

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Jaraneros and Jarochas:
The Meanings of *Fandangos* and *Son Jarocho*
In Immigrant and Diasporic Performance

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Music

by

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December 2012

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The Thesis of Hannah Eliza Alexia Balcomb is approved.

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Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank in the completion of this project. First, I must recognize my thesis chair Jonathan Ritter, and my other committee members, Deborah Wong and René T.A. Lysloff who all constantly encourage me to take my critical thinking to the next level. I would also like to thank all the people at interlibrary loan that helped me obtain some very obscure and crucial sources. Next, I would like to acknowledge all the people who graciously provided me with interviews and shared their enthusiasm and knowledge with me. Although not everyone's words made it into my final version, all of the conversations I had with people contributed to my overall understanding of *son jarocho* in the Los Angeles area and are incorporated into this work.

Both communities that I studied with are doing incredible work to promote *son jarocho*, and each group has become special to me in their own way. From the *jaranero* community I am especially grateful to Martha González and Quetzal Flores, whose activism and music inspired this project. I am also thankful to Chuy Sandoval, and Cesar Castro for their extensive interviews. I admire all the teachers at the *Plaza de la Raza* who donate their time on a weekly basis to teach aspiring musicians.

I became especially close with two members of the *jaranero* group, Maria Pérez and Heriberto Rodriguez. I often spent afternoons after the *fandango* workshops with these three people learning new songs as their children played in Lincoln Park. Early on in my research when I did not yet have a *jarana* María and Heriberto were sympathetic and let me practice on their instrument after class finished. This type of generosity and

openness is characteristic of the *jaranero* community and the workshops in the *Plaza de la Raza*, and I am grateful to all those who welcomed me into this world.

I also became close with the *jarochas* and have many people to thank for granting me interviews and for welcoming me into their community. First, Rafael Figueroa Hernández has been an invaluable resource for me both as a scholar and as a friend. In addition to answering all my questions Rafael graciously read my draft and provided crucial feedback. Most importantly, he introduced me to all of his friends and colleagues in Los Angeles. I would also like to thank Jacky Avila who provided my initial contact with Rafael. Personal introductions are incredibly useful in trying to connect with informants and colleagues in an ethnography, and this particular introduction was pivotal in my research.

As I mention in my thesis, three women in particular, Columba Baruch-Maldonado (and her husband Michael), Adriana Delfin, and Patty Paroquín showed me incredible kindness and not only supplied pertinent information but also invited me into their fold. They let me stay at their houses, invited me to parties where I met many wonderful musicians, and recruited me as a volunteer into the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*. Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, Honorio Robledo, Arturo Rosado, Juan Paroquín and Sebastián Rodríguez also granted me multiple interviews. As with the *jaranero* one the *jarocha* community is full of intelligent and warm people and I am thankful to have been embraced by them so wholeheartedly.

Last I would like to thank my friends and family, in particular No.e Parker who always helped me maintain perspective and my mother who has always been supportive of my aspirations.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my sister Frances with whom I share some of my earliest and fondest musical memories.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Music
University of California, Riverside December 2012
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This paper analyses the different ways that two groups in the Los Angeles area use *son jarocho*, a musical practice from Veracruz, Mexico, and the participatory values in a *fandango*, a communal gathering, to build community and to connect with their Mexican heritage. The first group is composed primarily of Mexican Americans and Chicanas/os who refer to themselves as *jaraneros*, or players of the main *son jarocho* instrument, the *jarana*. For the *jaraneros*, *fandangos* provide an opportunity for people to come together in a democratic setting in which the main tenets of neo-liberalism such as competition and privileging the individual over the community are eradicated. The *jaraneros* are also connected to the Zapatista movement and a global effort to re-examine and ultimately challenge the new world order and its modes of capitalism like free trade under NAFTA. The second group, the *jarochas*, is composed primarily of immigrants from Veracruz. For members of this group, playing *son jarocho* is about connecting with their traditions from their hometowns in Veracruz and building community with others

from that part of Mexico. Using these two communities as my case studies, I demonstrate the different ways that diasporic and immigrant communities cultivate *son jarocho* and *fandangos* in Los Angeles. I argue that the meaning each group has assigned to this music and social practice is reflective of each one's respective relationships to the homeland, Mexico, and more specifically to Veracruz, where *son jarocho* originates.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Tijuana, outside on the wharf, July 15, 2012

It is very late and people are tired, yet no one stops. The music seems to give people energy, and the dancers continue climbing up on the tarima, a small, wooden platform, and dance with endless, graceful enthusiasm. I watch as couple after couple ascends to this privileged space and begins zapateando, or tap dancing. Both men and women wear black shoes with heels that are specifically designed for this kind of dance. The dancers appear unaffected by the cool ocean breeze: women bravely bare naked shoulders in halter-top dresses and sweat pours down the faces of the men.

Not yet ready to take center stage as these dancers do, I take my place towards the outer circle of musicians that are huddled around the tarima. Like me, most people play jaranas, a small guitar-like instrument. Some play the requinto, a similar small guitar, while a few keep a steady rhythmic motion with the quijada or donkey jaw. I watch the people around me and try to mimic their finger positions with each chord change. Occasionally, someone will notice and slow their motions or even stop and offer some instruction. Once I have mastered the fingering I bend my ear close to my instrument trying to match the rhythm of my rasgueos, or strumming, to that of the musicians around me. As the night progresses I get colder and more tired. There are no chairs. On one side a tarima leans vertically against the fence. I sit with a new friend, Cynthia, perched on the tarima and we talk. Cynthia says that some songs, like this one, last up to an hour. I

have no idea how long we have been playing this particular song. I mention this to Cynthia, and we happily agree that we shouldn't check the time because this would break the magic feeling of being lost in the experience.

I am caught in what Victor Turner would call a liminal space, betwixt and between the known worlds of my everyday existence, somewhere between yesterday, today and tomorrow. I left the house at 9:00 a.m. earlier today or, what I now realize was actually yesterday, and it is somewhere between 2:00 and 5:00 in the morning. The only reason I know this is because the bars on the beach boardwalk have closed and the sun has not yet risen.

I am so tired that my fingers keep slipping clumsily as I switch chords, my body aches from standing for so many hours. Yet, I feel safe and happy. I feel that I am part of something special. Even though I do not know everyone's names, and I may not see them again, I feel connected to them all, at least in this moment. Someone I have never met motions that he would like to play my jarana. I pass him one of the most fragile and expensive things I own without hesitation, caught up in the feeling of communitas, of being part of a larger social existence. I look up at the stars, wondering how many other people around the world are seeing them and feeling this connected to all of humanity.

At around 4:30 a.m. the group stops playing music, and it looks like the fandango has ended. Everyone gathers for a picture. However, soon after someone starts playing again and the fandango resumes with full fervor. Finally, around 5:30, people decide to stop. I help a few people clean up the area around us, picking up empty beer cans. As we walk away the sun is coming up. I say goodnight, and fall into my hotel bed, exhausted

but content. Later I get an email from some of the people I met that night. They tell me that this was a great fandango. We were lucky to have been part of something so special.

A *fandango* is a communal gathering in which *son jarocho*, a musical practice from Veracruz, Mexico, is performed. Although chronologically the *fandango* just described took place close to the end of my research, I begin with it here to provide the reader with a sense of what it means to play *son jarocho* and participate in such events—the kind of powerful personal and communal experience that my research consultants frequently cited as crucial to understanding the world of *son jarocho*.

Fandangos are central to *son jarocho* communities in the United States and in Mexico. Collectives that teach workshops, and organize *fandangos* exist in California, Chicago, Illinois, New York, and Texas. In southern California there is a network of at least six different *son jarocho* collectives.¹ All workshops and *fandangos* are open to anyone who wishes to attend: therefore, some overlap is common: members from San Diego attend events in Santa Ana and visa versa. A community listserv helps everyone stay informed about *fandangos*, workshops, and other events.

In my research, I examined the practice of *son jarocho* and *fandango* within the *son jarocho* community in Los Angeles. Mark Mattern writes that people exist in communities by virtue of the things they have in common. A community, he posits, represents a theoretical and practical way for disparate individuals to recognize and act upon common interests and concerns, negotiate differences, and assert themselves in public arenas (Mattern 1998:6). I use this definition to refer to a broad group of

¹ <https://sites.google.com/site/seattlefandango/>; <http://www.npr.org/2011/10/29/141723031/a-musical-style-that-unites-mexican-americans>;

individuals in the Los Angeles area and throughout southern California who, despite their differences, participate in *son jarocho* music; this can mean that they dance, play an instrument, attend events, and/or help to organize musical gatherings.

Within this broad community a variety of different collectives, groups, families and individuals exist who have their own, unique relationship to the music and culture of *son jarocho*. As Mattern posits, popular music can be the social glue for creating and maintaining diverse communities (Mattern 1998:6), and in southern California many Mexican Americans, Chicanas/os, and Mexicans are joined through their love of *son jarocho* and *fandangos*. However, different sub-communities, or smaller groups, view this practice in different ways. Some see *son jarocho* as a tool for political organizing; others see it as a way to build community or to connect with their Mexican or Mexican American heritage. Still others seem to simply enjoy the music for the music itself.

In this paper, I examine the different ways that two groups in the Los Angeles area use *son jarocho*. The first group is composed primarily of Mexican Americans and Chicanos/as who refer to themselves as *jaraneros*, or players of the main *son jarocho* instrument, the *jarana*. This group uses *son jarocho* as a means for social and political action, and as a way to build community and connect with their Mexican American heritage (González 2007:375). Members are highly influenced by the Mexican *son jarocho* group Mono Blanco and the *movimiento jaranero*, or *jaranero* movement, in which *son jarocho* musicians rejected *son comercial*, or an urban, style of playing and emphasized the importance of *fandangos* and participatory music playing.

The *jaranero* group offers weekly workshops that teach people how to play *son jarocho* and, most importantly, how to participate in a *fandango*. For this group, *fandangos* provide an opportunity for people to come together in a democratic setting in which the main tenets of neo-liberalism such as competition and privileging the individual over the community are eradicated. The *jaraneros* are also connected to the Zapatista movement and a global effort to re-examine and ultimately challenge the new world order and its modes of capitalism like free trade under NAFTA. The *jaraneros* emphasize the creation of community determined by social rather than commercial values and encourage consensus building and equal participation. Members of the *jaranero* group use participatory *son jarocho* and the *fandango* performance practice to challenge the norms of capitalist society and provide alternative ways of interacting through music.

The second group, which I will refer to in this paper as the *jarochas* (for reasons explained below), is composed primarily of immigrants from Veracruz. Some of them grew up playing this style and attending *fandangos* in Veracruz. Others did not become inspired to learn about their musical culture until they were living in the United States. In general, the Veracruz community represents an older generation than the *jaranero* one. The *jarochas* play and support both traditional and urban styles of *son jarocho* and organize the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* every year in Los Angeles, an event in which different *son jarocho* groups come together to showcase their individual music. For members of this group, playing *son jarocho* is about connecting with their traditions from their hometowns in Veracruz and building community with others from that part of Mexico.

Using these two groups as my case studies, I will demonstrate the different ways that diasporic and immigrant communities cultivate the practice of *fandango* and *son jarocho* in Los Angeles. I argue that the meaning each group has assigned to this practice is reflective of each one's respective relationships to the homeland, Mexico, and more specifically to Veracruz, where *son jarocho* originates.

Research Method

I conducted my research over a seven-month period from January 2012 to August 2012. My primary research site was a weekly *fandango taller*, or workshop, in downtown Los Angeles at the community center, the *Plaza de La Raza Cultural Center for the Arts and Education* (from here on known as the *Plaza de la Raza*). My other sites were scattered across the city in events held at private residences and public *fandangos*. While the majority of my work was conducted in this area I also had the opportunity to attend the *Fandango Fronterizo*, an event on the border between Tijuana and San Diego, and another one in Tijuana itself. Two major events, the *Fandango Fronterizo* and the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles, provided opportunities for me to interact with the larger southern California *son jarocho* community and to observe the complex ways that the *jaraneros* and *jarochas* overlapped or separated in the ways they used *son jarocho* to build community and connect with their heritage.

I initially became interested in *son jarocho* through the Chicano rock band Quetzal and the work of their singer, songwriter, and *zapateado* dancer, Martha González and her husband and band leader/*jarana* player Quetzal Flores. In addition to being

professional musicians, Martha and Quetzal are highly active in the Chicano community, the academic world, and most recently in ACTA (the Alliance for California Traditional Arts). They are also two central figures in the *jaranero* community and recently gained fame through creating the Seattle *Fandango* Project,² a *son jarocho* collective in Washington state that is very involved in political activism. Prior to studying ethnomusicology, I worked in social work, and this passion for social justice issues attracted me to the musical projects of Martha, Quetzal and other *jaraneros* who were using their craft for activism and social justice.

My introduction to *son jarocho* within this political activist context prompted a number of questions. I wondered if there was something inherently political about *son jarocho* or *fandangos*, or if this was just the way it was being interpreted within particular contexts in Los Angeles. I also wanted to know if *son jarocho* was practiced the same way in Los Angeles as it was in Veracruz. Further, why had a genre specific to Veracruz become associated with a broader Mexican, Chicana/o, or Mexican American identity?

As I continued my research I found that not everyone in the Los Angeles *son jarocho* community viewed the practice as a tool for political work. A major shift in my investigation occurred when I met a completely different group of *son jarocho* musicians and aficionados who were not connected to the *jaranero* group or the collectives in Santa Ana. Particularly intriguing to me was that this other group was actually from Veracruz. I wondered about the different role that *son jarocho* played in the lives of people who were born in the United States but connected with their Mexican identity through cultural

² <https://sites.google.com/site/seattlefandango>

forms versus the one that it played for those who were born in Veracruz and were now living in the United States.

In order to understand these differences better, I interviewed people from both groups and asked similar questions to try to determine what common ground they shared. I wanted to know what this music meant to my informants and how their interpretation was shaped by their sense of identity and politics. I also compared the way that each person defined a *fandango* and the benefit he/she received from participating in a *fandango*. The more people that I spoke with in the *son jarocho* scene, the more divergent opinions I came across. Although most of my conversations with informants focused on the music, I concluded that much of the division between groups had to do with their respective positions and experiences as diasporic or immigrant groups.

Diasporic versus Immigrant Groups

Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino provides a framework for distinguishing between immigrant and diasporic groups. Turino defines diasporas as communities that involve multiple sites in a number of states. He posits, unlike immigrant communities that tend to assimilate, diasporic groups tend towards longevity of complex cultural forms (Turino 2003:60). Immigrant communities, Turino suggests, are characterized by bilateral relations and movement between the original and the new home environments (Turino 2003:59).

Consequently, in what follows I analyze the *jaranero* group within a diasporic context and the *jarocha* community within an immigrant one. Chicanas/os or Mexican Americans are not generally referred to as a diasporic group since this implies that they are far from their homeland, and, given that California once was part of Mexico this is an assumption that is not always appropriate. Indeed, a common saying for many Chicana/os is that “we didn’t cross the border, the border crossed us” (Vargas 2006:314). Yet, Chicanos have developed a complex relationship with their homeland of Mexico. Indeed many Chicano artists and activists have been motivated by a need to navigate the complex relationship they have with their new country, United States, and their homeland of Mexico (Lipsitz 2006:55).

The *jaraneros*, as a diasporic group, have developed multifaceted attachments to both the United States and various states in Mexico including Chiapas and Veracruz. In contrast, the *jarochas*, as an immigrant community, have established a bilateral relationship primarily between Veracruz and the United States. The *jarochas* have also tended to adopt mainstream ideologies within the United States. Thus, unlike the *jaraneros* they do not generally engage in anti-neoliberal dialogue or other rhetoric to question privilege in the United States. As an immigrant community they are more concerned with fitting into the new society and thriving economically in establishing themselves as a group than with a political agenda or a great need to stand out.

In so doing the *jarochas* have not forgotten their roots. First, all the members of this group speak Spanish as do their children. Second through organizing events around *son jarocho* they are actively maintaining their tradition in the United States.

Turino argues that history is crucial to both diasporic and immigrant groups and that music, dance, and festivals that index “home” are significant in this regard (Turino 2003:59); in this way *son jarocho* is valuable for both the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas*. However, as I will demonstrate in this paper, the different ways that *son jarocho* fits within a larger framework of Mexican heritage, history, and politics, differs for each group and determines how each uses *son jarocho* to identify with the homeland.

On Writing

This paper is based on my own participatory research and includes interviews with informants and personal fieldnotes. I spoke with many people, some were bilingual and many were monolingual Spanish speakers. Throughout this paper I have included the interviews in the language in which I conducted them. Some quotes are written twice to include translations, while others only needed to be written once. My fieldnotes are italicized, told from a first person perspective, and written in the present tense.

One challenge of an ethnographic work is how to situate yourself in your own writing. In ethnomusicology and anthropology the terms insider and outsider are used with great consternation and much debate. Some scholars like Bruno Nettl see the divide between these positions as insurmountable, yet recognize the ways that both sides can be beneficial in conducting an ethnography (Nettl 2005:158). Other scholars such as Kirin Narayan embrace a more hybrid model in which complex ways that heritage as well as factors such as education and class places a researcher as an outsider in some contexts and an insider in others (Narayan 1993:677). I have thought long and hard about my

perspective as an outsider in the context of *son jarocho* and the different groups with whom I have worked in Los Angeles. I am not from Mexico nor am I a Chicana. Therefore, in many respects I am an outsider to this practice. Yet, one of the fundamental values that I often heard repeated was that *son jarocho* was for everyone and all people were welcome regardless of race, age, gender, or ethnicity.

Despite this egalitarian position my ethnicity did play a role in my interactions with my informants, although I never felt this in a negative way. Indeed such moments as when I was told by a member of the *jarocho* Veracruz community that he was happy to have another white person join the *son jarocho* scene, made this abundantly clear.

Scholars are also divided in their opinions about whether being an outsider creates a barrier between researchers and their informants, or allows one to remain objective. For example, Nettl observes that while we may not ever be able to appreciate another culture's music from an insider point of view, we may be able to contribute in other ways through a carefully approached outsider perspective. He points out that an outsider could make a significant contribution through noting or discovering things that are meaningful to a society but not part of its ordinary musical thought (Nettl 2005:157).

In this case my outsider status helped me communicate with people across a wide spectrum. As an outsider I had no connection with any group, and I had a certain freedom to move between different groups without being directly associated with any one particular interpretation of what this music meant.

My privilege in this manner was highlighted in a conversation with a fellow ethnomusicologist from Veracruz who shared with me his need to approach a *son jarocho* Chicano activist with caution so a barrier would not immediately go up between the two men. As a person not heavily invested in either a Chicana/o or Veracruz immigrant mindset I have tried to assess the position of the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* from an unbiased standpoint. It is my hope that the critiques and observations I offer in this thesis will enable each group to see the position of the other as different, yet equally important.

Last, I would like to be clear that this thesis is not about *son jarocho*. First, this genre has existed for over 300 years, and it takes much longer than a five-month period to become an expert on the subject. Second, other scholars have written extensively about the music itself, (see Koegel 2012; Hernández 2005 and 2007; García de León 2006; González 2006; Kohl S. 2007; Sheehy 1999 and 2000; and Loza 1992), although in general, extensive information is lacking in English texts. Rather, this is an ethnography about two specific communities of people who play *son jarocho* in southern California.

Overview of Seminal Works

One of the primary experts on *son jarocho* in the United States is Daniel Sheehy, currently director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. His Master's thesis, "Speech Deviations of Style in the *Son jarocho* of Veracruz, Mexico" (1975), and PhD dissertation, "The *Son jarocho*: The History, Style, and Repertory of a Changing Mexican Musical Tradition" (1979), both provide extensive information about *son jarocho* practice in Veracruz, Mexico. Sheehy provides a detailed overview of the

genre itself, tracing the African, indigenous, and European characteristics back to their source throughout colonial history. He also includes analysis of song structure and lyrics. In particular, he focuses on the speech deviations within verses.

