The Son Jarocho Revival: Reinvention and Community Building in a Mexican Music Scene in New York City

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The Graduate Center, City University of New York

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THE SON JAROCHO REVIVAL: REINVENTION AND COMMUNITY BUILDING IN A MEXICAN MUSIC SCENE IN NEW YORK CITY

by

EMILY J. WILLIAMSON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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EMILY J. WILLIAMSON

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music to satisfy the dissertation Requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
ABSTRACT

The Son Jarocho Revival: Reinvention and Community Building in a Mexican Music Scene in New York City

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Emily J. Williamson

Advisor: Peter Manuel

This dissertation analyzes the ways son jarocho (the Mexican regional music, dance, and poetic tradition) and the fandango (the son jarocho communitarian musical celebration), have been used as community-building tools among Mexican and non-Mexican musicians in New York City. Since the late 1970s, the participatory elements of son jarocho have been revitalized for not only the preservation of the fandango, but also for the purpose of creating a community-building tool that can be adapted and applied to create musical communities. Across the U.S. and in Mexico, son jarocho communities have formed, using similar methods of musical instruction, communitarian music making, and dissemination of the fandango. I argue that New York City’s son jarocho community serves as an example of an “affinity group” that is based not only in a collective “taste” or preference for the musical genre, but also for participatory music making. In addition, this dissertation demonstrates that the revived practices of son jarocho are reinvented and reveal material limits to inclusivity in community music. In Chapter 2, I highlight the socio-historical context of the movimiento jaranero (son jarocho movement and revival) that began in Mexico to analyze the community-building project in New York City. In Chapter 3, I use the revived or reinvented principle of convivencia—conviviality, coexistence, or participation—to examine how the New York City son jarocho community has adapted practices of the fandango to its circumstances and how specific practices are in the process of further reinvention. Last,
Chapter 4 examines the under-studied percussive dance of the fandango and son jarocho: zapateado. The zapateado is an interesting musical element not only to the music performed at a fandango, but is also becoming more relevant to son jarocho professional, staged performance. Overall, the jaranero community of New York City is an example of a community-building project of Mexicans and non-Mexicans, revealing the ways musical practices become repurposed and reinvented in new social settings.
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Chapter 1: Mexican Immigration, Mexican Music, and an Introduction to the Son Jarocho Community in New York City

On a sunny Sunday afternoon in Central Park, New York in July 2016, men and women placed a *tarima* (wooden platform) under the shade of a tree. They casually formed a circle around the tarima, tuning their instruments and strapping on their dance shoes for the monthly community fandango. Slowly, one by one members of the community arrived. Once the group reached a critical mass of about ten people, the music could begin. As the fandango progressed, one by one men and women stepped onto the tarima to execute percussive dance steps, and one by one, members of the circle sang traditional poetic verses while strumming their string instruments.

In contemporary New York City, this group of people have formed a community, based in the practice of *son jarocho*, the regional music, dance, and poetic tradition that has roots in colonial Mexico. The *fandango* is a participatory music party of son jarocho, and the tarima is the centerpiece of the fandango circle. The members of the group are mostly amateur musicians, some highly skilled and others just beginning their practice, who play music for fun and in community settings around New York City. That Sunday was the end of a four-week visit by son jarocho musician and master teacher Leopoldo Novoa. Leopoldo had just finished a series of workshops on the *marimbol*, a bass instrument with metal strips over a resonating hole that are plucked. At the fandango, members of the son jarocho community had the opportunity to test out their newly acquired marimbol skills and practice their monthly fandango. The circle of performers played their *jaranas* (small, strummed lutes), *requintos* (plucked lutes), and exchanged the singing of verses in participatory fashion.

The son jarocho community consists of Mexican immigrants, Mexican Americans, and non-Mexicans who are mostly white and U.S.-born. This mixed group of people gathers for
weekly instrument and singing lessons, monthly fandangos, and annual community gatherings. Their community is connected by a collective interest in learning the traditions of son jarocho—a son jarocho that has been recently “revived” and disseminated transnationally throughout Mexico and the United States.

Between 1990 and 2010, Mexican immigration to New York City increased from roughly 100,000 in total population to over 600,000 (Bergad 2013:11). Although these numbers undercount the overall Mexican population because they exclude undocumented people, they nevertheless show that Mexicans are the fastest-growing Latino group in the New York City area. Unlike many Mexican populations in major cities in the United States, which tend to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods—like Pilsen, Chicago—Mexicans in New York are dispersed across all five boroughs of the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island. In the city, Mexican communities have integrated with other immigrant neighborhoods, and many individuals live in non-Mexican Spanish-speaking neighborhoods. The areas with higher concentrations of Mexican immigrants include Sunset Park and Bushwick, Brooklyn; East Harlem and Washington Heights, Manhattan; Corona and Jackson Heights, Queens; and Mott Haven, Bronx.

