male “bottoms” and MSM. In public health discourse, at-risk designations typically have been reserved for queer men who “bottom,” while “tops” supposedly are less vulnerable to HIV/AIDS contraction. When this “science” is applied to gendered and racialized stereotypes such as the Latino “top” and the Asian “bottom,” this paradigm of sexual roles and sexual risks does not account for the murkiness of sexuality for those who partake in more versatile forms of sexual gratification and gender expression including “power bottoms,” “femme tops,” and “butch queens.” As Tan Hoang Nguyen argues, Asian American bottomhood has historically possessed a range and depth of gender variance.<sup>34</sup> There was no language to describe Latino bottomhood, but the presumed binaries Carrier built his frameworks upon opened that up.

There is an inherent problematization of the racial configuration and hierarchy that sets up Asian men in proximity to and subjection to masculine whiteness, or the racialization of Vietnamese people as targeted objects of study, whether in times of war as

31. Magana, J. Raul and Joseph M. Carrier, “Mexican and Mexican American male sexual behavior & spread of AIDS in California,” *Journal of Sex Research* vol. 28, no. 3 (1991): 425–441.

32. Joseph Carrier, Bang Nguyen, and Sammy Su, “Vietnamese American Sexual Behaviors & HIV Infection” vol. 29, no. 4 (1992): 547–560.

33. Richard Parker and Carlos Cáceres, “Alternative Sexualities and Changing Sexual Cultures among Latin American Men,” *Culture, Health & Sexuality* vol. 1, no. 3 (1999): 201.

34. Tan Hoang Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

internal refugees patrolled by the US military or in US civil society as ethnic minorities. Thus, when there is greater focus on the study of race (and not simply culture, region, or identity), the issue that emerges is not how others think, act, or behave, but how categories of difference are suspect, and engendered by the white gay male gaze as well as Western military-intellectual dominance. The Vietnamese/Mexican subject that emerges from Carrier's intellectual corpus is one that has not been fully fleshed out, even if there are variations (rural Vietnamese or acculturated Vietnamese Americans, and mestizo or indigenous Mexican men).

Joseph Carrier contributed enormously to the early social scientific research on gay sex. His work traverses the disciplinary fields of anthropology, sociology, geography, and cultural history. Even while Carrier conceptualized and respected the wide diversity of sexualities across the globe, his body of work engaged men of color as discrete subjects and important populations, putting them at the forefront in the study of contemporary social behavior and deviance. The history of the social sciences has been one of the production of colonial knowledge about groups of people who must emerge within the constraints of European dominance, politically or epistemologically. This general observation does not serve to diminish the significance of Carrier's influence, but serves as a reminder of the power and precariousness of research, and assesses the value of such work within global hegemonic structure of power and a historical tradition of science in which Carrier figures prominently. The underpinnings of this appraisal expose the cross-pollinations as well as divisions between modern and alt-modern sexual beings. But as we have shown, the emergence of the ethnographic gaze is an interwoven story of relations and unspoken intimacy seen and unseen. Carrier's life and work testifies to the power-laden historical force field in which the modern gay ethnographic subject is embedded. ■

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Sincerest gratitude to anonymous reviewers for their feedback and Ron Scapp for believing in our piece. We appreciate the encouragement and support from our colleagues, Martha Escobar and Rosa RiVera Furumoto. We also want to acknowledge the last-minute review by Tomas Figueroa.