Sheehy has also published articles within numerous collections. One of the most useful to me was “Popular Music Traditions: the Mariachi of West Mexico and the Conjunto Jarocho of Veracruz” in John Schechter’s edited collection *Music in Latin American Culture: Regional Traditions* (1999). In this chapter, Sheehy offers some comparisons between mariachi music and *son jarocho*. He also includes interviews from informants who were transitioning from local musicians to professional ones in ballet folklórico and other institutions. This writing helped me contextualize and understand some of the changes that *son jarocho* underwent at this time and the resultant debates over *comercial* versus traditional styles.

In addition to these publications Sheehy compiled in collaboration with Rubí Oseguera, 40 pages in the CD booklet for *Son de Mi Tierra* (2009), a recording of the *son jarocho* group Son de Madera. In the introduction Sheehy provides a solid overview of the historical trajectory of *son jarocho* in Mexico. He also discusses the important work of Mono Blanco in the *movimiento jaranero* and that of Son de Madera in merging together old and new practices.

One of the most recent English sources on *son jarocho* is a small section in the “Mexico” chapter by John Koegel in the 2012 publication, *Musics of Latin America* edited by Robin Moore and Walter Aaron Clark. Koegel provides a solid summary of *son*

jarocho and the instruments. Yet, to my surprise he makes no mention of traditional versus urban styles.

Although the connection between Chicano activism and *son jarocho* is a more recent development a few important works have appeared on the subject. One major figure in Chicana/o studies and ethnomusicology to have written about the subject is Steven Loza. In his 1992 article “From Veracruz to Los Angeles: The Reinterpretation of the ‘*Son jarocho*’” Loza compares the practice of *son jarocho* in Veracruz with the way it has been interpreted in Los Angeles. He also examines the role that *son jarocho* has played in the Chicano community from Ritchie Valens who popularized the *son* “La Bamba” in the United States to the innovations implemented to the music by the Chicana/o band Los Lobos.

Martha González published a chapter in “*Zapateado Afro-Chicana Zapateado Fandango Style: Self-Reflective Moments in Zapateado*” (2009). In this work, González discusses her own improvisation technique inspired by *zapateado* and predicts that *son jarocho* and *fandangos* will have an important role in the Chicano community as a genre through which Chicanas/os will connect to their Mexican heritage. González is currently completing her PhD and will undoubtedly publish further on *son jarocho*, in particular in relation to women. Other contemporary scholars on *son jarocho* and Chicanismo include George B. Sánchez-Tello, Russell Rodríguez, Alexandro D. Hernández-Gutiérrez, Stuyvie Bearns Esteva, Micaela Díaz-Sánchez and Gottfried).

Most of my sources focus on the music of *son jarocho*, yet one important work on folkloric dance is worth mentioning here. In her ethnographic study *Jarocho's Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance*, Anita González, examines racial and cultural mixing in Mexico through tracing the development of *son jarocho* into a national folkloric performance.

While all of these scholars have contributed tremendously to our understanding of *son jarocho*, there is still a dearth of information in English. For example, there is no compendium in English. In contrast, a few important books exist on *son jarocho* in Spanish. Antonio Garcia de León is one of the foremost ethnomusicologists on *son jarocho* in Mexico. In his book *Fandango: El Ritual Del Mundo Jarocho A Través De Los Siglos*, Garcia de León offers a thorough look at *son jarocho* across the centuries. Of particular use in my writing were Garcia de León's explanations of the encuentros in Tlacotalpan and the reasons that the *movimiento jaranero* emerged out of these events. Garcia de León also includes detailed descriptions of *fandangos* and encuentros throughout Veracruz, which clearly demonstrate the regionalism of *son jarocho* practice.

In another insightful text "*Ecós de "La Bamba": Una historia etnomusicológica sobre el son jarocho de Veracruz 1946-1959*", Randall Kohl examines a specific time in the *son jarocho* historical trajectory. Through focusing on the use of the "La Bamba" in Miguel Alemán Valdés campaign and presidency, the author demonstrates how *son jarocho* become politicized and popularized on a national scale.

Sociologist Rafael Figueroa Hernández contributed significantly to my understanding both through personal interviews and published texts. This scholar has documented the stories of important *son jarocho* musicians like Rutilo Parroquín. He has also created a summary of *son jarocho* titled *Son Jarocho: Guía histórico-musical*. In this work, Figueroa Hernández offers a concise historical outline from colonization to current times. One of the most useful parts of this book is a detailed analysis of verses in the *sones*, and an overview of significant musicians within both the rural and the urban *son jarocho* setting. Like González, Figueroa Hernández is currently working on his dissertation on *son jarocho* conducting research in both Veracruz and Los Angeles, and will surely publish further on the subject in the near future.

None of these texts has examined the different practices between Chicano *son jarocho* musicians and their Veracruz counterparts in Los Angeles. In this respect Hernández's future publication may offer a similar critique as the one I hope to provide in this paper. Undoubtedly, there are many other aspects of this multifaceted practice to be examined still, and I foresee numerous publications on *son jarocho* across the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, Chicana/o studies, women's studies, and, of course, ethnomusicology.

Chapter Overview

In chapter 2 of this thesis I discuss important terminology and provide a brief explanation of how I conceptualize the two groups in my research. I also provide a synthesis of the terms *son comercial* and *son tradicional* in order to contextualize the

critiques of these two styles throughout this paper. I then reframe these concepts within Turino's framework for participatory and presentational music.

In chapter 3, I provide a historical overview of the development of *son jarocho*. In particular I demonstrate how Mexican nationalism and the ideology of *mestizaje*, or mixing of cultures, have shaped this genre. In chapters 4 and 5 I offer an explanation of the instrumentation and performance practice and focus primarily on those found in a participatory *fandango* setting. I also include a brief summary of instruments that have been adapted over time into a presentational context.

In chapters 5 and 6, I explore the ideologies of first the *jaraneros* and then the *jarochas*. In chapter 6, I analyze two major fieldsites in which the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* came together at the same events. The first, the *Fandango Fronterizo*, is a symbolic, political protest held on the Mexican and United States border. The second fieldsite is the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles. This chapter concludes with a comparison of the different interpretations that the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* have for *son comercial* versus *son tradicional*.

In chapter 8, the conclusion, I revisit the relationship that the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* have with *son jarocho* and the ways that these relationships are informed by their respective positions as diasporic and immigrant groups.

Chapter 2.

Definitions

The way someone chooses to self-identify is a very important matter, and I do not want to oversimplify that in any way. There are also terms throughout this paper that can be interpreted in various ways and deserve further explanation. In this chapter I will analyze these concepts in order to clarify how I will use them throughout this work. For a complete list of terms please see the glossary on page 110.

Jaraneros and Jarochas

To begin, I would like to offer a way to reference the two groups in my case studies. In my research I often heard people from Veracruz refer to the *jaraneros* as Chicanos and the *jaraneros* referred to the people from Veracruz as “*son blanco*,” or white *son*, a term to associate them with *ballet folklórico*, or folkloric ballet, style of dance and dress. As I will demonstrate in this paper, these labels do not allow for the diversity of ethnicity, politics, and musical orientations within either group.

Many people within the *jaraneros* and the group associated with the *fandango* workshops self identify as Chicana/o. However, the term Chicana/o is political: it implies not only that someone is an American of Mexican descent, but also that this person views himself or herself as part of a particular movement or ideology.³ Some people I interviewed expressly stated that they did not see themselves as Chicana/o or that they

³ See Richard Delgado and Vicky Palacios, 1998. “Mexican Americans as a Legally Cognizable Class” in *The Latino Condition* eds. Richard Delgado and Jean Stancic, New York: New York University Press.

did not identify with the Chicana/o mindset. Other people involved did not identify even as Mexican Americans because they had migrated here from Mexico in childhood or adulthood. This diversity could not be captured if I simply referred to them as Chicanos. Similarly, in the second group, most, but not all of the people I met were from Veracruz, Mexico. Thus, a name linked to Veracruz would not be accurate.

I often heard the first group refer to themselves as *jaraneros* and the second group refer to themselves as *jarochas*, a term which refers to the Gulf coast of Mexico, or, people from Veracruz. Therefore, for purposes of clarity in this paper, I will refer to the first group, primarily composed of Chicanas/os, as the *jaraneros* and the second group, from Veracruz, as the *jarochas*.

Son Comercial versus Son Tradicional

One of the major points of contention between the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* in Los Angeles is the different way that they view the impact of commercialism on *son jarocho*. Commercialism in this case describes the changes that occurred to *son jarocho* music as it transitioned from a localized practice in regions within Veracruz and became a national and internationally known genre through recordings, movies, and folkloric dance presentations. Some of the stylistic modifications that occurred in this process, such as standardization of verses and arrangements, and the shortening of songs, are at the heart of the debates that occur in the Los Angeles *son jarocho* community today.

Hector Marquez, for example, is a musician who has been living in Los Angeles since 1989 and has been helping to revive traditional *son jarocho* in the Los Angeles community, in particular through teaching young people in Santa Ana. Hector shared that when he first arrived in Los Angeles he was disappointed that the only style of *son jarocho* people knew was what he referred to as the commercial kind. In more recent years, he observed, people in Los Angeles had begun to question the *son comercial* style as representative of a Mexican heritage.

A lot of things that existed culturally started getting questioned. Like how much commercial *son jarocho* is something that we should defend as our national heritage. This is *son jarocho* but this is not the people's *son jarocho*. This is something made up for commercial purposes. And you should accept that reality. People get angry because they are playing this type of music as their cultural roots (Interview with Hector Marquez, December 2011).

Far from merely a descriptive term for musical style, then, Hector's comments illustrate how the question of commercialism cuts straight to deeper issues of identity and heritage for many in the *son jarocho* community. These concerns were shared by many in the *jaranero* community and were major reasons for their critiques of *son comercial*.

Given the frequency with which the terms *son comercial* and *son tradicional*, or traditional *son*, arose in conversations with many of my informants, the need to define music within this construct is obviously important to them, and I do not wish to dismiss

this.⁴ However, it is crucial to interrogate the ways that members of the *son jarocho* community use these terms and what exactly they mean by them.⁵

In general terms, traditional and folk music is typically associated with rural contexts and with groups that have cultivated the music for generations. Traditional music is usually learned by ear and does not undergo rapid changes (Moore 2012:17). In contrast, popular music is usually associated with urban contexts and is dispersed through mass media. Styles in popular music tend to change rapidly, following trends in the consumer market, and performers expect to be paid (Moore 2012:18).

Most of my informants seemed to use the word *comercial* in place of “popular.” The term *popular* within Latin America does not mean the same thing that it does in the United States. Rather, popular might be translated as “of the people” and can refer to folkloric repertoire (Moore 2012:18). Thus, in Latin America the terms traditional and popular are not in opposition. Given that the majority of my informants were Spanish speakers and were speaking about *son jarocho* within a transnational context between Latin America the United States, I interpreted their use of the term *comercial* as equivalent to Moore’s use of the term popular in describing music above.

For my informants, however, the term *comercial* also indicated much more than simply the context within which music was performed or how it was transmitted to the

⁴ In Spanish texts on *son jarocho*, the word *comercial* is placed between quotation marks. In order to be consistent with the language of my informants, I will use this word in this paper to mean “mass mediated,” however I will keep it in its Spanish form and in italics so as not to confuse it with the English interpretation. I will also write the counterpart traditional *son* as *son tradicional*.

⁵ It is also worth noting, as I learned through my interviews, that the word *músico*, or musician, in Latin America does not refer broadly to any one who plays music, but rather, only to professional musicians. Thus, if I referred to musicians I met as *músicos* they would often correct me and say that they were not *músicos* but just played music.

audience. Rather, they had a long list of criteria including specific instrumentation, dress, speed, and other stylistic factors to differentiate music as *son comercial* or *son tradicional*. For veterans of *son jarocho* music these distinctions were obvious, and I was often told dismissively that this was *facil de entender* (easy to understand). Yet, each person I spoke with had a slightly different interpretation of *son comercial* versus *son tradicional*, and as soon as I thought I had grasped one concept I would be shown an example that broke that norm.

The terms *comercial* and *tradicional* were not only used to define the music, they were often used to judge it as well. Music is often construed of as either traditional and therefore honest and authentic, or commercial and ideologically compromised (Moore 2002:18). This sentiment abounds in the *son jarocho* world and it is common to hear musicians evaluate one another in terms of how *comercial* or traditional they sound. I often heard informants refer to other ones as “the other kind of *son jarocho*.” This usually meant that the other kind of music was less authentic than the one that the speaker preferred or played.

The binary between supposedly pure traditional music and its mass mediated counterpart is overly simplified. First, most music that is known outside of a local context, is subject to commercial or mass mediated imperatives (Moore 2002:218). Second, as sociologist Rafael Figueroa Hernández pointed out to me in an interview, to form any type of formal music group is not traditional. By this criterion, any musician who does not play in a completely improvised setting is not traditional (Interview with Rafael Figueroa Hernández, June 2012).

Authenticity is another conundrum as it is similarly mired in romantic ideologies in which one type of music is viewed as pure and unchanged by modernism while the other is not. This dichotomous construct does not allow for any ambiguity and does not allow for the fact that some musical groups may be restoring tradition in some ways and changing it in others. For example, the Mexican group Mono Blanco, who was instrumental in the resurgence of *fandangos* and traditional *son jarocho* in the 1970s, was often spoken about by my informants as preservers of a pure and unchanged tradition. However, as Francisco Javier Saucedo Jonapá notes, Mono Blanco reinvented some styles based on what they thought they would have sounded like and also invented new *sones* in this process (Saucedo Jonapá 2009:75-76).

It is common for musicians to reinvent certain sonic aspects as they restore lost traditions. Heidi Feldman describes a similar scenario in the Afro-Peruvian revival of the 1950s (Feldman 2005:212). This tendency in itself is not an issue, but when these adaptations become ensconced in a supposedly “pure” canon and thus authentic and untouchable, it is worth examining the deployment of this argument.

The prevalent use of the binary between *tradicional*, or authentic music, versus its *comercial* and, thus, ideologically compromised, counterpart is not surprising within the *son jarocho* community since many members of the Mexican American or Chicana/o diaspora, use music to navigate complex identities between their new and old homeland. Indeed, Rafael Pérez-Torres writes, Chicano music oscillates between poles of authenticity and assimilation (Pérez-Torres 2000:210). Thus, he notes, right after they gained fame within a mainstream Anglo-American market, Los Lobos, a Chicano rock

group, returned to their roots to produce a Spanish album, *La Pistola y El Corazon*, and ensured their popularity with Mexican and Mexican American fans (Pérez-Torres 2000:213-214).

While I recognize the reasons that the construct between *son comercial* and *son tradicional* is deployed in the *son jarocho* community, in the next chapter I would like to re-frame this binary in terms of participatory versus presentational music.

Participatory versus Presentational Music in the Fandango

Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino argues for a distinction between what he terms “presentational” and “participatory” music. Presentational music, he notes, incorporates closed scripted forms, organized beginnings and endings, and rhythmic variation. Most importantly, individual virtuosity is emphasized. In contrast, participatory music is characterized by short, open, repetitive forms, feathered beginnings and endings, constancy of meter or groove, and a downplaying of individual virtuosity (Turino 2008:59). These two constructs map in remarkably consistent ways onto the distinctions discussed above between *son comercial* and *son tradicional* and bear further scrutiny for what they might reveal about the meaning and practice of this music.

Son comercial is characterized by many of the qualities Turino enumerates in presentational music. First, in *son comercial* musicians play within a set format, which, as I will explain in a later section of this paper, was one of the salient features of the *son jarocho* musical groups who became popular in the 1940s in Mexico City. Small ensembles were formed in which musicians began and ended pieces together, and

musicians played the same arrangements night after night so that their songs would fit with the expectations of their audience. In particular, an ending was developed in which the musicians would close the piece with an exuberant four part vocal chorus of “Ah, Ah, Ah.” In my interviews with informants they often singled this sonic element out to me as definitive evidence that the group in question was *comercial*.

Another important way that *son comercial* fits within a presentational model is in the use of the harp. While I never observed *son comercial* groups playing hemiolas or shifting rhythms, modern innovations allow harps— instruments, which today are typically seen only in *son comercial* performances— to modulate keys. A harpist would have difficulty playing in a participatory setting where as many as fifty musicians may be playing at once and it would be nearly impossible to coordinate a retuning. However, in a presentational context, *son comercial* ensembles tend to consist of four or five members, and thus, shifts like modulations are much more feasible in this size group. A harpist changing keys mid-song also highlights individual virtuosity, which is another characteristic of presentational music.

Improvisation is part of both *son comercial* and *son tradicional*; however, within the latter non-scripted performance occurs within a set format. Each player takes a solo and exhibits his or her individual talents; he or she is then followed by the next musician. Thus the emphasis is again on individual virtuosity. In a *son comercial* presentational setting it is more important for musicians to create a polished, practiced sound than a communal one.

While *son comercial* fits well into a presentational outline, many elements of *son tradicional*, the music in *fandangos*, fit within Turino's framework of participatory music. First, as already noted, a *fandango* is a participatory event in which musicians, dancers, and spectators are all invited to partake at the level that they choose. This means that there is typically a wide skill range; as a beginner, for instance, I played just basic chords while others performed virtuosic solos and led the songs. Spectators who do not actually play an instrument or sing or dance are also considered part of a *fandango*.

In a *fandango son jarocho* is based on repeated forms that can continue indefinitely. One *son* can last up to an hour or longer, and most players switch between two or three chords throughout. Music in *fandangos* is also characterized by feathered beginnings. Although a *son jarocho* technically begins with the requinto player and then everyone else joins, in my experience, one person would begin playing a melody and one by one others would join in: this created an overall affect of a layered entrance.

One important distinction that Turino makes by highlighting the tendency toward feathered beginnings is that, unlike in most concert pieces, for example, there is nothing wrong with musicians joining in to play at any part of the song. Indeed, I would often tire in the middle of a piece and let my hands rest for a few moments before coming back in. This is something I could never do in a formal music presentation. The ability for musicians to join in is made possible by the highly repetitive and constant rhythm of the music. If I got lost during one cycle I would wait for it to end and the next one to begin.

Of course, *fandango* style of playing does not follow every aspect of Turino's participatory model. For example, the endings are not feathered, rather, everyone stops playing together after someone shouts out "una," or one, the cue to finish. Yet, sometimes people don't hear this call or fail to end on the same exact chord as everyone else. Again, as a *fandango* is a participatory music setting, no one gets upset when this occurs.

Turino's last point, that individual virtuosity is de-emphasized in participatory music, is also two-fold. On the one hand musicians and dancers display individual talent through the incorporation of increasingly difficult strumming techniques and *zapateado* steps. Singers improvise lines and engage in vocal duels, a practice that is common throughout Latin America. However, on the flip side, the goal of a *fandango* is to create a space for the entire group to play music and, ultimately, the crucial requirement for a *fandango* to be successful is for everyone to participate in whatever way they choose.

Thus, in *son comercial jarocho* professional musicians exhibit characteristics of presentational music, while *fandangos* provide a perfect model of a participatory music practice in which each musician can play to their own ability and community is stressed over technical perfection.

Now that I have provided an explanation of terms, I would like to proceed to discussing *son jarocho* itself. As I will demonstrate, the ways that *son jarocho* was shaped by colonization, *mestizaje*, Mexican nationalist agendas and the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* and the *movimiento jaranero* are crucial to the associations that the *jaraneros* and the *jarocho*s have with the music. Therefore, in this next chapter I will provide a historical overview of *son jarocho*.

Chapter 3.

A historical overview of son jarocho

While *son jarocho* communities are growing all over the United States, common knowledge about this genre is still limited (e.g., compared to mariachi). Most people outside the *son jarocho* community that I mentioned my project to had never heard of this music and had certainly never seen a *jarana*. In the Los Angeles area and, I presume in other parts of the United States, a *jarana* is not a well-known or easy instrument to come by. I found, that I could not simply buy a *jarana* in a store. Rather, I had to request one from the only luthier I knew. Indeed, *son jarocho* instruments are so unique in southern California that most people I met had bought their *jarana*, *requinto*, or *leona* from the same luthier I had, Cesar Castro. I also had to create my own case because *jarana* cases are not sold anywhere here.