Despite the dispersed nature of the Mexican population, there have been efforts to create social networks and support cultural activity across the city. For instance, the Mexican Consulate has supported social organizations such as soccer clubs that provides men’s and women’s team networks for and access to competition and organized games (Smith 1996:57-103). Other non-profits such as Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture without Borders support cultural events for

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1 Since the recession in 2008, Mexican immigration to New York has slowed, but the population has become significant in size, relative to other immigrant groups.
Mexican holidays like Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) or Posadas y Pastorelas (a Christmas-time celebration). For musical activity, the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York (founded in 1983) and the Mariachi Academy of New York (founded in 2002) have been educating and entertaining Mexican New Yorkers for decades. Aside from ballet folklórico and mariachi, which are closely connected to the Mexican state’s national canon, there are also active commercial scenes of Mexican music ranging from DJ parties that feature *cumbia* to *norteña* and *banda* concerts. However, because of the dispersed nature of New York’s Mexican population, the limited reach of institutions, and dissatisfaction with capitalist-consumer models for music, some Mexicans have sought alternative musical and communitarian experiences for social support—in the genre of *son jarocho*.

The genre of *son jarocho* has socio-historical roots in the Sotavento region of Mexico, which spans the southern half of the state of Veracruz, eastern part of Tabasco, and northern portion of Oaxaca [pictured in Figure 1 to the right]. Throughout the colonial period, the genre developed among Spanish, indigenous, Afro-Caribbean, and enslaved African people that moved in and out of the important economic port of Veracruz. As Daniel Sheehy explains, *son jarocho* is a part of a larger “*son complex*” that emerged out of the music that pervaded Cuba, Mexico, and Central

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2 For more detailed information, see Mano a Mano’s community events page: http://www.manoamano.us/en/community-events.html
America in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries (Olsen and Sheehy 2007). Son jarocho is a string-based music that includes a variety of jaranas (small five-coursed lutes), providing harmonic accompaniment; the melodic, four-stringed requinto; and the percussive tarima (a wooden platform), on which dancers execute rhythms with the heels of their shoes in a dance called zapateado. Additionally, performers of son jarocho sing poetic verses, and other instruments may include the arpa jarocha (the jarocho harp), violin, leona (a bass requinto), marimbol (a bass lamellophone), quijada (donkey jaw, scraped with a stick), and pandero (hand frame drum similar to a tambourine).

Mexico underwent a process of urbanization after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and more intensely after World War II. During this process, son jarocho, like other folkloricized and commercialized regional musics of Mexico (such as mariachi), was commercialized in the first half of the twentieth century for recordings, film, and other Mexican media. In that consolidation and commercialization, as many rural son jarocho musicians moved to the cities for economic opportunity, son jarocho became a staged and presentational music, transforming the participatory and social elements like the fandango (music party) that were practiced by the rural communities in the Sotavento. However, since 1979, the participatory elements of son jarocho have undergone a “revival.” The revival, now labeled the movimiento jaranero (son jarocho movement or revival), sought to rescue the dwindling communitarian practices of the fandango and re-establish their importance within Mexican society and within the son jarocho genre. Revivalist musicians and intellectuals from inside and outside of Veracruz have worked to maintain the participatory elements of son jarocho and have actively disseminated this performance style of community fandangos. The movimiento jaranero is both a social and musical project aimed at using the fandango and son jarocho as community-building tools.
Although urbanized, commercial performance of son jarocho still exists, the participatory performance style is the privileged performance style among contemporary son jarocho communities and collectives.

By the 2000s, son jarocho had emerged in New York City’s Mexican immigrant communities as an important source of music making, through both amateur participatory performances and professional stage performances. Drawing from the revitalized participatory practices of son jarocho and prescriptions of the movimiento jaranero, the jaranero (son jarocho musician) community of New York City holds monthly fandangos, weekly son jarocho workshops and classes, and annual Encuentro de son jarocho (Meeting or Gathering of son jarocho) that are concert presentations of the community’s musical work and progress.

The genre has recently attracted some transnational popularity and following, illustrated by the numerous cities across the U.S. that have formed their own son jarocho communities: Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Chicago, Seattle, Austin, and Los Angeles. Not all U.S. sites of son jarocho developed simultaneously; cities like Los Angeles and Chicago have had a son jarocho presence for a longer time period due to their more significant Mexican populations. But son jarocho’s presence in Mexico is still mostly relegated to its “native” state of Veracruz and to cosmopolitan centers like Mexico City. In geographic contrast to the origins of son jarocho, the majority of New York’s Mexican working-class immigrants come from the poor and underdeveloped Mixteca region, which spans southern Puebla and parts of the Southern states of Guerrero and Oaxaca. A smaller number of educated, middle-class Mexican immigrants come from urban areas like Mexico City, Guadalajara, Puebla City, and Tijuana.  

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3 Although there is little scholarship on middle-class Mexican immigrants, I define them as “middle-class” for a few reasons: most Mexicans in the son jarocho community earn middle incomes and work in education and in other professions. The professional musicians of the
both working-class populations from the southern Mixteca region and middle- and elite-class Mexicans have become part of the son jarocho community.

Mexican music has flourished in the last decade in New York City. The seeds of son jarocho have been planted by musicians and nurtured through performance and education networks. New York City is distinct in the U.S. for its immigrant diversity and social and economic infrastructure that supports immigrants (Foner 2013:5), which in turn has provided Mexican immigrant populations with new types of opportunities. In particular, New York City provides reliable public transportation, eliminating the need for a driver’s license or car, things that are often inaccessible for many working immigrants even with documented status. In most U.S. states, including New York state, undocumented people cannot obtain a legal driver’s license, and traffic stops in driving cities like Los Angeles and elsewhere represent a significant risk for detention and deportation initiation, not to mention “transport-related social exclusion” (Priya and Uteng 2009, Mounts 2003). Also, New York state offers the opportunity to attend a public university for in-state tuition regardless of immigration status if a student graduates from a New York state high school. However, New York still does not have a “dream” act or state financial aid for immigrant students like California or Illinois do. While the multicultural acceptance and some public infrastructure make New York City an attractive destination for immigrants, the problems of economically and racially segregated neighborhoods, unaffordable housing, and accessible public space throughout the year (unforgiving winters limit public park access) are factors that greatly affect community building among working-class immigrants who are most vulnerable to these material conditions.

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community are working musicians, earning their living from performances, teaching music lessons in both institutional and free-lance capacities, and studio work.
Related to music, the opportunity for accessible music education has been a galvanizing force to grow and sustain genres of Mexican music in New York. The Mariachi Academy of New York and the Ballet Folkórico Mexicano de Nueva York are two well-established organizations that offer free or low-cost music and dance education. Students of Mexican music have the opportunity not only to enjoy and learn music—-instruments, dance, and voice—but also to participate in the learning of Mexican cultural history through song. Indeed, whether it is a mariachi performance at a Catholic mass or an informal son jarocho party in the public park, it is this musical learning that creates and maintains communities.

This dissertation examines how the son jarocho community has built itself within the social context of New York City, which offers both limitations and new possibilities for the practice of a traditional music, and its relationships with local businesses and organizations that provide support for music and culture. The transnational son jarocho community is a collection of Mexican immigrants of both middle- and working-class backgrounds, Mexican Americans, and non-Mexicans who were born in the U.S. I argue that these people have connected over musical tastes and ideals of socialization that privilege inclusion, collaboration, and a mutually supportive environment for music making. Through this musical collaboration, the New York City community serves as an example of how son jarocho music and the social practice of the fandango are reinvented and reproduce the community’s values around participation and social inclusion. Yet, despite the intentions of the community to be as inclusive as possible, this study also demonstrates how structural barriers such as socio-economic class limit the reach of this musical community.
Mexican Migration and Music in the 20th Century

Academic literature on Mexican music in the United States has focused primarily on the regions of the U.S. that have the largest populations of Mexican immigrants and people of Mexican descent: the U.S. Southwest (California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico) and the geographical outlier, Chicago, Illinois. Music scholars have thoroughly studied both traditional and commercial musics from Mexico, including mariachi, son jarocho, norteña, Texan conjunto, banda, and corrido, and even more contemporary genres such as narcocorridos, cumbias, and Mexican rock and punk. Similarly, in the twentieth century, scholars of Mexican immigration to the U.S. have also concentrated on the geographical region of the American Southwest, which until recently (1980s-present) was the destination for the majority of Mexican immigrants. While immigration scholarship has kept up with the rapid migration of Mexican populations in new geographies, like New York and North Carolina, music scholarship has just begun to follow these new immigrants to their new destinations.

Prior to these recent changes in Mexican migratory patterns, ethnomusicology and music studies about Mexican music in the U.S. addressed a variety of genres and advanced theoretical approaches that have contributed not only to musical scholarship, but also to Mexican and Mexican American studies. The bulk of this literature concentrates physically and thematically on the U.S.-Mexico border. Some of the earliest scholarship on border music catalogues and identifies musical form, poetic structure, and socio-historical origins of the corrido (border ballad) and poetic traditions (Paredes 1958 and 1976). Later work emphasizes the social-symbolic meaning of poetry and ballad from the border region (Limón 1993). Scholars such as Hutchinson (2007) and Simonett (1999, 2001a) interrogate the border as a place of both tension and change, and analyze the ways music on the border contributes to an understanding of
Mexican immigration as well as the complexities of life near the U.S.-Mexico border (Hutchinson 2007:44). For example, Hutchinson’s work examines how a dance style (the *quebradita*) emerged and became popular among youth near the Mexico-Arizona border during a period of anti-immigration laws and English-only movements in the 1990s. Helena Simonett’s analysis of the cultural history of *banda* (brass band) connects the traditional brass bands that emerged in northern Mexico in the nineteenth century to contemporary youth innovations of *technobanda* (electronic banda), *quebradita*, and the *narcocorrido* (drug ballad) (2001a). Simonett investigates the ways the narcocorrido continues the poetic ballad tradition of narrating violence at the border (2001b). Other scholarship on narcocorridos still focuses on the violent context of the drug trade at the border and in northern Mexican states, while looking at the popularity of the genre in Los Angeles and in Mexico (Wald 2002).