Son jarocho is one of at least a dozen distinct forms of *sones*, or regional songs, that are played in Mexico. The most well known sub-genres of Mexican *sones* are *son huasteco* and *son jalisciense* (Jalisco-style son), one of the antecedents of mariachi music (Koegel 2012:87). *Son jarocho* musicians I spoke with shared that audience members would assume that they were some type of mariachi band. Cesar Castro, the luthier, prior member of the group Mono Blanco, and current leader of the ensemble Cambalache, told me that fans thought *son jarocho* was “the other mariachi music ” or that the *jaranas* were ukuleles (Interview with Cesar Castro, July 2012).

Son jarocho music is unique among Mexican *sones* both in instrumentation and historical trajectory, and in *fandangos*, many specific rules dictate interactions between musicians. Further, as mentioned earlier, while discussions with informants about the distinctions between *son comercial* and *son tradicional* tended to focus on the sonic elements of each style, the history behind these changes and, in particular, the political and social reasons that each came about are at the heart of the debate. Therefore, in order to properly respect the music and contextualize the rest of the paper this chapter focuses on the historical development of *son jarocho* music.

Son jarocho originates in the Sotavento area of Mexico. Figueroa Hernández describes this as a sociocultural region principally located in Veracruz but that also encompasses significant portions in the neighboring states of Tabasco and Oaxaca (Figueroa Hernández 2007:9). However, most people I spoke with connected the genre primarily to Veracruz. The majority of scholarly articles on *son jarocho* also discuss it as originating in this area. Sheehy describes the etymology of the genre as specifically related to this state. “Jarocho,” he writes, is an adjective used to denote the Atlantic seaboard of Veracruz, or someone or something in that area. It can also refer to the peasants of this area (Sheehy 1979).

Sheehy describes *son jarocho* as a combination of influences from Spanish, indigenous, and African populations. The first documentation of the son dates back to 1776, during the Spanish Inquisition (Sheehy 1979). As Steven Loza writes, in the eighteenth century the Spanish brought a musical play called *Tonadilla Escénica* to Mexico, which showcased various forms of Spanish song and dance, including the *tirana*,

sequidilla, tenada, bolero, copla, and the *fandango*. Rural inhabitants used these pieces as models for creating their own *sonecitos del pais*, little *sones* of the country (Loza 1982:257-258). Towards the end of the 18th century Mexican Indians, blacks, and *mestizos* adopted these Spanish genres and modified them into *sonecitos regionales* (Sheehy 1979).

One adaptation that highlights the indigenous influence is the incorporation of animal images and many songs such as “El Pájaro cu” and “La Iguana” are named after animals. Koegel explains these references to animals, fruit, and flowers as anthropomorphized symbols of human activities (Koegel 2012:86). Indeed, lyrical double entendres are prevalent in *son jarocho*, and, as I learned in my discussions with informants, a song about a particular fruit or animal is often imbued with hidden meanings and layered interpretations.

Another salient characteristic of *son jarocho*, which distinguishes it from other Mexican *sones*, is the African influence. Sheehy notes that the port of Veracruz, often characterized as the “gateway to Spain,” was an entryway not only for Spanish colonizers on their way to the interior, but also for Africans, both slaves and free men from Cuba and other parts of the African Caribbean (Sheehy 1999:65-66).

The African influences in Veracruz are varied, and as ethnomusicologist Argeliers León observes, “the population of African descent in the Americas arrived at different times and places, in varying numbers, and from ethnic backgrounds as linguistically diverse as distant in geography” (León 2007:21). Some informants I spoke with mentioned specifically Arabic influences and sounds that they connected with in North

African countries, like Algeria, while others emphasized the syncopation in the strumming and *zapateado* as evidence of the African presence in *son jarocho*.⁶ Sheehy recognizes similarities to the West African bell pattern or Afro-Cuban clave in musical elements such as the call and response format and the short, cyclical, rhythmic-chordal pattern called *compas*.

The Spanish, indigenous, and African musical characteristics described above give *son jarocho* its unique sound. Playing styles and instrumentation are another outcome of this cultural mix. As Sheehy notes, an important vestige of African roots is the highly communal and participatory nature of *son jarocho* (Sheehy 2000:158), which as discussed earlier is central to *fandangos*.

Son Jarocho and Mestizaje

After the Mexican revolution in 1917 a rhetoric of *mestizaje* or mixed-race heritage that developed envisioned Mexican society as a hybrid culture of primarily Native American and Spanish ancestry (González 2004:2). Within this framework, the Mexican population, particularly mestizos, were quick to reject Spanish forms and to adopt others that they saw as uniquely Mexican, neither exclusively indigenous nor Spanish (Sheehy 1975, Loza 1982:259). Thus, as Loza concludes, “It is among the mestizos, that we find the most intensive cultivation of popular forms such as the *jarabe*, the romance, and the son, even to the present day (Loza 1982:259).

⁶ Some scholars view the tarima and zapateado as having African roots or as a development in which slaves replaced drums with a tarima. Others see zapateado as related to Spanish flamenco. See Díaz-Sánchez 2010:132-136.

Within the ideology of *mestizaje* in Mexico as described above by González, blacks were omitted. Micaela Díaz-Sánchez notes the lack of government documentation regarding Afro-Mexican communities and that the inception of a Mexican national identity encouraged the negation of the histories of Afro-Mexicans (and Indigenous populations) in the national imaginary of Mexico (Díaz-Sánchez 2009:118).

In interviews, I often heard informants speak about the prominent African influence in *son jarocho* and referred to the phenotype of particular musicians from Veracruz as evidence. However, I am not sure how people of African descent in Los Angeles saw themselves within a mestizo ideology, as they were not part of my focus groups. Indeed, a strong presence of African Americans from Mexico or the United States is conspicuously absent within *son jarocho* communities in Los Angeles, and this subject merits its own further research.⁷

In reference to *mestizaje* in Veracruz Sheehy notes the following:

Today there is no major, separate, identifiable ethnic group of people of African heritage in Veracruz, but the prominence of African and African-Caribbean culture in the *mestizaje* [cultural blending] of the region distinguishes it from most other regions of Mexico (Sheehy 1999:66).

The term mestizo in scholarship is often used simply to describe people of mixed race. However, as González notes, *mestizaje* was an ideological framework to contain and define various social and economic classes within Mexico (González 2004:2). The ways that *son jarocho* fit within a mestizo rhetoric were crucial to the genre becoming

⁷ For a further discussion of *mestizaje* and the performance of Afro-Mexican performance in diaspora see Díaz-Sánchez, (2009) Macias, Anthony (2008) and Loza, Steven (1993).

part of a national narrative and its incorporation in political campaigns and folkloric dance presentations.

One of the biggest proponents of *mestizaje* was José Vasconcelos, author of the book *La Raza Cosmica* (“*The Cosmic Race*”), published in 1925 and an original member of the *Ateneo de la Juventud*, a socialist literary collective. Amaryll Chanady analyzes this work and posits that Vasconcelos conceptualized of *mestizaje* as a symbol of the future nation in which all traces of alterity would be replaced by a ‘purification’ of taste (Chanady 2003:195). Further, she argues, Vasconcelos believed that the superiority of Hispanic tastes would lead to the emergence of the fifth race in Latin America, which would dominate all other races. As Chanady notes, Vasconcelos’ belief was that a predominance of European characteristics would naturally come about through miscegenation, and that this was part of civilizing the country (Chanady 2003:267).

After 1921, Mexico’s President Obregon appointed Vasconcelos as the Minister of Education of the *Secretariat de Educacion Publica* (SEP) (González 2004:26, Suchlicki 2008:114). Within Vasconcelos’ framework, as González observes, art and educational programs instilled pride in pre-Colombian roots yet failed to speak to the economic and social needs of the impoverished mixed-race Mexican majority (González 2004:27). Vasconcelos put great effort into investigating and compiling information about different regions of Mexico including Veracruz and employed artists to teach rural peasants and musicians to investigate folkloric traditions (González 2004:26-28). This led to *son jarocho* being incorporated into a nationalist agenda to usher Mexico into a new era (Hernández 2004:85).

Anita González describes the emergence of *son jarocho* folklore as a way of encouraging a sense of, sometimes revisionary, Mexican history and heritage into the Mexican proletariat (González 2004:25). Similarly, Ruth Hellier-Tinoco demonstrates that two events, a dance called *The Old Men* and the ceremony of the *Night of the Dead*, from the Patzcuaro region of Mexico became important symbols of national identity and the movements of *indigenismo* and *mestizaje*. Under these ideologies, the Mexican government sought to create a new national identity, *lo mexicano* (distinctively Mexican) and *mexicanidad* (Mexicanness), based on symbols of the past, to unite people in the present under a state sanctioned hegemonic process (Hellier-Tinoco 2011:57).

Through folkloric dance and music, the populace became familiar with heroic historical deeds, heroes, both real and imagined, and traditional local customs. Folklore instilled a sense of national pride and familiarized urban Mexican citizens with a “lost” cultural heritage that had been created in rural popular roots. These traditional cultural forms became part of a new “Mexicanness” (González 2004:25).

The emphasis on regionalism in folkloric presentations resulted in the creation of stereotypes (Figuroa Hernández 2007:85). These included the creation of the typical *son jarocho* dress with a white dress or white pants and shirt with a small necktie. This folkloric costume of white clothing became central to the production of *son jarocho* as a tourist attraction. Sheehy relays the story of José Gutiérrez, a musician whom he says, “personifies the story of the modern *son jarocho* in its transition to an urban popular music setting” (Sheehy 1999:73). Born in 1942 Gutiérrez grew up on a ranch near Alvarado, Veracruz. As a young boy he started playing the *mosquito*, a small *jarana*:

there were no large *jaranas* at this time. Gutiérrez turned his *jarana* into a requinto and became one of the best requinto players in the region (Interview with José Gutiérrez, Aug. 17, 1997 in Sheehy 1999:73).

Gutiérrez started to work as a professional musician in the tourist restaurants in Boca del Río, a fishing town near the port of Veracruz. He learned the more urban style by listening to records of Lino Chávez and other popular musicians. After living in the United States, from 1975 to 1997, Gutiérrez joined the Ballet Folklórico de Amalia Hernández. From then on, Sheehy observes, José Gutiérrez and his four-member ensemble played “almost exclusively for ballet folklórico or *chambas*, hired by the hour” (Sheehy 1999:75).

Professional *son jarocho* musicians, like Gutiérrez and his father Isidoro, played, not in *fandangos*, but, rather, for customers in restaurants and bars, charging by the song. Musicians also dressed in white with a multipocketed *guayabera* shirt, white pants, and a traditional round-cupped, palm fiber jarocho hat (Sheehy 1999:75).

While nationalism and folklorization could be seen as precursors of this urbanization, emigration brought about an even bigger change in the *son jarocho* style. In the 1930s and 1940s musicians began moving from Veracruz to Mexico City in search of work. They began playing professionally in restaurants, creating recordings, and began appearing in films. As *son jarocho* developed into *son comercial* changes came about as a result of this re-contextualization including use of larger instruments, three-part harmonies, accelerated tempos and truncated songs.

One of the most influential musicians at this time was a harpist Andrés Huesca who appeared in movies and live shows (Sheehy 1999:67). As Sheehy notes, Huesca's innovations had enduring repercussions on the *son jarocho* tradition. He replaced the traditional small *arpa Veracruzana*, or Veracruz harp, with a larger version from western Mexico. Huesca and his brother Víctor Huesca, as well as Lorenzo Barcelata and Lino Carrillo composed new pieces. Barcelata and Carrillo even copyrighted previously uncopyrighted traditional *sones*, claiming them and the royalties as their own (Sheehy 1999:67).

Two other groups that had a lasting impact on *son jarocho* style were Los Costeños (the coastal ones) and Conjunto Medellín de Lino Chávez. A violinist from Veracruz, Lino Chávez, migrated to Mexico City in youth where he played with *Los Costeños*. He eventually took up the requinto and became famous for playing this instrument (Sheehy 1999:67). Like Huesca, The Conjunto Medellín set new customs for instrumentation and style. They popularized a particular ensemble consisting of harp, *jarana*, requinto, and guitar. Violins and smaller sized *jaranas* became almost obsolete (ibid).

The popularization of *son jarocho* also led to stylistic modifications. Traditionally, in a *fandango*, a single son can continue for up to an hour or longer. However, in a presentational setting *son jarocho* songs were shortened to one to three minutes so they could fit on a recording or could be played in a concert setting. The tempo also increased as the music was played for a performance rather than a *fandango*. Musicians began to use set repertoires and arrangements to meet the needs of the music

industry that required them to repeat themselves night after night: this eliminated the option of improvisation.

Sheehy describes the standardized form in the following manner.

Typically near the end of the son, the guitars would abruptly stop, leaving the harpist to play a solo to show off his skills. When the harpist signaled the end of his improvisation, the requinto would join in, foregrounded as he played his own solo improvisation. Then the *jarana* and guitar would be added, as the piece raced to a close (Sheehy 1999:68).

These adaptations represent some of the key distinctions between participatory and presentational music and are often used to define one group as *comercial* or *tradicional* in the Los Angeles *son jarocho* community.

Another event that helped bring *son jarocho* into Mexican mainstream culture was when future President Miguel Alemán Valdés used the song “La Bamba” as a musical theme in his campaign from 1946-1952. Randall Kohl describes Valdés’ impact on *son jarocho* music. In addition to creating *el Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes* and appointing Carlos Chávez as the first director, Valdés helped carry the music of Veracruz to the national scene. Valdés implemented “La Bamba” as a propaganda tool for his campaign, and it became a paean to the man and to Veracruz. Hernández writes, that this *son* was used to such an extreme that it could almost be said it became the second Mexican anthem Valdés’ six year presidential term of office (Hernández 2007:89).

Amalia Hernández’ creation of the Ballet *Folklorico* in 1952 was another outcome of *mestizaje* since Hernández mixed regional folkloric forms with classical European and Euro-American dance techniques. González describes Hernández’ work as being about “capturing the astonishing beauty and exoticism of a colorfully imagined

ancestral past that allegedly still survives in the regions of Mexico” (González 2004:33). The author further notes that, “even thirty years after the initial surge of post-revolutionary nationalism, *indigenismo* and concepts of *mestizaje* permeate aesthetics of national dance companies” (González 2004:35). She observes that, although folkloric dancers foreground Mexican motifs in their work, they also craft their art so that it will be accepted as performance that conforms to European standards of artistic excellence (ibid).

Ballet folklórico is a controversial subject in the *son jarocho* community. Some see the incorporation of *son jarocho* in ballet folklórico as detrimental. As Figueroa Hernández writes, Amalia Hernández’ ballet contributed to the international diffusion of the genre, but through a process of stereotyping that for many signified the codification of the *jarocho* tradition (Figueroa Hernández 2007:90). Others see folklorization as beneficial in preserving traditions.

It is important to remember that, while processes like folklorization may codify traditions and produce stereotypes they also imbue them with political and social value that translates into government and monetary support. This in turn, helps these traditions survive and somewhat ironically protects them from becoming obsolete through modernization.

In his discussion of the politicization of “La Bamba” Kohl includes an interview with Mario Cabrera, an ex-dancer from *el Trío Alvaradeño*, Veracruz, which demonstrates how another president Camacho had similarly contributed to the politicization and thus the preservation of *son jarocho*.

El *son jarocho* estaba muerto pero Avila Camacho vino y empezó a invitar a músicos; que estaban trabajando con machetes, palos, estaban trabajando en el campo, pero sabían tocar. Hacían los grupos y les pagaba. Imagínese cuánto se ganaba en una jornada al día y cuánto les pagaba por estar allí un ratito tocando; y, además, estaban con lo que les gustaba. Todo el mundo empezó a agarrar un instrumento y tratar de superarse (Kohl 2007:58).

The *son jarocho* was dead, but Avila Camacho came and began to invite musicians; who were working with machetes, sticks, they were working in the fields but they knew how to play. They formed the groups and he paid them. Imagine how much they were earning every day working, and how much they earned just playing for a little while; and what's more, they were doing what they liked. Everybody began to seize an instrument and try to improve (translation mine).

This quote demonstrates that sometimes traditions, like *son jarocho*, can resurge through being adopted into nationalist agendas and becoming folkloric and touristic enterprises.

Of course, the counterpart to this argument is that folklorization and tourism turn culture and tradition into a type of commerce. George Yúdice notes the following:

Indeed, as powerful institutions like the European Union, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), and the major international foundations begin to understand culture as a crucial sphere for investment, it is increasingly treated like any other resource (Yúdice 2003:13).

The belief that folklorism had commodified *son jarocho* and made it less valuable intrinsically as a marker of culture than extrinsically as a tourist attraction, explains Figueroa Hernández' earlier observation that many people in the *son jarocho* community viewed ballet folklórico as detrimental to the preservation of tradition. Hector Marquez explained his reasons for disliking *son comercial son jarocho*, from a political and social perspective.

HM: In Mexico, back in the 40s the Federal government hired 3-4 famous *jaraneros* and put them in charge of developing a style of *son jarocho* for the movies, literally hired them, but the result was this fast paced *zapateado* played with harp all the time; just one *jarana* and a different type of strumming. The strumming changed because the accent had to be that fast. And this became the commercial style. The *son jarocho* that is known around the world. Even the suits, the beautiful dresses the women wear are not something usual in Veracruz. They are part of the aristocracy, the parties. And the main area where this developed was in the Puerto de Veracruz; the urban areas, for the tourists.

HB: So, the dressing all in white, that's just a development of tourism?

HM: And movies, first movies, then tourism. This had terrible consequences for the *son jarocho* world.

HB: Because they had to conform to that style?

HM: No, because the youth were not interested in the traditional style anymore. They wanted to go to the cities to make money. They wouldn't learn the other style, which is totally different, and it responds to different necessities. You don't improvise, at all in the commercial style. You follow exactly the thing as it is, the same pattern, same verses, same length, pre-written choreography (Interview with Hector Marquez, December 2011).

Like Hector, many *jaraneros* including Martha, Quetzal and Chuy expressed distaste for the white outfit ubiquitous in the ballet folklórico arena, which they associated with a tourist gimmick.

In contrast, many people from the *jarocha* Veracruz community felt that the white outfit signified pride in their culture and heritage. When I brought up the controversy around the white dress to Carlos, a *jarocha*, he emphatically declared that this clothing was a vestige of Spanish colonial style and thus had been part of the *son jarocho* tradition from the beginning. He explained that the peasants in Veracruz had taken great pride in dressing nicely all in white for *fandangos*; that they had saved their hard-earned money in order to purchase these clothes. Thus, for him, not dressing up for a *fandango* signified a

lack of respect for the music and culture, which he equated to a person attending church, not in their Sunday best, but rather in jeans and a t-shirt (Interview with Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, August 2012). These conversations again emphasized for me that the stylistic differences between the *jaranero* and the *jarocha* communities reflect, more than anything, a different way of relating to Mexican heritage and politics.

El Encuentro de Jaraneros

In the late 1970s and 1980s, regional *son jarocho* musicians in Veracruz began to look for ways to revitalize the community traditions that had been lost through urbanization as *son jarocho* transitioned from a local genre to a national and international one. They formed a new style in which they intended to recreate the *campesino*, or peasant, way of playing, which they saw as more pure. One important element of this process was to re-institute the *fandangos*, which had all but disappeared in the Sotavento region. This revitalization of *fandangos* resulted in the creation of *encuentros de jaraneros*, in which musicians came together once more to reignite the tradition. Music and dance workshops also emerged at this time, which culminated in the annual *encuentros* in Tlacotalpan from 1979 to present day (Garcia de León 2006:58).

An *encuentro* is literally translated as a “meeting” or an “encounter.” Today the word is used in some contexts to signify a peaceful egalitarian gathering for dialogue and collaboration. Many community organizers and non-profits credit the Mexican Zapatista revolutionaries with developing this term as an event to counter the tendency to prioritize

big business over individual welfare.⁸ This interpretation of an *encuentro* has been adopted by the *jaraneros* as well. However, based on the fact that the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan took place many years before the Zapatista uprising in 1994, I would posit that the anti-neoliberal association is a newer interpretation of this word.