Furthermore, border music scholarship has turned to the urban fusion of Mexican genres with electronica. Asensio (2001) and Madrid (2008) analyze the electronic dance music from the group Nor-Tec Collective, which presents electronic interpretations of northern Mexican genres such as norteña and banda. These studies on Mexican electronic music further elucidate the ways the U.S.-Mexican border presents a complex reality for different social classes on both sides. Although the music may not *sound* much like its predecessors, the cultural milieu and cosmopolitan tastes of elite-class Tijuana residents present a complex reality at the border that generates unexpected or surprising innovations in Mexican popular music.

The majority of scholarship on Mexican music in the U.S. focuses on California’s and Texas’s substantial Mexican and Mexican American populations and many musical communities, ranging from traditional music and folklore to commercial popular music. Steven Loza has been a prominent scholar in the field of California’s Chicano and Mexican music. His
work on music in Los Angeles (Loza 1993) chronicles the presence of people of Mexican
descent and their music in the Los Angeles area from Mexican independence from Spain (1821)
through the Mexican American war, which resulted in the annexation of half of Mexico by the
U.S. (1848), up until the twentieth century. Loza points to the cultural mixture and hybridization
in genres that took place over this time period in the Los Angeles area.

Among the Mexican populations of Texas, musical life has been documented in the now-
classic folkloric studies of Américo Paredes and ethnographies of Manuel Peña. Paredes’s work
pioneered Mexican American studies at the University of Texas at Austin and serves as an
example of the ways Mexican music has served as a historical example cross-border expressive
culture (1958 and 1976). In particular, Peña’s ethnographies (1985 and 1999) remain prominent
works that engage with music of working-class and middle-class Tejanos, while offering a class
analysis of the social life surrounding those very musical practices. Few monographs in music
scholarship explicitly attend to social class, making Peña’s work important for more than just the
field of Mexican music studies. Additionally, José Limón’s scholarship on Mexican and Mexican
American dance practices of Texas identifies the symbolic significance of local dance and music
making (1993, 1994). Another more contemporary ethnography about Mexican music in Texas is
Cathy Ragland’s monograph about norteña (2009). Ragland’s investigation of norteña centers on
commercial groups and their popularity among Mexican American and Mexican immigrant
audiences in Texas, and how norteña music provides audiences with powerful symbols of
Mexican heritage and community. Other Texas and Tejano music scholarship examines the
commercial success of the Mexican American singer Selena as well as women’s and queer-
identifying artists’ roles in the development in popular genres and identity formation (Vargas
Music scholars have researched Mexico’s national music mariachi in the same geographic locations within the U.S. as well as in Mexico, albeit weighing different concerns. In her dissertation, Jáquez writes that published work in English on mariachi music is scarce (2000:1). The majority of scholarship on mariachi is in Spanish, and much of it is descriptive in its approach, only detailing the essential musical and performance characteristics of the genre and theories of mariachi’s origin (Mendoza 1956, Rafael 1983, Flores y Escalante 1994). Recent English-language literature on mariachi still grapples with elements of the music, though via new routes—principally through a U.S. performance approach for both teachers and performers (Jáquez 2000, 2003) and a growing discussion about educational programming, notational vs. oral/aural musical transmission, and cultural and ethnic learning (Clark 2005, Salazar 2011).

Other approaches to mariachi are historical, tracing the genre’s transition from rural mestizo (mixed-race) music to an urban national music and eventually transnational musical practice (Henriques 2006). These contemporary dissertations on mariachi analyze the transnational quality of the genre, particularly because of its visibility within the traditional geography of Mexico and Mexican American southwestern states like California and Texas.

Within the literature about music and dance practices in Mexico, scholars have been concerned with a number of commercial genres that relate to post-Revolutionary processes of urbanization. Mark Pedelty addresses the social tensions around “modernity” in Mexico after the Revolution through an analysis of boleros (a dance genre associated with the Caribbean) and their presence in nascent radio, phonograph, and film industries (1999). Also linked to the birth and popularity of bolero is the formation of danzón (popular dance and music originally from Cuba). Madrid and Moore examine what they identify as the danzón “performance complex” (2014:10). The danzón does not have a single, set practice, but comprises multiple repertoires.
and dance and performance styles that exist in a network of production, circulation, and signification among Mexico, Cuba and New Orleans—or the “circum-Caribbean” (17).