The *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan created a collaborative space for each *son jarocho* musician to play his/her own style. Originally conceived of as a *concurso* or competition, eventually Humberto Aguirre Tinoco, the founder, came to the conclusion that it was impossible to measure the different groups due to excessive regional differences. Instead, he decided to change the event into an *encuentro*, in which each group could simply present their work (Interview with Arturo Rosado, July 2012). As Figueroa Hernández notes, the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* helped people see that *son jarocho* is not one style, but many; that each region has its own tradition (Hernández 2007:95).

While, on the one hand, the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* revitalized the campesino tradition it also emphasized the presentational side of the music since various groups would perform in front of the others and for audience members. As Garcia de León notes, the same *encuentros*, that had been introduced to preserve the tradition, had become a spectator event of passive listeners, which in the end resulted in the presentational *son jarocho*, although interpreted through campesino styles, being given precedence over the participatory one in the *fandangos*. In place of being an event for everyone to play music together the *encuentros* had turned into showcases for the best musicians of the regions to

⁸ <http://wesleying.org/2012/04/27/encuentro-for-community-for-humanity>

exhibit their talent (Garcia de León 2006:59).

At this time, Garcia de León notes, a new set of younger musicians began to emerge. These groups reincorporated some of the older, traditional instruments like the *leona*, the *quijada*, donkey or horse jaw, and the *marimbol*, (see figure 4), a type of bass instrument similar to the African *mbira* that has been played throughout the Caribbean in the 19th and early 20th century (Sáenz Coopat and Vinueza 2007: 45). They also introduced new forms of percussion including the Afro-Peruvian *cajon*, a type of drum, and the Colombian *guacharaca*, or scraper. These musicians rejected the ballet folklorico style of dance and dress (Garcia de León 2006:59). With these changes they ushered in a new movement: the *movimiento jaranero*, or, the *jaranero* movement.

El Movimiento Jaranero and the group Mono Blanco

In 1981 a group of young musicians formed a new movement called the *movimiento jaranero* to rescue or preserve traditional *son jarocho*. *Movimiento jaranero* musicians aimed to restore *son jarocho* to the way it was performed before the urbanization and folklorization of the 1930s and 40s; they re-instated longer performances and slower tempos. Jessica Gottfried provides a summary of the movement's goals:

... algunas de las premisas principales parecen ser buscar darle un lugar privilegiado a los viejos soneros; entender que el *son jarocho* tienen sus orígenes en el periodo barroco; buscar dar al *son jarocho* un lugar frente a las instituciones y asimismo desmentir la idea que el *son jarocho* se refiere estrictamente a los famosos tríos sotaventinos; la creación de versos y décimas; que el *son jarocho* se deriva también de ritmos de origen africano; y hacer mención de la creciente participación de jóvenes

jaraneros que vienen de otras regiones o ciudades del fuera del Sotavento (Gottfried 2005:40).

[S]ome of the major premises appear to be seeking to give a privileged place to the old *soneros*; understand that the *son jarocho* has its origins in the Baroque period; relocate the *son jarocho* in an important place in the institutions and at the same time disabuse the notion that the *son jarocho* refers strictly to the famous *sotaventino* trios; the creation of verses and *décimas*; recognize that the *son jarocho* is derived from African rhythms; and make mention of the growing participation of young *jaraneros* that come from other regions and cities from outside of the Sotavento (my translation).

One of the main figures in the *movimiento jaranero* was the group Mono Blanco. Founded in 1977 by Gilberto Gutiérrez Silva, Juan Pascoe, and José Angel Gutiérrez Mono Blanco intended to revive a rural, participatory, style of *son jarocho*, and thus, along with slower tempos and longer songs, they emphasized *fandangos*. In a 2009 interview with Kevin Mathews in the *UCLA Asia Institute publication*, Gutiérrez shared the following insight about the integral role that *fandangos* play in *son jarocho*.

We realized that what we had to do to revive the tradition was to have *fandangos*. It wouldn't help for [*son jarocho*] to exist on the stage or in ensembles of folkloric ballet if there were no *fandangos*. That would be like teaching people to play soccer, but without soccer fields.⁹

In their efforts to rescue or revitalize the tradition, the leaders of the *movimiento jaranero* sought the advice of older *son jarocho* players. Through this process one *jarana* player and political revolutionary, don Arcadio Hidalgo, become an iconic figure. Hidalgo, known today as the “father of the *son jarocho* Renaissance”¹⁰ is looked at as a

⁹ Kevin Mathews, “Leader in Son Jarocho Revival Tells His Music’s Story.” <http://www.international.ucla.edu/asia/article.asp?parentid=111969>

¹⁰ *ibid.*

legend or a hero of the *jaranero* movement. Mono Blanco also incorporated another rural *jaranero*, Don Andrés Vega into the group.

The annual *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan and the *movimiento jaranero* hold great significance for the *jarocha* group from Veracruz and the *jaraneros* respectively. In chapters 5 and 6, I will examine more closely the activities of the *jaranero* and the *jarocha* groups in relation to these two developments in musical history. Before delving more thoroughly into the case studies, however, I will describe in the next chapter some of the important instruments and explain their roles in, first a *fandango* traditional setting and then a presentational one.

Chapter 4.

Instrumentation and Performance Practice

For both the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas fandangos* bring people together in powerful ways through the social values of *convivencia* or togetherness or co-existence.¹¹ A *fandango* is about much more than playing music. Rather, a *fandango* provides an opportunity for everyone to come together in a communal space dictated by social rather than commercial values. While many people in the *jaranero* community such as Martha González and Quetzal Flores have harnessed this potential for unity and infused it back into Chicana/o activist projects, the majority of the *jarochas* have used it to build social community without, for the most part, a particular political agenda.

Regardless of the end goal, the participatory values of music in a *fandango* are important to both groups, and in this setting musicians are evaluated not purely on technique, but also on the way that their playing adheres to the social values of the event. A person may have amazing ability as a dancer, but if, for example, he or she steps onto the *tarima* during a vocal section of the song the dancer will not be considered a good performer as this rule breaks the social norm of a *fandango*. Since in a *fandango* technique cannot be separated from the way that a musician interacts with others. In this section I will demonstrate not only the functioning of each instrument but also the ways in which participatory *son jarocho* music is particularly apt for bringing people together.

¹¹ For a complete explanation of *convivencia* see <https://sites.google.com/site/seattlefandango/>

Core Instruments in a fandango, participatory setting

The core instruments in the *son jarocho* are the *jarana*, the *tarima*, a small wooden platform for dancing, and vocals (Interview with Carlos Rosado Gutiérrez, August 2012). Strings are fundamental elements of the *son jarocho*. Among these the *jarana* is the most important. As Figueroa Hernández notes, “it is not for nothing that the word *jaranero* has become almost synonymous with “player of *son jarocho*” (Figueroa Hernández 2007:15).

Early on in my research I had an experience that demonstrated the way that the *jarana* serves as a cultural identifier in the *son jarocho* community. At a point when I was just becoming acquainted with a few people from the *jaranero* workshops I attended a *fandango* held in Santa Ana, near Los Angeles. Upon arriving, I could not find the event, and it was only my recognition of a fellow *jarana* player that eventually led me to the party.

Santa Ana, March 6, 2012

I drive to Santa Ana around 8:00 p.m. I find the address on a dark, deserted street, off the center of Main Street. It appears to be one of a row of tiny apartments. I approach the door hesitantly but neither hear nor see anyone. I knock. No response. Perplexed, I walk towards town to try and find a coffee shop where I can sit down and recheck the address. There is some type of arts event taking place. I walk into town and double-check the address. It is correct, so I decide to wait an hour or so. My experience living in Mexico was that parties started notoriously later than planned, so I figure this is probably the

case here. Someone in a nearby store asks me what I am doing and I explain that I am here for a fandango. "What is that?" the person asks. I explain. It strikes me later that this loud event is happening quite unbeknownst to the people who are only a few blocks away.

Around 9:15 I pass by the address again. It still appears to be deserted. Frustrated, I decide to go home. As I am walking towards my car on the side street I see two women approaching with jaranas. I stop and ask them if they are going to a fandango. They affirm this, and I walk with them around the back of the apartments and into what appears to be an empty warehouse that has been converted into a small apartment.

I relay this anecdote to demonstrate the centrality of the *jarana* in *son jarocho*. Even as a complete novice I knew enough to distinguish a *jarana* from any other instrument and to immediately associate it with the *fandango* and thus find the event.

A *jarana* is a shallow-bodied guitar. (See figures 1 and 2.) However, unlike a Spanish guitar, the body of a *jarana* is carved from one solid piece of wood, generally cedar or another soft wood (Figuerola Hernández 2007:15). The only separate pieces are the fret board and the cover around the resonating hole (ibid). A *jarana* typically has frets and between eight and twelve strings grouped in five courses (pairs of strings or courses), normally three doubled courses and two single strings (Koegel 2012:88). In *fandangos* I saw *jaranas* in various sizes including the *mosquito*, *segunda*, *tercera*, *cuarta*, and

tercerola. The most common of the *jaranas* is the *tercera*, which is about 70 centimeters long. (Figuroa Hernández 2007:15).

Jaranas are central to the participatory character of a *fandango*. First, players provide both the rhythmic and chordal base for the son (Sheehy 1975; Koegel 2012:88). Thus, no other instruments are needed to accompany the singers and dancers. Second, the *jarana* is accessible to all levels of musicians. Once a person has learned two to three basic chords, which are alternated and played cyclically in most *sones*, he or she can participate. More advanced players, however, can add a variety of *rasgueos*, or strummed patterns. At the time that I attended my first *fandango* I had only been to two workshops, and I did not yet have my own *jarana*. Yet, I was still able to participate by playing along at my own level.

Santa Ana, March 6, 2012

A group of about 30 jarana players circle around the tarima and the dancers. At times people lend me their jaranas, and I hang back towards the outer edges of the circle and practice the chords. As a beginning player, I focus on a basic down-down-up pattern, and try to match the rhythm of the jaranas around me. Other more advanced players incorporate complex breaks into the melody. Someone shows me the basic dance step and I practice for a little while off to the side. I appreciate the participatory nature and the accessibility of this event. I can see that there are people with virtuosic talent and great expertise. Though a complete beginner, I still feel that I can participate.

While the first instrument a person thinks of in relation to *son jarocho* is the *jarana* another important, but less common and more virtuosic instrument is the *requinto*. (See figure 3.) A requinto is a narrow-bodied guitar with 4 single strands. The main differences between the *jarana* and the requinto are the number of strings and the playing technique. Traditionally, requintos have 4 strings, although more contemporary models sometimes have 5 strings (Figueroa Hernández 2007:18-19). While the *jarana* is primarily played solely in chords, the requinto is played note by note using a plectrum fashioned from cow horn or a plastic comb to pluck.

The melodic line is highly improvised (Sheehy 1975; Koegel 2012:88), and the requinto player adds an element of heightened skill to an otherwise highly accessible musical practice. The *requintero*, or requinto player, also has a more individual role within the *fandango*, as this individual is responsible for starting each *son* (Interview with Chuy Sandoval, June 2012). Most likely because it is a more difficult instrument to play than the *jarana*, there are only a few requinto players in a *fandango*, whereas there is no limit to the number of *jaraneros*.

Another opportunity for participants in *son jarocho* to display their skill is through *zapateado*, or dancing, (see figure 5), which is performed on the *tarima*, a wooden rectangular-shaped platform. A *tarima* is hollow and sometimes has holes on the side for the sound to resonate. Although it functions as a small stage for *bailadores*, or dancers, to perform highly percussive footwork, the *tarima* itself is actually considered to

be an instrument, much like a drum. Dancers wear leather, high-heeled shoes or boots that sometimes have nails embedded in the sole and heel of the foot to create a louder sound. Figueroa Hernández notes that *tarimas* vary in size from region to region in Mexico, but they are normally large enough to fit four dancers (Figueroa Hernández 2007:23).

Dancers provide percussive footwork and *zapateado* is referred to in the same way as the *jarana* and the requinto. I attended a workshop with the *jarochas*, led by Saul, a teacher from Veracruz, in which he constantly stressed the need to stay on beat and not accelerate the tempo as this would obligate the other instrumentalists to follow accordingly. Saul showed us how to listen to the *rasgueos*, rhythm of the *jarana* and match this pattern with our feet. He emphasized noting the silences as well as the strumming patterns; in places where the *jaranas* fell silent we should similarly cease our steps. When we dance, he continued, we are accompanying and we are creating the rhythm of each son. So, he concluded, it's really important to maintain the tempo and follow the patterns.

In accordance with a participatory model, and in a similar fashion as the *jarana* players, dancers participate at various skill levels. *Zapateado* involves a high level of skill, and dancers are prized for their improvisatory abilities. Yet, this free form is based on fundamental steps, and in order to ascend to the *tarima* a dancer has to have mastered the preliminary pattern called *café con pan*.

In her account of learning *café con pan* Martha González writes that it was not the technical aspects of this step that were hard for her to master, but rather the *cadencia*, or

cadence (“swing” or “groove”), of it (González 2009:367). Similarly, I found that the basic step was deceptively difficult. In a *son* called “Buscapiés” Saul showed us *café con pan*; how to step twice on the right, once with the left, and once more on the right. We practiced reciting the onomatopoeic mantra emphasizing each syllable as we stomped. The rhythm sounded like two eighth notes followed by two-quarter notes (Ca-fé con pan or quick, quick, slow, slow).

While improvisation is highly valued in zapateado, dancers are expected to follow certain rules or structures. The dancers and the musicians communicate back and forth throughout the duration of a song. Thus, many guidelines dictate the interactions between these two parties. In my first *fandango* I watched the dancers with wonder, struck by the intense feeling of being a complete outsider, not from a cultural perspective as much as a musical one. I sensed an unspoken substructure underneath this event and knew instinctively, although I could not articulate how or why, that the rules the dancers followed were at the heart of this foundation.

Santa Ana, March 6, 2012

Four women step onto the tarima. They dance very fast, and hold their bodies upright. One person seems to lead the other or at least 2 people are communicating and following each other as they dance. I notice that there are always at least two people on the tarima; never solo dancers. As they dance, the dancer’s upper bodies remain still and taught. It looks like a proud posture. Yet, despite this regimented stance their faces are relaxed and they laugh, smile, and joke with one another. Almost all the women wear long, flowing

skirts and many have woven scarves draped over their shoulders. They wear black shoes that look like tap shoes.

Dancers continually exchange positions as they climb up and down from the tarima with grace. Singers call out verses and amazingly do not seem to compete with one another despite the fact that there is no apparent order to dictate who will sing next. I wonder how all of this happens without a heightened sense of competition or even conflict in the air. I note that dancers only step onto the tarima when no one is singing. I ask a woman next to me about this and she confirms that, yes, you can only step on the tarima during an instrumental part. There are also certain songs in which only women dance and others in which it is a mixed sex couple. I also notice that when the singers begin, the dancers switch from an energetic step that creates a loud rhythm to a softer step in which they seem to drag their feet on the ground.

In my research I learned that the interactions I witnessed between dancers in this *fandango* were codified. The first rule is that dancers can only step up onto the *tarima* during an instrumental part, when no one is singing. Another rule to help ensure that the singers are heard above the percussive footwork is that, when a verse begins, the dancers immediately shift to *la mudanza or descanso*. In this softer step, dancers shift weight, and gently drag one foot squarely in front of the other and then alternate feet. In his workshop, Saul showed us how to incorporate a brushed stroke in place of the *café*, of

café con pan, sliding the tip of the toe forward on the first syllable and back on the second. When the singer stops the dancers stomp loudly in intricate, percussive, patterns.

A dancer must be allowed to dance on the *tarima* for at least one verse before another may indicate that she or he would like to take her or his place by gently tapping the dancer on the shoulder. This last rule again demonstrates the coterminous nature of dance technique and social interaction in a *fandango*. As I mentioned earlier, even if a dancer is very skilled if he or she does not give other dancers sufficient amount of time on the *tarima* this individual will not be well regarded within the *fandango* context.

Heteronormative gender roles are also important in zapateado. Traditionally the musicians were male and the dancers were female or a couple, and *fandangos* were often a place of courtship between the opposite sexes. However, in workshops and *fandangos* I attended in the Los Angeles area dancers' and musicians' roles are interchangeable. In fact, it is common to see a woman or man dancing on the *tarima* with her or his *jarana* slung over her or his back.

In a *fandango* usually two to four people are on the *tarima* at one time. Generally, a man and woman dance in pairs. Sometimes two women dance together, but this appears to be more due to a lack of sufficient male partners. In the *zapateado* workshop, Saul stressed that men should learn to dance because all too often there are many female dancers in *fandangos*, but very few male dancers. He mentioned that this gender disparity occurs in Veracruz because it is less common for men than women to learn to dance. He joked that, if he was the only male dancer, then all the women would get a break, while

he would be stuck on the tarima, almost dying. I often observed this phenomenon in my own research in Los Angeles and Tijuana.

In addition to dancing in pairs, women sometimes dance in groups in *sones de monton*. These songs are exclusively for women. Even if there are four women on the tarima, they all dance similar steps, but they move in pairs, rather than as a unit of four people.

Zapateado is not unique to *son jarocho* as it is a technique found in other genres throughout Latin America. For example, it is found in *son huasteco*, another Mexican *son*, as well as in Argentine rural dances, known as *zapateo* (Schwartz-Kates 2012:282). However, the patterns dancers perform in *son jarocho* are particular to the syncretic combination in the Veracruz area. Anita González notes that, while the heel beats of other Mexican regions are generally uniform, the *jarocho zapateado* is polyrhythmic and incorporates syncopated improvisations that are rooted in Spanish and African practices (González 2007:57).

The free structure and vocal technique in *son jarocho* are another important component of the participatory setting of a *fandango*. Similar to dancers vocalists in *son jarocho* use a basic template for singing and then improvise. Verses are sung in *coplas*, or couplets, which are 4 sets of phrases in which the second and fourth lines rhyme. Singers can change words of verses freely as long as the second and fourth lines rhyme (Sheehy 1975).

The basic form is a call and response in which singers take turns singing the lead parts at random. The leader will sing a verse and another will echo this phrase. Some

sones like “Colas” also have a chorus that everyone sings. Improvisation of lyrics is highly prized, and vocalists can memorize verses or make them up on the spot. Heriberto Hernández and Maria Pérez, two friends from the *fandango* workshops, told me that once a verse is sung, ownership is relinquished. This verse can be copied and used by other singers (Interview with Heriberto Hernández, May 2012). Therefore, the verses a listener hears in a *fandango* are usually a combination of phrases that people have heard and ones that they have created themselves.

Unlike in *son jalisciense* and other Mexican styles, in which an operatic style is highly valued, there is no vibrato in *son jarocho* singing. Some informants described the singing in participatory *son jarocho* as *gritando*, or shouting. Hector Marquez explained the preference for a strong, often high-pitched and nasal sound, (Interview with Hector Marquez, December 2011).

Using a higher pitch helps the singer to be heard over multiple *jaranas* in a participatory context. *Jaraneros* are supposed to play more softly when people are singing, but, there can be as many as fifty instruments playing at one time, and the singer can easily be overpowered. Informants also explained that this style of shout-singing developed because in a rural setting people would communicate verbally over large distances and needed to project their voices to be heard from one house to the next (interviews with Hector Marquez, December 2011 and Carlos Rosado Gutiérrez, August 2012). The ways that this vocal style is used to communicate across a distance and can be implemented in a political setting was plainly demonstrated to me in my fieldwork in particular in the *Fandango Fronterizo*. I will discuss this further in chapter 7.

In *fandangos* and workshops in which I participated in southern California and Tijuana, the *jarana*, requinto, zapateado, and vocals were the prominent instruments. However, the instrumentation of *son jarocho* varies region to region and many other instruments exist. A few auxiliary percussion instruments I often saw were the *quijada* and the *pandero*, similar to a tambourine. The *quijada* is played by scraping a wooden stick across the teeth and hitting the outside bone of the donkey jaw to create a percussive rattling of the teeth. (See figure 6.) The *pandero* is played by running one's fingers across the drumhead and hitting the frame on the side.