In contrast to the aforementioned literature on Mexican music in the U.S. and in Mexico that focuses on geography and cultural identity formation, scholars of son jarocho have analyzed the musical characteristics and structure of the genre (Sheehy 1979 and 1999, Sánchez García 2002, Pérez Hernández 2003 and Figueroa Hernández 2007). Daniel Sheehy’s 1979 dissertation and later work provide a thorough musical analysis of form, instrumentation, and poetic repertoire in son jarocho. Mexican scholar Rosa Virginia Sánchez García contrasts and compares the lyrical content of son jarocho and son huasteco (2002), offering a rich examination of poetic text, structure, and musical use of poetry from the neighboring Jarocha and Huasteca regions. Rolando Antonio Pérez Hernández analyzes son jarocho polyrhythms in jarana strumming patterns and links these patterns to West African timelines (2003). Veracruz historian Rafael Figueroa Hernández historicizes son jarocho in the twentieth century and outlines examples of sones jarochos with jarana, dance, and poetic structures (2007). Randall Kohl examines the commercialization of son jarocho in the middle of the twentieth century during the administrations of two presidents from Veracruz in the 1940s-50s, and how “La bamba” became the most famous son jarocho (2007). Some research has turned to other histories of son jarocho that were once overlooked in national narratives, including son jarocho’s Afro-Mexican heritage. Ethnomusicologist Alejandro Hernández traces son jarocho’s histories of resistance and protest related to Afro-indigenous practices that subverted New Spain’s and the Catholic Church’s prohibition of what they deemed to be profane and overly sexual practices in the seventeenth century (2013). Martha González analyzes polyrhythms in contemporary zapateado (2011). Other scholars are important for both the study of son jarocho and the twentieth-century
movimiento jaranero. Antonio García de León is both a scholar of son jarocho and active participant in the movimiento jaranero, producing socio-historical examinations of the development of son jarocho (2009). Within the recent work on son jarocho, Homero Ávila Landa outlines and frames the ways the movimiento jaranero has been implemented by scholars and musicians (2009). Historians of peninsular Spanish popular music and dance have recently generated scholarship that traces lascivious poetic verse from Spanish fandangos from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to son jarocho poetry in Mexico (Etzion 1993, Baird, et al. 2015).

Since son jarocho underwent a revival—beginning in 1978 with the aim to reinstate the rural practices of the fandango jarocho as the central communitarian practice and resulting in a new transnational interest in the genre—more researchers have begun to examine son jarocho through a transnational lens, seeking to connect this regional Mexican practice to practices in the U.S. (Sheehy 1979, Loza 1992, Cardona 2006). Furthermore, unlike scholarship on mariachi, which includes an emphasis on the nationalist preoccupation with education and cultural transmission of lo mexicano (Mexican-ness), son jarocho scholars have been attentive to the use of the genre as political and protest music, particularly in California and at the border. Perhaps scholars’ concern about son jarocho’s relationship to marginal identities comes from the genre’s somewhat peripheral position with respect to the national music, mariachi. Chapter 2 engages more deeply with son jarocho literature as it pertains to the revival. Within it, scholars have turned toward identifying cultural and ethnic roots of the music rather than description of form and structure (Pérez Montfort 1991, García de León 2009, Alcántara Henze 2011, Gonzalez 2009 and 2011).
New York City and New Geographies of Mexican Music

The geographic themes that run through the literature on Mexican music in the U.S. do not reflect the shifting demographics of Mexican immigration. Yet, immigration literature has followed Mexican populations to unlikely “new destinations” such as Lexington, Kentucky; Charlotte, North Carolina; and New York, New York (Zúñiga and Hernández 2006, Margolies 2009, Byrd 2015, Smith 2006). Immigration scholars show that the new patterns of immigration are not only closely linked to immigration policies, namely the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), but also to the economic demands of the U.S. and the clear economic need of an impoverished region of Mexico: the southern Mixteca region (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). The majority of new Mexican immigrants to the New York come from this undeveloped and poverty-stricken region (Smith 2006).

Aside from the growing research on Mexican immigration in sociology and anthropology, a few ethnographies about Mexican music in the U.S. have investigated the music within the contexts of these new geographies. For example, both Margolies (2009) and Byrd (2015) interrogate the growth of Mexican and Latino immigrant music in cities in North Carolina. The “New South,” as identified by Margolies, is experiencing a rupture in the formerly biracial (black/white) population makeup. New immigrants have changed the demographics of the area, and have brought new food, and new music, which all contribute to a shift in regional identity for both the “old south” and the new immigrants. Byrd examines how Latino immigrants (many of whom are Mexican) in the “newly global” city of Charlotte have created musical communities through performances of a wide range of genres—from commercial rock and punk to cumbias, Caribbean genres of bachata and merengue, and regional Mexican music. Similarly, O’Hagin and Harnish (2006) examine how schools in Toledo, Ohio incorporated Tejano music
into their curricula in order to meet the needs of new students, resulting in a transformed musical repertoire. These writings on new geographies of Mexican immigrant music share a striking feature: they are investigations of how a new immigrant population affects the new locale that previously did not have a significant immigrant population, let alone a Spanish-speaking one. Among these musical investigations, only one article has been published about New York City (Ragland 2003). However, Ragland’s article does not present the Mexican music scene in terms of “new destinations,” but rather as a transnational phenomenon where immigrants remember their Mexican home in the space of DJ parties.

Sociologist Robert C. Smith is a prominent scholar of Mexican migration to New York City. His work has engaged with immigration issues such as “segmented assimilation” of Mexican immigrants (1996), the back-and-forth movement and transnational character of New York City’s Mexican population (2006), and educational and income inequality that affects most undocumented and working-class Mexican immigrants (2013). Besides the extensive publications of Smith, other important ethnographic research on New York’s Mexican immigrant population includes anthropologist Alyshia Gálvez’s analysis of religious dedication to the Virgen de Guadalupe (Mexico’s patron saint) and the community formation of devotional comités (committees or groups) (2009). From her research, she argues for a broader conception of citizenship: one that is both performative and agential, which allows immigrants to envision community and re-imagine their identities (2009:3). Both Smith and Gálvez offer useful insight into the ways mostly working-class Mexican immigrants have integrated into New York City.

In contrast to the ethnographic work on mostly working-class and poor Mexican immigrant populations, there have been some recent investigations that examine the emerging elite class of Mexican immigrants in New York City. In my own field research on Mexican DJ
parties for my master’s thesis, I found that many elites from Mexico come to New York City to work in the media and financial sectors (Williamson 2009). These well-educated immigrants have not experienced the same inequities or challenges that many working-class immigrants face, but rather, they often benefit from the multicultural economy of a global city like New York City. Other research on the Mexican elite class focuses on musical spaces and consumption practices in chic Mexican restaurants that have been established in the last decade (Bartra 2015). Other non-musically focused research includes Yesenia Ruiz Cortes’s work on the emergence and transformation of a self-made entrepreneurial, elite class of Mexican immigrants in New York City.4

In light of the “new geographies” of Mexican immigration, I show how the activities of the son jarocho community are embedded in New York City’s unique musical spaces that support immigrant music. New York City is not only a destination for Mexican immigration, but the center of U.S. immigration in general. According to Foner, New York City has many “place-specific conditions” that make it an attractive immigrant destination. In contrast to U.S. national standards, New York City offers more social, health, and educational services that immigrants can utilize, including Mexicans (2013:7). How do they build community in this new destination? What are the ways in which Mexican music is taught in New York? How does access to space affect the son jarocho community’s musical activities? Thinking of New York City as a “new geography” reveals an obvious fact: places like the U.S. southwest are no longer the normative “places” for Mexican culture and people. A focus on the new geographies of Mexican

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immigration leads to a more complicated understanding of Mexican practices and their meanings associated with Mexican-ness because geography, as Roger Rouse suggests, no longer determines cultural borders (1991). He writes, “the place of the putative community—whether regional or national—is becoming little more than a site in which transnationally organized circuits of capital, labor, and communities intersect with one another and with local ways of life” (1991:16). So, what are the ways in which Mexican son jarocho is transmitted in a new geography like New York City? Members of the son jarocho community mostly rely on pre-existing cultural organizations that support cultural education and Latin American-owned music venues that also support music making.

In addition to New York’s social and political infrastructure, there is a cultural embrace of “multicultural” tastes in New York City. As a “global city,” New York offers its citizens a variety of worldly cuisine choices, entertainment venues, and cultural presentations (Sassen 2001). According to Zúñiga and Hernández, the contemporary era of Mexican immigration is unprecedented and is creating closer ties between the U.S. and Mexico (2006:xiv-xv). Indeed, these ties are emerging in highly visible ways, like in already-established commercial venues, public parks and museums. As New York City continues to “celebrate” diversity through its consumption practices, Mexicans in New York are gaining visibility in a variety of ways—through the “multicultural” fields of popular culture: music, food, and art.

What is not completely visible is how everyday life for many Mexicans is affected. Many working-class Mexicans do not directly benefit from the proliferation of high-end restaurants in any way other than the opening of yet another service-sector labor position. What is happening for them, however, is that this growing interest in Mexican culture has, in a strange way, made “their own culture” more accessible to them. Zúñiga and Hernández explain that new Mexican
immigrants to the U.S. are experiencing a different “normative climate” that favors a multi-ethnic or “right to diversity” attitude (xxvi). This is clear as more and more public spaces are featuring free exhibitions or performances of Mexican music and folklore, as well as educational offerings such as lectures and performance presentations. It is this mixture of cosmopolitan tastes, a multicultural awareness and infrastructure, and the growing Mexican population that contributes to the overall emergence and visibility of Mexican cultural forms. For the members of the Mexican son jarocho community, new Mexican restaurants such as El Kallejon Lounge in Spanish Harlem (East Harlem) not only offer performance space, but also a common meeting place for workshops and musical learning.

New York City has been a center for Spanish-sung music performance and recordings for much of the twentieth century. One only has to look to the Latin dance and music crazes of the 1950s at the Palladium or the influence recording houses like Fania records had on production of salsa (McMains 2015 and Flores 2016). Into the twenty-first century, New York City continues to offer an overwhelming amount of different musics in commercial venues. Examples of New York City’s musical diversity are found in the venues themselves: Drom, a Turkish-owned world music venue in the East Village of Manhattan; Barbès, a French-owned world music bar in Park Slope, Brooklyn; and Subrosa, a Latin jazz venue affiliated with the Blue Note in the West Village of Manhattan. Commercial venues and stages display the abundance of international music in New York. A brief glance at the 2017 Celebrate Brooklyn summer concert line-up includes musicians from Mali, Jamaica, and Colombia. Without a doubt, professional son jarocho groups in New York City have benefitted from this demand for diverse styles of music.