Instruments in a presentational context

In the previous section I explained the role of the core instruments in a *fandango*. I will now mention briefly some of the other instruments that have been incorporated over time into primarily a presentational context.

In my discussions with informants the primary instrument that was noted to distinguish music as presentational rather than participatory was the harp. As noted earlier, the traditional harp, which was small, only four to five feet tall, and required the harpist to sit down while playing was replaced by Andres Huesca with a larger harp in the 1940s (Hernández 2007:21).

I often saw harps played in concerts with the *jarocho* community and one member in particular, Juan Parroquín, was a highly accomplished requinto and harp player. Traditional harps are played diatonically in the key of the song, but cannot play chromatic notes because they do not have pedals to raise or lower the pitch of individual

strings. This means that in order to change keys the harpist has to retune the instrument to match the ensemble. However, some innovations have been made to more modern harps providing levers that can be used to change keys (Figueroa Hernández 2007:21). Juan demonstrated this for me one day while I was visiting with him and his mother in their house in Los Angeles. He showed me how he could modulate keys in mid-song by quickly removing one hand from the strings and flipping the levers above. This is still not common practice because it is quite difficult to execute.

Over time *son jarocho* musicians have incorporated additional instruments that are commonly found throughout Mexico and other parts of Latin America. Los Cojolites, a musical group from Veracruz, have incorporated a *marimbol*. Other groups have added the *cajon*, an Afro-Peruvian drum, while others including Los Cojolites, Quetzal, and Las Caféteras have modified the large *tarima* found in *fandangos* to a small one for an individual to dance on while on stage. (See figure 7.)

Although in these presentational settings the majority of the instruments are the same as those found in a *fandango* the way that they are played is based on individual technique versus the values of *convivencia*.

Now that I have provided a general description of *son jarocho* history, instruments, and performance practice I turn to the first of my case studies: the *jaraneros*. I will demonstrate in this next chapter the ways that the *jaraneros* relate to *son jarocho* on an ideological and music level and how that translates into their application of the music to Chicana/o activism.

Chapter 5.

The *Jaraneros* of La Plaza de La Raza

The *jaranero* group in Los Angeles has been highly influenced by the *movimiento jaranero* and the work of Mono Blanco. Thus, they similarly stress the African origins of rhythms, improvising verses, and playing at slower tempos. For them, Gilberto Gutierrez and Arcadio Hidalgo are musical legends. Most importantly, the *jaraneros* emphasize the importance of building community through *fandangos*. They model these ideological and sonic values through weekly *fandango* workshops.

I got to know the *jaraneros* through attending Saturday workshops from 10:00 to 12:00 noon in the community center the *Plaza de La Raza* in East Los Angeles.¹² These workshops, which were initiated and taught by Martha González, Quetzal Flores, Cesar Castro, Xochi Flores, and Chuy Sandoval as well as a few guest teachers in January 2012, were free and open to anyone who wished to attend. Each time I arrived the set-up would be different, and it always took me a minute to figure out where everyone was. Sometimes I would find just eight people playing in a small room. Other days I would join a group of thirty people, including men, women, and children, in a large auditorium. The majority of people were in their late twenties or thirties; however there were no age restrictions, and teenagers as well as people in their fifties and older would attend. The participants were almost exclusively Chicana/o or Mexican American with a few

¹² Founded by Mexican born actress/singer Margot Albert and labor union organizer Frank Lopéz, in 1970 in reaction to the proposed demolition of the boathouse in Lincoln Park, the *Plaza de La Raza*, is a community-based cultural and arts education center. *Plaza de la Raza* is a landmark where people have joined to celebrate Latino performing and visual arts. For more information see <http://www.plazadelaraza.org/about/history/>.

exceptions including myself and an immigrant family from Guerrero, Mexico.

The workshops teach people how to play, not for the purpose of becoming professional musicians, but rather with the intention of taking part in *fandangos*. In many ways the workshops provided a way for beginners to participate in a *fandango* without the pressure of having to compete with experienced musicians.

La Plaza de La Raza, Los Angeles, March 16, 2012

Quetzal motions everyone to stand closer to the tarima. He shows the three chords of the song. The chords seem to remain on the first 2 frets of the instrument. We play this chord progression over and over for perhaps 15 minutes. Quetzal walks around helping people individually. I struggle to play the chords and the rhythm together so he has me mute the sound by holding down the strings with my left hand and playing the up and down pattern with my right hand. He instructs me just to concentrate on that.

The three activities that are taught in the workshops are playing *jarana*, learning zapateado, and singing verses. Most often the teacher would focus on the *jaranas*, the primary instrument. However, depending on who was leading the workshop and his or her particular expertise we might focus solely on the footwork for that day or a combination of the three activities. Each teacher also had his or her own style. Quetzal would walk around and check on the progress of the newer students, while others would

lead everyone together as a whole group. Regardless of who was teaching, the pedagogy was always modeled on the *fandango*.

While everyone in the *jaranero* community recognized the importance of *fandangos*, each person I spoke with had his or her own reasons for participating in them. Some saw *fandangos* as environments in which to restructure social interactions based on the tenets of anti-neoliberalism. Others saw these events as opportunities for creating great music and friendship between musicians.

For two of the central figures in the *jaranero* movement Martha González and Quetzal Flores, a *fandango* is about much more than playing music. Rather, a *fandango* provides an opportunity for everyone to come together in a communal space dictated by social rather than commercial values. Martha's and Quetzal's theoretical approach is highly informed by the work of the Zapatistas and their anti-neoliberal agenda, which bears further explanation here for the importance it plays in the contemporary *jaranero* movement.

January 1, 1994 marked the official beginning of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and, more generally, the era of global trade agreements nicknamed the "New World Order" by President Bush and implemented by President Bill Clinton; it was also the day the Zapatista rebellion began. Thousands of masked guerrillas, led by *Comandante* Marcos, emerged out of the jungle carrying signs that read "NAFTA is Death" and staged an armed uprising in Chiapas (Hayden 2002:2). One of the main demands of the Zapatistas was "a world in which many worlds fit," not a homogenized one with no space for them (ibid.)

The Zapatista uprising prompted people around the globe to re-examine –and ultimately challenge–the new world order with its neo-liberal values and new modes of capitalist reproduction. Neo-liberalism is characterized by a supply-side economics agenda that privileges a particular–market-centered–conception of competitiveness. In this model a strong focus is placed on particular high-technology products, the realization of short-term gains and the loosening of long-term cooperative bargaining structures and socially oriented network relations (Bieling 2006:211).

From a social point of view, neo-liberalism privileges the individual over the collective and values people based solely on their economic rather than social contributions.

Neoliberals maintain that–with very few exceptions–market-relations are generally more efficient and superior to all forms of collective co-operation, whether mediated by the state or by other political organizations as trade unions. Non-economic principles like solidarity, social fairness and social redistribution are therefore totally inappropriate criteria for an optimally organized capitalist. Neoliberal arguments are based on the assumption that the capitalist economy is a market economy which requires a certain constitutional framework, but consists above all of rationally oriented individuals –producers, consumers or voters... This utilitarian ontology goes hand in hand with a distinctive methodological individualism... This implies the assumption that the rational individual–above all the economically rational individual–represents the starting and ending point and only reliable unit of analysis (Bieling 2006:212).

The Zapatista rebellion also prompted haunting moral questions regarding privilege and a passive acceptance of the past. As Tom Hayden writes, “Chiapas raised from the hidden depths of our continental history an issue that our society seeks to forget: The Conquest of the Americas that left millions dead is the foundation on which our

civilizations are built” (Hayden 2002:3). Through this awareness the Zapatista rebellion also called into question the legitimacy of current power structures based on the genocide of indigenous peoples.

Since the Zapatista uprising in 1994, anti-neoliberal support has grown steadily, and collectives to reinstate values of equality and communal organizing have been created all over the world. Protests in support of the Zapatistas were staged in many countries and a stream of international visitors including reporters, academics, and activists flocked to Chiapas in great numbers to learn more about the guerrillas and their demands (Hayden 2002:2). Among these visitors were Martha and Quetzal.

Martha and Quetzal told me that they travelled to Chiapas to participate in a Zapatista encuentro in 1997. They then took this model of conducting an open, liberal dialogue and applied it to the concepts of *son jarocho*, which they learned about when they visited Veracruz soon after. Already deeply involved in the Chicano movement in Los Angeles, and the Eastside music scene¹³ on returning to California, Martha and Quetzal began to implement the ideas of the Zapatista encuentro model together with the participatory model of the *fandango* and the ideas from the *movimiento jaranero* into the existing Chicano/a community in Los Angeles.

¹³ The Eastside music scene consisted of a group of socially conscious and politically active bands in Los Angeles including Quetzal, Aztlán Underground, Ollin, Ozomatli, and Yeska. For more information see Díaz Sánchez 2010:151-153 and Viesca 2004:720-731.

Using art for resistance was not a new practice in the Chicano community. Nor for that matter was the incorporation of the *son jarocho*. As Loza observes:

during the apex of the Chicano movement, artistic production took the form of murals, poetry, theater, and music. The *son jarocho* as incorporated into this movement was transformed from a regional stylistic marker (associated primarily with Veracruz) into one with an entirely different set of associations and meanings (Loza 1992:190).

Martha and Quetzal's application of *son jarocho* to the Chicano community was not new. However, their application of *fandangos* as political tools and the tenets of anti-neoliberalism within this context were.

A central way that *fandangos* challenge neoliberal values is that they are not dictated by a capitalist agenda. *Fandangos* are open to everyone, and it does not cost money to participate. People are not valued in accordance with their monetary contribution but, rather, their social one. In accordance with these values, the *fandango* workshops in the *Plaza de la Raza* and all *fandangos* are also free. As Martha explained:

Everything is bought or sold, right? And then that's the only reason for people to come out. So I think that when all of these things begin to be regulated and revolve around commerce, then unless you have money you can't participate, unless you're buying or selling. And so commodities have defined how we interact. So when you have ways or social techniques that you are able to pull out in order to interact there, it will undoubtedly lead to critical thought, somehow, because suddenly you are talking to somebody else. At great length you are learning about their life, things you have in common. And then you bond and lo and behold you love each other and you become a community (Interview with Martha González, May 2012).

Thus, in addition to welcoming people of different musical abilities, *fandangos* also unite individuals across socio-economic boundaries.

Martha and Quetzal approach *fandangos* as democratic spaces, in which everyone has an opportunity to participate. They do not encourage competition, but, rather, foster communal activity. Community in this context does not mean that everyone within the *jaranero* group is in agreement about everything. Indeed, this apolitical definition of community can create apathy rather than active engagement. As Mattern notes, this concept of community that erases disagreement and difference is justified on psychological grounds as a tonic for alienation and isolation rather than on political grounds as a social basis for collective political action (Mattern 1998:6).

Quetzal shared with me his vision of a democratic community run by consensus:

A world in which everyone would see voting, not as a right, but as a responsibility. There would never be a situation in which, ok, five people are voting, three people vote one way, the other two the other way; ok, two people lost. There would be a conversation until everyone in that room was in agreement of how they wanted to move forward. It's long and messy, but in the end, I feel you are able to create a more balanced world in that way (Interview with Quetzal Flores, May 2012).

Quetzal's statement reflects a community development approach in which, as Murray Levine and David V. Perkins note, the assumption is that "the community already has within it the knowledge, resources, and potential for organization and leadership to effect constructive community change through consensus" (Levine and Perkins 1997:396). This is an important belief since the *jaranero* method is not about pandering to politicians or big donors and bringing in outside help to fix social problems. Rather, the emphasis is placed on the strengths that the Chicana/o community already have and the belief that they can build this power from within.

One way that Quetzal and Martha try to create their vision of a more egalitarian and balanced world is through organizing, promoting, and participating in *fandangos*. They see *fandangos* as powerful tools for creating alternative spaces and encouraging a communal mindset.

It really does put you in a different space. It is almost, it is sort of surreal in a lot of ways when you're in it because of the circular motion of the music, and it puts you in sort of like this trance, and at the same time I feel like it's a powerful political tool to build community (Interview with Quetzal Flores, May 2012).

My interpretation of these comments relates to what Turino refers to as flow. Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defines flow as “the way people describe their state of mind when consciousness is harmoniously ordered, and they want to pursue whatever they are doing for its own sake” (Csikszentmihalyi 1990:6). Building on Csikszentmihalyi's theory, Turino explains the concept of flow or a theory of optimal experience that helps explain how art and music aid individuals in reaching a fuller integration of the self (1998;1990 in Turino 2008:4). Turino notes that the most important condition for flow is that the activity must have a balance between inherent challenges and skill level. If the activity is too difficult people will become frustrated. On the other hand, if the action is too easy, participants will get bored. Frustration and boredom are emotions that do not allow one to feel flow (Turino 2008:4). The participatory and multi skill level nature of music in a *fandango* enables a musician to play at his or her appropriate level, avoiding boredom and frustration, and enter into a flow.

Turino also uses Victor Turner's term *communitas* to describe a dissolving of self or identity when a person enters into a flow. He says that during a good performance the multiple differences among us are forgotten and we focus completely on an activity that emphasizes our sameness.

Within the bounded and concentrated frame of musical performance that sameness is all that matters, and for those moments when the performance is focused and in sync, that deep identification is felt as total (Turino 2008:18).

The communal feeling that Turino describes here is applicable to the experience of being in a *fandango*. In his work on ritual and rites of passage Turner uses the word *communitas* to denote a society as a simply structured and undifferentiated communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. Although there are no ritual elders in a *fandango* everyone is adhering to a particular traditional structure that dictates the interactions of the musicians. Therefore, it could be argued that a *fandango* community is a type of *communitas*.

Liminality is another crucial component of the flow in a *fandango*. Turner describes liminal stages in which one finds him or herself "neither here nor there" or "in and out of time" (Turner 1966:95-96). The repetitive nature of the *fandango* as well as the duration of each song puts one in a liminal state.

In my opening fieldnotes I described my experience in a *fandango*. My fellow musicians and I completely lost track of time. We were not sure if it was midnight or 4:00 a.m. Each song seemed to last an hour, although I am sure that some were not longer than

15 minutes. We were exhausted beyond belief and, yet, we continued playing. Through this process, a strange feeling came over me. I felt connected by some invisible thread to the people around me. I also felt that my personal identity was subsumed to the music and the environment around me. Finally I felt I understood the power of the *fandango* and what pulled people into this practice with such force. I felt, like Turino says, that I was in the flow.

After having this experience I reflected back on what Quetzal and Martha had shared about the *fandango* as a social tool. It seems natural that strong communities would build around the *fandangos* and *son jarocho*. It also is a great way for activists to organize and come together. Here again, the participatory style of playing music in a *fandango* is a major contributing factor to create an egalitarian space as the emphasis is placed on blending in with the group rather than establishing oneself as an individual musician.

While some people in the *jaranero* community encouraged activism, the *fandangos* and workshops connected to the *Plaza de Raza* were not spaces in which people were indoctrinated into specific social or political agendas. In all the events I attended I never heard political speeches. Thus, there was no obligation for people in the *jaranero* community to be involved in certain political or social causes. However, people would often make announcements about particular political events.

A few people brought their *jaranas* with them when they demonstrated against the alleged fraudulent election of PRI Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto at the Mexican

consulate in Los Angeles this past July 2012.¹⁴ Many *jaraneros* attended the *Fandango Fronterizo* in protest of the border and immigration policies. Also, as discussed, another important cause within the *jaranero* community was supporting the Zapatistas and anti-neoliberalism. This was often demonstrated through stickers and t-shirts bearing slogans like “*Todos Somos Jaraneros*”—an adaptation of the phrase “*Todos somos Zapatistas*” and “*Apaga la Television: Agarra una Jarana*” (“Turn off the television: Grab a *jarana*”). (See figure 10).

Martha, who is a PhD candidate in women’s studies at the University of Washington, has also been influential in promoting awareness about women’s issues. She is currently involved in *Entre Mujeres*,¹⁵ a collaborative music project that connects women musicians in Los Angeles and Veracruz. With their band Quetzal, Martha and Quetzal have played for several years at a women’s conference in Los Angeles. The collective that they started in Washington state, The Seattle *Fandango* Project, also works with a women’s’ group called Casa Latina (Interview with Martha González and Quetzal Flores, May 2012).

Of course Martha and Quetzal are not the only people to note the potential a *fandango* has to put a person in the flow. Many people within both the *jaranero* and *jarocha* communities spoke of this as well and, throughout my research, I heard many different descriptions of what “being in a different space” in a *fandango* meant. Some described it by saying that when people played the music skillfully it put them in a type of trance or emotional state. This emotional state, they said, would open a door and those

¹⁴ http://blogs.laweekly.com/informer/2012/07/la_activists_mexico_presidential_election.php

¹⁵ <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/mgonzalez/entre-mujeres-translocal-musical-dialogues>

in the *fandango* would step up to that door, but they would not enter. I interpreted this to mean that these people felt on the verge of falling into a trance state but they did not succumb to it. Others stated that the *fandango* helped you forget about your problems and just allowed you to be happy.

While most of my informants noted the unifying power of participating in a *fandango*, not everyone spoke of this in the same political terms as Martha and Quetzal. In my interviews I found that people who identified as Chicana/o tended to be more involved in projects of anti-neoliberalism than those who identified as Mexican or Mexican American. This makes perfect sense when we consider the ways that the Zapatista and anti-neo-liberal model of questioning capitalist modes of production and the power structures inherited through colonization fits perfectly into the Chicana/o movement.

Sociologist George Lipsitz suggests that Chicanas/os, who give the U.S. society its distinctive character and have developed a sophisticated and powerful vocabulary for discussing culture and power, are in a unique position to radicalize the story of the American narrative. He argues that a historically grounded approach to cultural studies work would mean facing the pain of history directly and taking seriously national legacies of conquest, genocide, slavery, and racism (Lipsitz 2006:57). Thus, those who were already invested in the process of decolonization and “detaching themselves from institutions of repression” (Interview with Martha González and Quetzal Flores, May 2012), were more likely to apply *son jarocho* and the *fandango* to this process.

While Chicanas/os in the *jaranero* community tended to view the workshops in the *Plaza de La Raza* and *fandangos* as political spaces, others simply enjoyed the music. Twenty-nine year old Manuel Jesus Sandoval, who goes by the name Chuy, is one of the organizers and teachers of the *fandango* workshops. He explained that the workshops provided opportunities for musicians who were already involved in *son jarocho* to further their learning. They also provided newcomers with a way to master the basics.

Because there are so many people playing already, we want to offer something for them to keep learning and to keep playing with the community that is already playing. We said, ok, if we are going to be playing, if we're going to call ourselves a community then let's get together. Let's be a community and keep learning and keep playing together. I think that's why we started doing that (Interview with Chuy Sandoval May 2012).

For Chuy the purpose of learning *son jarocho* is to play music. In addition to being a teacher at the workshops, Chuy plays professionally in Cambalache with Cesar Castro. He is also pursuing an MA degree in guitar performance. While he emphasized that he was not a conservative, he was also not comfortable with the music being equated with a leftist, political cause.

CS: If I call myself a *jaranero* it's because I play the *jarana* in a group. That's my job in Cambalache, I'm a *jaranero*. If I say that to another group of people they'll be like, oh, he's part of a movement. He's out there protesting. He's doing this. He's doing that. Which is not what I'm doing. I'm not using it for anything else than for music. Right? I'm not using it to help at a protest or anything like that. I don't necessarily see why this music is being imposed on protests or anything. I have a different experience with it than other people do.

HB: Is it being imposed on protests? I haven't seen that.

CS: That might be a harsh word I'm using like, you're making people listen to this while they protest. No, but I do see it a lot. Like, oh there's going to be a march, a rally and we're going to be there with our *jaranas* to support and I'm like, why? (laughs) I don't know. I mean that's cool, that's fine, but I don't understand the resistance part of it, it's not something that's been part of my *son jarocho* experience, so, I don't really understand it. I'm not going to say it's wrong or anything like that. It's just something I don't understand.