Nevertheless, community-based performances also reveal the amount of musical variety supported by New York City immigrant neighborhoods. Following the concept of “hidden
pathways” of local music practices, first theorized by Ruth Finnegan, this dissertation values both professional and amateur musical performance (1989). Finnegan explains that while the distinction between amateur and professional musician is clear, the interrelationship between them becomes important for examining “local” music (13). Taken together, both amateur and professional musicians make up the New York City jaranero community, overlapping and interacting with each other in the construction of the local community itself and son jarocho audience.

The local, community-based performances of son jarocho display another example of the many ways Mexican immigration is a varied phenomenon: the music is not historically or geographically connected to the population performing it, which has been an underlying assumption in most scholarship on performance of Mexican regional son traditions. For instance, in the literature on regional sones, scholars examine how people of the Jarocha region play son jarocho or the people from the Huasteca region play son huasteco. Within the literature about Mexican music in the U.S. and in Mexico that was previously mentioned, researchers have not emphasized any community or individuals that perform Mexican music that are not themselves Mexican or of Mexican descent. I do not think this is intentional, just that perhaps Mexican music scholars have not yet studied the ways intercultural relationships play out among amateur and professional musicians in a “global city” like New York City. If there are non-Mexican people performing Mexican music in the U.S., they are not explicitly mentioned. I suspect that the only exception to this could be found in music education and pedagogy scholarship, but for the most part, case studies still tend only to focus on the impact of mariachi or Tejano education on students of Mexican descent, not students of other ethnic backgrounds (Clark 2005, Salazar
Furthermore, many studies of regional music from Mexico tend to examine regional musics only within their historical place of origin, also focusing on the people of that place. This geographic context leads readers to assume that perhaps only people from Veracruz perform son jarocho. My dissertation on the New York City son jarocho community presents a case that breaks these research paradigms, where Mexicans (who are not from Veracruz), Mexican Americans, and people without any Mexican heritage perform and engage with son jarocho.

My dissertation examines both the more visible and less visible activities of the Mexican immigrant populations and how they interact and form communities with non-Mexicans in New York City. The commercial and tourist attractions such as restaurants and public concerts are visible aspects of Mexican culture, but the less visible, mundane practices are equally important to understanding how immigrant communities develop. In the everyday practice of Mexican music in New York City, there are several distinct qualities that separate New York from other Mexican immigrant destinations.

First, unlike other new destinations for Mexican immigrants such as Charlotte, North Carolina, New York City already has a large population of Spanish-speaking immigrants and neighborhoods, many of Caribbean heritage, providing Mexicans proximity to Spanish-language businesses, bilingual schools, and entertainment (Haslip-Viera and Baver 1996). Venues like Terraza 7 in Queens accommodate the surrounding Spanish-speaking immigrant communities by providing a performance space for Spanish-sung musics. The proximity to other Spanish-speaking immigrants and citizens of New York City both facilitates integration into the city and creates challenges for Mexicans in the form of new racial paradigms (Smith 2006a and 2006b).

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New York City has also been a long-time center for Latin music, providing new Spanish-sung music a potential audience in a well-established industry. Additionally, Mexicans are not the only new Latin American (Spanish-speaking) group to arrive. Colombians, Ecuadorians, Salvadorans, and Peruvians are some of New York’s expanding Latin American immigrant populations. One music venue that is featured in this dissertation, Terraza 7 in Queens, exemplifies the musical mélange of new Latin American immigrants. In fact, other Latin American immigrants also participate in the Mexican music network. Families from Peru, for example, hire mariachi performers to play at birthday parties and other celebrations. Mexican people are not the only ones economically supporting traditional Mexican music in New York City. Specific to this dissertation, professional son jarocho groups in New York City include performers from Mexico, the U.S., and other Latin American countries like Colombia, Costa Rica, and Argentina.

Second, within the practice of son jarocho, non-Mexicans participate in the music making, education, and support of Mexican music. Places like the urban folk arts organization City Lore donate space for son jarocho workshops, and Terraza 7, a Colombian-owned bar and music venue in Queens, hosts fandangos, workshops, and concert performances for the son jarocho community. U.S.-born non-Latinos participate in the musical learning and practice of son jarocho in public fandangos. Altogether, the people who participate in son jarocho events come from a variety of national and ethnic backgrounds; most participants are Mexican or Mexican American, but others are from other Latin American countries or are U.S.-born non-Latinos.