Despite the fact that he is one of the organizers and teachers of the *fandango* workshops Chuy has a slightly different perspective than some of the other *jaraneros* regarding his personal identity and his politics. I asked him if this impacted his relationships with others in the *jaranero* community.

I started meeting more *jaraneros*, I grew to learn, like, wow, you gotta be on their side politically or else you might not fit in. That's how I felt. You gotta be on the far left or you might not fit in. This is a funny thing that happened to me once. There was a little *fandanguito* in Mariachi plaza and people were singing verses about war and about being anti-war, right? Which is cool. I don't like war. But let's say there's somebody in the audience that is not a war monger, but they agree with the war, for whatever reason. Or their son is over there. How are they gonna feel? They might not feel welcome. They might not feel good about the things you're singing (ibid).

In my interview with him Chuy admitted there are certain subjects that he might avoid.

Yet, he assured me that he gets along well with everyone and, most importantly, they are all still joined through the love of *son jarocho*.

That's the cool thing about being in a community. You don't necessarily have to get along. If you're part of a community it doesn't mean you're going to live in harmony. Any community, school, your family. You're gonna love each other, you're gonna take care of each other, you're gonna reprimand each other, you're gonna call each other out on different things But you're still gonna get together and have that love for each other. And that's what I see in this *jaranero* community. We don't have to agree on the same thing. I hear people say we believe in a world where many worlds can exist. That's true, I believe in that (ibid).

Chuy may not identify with leftist politics, yet, his definition of a community as a world in which many worlds exists is in keeping with Martha's and Quetzal's desires for a democratic community. Chuy's wording here also echoes the Zapatista demand for a "world in which many worlds fit" (Hayden 2002:2).

Instead of emphasizing politics, Chuy focuses on the quality of the music. He describes the *fandango* workshops and smaller *fandanguitos*, or little *fandangos*, in which students are learning as places for them to hone their craft so that when they attend a *fandango* it will be good.

In jarocho the ultimate goal is to play good music at a *fandango* with a community, right? To play GOOD music at a *fandango*. Not to play mediocre music or to let the excuse be, oh they're just learning, that's why they messed that verse up or that's why they sang the wrong verse. I don't think that's an excuse. In a *fandango* you want to make good music. Right? That's what I think (laughs). The *fandanguito* will be mostly students and the workshop leaders... they'll give the students a chance to sing and dance and play or whatever. When I go to a *fandango* like in Santa Ana, where I've seen the good ones, that's different, right? Really, really good musicians in the front leading it, and really good *bailadores* keeping it alive, and it works out really well (Interview with Chuy Sandoval May 2012).

I asked Chuy if he identified as Chicano and how this did or did not relate to *son jarocho*. In particular, I wanted to know how he related to a musical style from Veracruz.

My parents are from Mexico, but they're not from Veracruz. They're from Zacatecas, which is... the style of music that is played over there is nothing like *son jarocho*. No strings. I think it's all brass and drums. Nothing like the *son*. So, I don't feel a connection to the *jarocha* culture. I don't feel that's how I identify myself. I don't even know if I would identify myself as a Chicano, cause that means a lot to a lot of different people. If I call myself a *jaranero* that means a lot to a lot of different people (ibid).

While Chuy doesn't express an affinity with *jarocho* culture his connections to Mexico do play a part in how he relates to the music. He told me that, although he is not from Veracruz, the music reminded him of visits to his parents' town in Zacatecas.

So when I heard these *coplas* being sung about *el campo* (the countryside) *y la naturaleza* (nature) it was something that reminded me of my parents and visiting my grandma and visiting my friends in Zacatecas. It was something that felt almost nostalgic, like, oh. Even though I'm not from there it brought that feeling back to me (ibid).

Although the majority of people in the *jaranero* community are either Chicana/o or Mexican American, there are also musicians who emigrated from Mexico in adulthood. They have yet another perspective regarding the political and social application of *son jarocho*.

Two avid *son jarocho* musicians with whom I spent many hours after each Saturday workshop at the *Plaza de La Raza* reviewing that day's lesson were Heriberto Rodriguez and his wife, Maria Pérez. Heriberto and Maria who immigrated from Guerrero, Mexico many years ago, had become involved in the *son jarocho* scene in Los Angeles through workshops at Tia Chucha's Centro Cultural and Bookstore in Sylmar, Los Angeles. Heriberto explained that although he originally attended classes to support his son he soon began studying as well.

Unlike some *jaraneros* who, following the ideologies of Mono Blanco, were selective in their musical tastes and tended to support *son jarocho* musicians whom they did not associate with *son comercial* or ballet folklórico, Heriberto and Maria attended workshops and events of all *son jarocho* styles from those at the Plaza de la Raza to the Anglo-American Conjunto Jardin, Cambalache and *son jarocho* fusion ensembles like

Quetzal, Cambalache and Las Caféteras. They also attended many of the events that the *jarochas* held.

When I asked Heriberto and Maria about the political implications of playing participatory *son jarocho* in a *fandango* or workshop they told me that they did not necessarily see *son jarocho* as related to social activism, rather they were drawn in by the communal nature of these events. For these parents the crucial component was that *fandangos* and workshops were open to all ages and their two young children were free to run around the workshop space or join. The multi-tiered skill levels also allowed their children to try out their abilities as they were learning. Again, in this participatory setting, it was more important that everyone took part in the music than that they played it perfectly.

The workshops were also accessible from a monetary standpoint as they were free and Heriberto and Maria did not have to pay for childcare. Thus, *son jarocho* provided a perfect vehicle for Heriberto and Maria to pursue their passions in an affordable manner as they encouraged their children to connect with their Mexican heritage.

One of the most respected *jaraneros* and workshop teacher is Cesar Castro who is famous in the *son jarocho* community for having been the youngest member of the group Mono Blanco. He is also one of the only members of the group who hails from Veracruz, which is significant because *son jarocho* comes from this part of Mexico. Eight years ago, he moved to Los Angeles where he currently is the leader of Cambalache, a *son jarocho* group. Cesar is also a master luthier and one of the only makers of *jaranas* in the Los Angeles area.

After ordering my handmade *jarana*, I drove to Cesar's workshop under his house in Los Angeles where he lives with his wife, Xochi Flores, also a member of Cambalache, and his children. We talked for a while, and Cesar shared a little about his experience with Mono Blanco and his perspective as a Veracruzano in the *son jarocho* community in Los Angeles. Cesar told me that he met Gilberto Gutiérrez of Mono Blanco when he was thirteen. Until this point Cesar had only been exposed to popular music on the radio including *son jarocho* musicians like Lino Chávez and Andres Huesca. He had never attended a *fandango*. Initially Cesar did not understand the ideas that Gutiérrez shared with him, but he was very attracted to the sonic quality of the music itself. Cesar's father enrolled him in a music institute, and he began learning to play *son jarocho*. Eventually he joined the band Mono Blanco (Interview with Cesar Castro, June 2012).

Like Chuy, Cesar stressed the music itself over any political or social application it had. He did not think that people played *son jarocho* to connect with their roots. Rather, he believed that people were attracted to *son jarocho* and the workshops based on the quality of the music alone.

Yo no creo en este, de que quieren conectar con su cultura o sus orígenes. Habrá algunos que si lo sienten así, pero hay muchos que no! Me gusta porque esta chido, esta divertido.

I don't believe in this, that they want to connect with their culture or their origins. There may be some who feel this way, but there are many who don't! I like it because it's cool, it's fun (ibid).

Similar to Gilberto Gutiérrez, Cesar stresses the participatory aspect of *son jarocho*.

Lo que yo creo que el son jarocho le da a la gente en esta forma lo que estamos haciendo es esta posibilidad de participar! Si hablamos de un genero, como el son huasteco, pues es bien dificil, el canto, es bien dificil, el violín, para que encuentras alguien que toca el violín así... El ensemble es bien dificil. Son jarocho tiene una primer, yo le llamo capa. Entonces en la primer capa tu ya estas divirtiéndose sin sufrir tanto.

What I think is that the *son jarocho* gives people, in this way, what we're doing, is this possibility to participate! If we talk about other genres, like *son huasteco*, well, then it's really difficult, the singing, difficult, the violin, for me to find someone who plays the violin like that... The ensemble is really difficult. *Son jarocho* has a first, I call it layer. So, in the first layer you're already having fun without having to suffer a lot (ibid.).

I asked Cesar if he agreed with Quetzal and Martha that this participatory model was part of a decolonization process or a method of extracting oneself from the dictates of capitalist society. Cesar then reiterated many of the sentiments that I heard from other *jaraneros*.

Si claro, vamos a tratar de ir en contra de estas tendencias neocolonizadores que son malignas para nuestra sociedad y para nuestros cuerpos. Así que en este sentido estoy totalmente de acuerdo con lo que esta haciendo Quetzal, la lucha. Pero estamos saliendo de este corriente y nos estamos encontrando afuera del corriente y si pues vamos ayudando entre nosotros. Es muy común que entre la gente de son jarocho vas a encontrar gente bien consiente de la política, la alimentación, le social. Por la escuela o la orden natural o por la familia también.

Of course, we will try to go against these neo-colonial tendencies that are bad for our society and for our bodies. In this sense I am totally in agreement with what Quetzal is doing; the struggle. But we are coming out of this path and we are all helping each other. It's very common among the people of *son jarocho* that you find people who are very aware of politics, health, and social issues... through the school or the natural order or through the family (ibid).

Like the many people joined across the globe through the Zapatista movement, Cesar, Quetzal, Martha, and other *jaraneros* are, as Cesar says, aware of politics, health and social issues, and they are openly critical of neoliberal or neocolonial systems in which people are measured in terms of their monetary versus social contribution and individualism is prized over collective consensus. For these individuals, participatory *son jarocho* serves as a vehicle to unite and work towards a more just world.

However attractive the belief that participatory music can act as a catalyst for social change, it is important to acknowledge that it is still a utopian ideal. To begin, we must question whether or not an individual identity can be subsumed through a musical practice. After all, even as I became immersed in the flow of the *fandango* I never lost sight of my own race, gender and other identifying characteristics that separate me from the next person. Rather, perhaps I focused on them less and less as I was drawn more and more into the music. Admittedly, the idea of merging with a larger community is attractive to me and to others with whom I spoke. Therefore, it could be argued that those individuals who are looking for an experience of loss of self from a *fandango* will inevitably find it.

We must also question whether participatory democracy in which all opinions are addressed equally in a consensus is truly promoted in the *jaranero*, *son jarocho* world. Or, as Chuy's example suggests, is it more accurate to state that those with more conservative beliefs simply refrain from disagreeing with the majority? The goal is for all to voice their thoughts, and for community to exist despite differences; but in order for the community created in a *fandango* to

extend beyond the realm of music and friendship and into that of social change, all opinions must be heard.

Last, we must ask, does participation in a *fandango* or other participatory musical event lead to direct action. Many activists in the *jaranero* community find themselves in the paradoxical position that, even as they acknowledge the problems inherent in a capitalistic model they are unable to extract themselves completely from the system.

As Cesar notes:

Si esta en contra de la capitalismo y la deshumanizada. Porque igual todos vivimos de eso, no? Pero ahí cuando vemos la deshumanidad decimos, pues ahí, eso no esta bien.

Yes, against capitalism and the inhumanity. Just the same, we all live from this, right? But when we see the inhumanity, we say, that's not ok (ibid).

This contradictory position further explains the intense attraction that many people within the *jaranero* community feel to be part of *fandangos*, spaces that are not run by competition and individualism and that, in a sense, are off the grid and in which you can remove yourself from mainstream society and reorganize social relations. However, here we must critically analyze the effect of participating in a *fandango*. Does it encourage those who are disillusioned with political, social, and economic injustice to fight the status quo or, by creating an alternate space, have the *jaraneros* simply provided a temporal escape from reality?

No easy answers emerge from these questions, and it is not my intention here to dismiss the theories of Quetzal and Martha or the efforts of the *jaraneros*.

Personally I believe that musicians and artists can be powerful creators of social change. However, it is worth noting the idealism here and the reasons that some *son jarocho* musicians may not subscribe to these ideas.

Although there may be ideological differences in the *jaranero* community everyone there is a strong believer in the traditional style or *son tradicional*. They all speak highly of Mono Blanco the leaders of the *movimiento jaranero*. Most importantly, the *jaraneros* believe that the ultimate purpose of playing *son jarocho* is to play in a *fandango* and that this builds community.

In this next chapter I will focus on the *jarocha* community. Just as the *jaraneros* have formed a community around *son jarocho*, so too, have the *jarochas*. However, while many *jaraneros* have formed *fandango* workshops and applied the music to the Chicana/o movement and social issues, the *jarochas* have orchestrated the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles and have united around a common Veracruz heritage.

Chapter 6.

The *Jarocho* Veracruz Community

Just as the *movimiento jaranero* has had a powerful role in shaping the *jaranero* community, the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan has been central to the *jarocho* group. Many members of the *jarocho* community have participated in the *encuentros* in Tlacotalpan; some were even present in the first one in 1979. The *jarocho*s have instituted a sister *encuentro* in Los Angeles which they organize each year in August, and, like the original *encuentro* in Veracruz, the Los Angeles event is designed to showcase *son jarocho* musicians from all different styles.

I met the *jarocho*s of the Veracruz community at a Ford Amphitheater concert in Los Angeles for the groups Conjunto Jardin, an Anglo-American *son jarocho* group, and Son Candela, an ensemble from Veracruz. (See figure 11.) To my surprise, the *jarocho*s were connected to a completely different set of people than the *jaraneros* were. Whereas the majority of the *jaraneros* were descendents of places in other states in Mexico, almost all the *jarocho*s had grown up in Veracruz and had moved to the United States as adults.

I attended the show both to see the concert and to meet with Rafael Figueroa Hernández, a sociologist from Veracruz who was the MC for the night. Rafael grew up in a musical family in Veracruz. His father, Don Fallo Figueroa, was a stand-up-bass player from the group Siquisiri, and now plays with Son Candela. Following his lead, Rafael originally studied to be a musician in Mexico City. However, he soon became

disillusioned because he was allowed to only study classical music and could not find any way to focus on music from his own culture.

I was trying to do something else and they were like throwing holy water on me (laughs). When I tried to find something about my tradition there was nothing...a few articles, gossip in the magazines. So I began doing that (Interview with Rafael Figueroa Hernández, June 2012).

Rafael gave up performing and decided to focus on sociology. He is currently writing a PhD dissertation on *son jarocho*.

The evening I met Rafael I also met his friends and was introduced to the local Veracruz immigrant *son jarocho* community. Of particular help were Adriana Elfin, Patricia Parroquín, and Columba Baruch-Maldonado, who have been organizing the *Encuentro de jaraneros* in Los Angeles over the last several years. These three women invited me into their fold, and I ended up attending parties, workshops and small concerts at their homes. They recruited me as a volunteer in the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in August. They also introduced me to many important people in the *son jarocho* community, including: Alberto de La Rosa, a master harpist from Veracruz; Patricio Hidalgo, the grandson of don Arcadio Hidalgo and a musician in his own right; and Honorio Robledo, the founder of the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles.

In an interview Honorio Robledo told me about his introduction to *son jarocho* and how he started the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles. Honorio comes from a musical family in Mexico and grew up playing *son huasteco*. In 1978 he went to Canada where he met a man who had lived in Veracruz and studied with Rutilo Parroquín, a famous requinto and harp player. He invited Honorio to play with him but Honorio only

knew the most common *sones* like “La Bamba,” “El Cascabel,” and “Colas.” Honorio felt embarrassed by this because he felt like he didn’t know his own music (Interview with Honorio Robledo, August 2012).

At age twenty-four, when Honorio returned to Mexico in 1979, he travelled to Tlacotalpan, Veracruz. There he became friends with Humberto Aguirre Tinoco, the founder of the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan. Honorio moved to Los Angeles with his wife and son in 1997 where he found work as a painter in Venice beach. At this time, he said, there were very few *son jarocho* groups in Los Angeles. Among these were Los Conjunto de Jardín, Los Hermanos Herrera, and, the Chicano rock band, Los Lobos (ibid).

Honorio made friends with about seven families from Veracruz, including those of Columba Baruch, Patty Paroquín, and Adriana Delfin, and they all united around *son jarocho*. In 2000, Honorio received a grant from ACTA to teach *son jarocho* classes. A year later, in 2001 he received his green card and travelled back to Tlacotalpan where he conferred with his mentor Humberto Aguirre Tinoco about how to organize an *encuentro*. Upon his return to California that same year, he and the seven families held the first *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles (ibid).

The first *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles was a great success. Honorio told me that they expected to have seven groups play, but they had eleven. They anticipated about 200 people to attend, but about 800 showed up (ibid). Honorio has since moved back to Veracruz, but the *jarocho* community has continued to organize the

Encuentro de Jaraneros in Los Angeles annually. In August 2012 they held the eleventh of these events.

While the main event the *jarochas* organize each year is the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* they also hold parties and small *fandangos*. However, in contrast to many in the *jaranero* group who see *fandangos* as tools for community organizing, the *jarochas* embrace *son jarocho* as a practice that connects them to their hometowns in Veracruz. For some this music represents not only a way to connect with their heritage on a cultural level but on a deeply personal one as well.

Patricia Parroquín, or Patty, is the daughter of Rutilo Parroquín, a famous requinto and harp player from Otatitlan, Veracruz. Patty and her cousin, Adriana Elfin, grew up with *son jarocho* around them. However, like most young people, Patty and Adriana were not interested in their parents' music. Instead they preferred to listen to popular music in the dance clubs. It was not until they arrived in Los Angeles and saw people there who were interested in this genre that their interest in their own heritage was sparked. This is a very common phenomenon among immigrants; Turino, for example, observes a similar pattern among Aymara migrants in Lima, Peru, who only became involved in pan-pipe ensembles after they had been living in the city for half their lives (Turino 2003:60). Patty and Adriana express regret at having not taken advantage of growing up around accomplished musicians. They now host guest artists from Veracruz and actively support the *son jarocho* community in Los Angeles.

Patty's son Juan Parroquín has become an aficionado of the music from his cultural heritage. Juan was born in the United States but lived in Veracruz for many years

growing up. Although he never had the opportunity to meet his grandfather, the famous requinto and harp player, he is now following in his footsteps having mastered the harp and requinto. He has now become a prominent figure in the *jarocho* community and at the eleventh annual *Encuentro de Jaraneros* this past August in Los Angeles, Juan played in almost every ensemble throughout the day including those of legends like Patricio Hidalgo and Louis Pérez of Los Lobos (See figure 13.)

While the *jaraneros* saw *fandangos* as political tools, the *jarocho*s viewed them as parties or celebrations. Of course, these celebrations were an essential part of their tradition from Veracruz and thus, were very important events.

El fandango yo lo defino como alegría por vivir. Así de sencillito es. Nace un niño y hacemos un fandango. Se muere mi abuelita hacemos un fandango. Se casa mi hija hacemos un fandango. Cumpleaños de mi esposa hacemos un fandango. La vida es un fandango porque se vive solamente una vez. El que quiera vivir la vida sin la alegría de un fandango es su problema. Y cada quien la va a vivir como la quiera vivir. Que es el fandango? Independemente es cultural. Independemente es filosofía. Pero no filosofía en que tu tengas que filosofar, sino filosofía de vida.

I define a *fandango* as the joy to live. It is simple like that. A child is born and we have a *fandango*. My grandmother dies and we have a *fandango*. My daughter marries, we have a *fandango*. My wife has a birthday, we have a *fandango*. Life is a *fandango* because you only live once. And each person is going to live it as they choose to. What is a *fandango*? Independently it is cultural. Independently it is philosophy. But it is not a philosophy for philosophizing. Rather, it is a philosophy of life. (Interview with Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, July 2012).

The events that Carlos mentions, birth, death, and marriage, are not everyday occasions. Rather, they are major markers in a person's life. His connection with these events and *fandangos* again emphasizes that, for the *jarocho*s, *son jarocho* is an essential part of their tradition that they have brought with them from their home country.

While the *jaraneros* reject what they see as *son comercial*, the *jarochas* accept both *son tradicional* and *son comercial*. Juan told me that rather than seeing them as opposing styles he merely views them as different from one another. Adriana Elfin is similarly of the opinion that there are many different styles of *son jarocho* and they are all acceptable (interviews with Juan Parroquín, July 2012, and Adriana Delfín, July 2012).

Just as the ideologies of the *movimiento jaranero* inform the position of the *jaraneros*, those of the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan shape the opinions of the *jarochas*. I asked Honorio why the encuentro had evolved into a presentation of different groups instead of a competition. He explained that each region had its own way of playing and that the judges would obviously favor the region from where they hailed.

En el son jarocho hay diferentes estilos. Hay como siete regions y tienen sus diferentes estilos. Por ejemplo habia un señor así delgadito Don Felipe Corro que era un bailaror excelente, que bailaba así. Ta,ta,ta,ta,ta,ta,ca. Y habia otro de otra region que se llamaba el Doctor Mundo que bailaba así. Y los Tlacotalpenos decian, del Doctor Mundo “Ay es que esta barriendo, parece que esta echando polvo en la casa!” Y los de la Cuenca decia “ay es que llega el Felipe Corro y tac a tac, se pone a clavar mesas, parece que esta martillando, mejor habia serido un carpintero.” Pero los dos bailaban muy bien.

There are different styles in *son jarocho*. There are about seven regions and each has a different style. For example, there was a skinny man, Don Felipe Corde, who was an excellent dancer, who danced like this. Ta,ta,ta,ta,ta,ta,ca. And there was another from another region called Doctor Mundo, who danced like this. And the people from Tlacotalpan said of Doctor Mundo, “Ay, he’s sweeping, it looks like he’s throwing dust in the house!” And those from the Cuenca would say, “Ay, Felipe Corde arrives and tac a tac, he begins to nail desks. It looks like he’s hammering, better he should have been a carpenter.” But they both danced well (Interview with Honorio Robledo, August 2012).

In this amusing anecdote Honorio expressed a sentiment that I often heard in the *jarocho* community: styles of *son jarocho* varied so greatly that it was useless to judge one from the next. Rather, each *son jarocho* style, participatory and presentational, had its own role to play in the community.

Another *jarocho*, Arturo Rosado, grew up playing music in Tlacotalpan, Veracruz and moved to Los Angeles in 1991 to pursue a career in painting. He grew up playing the participatory and rural style in Veracruz and learned the presentational one when he went to work as a professional musician in a hotel in Mazatlan. He told me that the members of his group didn't know how to play that fast or how to have set arrangements, so they listened to *son comercial* recordings of Lino Chávez from Mexico City and ballet folklórico.

Tuvimos que tocar otro tipo de música diferente a lo de son jarocho. Por ejemplo si tu eres una persona del campo por mucho que te vayas a la ciudad interpretar otra personaje la gente te va a ver que eres de campo. La gente nos decía porque tocábamos tan lenta. Nosotros tocábamos música tradicional, pero en ese entonces nosotros escuchábamos a Lino Chávez a la música de ballet y todo esto.

We had to play another type of music different from the *son jarocho*. For example, if you are a person from the country even if you go to the city and take on another persona, people will still see that you are from the country. We played traditional music, but then we listened to Lino Chávez and the ballet music and all of this (Interview with Arturo Rosado, July 2012).

Here Arturo shows the economic reasons that he and other musicians from a traditional background adopted urban, presentational styles. Audiences in Mazatlan, a

large tourist destination, saw the musicians from Veracruz as country folk and would not pay to see them play in that style.

Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, Adriana Delfin, and a few other informants within the *jarocho* community consequently found the critiques made against professional musicians offensive. They shared that many urban musicians were called *marisqueros*. The word *marisqueros* comes from the term *mariscos*, or shellfish, and was used to describe musicians who found work in the tourist restaurants where they sold seafood. To the *jarocho* community this term is objectionable, since, calling a musician *marisquero* blames that person for working in a restaurant, and implies that he or she is not talented as a musician (interviews with Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, August 2012, and Adriana Delfin, July 2012).

The *jarocho*s also contemplated the *movimiento jaranero* and the work of Mono Blanco in a different light than the *jaraneros* did. While the *jaranero* community revered don Arcadio Hidalgo as a musical icon, the *jarocho*s viewed him as just one of many great musicians. Honorio shared with me that don Arcadio Hidalgo was a talented *jarana* player, but there was “another don Arcadio Hidalgo in every town in Veracruz” (Interview with Honorio Robledo, August 2012).

Juan Parroquín and Rafael Figueroa Hernández echoed this sentiment when they talked about the fact that don Arcadio Hidalgo was only elevated to special status because Gilberto Gutiérrez and Mono Blanco had chosen him.

So, we had this general feeling of the area. It began to develop into something really conscious. Gilberto was the first one to give it structure. He was really skillful in marketing it. That’s why he took Arcadio Hidalgo, I don’t know how conscious he was, but it was the idea of having

a symbol. Let's bring Arcadio Hidalgo and, he's not young ... made him like a symbol. Arcadio was a good musician, but he was not the only one. There were a lot of them. Gilberto made him a symbol. And it worked (Interview with Rafael Figueroa Hernández, June 2012)

Like Juan and Honorio, Rafael pointed out that, while there were other artists as capable as Hidalgo, he was the primary one who became famous through the movement. Rafael also demonstrates that even within a grassroots movement, Gutiérrez' ability to market the ideas played a part in how Mono Blanco's ideas were received. Part of this marketing, whether it was intentional or not, involved turning an old *sonero*, don Arcadio Hidalgo, into an icon.

Rafael's observations here about the way that Gutiérrez marketed don Arcadio Hidalgo as an idol reinforce my earlier interrogation of how authenticity is evoked in different narratives. Mono Blanco was often referred to by the *jaraneros* as if they were the gatekeepers of a pure and authentic tradition and thus, removed from monetary imperatives. Yet, as Juan, Honorio, and Rafael's comments elucidate Mono Blanco did not operate outside of the commercial market. Rather, they incorporated their ideologies into their commercial objective and made an icon out of don Arcadio Hidalgo.

The *jarochas'* opinion that don Arcadio was not the only *son jarocho* musician worthy of idolization did not lessen their respect for the man. Indeed, the homage they bestowed on his grandson, Patricio Hidalgo, both in the 2012 *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles and in private events in their homes, indicated otherwise. However, for them, it was strange that the *jaranero* group in Los Angeles venerated don Arcadio Hidalgo so highly, when, from the *jarocha* perspective, he was just one of many talented *son jarocho* musicians.

In the previous two chapters I have introduced the reader to the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* and have focused on the different ways that these groups relate to *son jarocho*. I will now turn to two events in which these two groups came together in interesting and complicated ways: the *Fandango Fronterizo* and the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*.

Chapter 7.

Moments of Unity: the *Fandango Fronterizo* and the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*

Throughout this paper I have emphasized the different stances of the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas*. In particular I have noted that the *jaraneros* use *son jarocho* in a political capacity, whereas the *jarochas* do not. However, just as there are exceptions in the *jaranero* community so there are in the *jarocha* one. One figure, Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez was especially notable in this for his instigation of the *Fandango Fronterizo*, an event in which two groups of musicians set up *tarimas* on either side of the Mexican and United States border in Tijuana and San Diego and conducted a *fandango* across the two fences. In terms of my research this event fell neither in the *jaranero* or *jarocha* category. In some ways it represented a uniting of the two sides, yet, only certain individuals from each group participated and the majority of people were either from Santa Ana or San Diego. I also met people from Texas, Washington, Canada, Mexico City and other distant locations.

Despite the difficulty with which I fit the *Fandango Fronterizo* into the main context of this paper, I include it here because of the significant ways it relates to the Mexican American experience and to the role that participatory *fandango* music can play in taking over public space and serving as a vehicle for political protest and personal expression. Participation of *jaraneros* and *jarochas* in the *Fandango Fronterizo* also highlights the mutual belief of some members within each group that music can be used for political change.

The fifth annual *Fandango Fronterizo* was held on July 15, 2012, in *Friendship Park* in Tijuana and in a border patrol no-man's land area in San Diego (See figure 17). From 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. musicians, dancers, and spectators including lots of photographers, videographers, and newscasters gathered on either side of the two fences separating Mexico and the United States. Two tarimas were placed side by side on either side of the parallel fences to create one platform out of two. Dancers performed together, and vocalists exchanged call and response verses over the barrier (See figures 18-21.) I was unable to get close enough to hear all of the verses, but I caught lines now and then about Tijuana and the border.

This action of volleying verses back and forth across the United States and Mexican border again demonstrates that participatory *fandango* music is deeply grounded in social values of *convivencia*. This is not the first bi-national event to occur across the border in this manner.¹⁶ However, through creating a *fandango* here, the organizers, including a *jarocha*, Carlos Rosado Gutiérrez, Jorge F. Castillo, and a group of players from San Diego called El Otro Son, transformed the inherent potential that *fandango* music making has to unite people and applied it to this symbolic protest.

In a short story he had written comparing the *Fandango Fronterizo* to a horse race in Veracruz, Carlos demonstrated the ways that *fandangos* have been traditionally used to unite people across social as well as physical divides.

¹⁶ The inspiration for the *Fandango Fronterizo* came from Daniel Watman who prior to 2007 had already been offering classes and workshops through the fences on either side of the border. For more information see <http://fandangofronterizo1.blogspot.com/>

El impacto de la primera visión que tuve cuando viví por vez primera el *Fandango Fronterizo*, es de analogía (relación de semejanza entre cosas distintas), empezaron a brillar los recuerdos de mis viejos en mi mente.

The impact of the first vision I had when I first saw the *Fandango Fronterizo* is an analogy (relation of similarity between distinct things). Old memories began to resurface in my head (Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez).

Carlos explained that the Rosario and Gutiérrez families organized a race between their two horses Pin Pon and Garcita. The town gathered to watch the famous race and to attend the *fandango* afterwards. Pin Pon, the horse of the Rosario family, won. The competition of the race elicited animosity between the two families and each one took their *tarima* and placed it on either side of the racetrack that was marked by a patch of grass, to conduct their own *fandango*. The people in the town created verses about this and offered their respective commentaries about the race.

As the *fandango* progressed the two families became caught up in the music and began bantering back and forth across the divide. Little by little the tension disappeared between the Rosario and the Gutierrez families, until finally they crossed the grass and united the two *tarimas* to create one *fandango* out of two. This joining of the two families turned out to be more than ephemeral or symbolic as it was in this *fandango* that Carlos's mother, Evangelina Gutiérrez met and fell in love with Carlos's father, Carlos Rosario.

In this lovely story Carlos draws an analogy between the *Fandango Fronterizo* and the *fandango* in which his parents met. He compares the two fences on the Mexican and United States border with the patch of grass that served as a racetrack and also as a dividing line between the two *tarimas* in his parents' story. While the border between San Diego and Tijuana and thus, the riff between those in favor of modifying immigration

laws and eradicating the border between Mexico and the United States and those not against this, may seem more impenetrable than the one between the Rosario and Gutiérrez families, the sentiment that the *fandango* can help to overcome these types of differences is at the heart of both situations.

The belief that music can help unite disparate groups is common. Indeed, as Mattern argues, “popular music can be the social glue for creating and maintaining diverse communities; that these communities support several distinct forms of collective political action including intracommunal disagreement and debate as well as assertion in external public arenas” (Mattern 1998:6).

However, certain characteristics of the music in a *fandango* make it particularly apt for bringing together diverse groups. One element is the already discussed participatory style of playing. I argue here that the vocal style of shout singing is another important aspect of the way that, sonically, *fandangos* can bring people together. To use the *Fandango Fronterizo* and Carlos’s story again, in both of these cases it was crucial that singers could hear one another across a distance and above the sound of numerous instruments.

Another aspect that makes participatory *son jarocho* a great vehicle for personal expression and political protest is improvisation. Since there is not a set text, *décimistas* or poets, can make up verses in accordance with specific situations. While simply yelling something to the effect of “no more border” sends a powerful message, a talented *décimista* can make an even more articulate and trenchant critique within the format of

the son. This was clearly demonstrated to me in a conversation with Carlos who shared the following improvised lines:

A La voz de la intolerancia
B Se escucha en esta frontera
B Son el pobre prolifera
A Y abusan de su confianza
A Es tremenda la arrogancia
C De todos los gobernantes
C Al dolor de caminantes
D Que no traen nada en la mano
D Tras el sueño Americano
C Convirtiéndose en migrantes

A The voice of intolerance
B is heard in this border
B They are the poor proliferation
A and they take advantage of their trust
C The arrogance is tremendous
C of all the people in government
D They carry nothing in their hands
D behind the American dream
C as they become migrants

In his verse Carlos expresses the critiques that many of the participants of the *Fandango Fronterizo* had of the United States and Mexican government and the fact that, while these governments were often the cause of social and economic problems they used illegal immigrants as the scapegoats for these issues. Indeed the protest was not a critique of the physical barrier so much as it was of what the border represented; the hypocrisy of a political landmark that prevented working class people from passing through but did nothing to mitigate the hegemonic power of the United States. As Rosaura Sánchez notes, the border is a political and social space used at one level to delineate a political boundary and hegemonic power, yet, these political and geographical national boundaries

do not curtail the impact of United States economic and political power, which extends as far south as Tierra del Fuego (Sánchez 2006: 105). These sentiments were also shared by many other people who had left their thoughts for all to contemplate in graffiti scrawled across the fences (See figures 22-24).

Tijuana on Mexican and United States border July 15, 2012

The fence is composed of two parts. The original part is made up of long, slender spokes. The metal is a dark brown and looks rusty. On the other side of these spokes (and closer to the San Diego side) is a second structure. This fence looks like a piece of graph paper with squares about half an inch all around. Powerful political protests and opinions are written in graffiti on the fence. I read a few signs. "9/11 was an inside job," "Alien-nate neighbors," "Words will build no walls", "Amigos Sin Fronteras," (Friends without borders), "everyone pushes a falling wall" "this joke is a wall", and last, "iron curtain", (a reference to the Berlin wall). As I stare at these scrawled statements it is almost as though I can hear the angry and frustrated voices of those who stood here before me. Their messages shout at me and seem to add energy this event today. I put my face as close as I can to the fence and try to look through these little squares. (See figures 25-27.) With difficulty I can make out the figures of some of the people on the other side. I am struck by the realization that for many Mexicans this is the only way for them to see their relatives- through these tiny chunks in the wall. As a U.S. citizen I have never experienced this feeling before because I have the freedom to cross the border as I choose.

The *Fandango Fronterizo* ends with musicians from the San Diego side coming across the border and joining with those in Tijuana. Food is served, speeches are made and eventually everyone partakes in a *fandango* on the wharf. Although the fences themselves are impenetrable musicians uniting in Tijuana is a symbolic victory that demonstrates as, Carlos says, “Music has no borders.”

Although there were no picket signs the *Fandango Fronterizo* was, without question, a political protest and, through the very act of taking over the border and reclaiming this public space, the participants made a powerful statement. In terms of my research the *Fandango Fronterizo* also represents a situation in which *jarochas*, like Carlos, united with *jaraneros*. It also shows how traditional participatory music can be used in a political context.

El Encuentro de Jaraneros in Los Angeles

While the *Fandango Fronterizo* brought a select number of *jaraneros* and *jarochas* together around a political issue, el *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Los Angeles united many talented *son jarocho* musicians in both a presentational context, through professional performances and in a small *fandango* at the end of the evening. The 11th annual Encuentro in downtown Los Angeles took place on August 18, 2012 from 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight (See figure 28.) I arrived at *La Plaza de Cultura* around 1:30 p.m. to help Columba and Adriana, the main organizers. I found them at a table selling CDs, photos, and books about *son jarocho* next to other vendors. Other tables held

beautifully hand-painted clothes, shawls, jewelry, and coffee from Veracruz (See figure 29).

The event itself was free and I knew that Adriana and Columba had raised funds through hosting dinners and selling tamales and thus, were not making a profit. Yet, the presence of so many vendors set this event apart from those that the *jaraneros* held since it encouraged monetary exchange of goods. I also noted with interest that many of the items being sold were beautiful white skirts and shirts like those associated with ballet folklórico and Veracruz tourism. Again, this showed a difference in opinion about the use of the white outfit between the *jaraneros* who primarily shunned this dress and the *jarochas* who sold it and wore it proudly throughout the day (See figure 30.)

Columba asked me to help the volunteers, musicians, and staff sign in, so I sat at the main desk for a while. As I pored over the list, searching for the name of the person I was signing in I could not help but marvel at the range of groups that were going to play that day. I recognized most, but not all of the names. The musicians included Conjunto Jardín, an Anglo *son jarocho* group; Quetzal a *son jarocho* Chicano rock group; Los Hermanos Herrera, the family of the California State University of North Ridge instructor Fermin Herrera; Los *Jaraneros* de Valle, the group of *jaraneros* from Santa Ana; and Las Caféteras, the political, *son jarocho*, hip-hop group, and Louis Perez from Los Lobos. Finally, I noted Patricio Hidalgo, the grandson of Arcadio Hidalgo, and his group Patricio Hidalgo y su Afro-Jarocho, would be playing last this evening. Other groups included Son Real, Los Alebrijes en Vuelo, Violeta Quintero y su Grupo, and Los Tremendos del

Sur. I was curious how the audience would respond to each performer given the range of styles that would be exhibited during the day.

Throughout the event musicians from diverse styles not only shared the stage consecutively but also re-grouped into smaller ensembles to collaborate. After Quetzal's energetic and polished performance of *son jarocho* Chicano rock songs lead singer Martha stayed on stage and played the *shekere*, an African-derived percussive gourd, danced on the small, stage tarima, and provided back up vocals for a few other ensembles. One very exciting moment came when two *son jarocho* legends, Louis Perez from Los Lobos and Patricio Hidalgo, took the stage together with El Godo, an amazing *jarana* player from Veracruz, Martha González, Juan Parroquín, Alex Hernández, a requinto player from the band Cambalache, and Jazmin Morales, a violin player. The crowd was entranced by so many amazing musicians performing together, and everyone cheered loudly.

At the end of this set Adriana and Columba came on stage with two special plaques made of glass, one each for Louis Perez and Patricio Hidalgo. Rafael and the Betto Arcos, the other announcer who was broadcasting live on KPFK gave speeches thanking these two musicians for helping to keep *son jarocho* alive in Los Angeles and in Veracruz.

One group I was particularly curious to watch was Las Caféteras. This was in part because their style is very different and also because they have been the topic of much controversy in the *son jarocho* world.¹⁷

La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Los Angeles, August 18, 2012

Now Las Caféteras take the stage. I am very curious to see this group who have injected a hip-hop feel and political lyrics into their music. Like Quetzal, Las Caféteras also have a large following in Los Angeles and are very well received in this crowd. They all appear to be in their twenties or early thirties. They bring a younger aesthetic to the event not only through their music but through their style as well, which looks slightly punk. One of the singers sports red hair and a short, stylish dress. Another member has jeans, a t-shirt and suspenders. This look varies greatly from that of most of the other musicians throughout the day who have worn dress pants and guayaberas, button up shirts typical of Cuba, or long flowing skirts, and blouses.

Las Caféteras play jarana, requinto, marimbol, quijada, cajon, another large drum I do not recognize and a flute like a quena. Their sound is distinctive from the other musicians in that they incorporate rap and spoken word elements. They are also blatantly political and declare themselves as a Chicano band. One song in particular stands out to me in which they keep singing, “Si yo fuera presidente” (“If I were president”).

¹⁷See “Las Caféteras Defy Tradition” <http://www.laweekly.com/2011-12-29/music/las-cafeteras-Salon-de-la-Plaza>

The last group to perform was Patricio Hidalgo y su Afro Jarocho. The announcers again emphasized what an honor it was to have Patricio, the grandson of don Arcadio Hidalgo, and a great musician in his own right, play at the encuentro. He took the stage with a violinist, a *leona* player from Santa Ana they called *el Toro*, the bull, and an amazing dancer, Donají Esparza. At one point the string players stopped and the dancer performed a solo. She was great to watch and performed much more complicated steps than I had seen previously.

After the bands ended, everyone gathered for a *fandango* around the tarima. This lasted only about an hour until 12:00 midnight when the venue closed. Everyone left, and I stayed behind to help Columba, Adriana, Arturo, Honorio, Carlos and the other organizers clean up.

Attending the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* gave me an interesting glimpse into the ways that the *jaranero* and *jarocha* groups co-exist within the larger *son jarocho* scene in Los Angeles. In particular I was curious what the *jarochas* thought of groups like Quetzal and Las Caféteras, as they seemed furthest on the spectrum from typical *son jarocho*. I asked Carlos his opinion about the different groups and their stylistic choices in the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*. He explained that he liked these fusion groups and did not object to their innovations since, in his view, they did not claim to play *son jarocho*. Rather, he said, these groups displayed themselves as Chicano groups influenced by *son jarocho*.

Carlos' categorization of fusion groups like Las Caféteras as a Chicano band eliminated any discussion about how *tradicional* or *comercial* they were. In contrast, Quetzal Flores and other *jaraneros* I spoke with expressed the belief that fusion was fine, but that bands like Las Caféteras who, in their view, had only grasped the basics of *son jarocho* technique before taking the music on stage were being disrespectful to the tradition.¹⁸

Despite their different opinions about *son jarocho* fusion, context was still of primary importance for both Carlos and Quetzal. In their opinions, *son jarocho* musical groups were allowed to create fusion, indeed, even the group Quetzal had modified the *tarima* for stage purposes, but musicians had to put in the time if they were going to call themselves authorities on *son jarocho*: they had to respect the tradition. Thus, the only question was, which tradition did they have to follow?

Different Interpretations of *Son Comercial* and *Son Tradicional*

In many ways the fact the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* often spoke of the other as playing “the other kind of *son jarocho*” perplexed me. Certainly, these two groups have different priorities, yet from my perspective, they have many things in common. For example, they both value *fandangos*. They also deploy similar criteria to differentiate between *son comercial* and *son tradicional*. I gained some clarity on this issue when I realized that, while people in the *jaranero* and *jarocha* communities used the same adjectives to describe the characteristics of *son comercial* and *son tradicional*, their individual interpretations of these descriptors varied.

¹⁸ <http://www.laweekly.com/2011-12-29/music/las-cafeteras-Salon-de-la-Plaza/>

The *movimiento jaranero* and the teachings of Mono Blanco emphasized the importance of improvisation. Thus, the *jaraneros* similarly taught that this was an important technique for upholding *fandango* musical traditions. However, from Carlos's point of view the *jaraneros* did not truly improvise; rather, they created their own verses and then sang them. This, he explained was different than improvising in the moment. True improvisation, he concluded was a lost art that even many traditional players did not how to do.

Los Angeles, August 19, 2012

I sit with Carlos at the kitchen table in Columba's house. He offers to demonstrate what he means by improvisation of décimas, or verses, is. I pick up my small purse and hand it to him. "Ok, dime algo de eso" ("Ok, tell me something about this"). He takes the purse from me and begins, "Con esa colorada . . ." ("With this colorful . . ."). From there he invents an entire décima about this purse and me. I ask Carlos to give me a beginning line so I can try to improvise. He does, and I fail miserably. Improvising décimas is not just about creating rhymes. The words have to rhyme in specific patterns and within structured syllabic rhythms. The story also has to make sense. Carlos creates a décima and writes it down so I can see the format (Interview with Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, August 2012).

Based on the skill that Carlos exhibited through reciting décimas on the spot it is no surprise that I had not heard this level of improvisation in any *fandangos*. First, one

almost has to instinctively feel the rhyme scheme and syllabic rhythm rather than intellectually grasp them because there is not enough time to think about the structure as one is creating the verses. This meant, as Carlos explained, a lifetime of practice. Within this challenging musical dynamic the *décimista* had to create a narrative that made sense. Not only did Carlos' verse make sense, but it also articulated a deeply political sentiment in a poetic form.

Second, the vocabulary Carlos used was immense. Without absolute fluency of Spanish this would be challenging. People within the *jaranero* group had varying levels of Spanish. Some were completely bilingual, but others had learned Spanish later in life. Thus, the fact that for Carlos, improvisation meant creating complex verses on the spot, while for the *jaraneros* the term was used more generally to indicate creating lyrics, made perfect sense.

Carlos also mentioned that in *son tradicional* dancers would improvise complicated steps. When Carlos made this comment about improvisatory footwork, I thought about having seen him dance in the *Fandango Fronterizo*.

Tijuana, outside on the wharf July 15, 2012

The number of female dancers greatly outnumbered the male dancers tonight. Francisco and Carlos are the main male dancers. They seem to come from opposite sides of the spectrum stylistically. The two both dance very fast, yet Carlos plays with the choreography more. For example, at one point he and Roxanna do a few moves that resemble jumping jacks or hop scotch.

Carlos noted that he had only seen a few people here who knew how to do that.

Interestingly, Carlos singled out the *zapateado* skills displayed by Martha González, when she dances on the presentational *tarima* in her fusion shows with Quetzal as an example of true, traditional improvisation.

Another difference in the way that the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* discussed *son comercial* versus *son tradicional* was that for the former group faster music automatically indicated that it was not traditional, while for the latter this was debatable. Juan Parroquín mentioned that when the members of the *movimiento jaranero* discovered don Arcadio Hidalgo, the musician was older and played more slowly. This slower style became the accepted style of the *movimiento jaranero*. However, in Juan's opinion this was circumstantial since, according to him, don Arcadio Hidalgo had been known to play at faster tempos in his younger years (interview with Juan Parroquín, July 2012).

Juan and Carlos made a similar observation about Juan's father, Rutilo Parroquín a master requintero and harpist: He played fast but he was a traditional musician because he learned that style in his hometown Tlacotalpan, and he was primarily a local musician.

Rutilo Parroquín tocaba a una velocidad que los mejores artistas no lo pueden hacer. A ver, como lo vas a llamar? Marisquero o tradicional? Nadia podía contestar a esa pregunta. Nadia la podía tocar, porque era su propio estilo. Punto. Pero como tocaba rápido pensaba que era un marisquero.

Rutilo Parroquín played at a speed that even the best artists could not. And, let's see; what are you going to call him; *marisquero* or *tradicional*? No one could answer this question. No one could touch him because it was his own style. That's it. Final. But because he played fast everyone thought he was a *marisquero* (interviews with Juan Parroquín, July 2012, and Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, August 2012).

As Figueroa Hernández notes, many people assumed that Rutilo Parroquín was a player of *son comercial* because he played very fast. However, they did not take into account that in this region of Otatitlan this was the regional style (Figueroa Hernández 2005:22).

In addition to the musical distinctions discussed above, the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* also view the historical changes brought to *son jarocho* through urbanization from different ideological positions. The *jaraneros* associate these stylistic elements with profit-driven music, which threatened to exterminate the traditional ways of life. On the other hand, for many *jarochas* they or their families had been forced to make changes to their music in a modern world, which they now see as adapting to economic needs in order to survive.

In my conclusion in the next chapter I will draw together all of these observations about the *jaraneros* and *jarochas* and explain how their different ideologies and uses of *son jarocho* are tied to their positions as a diasporic and immigrant group, respectively.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion

In this paper I have examined two different *son jarocho* communities in Los Angeles: the *jaraneros*, mostly comprised of Chicanas/os and Mexican Americans, and the *jarochas*, made up primarily of immigrants from Veracruz. I concluded that the major difference between the *jaranero* group and the *jarocha* community had more to do with their respective positions as a diasporic or immigrant group in Los Angeles than with the sonic quality of the music they played.

As Turino notes, diasporic and immigrant groups frequently highlight cultural practices and styles from the original home as indexes and activities that unite and maintain the group in the new location. Group activities that represent of “home” are particularly powerful in this regard, making dance, festivals, and music common unifiers (Turino 2008:118-119).

In this way, *son jarocho* is crucial to both the *jaraneros* and *jarochas* and, while each group has its own outlook, both engage in parallel activities to promote *son jarocho* overall. The *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* create transnational circuits through sponsoring and hosting guest teachers. Indeed, sometimes the same guest teacher would teach for one group and then for the other the next day. In sum, both groups are dedicated to promoting *son jarocho* and are invested in improving relations between the United States and Mexico through this art form. However, ultimately these two communities relate to *son jarocho* in different ways.

Turino argues that while history and cultural symbols that index “home” are crucial to both diasporic and immigrant groups it is different ways (Turino 2003:59). One major distinction between diasporic and immigrant groups, he argues, is the relationship that each has with the original home. Diasporic formations develop multifaceted relationships with their home as they draw from a combination of habits from multiple sites including the new and old home and other places in the diaspora. The diasporic sites, Turino continues are joined together by at least symbolically emphasizing their allegiance to their original homeland. In contrast, the scholar writes, immigrant communities are defined by bilateral relationships between two sites: their new and old homeland (Turino 2008: 118-119).

As a diasporic group, the *jaraneros* have drawn from diverse sources and combined the anti-neoliberal ideas of the international Zapatista community and the traditions of musicians in Veracruz into a highly theorized approach. Further, they have applied *son jarocho* to the Chicano movement. As Rafael observed, this is a very powerful way to make a political point.

I think for example, Chicano musicians are using *son jarocho* as a way to gather resources to their own agendas, and I don't mean in a bad way at all. This is really important and I don't think that's bad, I mean not at all. They had this political mind before and they saw the possibility of *son jarocho* to reinforce that. And this is one of the characteristics of *son jarocho*. The fact that you can build communities out of *son jarocho*: that can be really good if you are trying to make a political point (interview with Rafael Figueroa Hernández, June 2012).

The *jaraneros* are also joined through a highly symbolic allegiance to the homeland. Some within this community have been to Mexico, others have not, yet, most identify strongly as Mexican Americans and use *son jarocho* to index the homeland in

that regard. Given that *son jarocho* is from Veracruz the *jaraneros* connection to this musical practice is even more complicated since many have found a sense of belonging in *son jarocho* despite the fact that this Mexican tradition is not from their specific state of origin within that country. It could be argued that *son jarocho* has been popularized all over Mexico and thus, cannot be tied directly back to Veracruz. However, the traditional style of the *movimiento jaranero* comes from Veracruz specifically. Therefore, the *jaranero* group is still accessing a culture from a part of Mexico that many were not connected to by birth.

While *son jarocho* has been important for the *jaraneros* to articulate a multifaceted relationship to their homeland, it has served a similar purpose for the *jarochas* to navigate a bilateral one. The transnational circuits the *jarochas* have formed are between Los Angeles and their specific hometowns in Veracruz. Thus Juan Parroquín was sent to live in Otatitlán the town where his mother grew up and where he could learn from the musical legacy of his grandfather. Further, the majority of people in the *jarocha* community are from Veracruz rather than from all over Mexico.

The symbols that the *jarochas* drew from also tend to come solely from their homeland since most of the people in the *jarocha* community draw exclusively on traditions from their hometowns in Veracruz and do not see the practice of *son jarocho* as political or tied to anti-neoliberalism and anti-assimilation.

Even the debate over *son comercial* and *son tradicional* is connected to the individual perspectives of the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas*. The *jaraneros* view *son comercial* son as going against tradition and they reject it on these grounds. However, for

the *jarochas* who may have played *son comercial* music or whose parents made a living this way, this is part of their personal tradition and heritage. Indeed, they cannot reject all these elements without also dismissing their friends and family who played this style from their hometowns.

In the end, the differences in meaning and practice between the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* are reflections of their individual experiences. As Mattern observes,

Music creates and reinforces differences within a particular community, and exposure to different forms of music may differentiate experience and identity within it. Exposure to these various forms allows for different forms of experience and hence differences of identity among listeners (Mattern 1998:21-22).

The *jaraneros* and *jarochas* are joined through a passion for *son jarocho*. Yet, one group is diasporic, the other immigrant; one is highly influenced by the *movimiento jaranero*, the other by the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* in Tlacotalpan. The meaning that each group subscribes to *son jarocho* is an outcome of these particular ethnic, political, historical, and social perspectives.

Despite the different political stances and musical tastes between musicians they all shared a love for *son jarocho* music of Veracruz. I was curious what, beyond this common affinity, made it possible for the *jaraneros* and the *jarochas* to come together in certain events. In particular, given that focus in the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* focus was on individual bands rather on the collective whole, I wondered what about this performance made it acceptable for the *jaraneros*.

It was during one of my last conversations with Carlos that I realized that some events, like the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* could be viewed as *comercial* from one perspective and as *tradicional* from another. I also came to the conclusion that despite their ideological differences and different positions as diasporic and immigrant groups, the *jaraneros* and the *jarocho*s had one more crucial thing in common: they not only shared a love of *son jarocho* but also a strong desire to build community around this musical practice.

Los Angeles, August 19, 2012

I ask Carlos to explain the difference between son comercial and son tradicional once more. He says son tradicional does not add new instruments. Then he shows me a group he calls tradicional that has a harp. I ask, "wait how are they traditional if they have a harp? I thought that was one of the rules." "No," he explains, "son comunitario is son tradicional; when the purpose is not just to perform but to create community." I explain that the jaraneros also create community; that is the whole purpose of their workshops and the fandango. Yes, he says but the Encuentro is different because it is public and anyone can join. How are people going to learn about son jarocho if we don't hold any concerts? Why would you go to a fandango if you didn't know anybody or even know what son jarocho is? Columba, Patty, Adriana, Leonora, Arturo, and Honorio, they are creating community through publicizing the event.

A light goes off in my brain. "Can I ask a question?" "Yes, he replies." "Ok, so you told me earlier that the music that they played yesterday at the encuentro was comercial,

right?" I ask. "Yes," he affirms. "Ok, but then you said that the encuentro was traditional. So, can I say that the music yesterday was because it was a presentation and most groups incorporated new and different instruments, but that the event itself was traditional because it created community around the son jarocho?

Carlos turns and smiles broadly "Eso!" he says. "Give me five!"

Glossary

Arpa Veracruzana-traditional small harp from Veracruz

Bailadores-dancers

Cadencia-cadence

Campesino—peasant

Convivencia-togetherness or co-existence

Café con Pan-basic *zapateado* step

Coplas-Verses are sung in which are 4 sets of phrases in which the second and fourth lines rhyme.

Décimistas-poets who make up verses

Encuentro-literally translated as a “meeting” or an “encounter.” Today the word is used in some contexts to signify a peaceful egalitarian gathering for dialogue and collaboration.

Fandango-a communal gathering in which *son jarocho*, a musical practice from Veracruz, Mexico, is performed.

Fandanguitos-little *fandangos*

Guacharaca-scraper instrument from Colombia to the guiro

Gritando-shouting

Jarana—the primary instrument in *son jarocho*. A *jarana* is like a small guitar and comes in many sizes. Each size *jarana* has its own name.

Jaraneros-Literally “one who plays the *jarana*” This term is used by many in the *son jarocho* community to refer to *son jarocho* players. In my paper it is the term I use to reference the group of players connected with Martha González and Quetzal Flores as well as the teachers and students in the *Plaza de la Raza*.

Jarochas-Refers to someone from the Veracruz region. In my paper I use this term to reference the immigrant group from Veracruz now living in Los Angeles.

La mudanza or descanso-softer step, in which dancers shift weight, and gently drag one foot squarely in front of the other and then alternate feet.

Lo mexicano-distinctively Mexican

Marisqueros-comes from the word mariscos or shellfish It was used to describe musicians who found work in the tourist restaurants where they sold seafood.

Mestizaje-mixed-race heritage A rhetoric developed in Mexico that envisioned Mexican society as a hybrid culture of primarily Native American and Spanish ancestry. This ideology was also prevalent throughout other parts of Latin America.

Marimbol-a type of bass

Mexicanidad-Mexicanness

Mosquito-a small *jarana*

Pandero-similar to a tambourine

Quijada-donkey or horse jaw

The movimiento *jaranero*-the *jaranero* movement

Rasgueos-strummed patterns

Requinto-a narrow-bodied guitar with 4 single strands

Shekere-an African-derived percussive gourd

“*Son blanco*”-white *son*, a term to associate musicians and dancers with folkloric style of dance and dress.

Son comercial-popular *son jarocho*, sometimes called *son urbano* or urban *son*. Stylistic changes that occurred to *son jarocho* in the 1940s and 50s characterize this music in Mexico. *Son comercial* is played by a specific ensemble, usually on a stage, and in my thesis the term is equivalent to presentational son.

Sones- regional songs

Sones de monton-songs exclusively for women

Sonecitos del pais-little *sones* of the country

Son huasteco and Son Jalisco-Jalisco style son

Son jarocho-a musical practice from Veracruz, Mexico

Son tradicional—traditional *son jarocho* sometimes called *son campesino*, or peasant *son*. This music is played in a *fandango* or other communal event by an indefinite number of musicians. It is characterized by improvisation, an emphasis on African rhythms, and use of traditional instruments.

Tarima-a small wooden platform for dancing

Zapateo-Argentine style of percussive footwork

Zapateado-dancing, which is performed on the tarima

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Appendix A



Figure 1.

Maria Pérez playing the *jarana*



Figure 2.

Heriberto Hernández playing the *jarana*



Figure 3.

Juan Paroquín playing the *requinto*



Figure 4. *Marimbol*



Figure 5. *Zapateando*



Figure 6. Sebastian Rodriguez playing the *quijada* at the *Fandango Fronterizo*



Figure 7. Martha González dancing on a stage *tarima*



Figure 8. *Fandango* workshop at the *Plaza de la Raza*



Figure 9. Chuy and Heriberto at the *Plaza de la Raza*



Figure 10.

A sticker stating “Turn off the tv, pick up a jarana.”
This was on a statue in *Friendship Park* at the *Fandango Fronterizo*.



Figure 11. The program for the Ford Amphitheater



Figure 12.

Rafael Figueroa Hernandez with his father Don Fallo Figueroa



Figure 13.

Juan Paroquín leading young musicians at the Encuentro de Jaraneros



Figure 14. A *fandango* with the *jarochas*



Figure 15. A *fandango* with the *jarochas*



Figure 16.

The *Jarochas* and friends gathered at a party / fandanguito. From left to right and back to front: Gary Johnson, Rafael Figueroa Hernández, Honorio Robledo, Juan Paroquin, Betto Arcos, Libby Harding, Adriana Delfin, Columba Baruch-Maldonado, Leonore Lowndes, Patricia Paroquín, Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez, the author, Patricio Hidalgo, and Donají Esparza.



Figure 17. *Fandango Fronterizo* Flyer



Figure 18. People gathered at the *Fandango Fronterizo*



Figure 19. People gathered at the *Fandango Fronterizo*



Figure 20. People gathered at the *Fandango Fronterizo*



Figure 21. People gathered at the *Fandango Fronterizo*



Figure 22. Graffiti on the fences separating San Diego and Tijuana



Figure 23. Graffiti on the fences separating San Diego and Tijuana



Figure 24. Graffiti on the fences separating San Diego and Tijuana



Figure 25. Looking through the fences



Figure 26. Looking through the fences



Figure 27. Looking through the fences



Figure 28. *Encuentro de Jaraneros* Flyer



Figure 29.

Quetzal at the *Encuentro de Jaraneros* (from left to right) Peter Jacobsen, Tylana Enomoto, Evan Greer, Martha González, Juan Perez, and Quetzal Flores



Figure 30. Martha González and Quetzal Flores with Juan Perez



Figure 31.

The author, Honorio Robledo, and Leonore Lownden vending CDs, books, and t-shirts at the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*



Figure 32.

Adriana Delfin at the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*



Figure 33..

Arturo Rosado at the *Encuentro de Jaraneros*



Figure 34. Carlos Rosario Gutiérrez and Rafael Figueroa Hernández



Figure 35. The organizers of the Encuentro de Jaraneros. (from left to right) Leonore Lownden, Columba Baruch-Maldonado, Honorio Robledo, Rafael Figueroa Hernández, and Adriana Delfin