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6 Many of my students at Hunter and Lehman Colleges in the City University of New York who are from Latin American families (Perú, Ecuador, Bolivia, and others) have told me about their families hiring mariachis for their birthdays and other celebrations.
Third, there are distinct gender configurations to consider. In contrast to some Mexican traditional music like mariachi, which has been practiced almost exclusively by men, the practice of son jarocho, in Mexico and the U.S., offers opportunities for mixed-group performance. From the traditional mode of participation for women in the fandango (dance) to the widening field of acceptable female participation (playing instruments and singing), the reinvented fandango of the movimiento jaranero opens a space for women to perform son jarocho that may not have been as accessible in both the romanticized past of the bucolic, “innocent” fandangos from the colonial period and the immediate and proximate past, with the twentieth century commercial conjuntos from the 1940s-60s. In the past, when traditional gender roles were more strictly upheld in a fandango, women probably were not active singers—especially with some of the poetic material of son jarocho having bawdy and picaresque content.

Although there have been “new gender configurations” in other U.S. Mexican immigrant communities (Clark 2005), the son jarocho community in New York City provides opportunities for women to participate in music which may not have been accessible for women in Mexico before the revival. Especially since the movimiento jaranero, women and men are equals in the music making; they share roles as jaraneras, leoneras, dancers, and singers. There are many women who are highly active in the son jarocho community. As the principal organizers of events, workshops, and fandangos, these women communicate announcements on Facebook for fandangos and workshops, call venues to reserve performance space, collect funds and distribute payments to guest teacher-musicians at workshops, and teach and lead in zapateado, often bringing a physical, dancer’s sensibility to the learning of son jarocho. The women in the son jarocho community have generated an inclusive and productive atmosphere that projects an attitude about women, children, and bodies that often counters the dominant patriarchal culture
of the U.S. Women’s bodies are not shameful or sexualized. Instead, women of all shapes and sizes dance and are valued for their dance. On more than one occasion, there has been a breast-feeding woman in a workshop or fandango, who later dances zapateado on top of the tarima with a sleeping baby slung over her shoulder. Moreover, in New York City women are not only expanding their traditional roles of cultural promoters and organizers, but are also musicians that shape the fandango and professional landscape of son jarocho.

Another distinctive quality of the Mexican music scene of son jarocho is cross-class interactions. Working-class, middle-class, and elite groups of people from a variety of ethnic and national backgrounds participate in the music making and forge new relationships. Although the social and cultural capital of the middle class and the elites plays a prominent role in the organization of musical events and teaching of the music, all class groups have access to musical learning and participation. Social class does not simply dissolve in spaces of musical participation for the son jarocho scene, but such a striking and uncommon example of cross-class interactions is difficult to come by in many sectors of both U.S. and Mexican society. In contrast, other Mexican musical scenes and communities in New York City often have pronounced class boundaries. For example, the sonidero (DJ, literally, soundman) parties that feature cumbia, norteña, and banda have an audience that is almost exclusively working-class men; and chic, underground DJ parties such as Nacotheque or Rico Suave⁷ attract party-goers exclusively from Mexico’s highly affluent social class.

Lastly, the jaranero community of New York City not only reveals the ways a revival in the twenty-first century disseminates music through digital media and international networks of

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⁷ Nacotheque was an underground DJ party that ran from 2004-2008. Rico Suave is an offshoot and subsequent project of one of Nacotheque’s DJs, Marcelo C. See my master’s thesis research (2009) for more analysis.
people, but also how “revived” practices are actually “reinvented.” Many of the practices that the movimiento jaranero “revived” can be understood as having been reinvented or repurposed. The ways the fandango unfolds in New York City illustrate how certain elements of the fandango were exaggerated or emphasized through the revival process.

**Towards a definition of the son jarocho community**

An assemblage of Mexican immigrants (from across Mexico, including Mexico City, Guadalajara, Puebla, San Luis Potosi), other immigrants from Latin American countries, U.S.-born Latinos and non-Latinos has converged in New York City around the genre of son jarocho. This collection of people reveals a complicated understanding of community—one that relies on connections of musical interests and tastes rather than a strict adherence to ethnic or political borders. In my research, I examine ways in which son jarocho serves as a vehicle for people to create community in a new place at the intersection of the complex web of immigration, cosmopolitan musical tastes, and new gender configurations, perhaps developing broader conceptions of Mexican-ness in New York’s communities.

By the early half of the 20th century, “Community,” according to sociologists and anthropologists, has often been defined as something that suggests an antithesis to the nation-state or society and is framed in terms of “loss” or “recovery” (Delanty 2003:10-26). Indeed, as the modern state restructured society by the 20th century, the loss of “traditional” community became a central concern for many social scientists. Massive rural to urban migration and the industrialization of labor were two particular sources for social anxiety, which affected

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8 “Towards a Definition of a Community Choir” is the apt title of an article by Cindy Bell, suggesting that there cannot be a singular and fixed definition for community music making (2008).
discourses in terms of the “loss” of community. Further, these themes of “loss and recovery” are also central to discourse around musical revival, including the son jarocho movement that began in the late 1970s. García de León (2009) frequently cites the social anxiety around Mexico’s transformation from a mostly rural population to a majority urban population in a relatively short period of time during the post-war era.

Besides tensions around “recovery and loss” that are tied to discourses of “community,” the concept and its social enactment further reveal more contradictions and conflict. Delanty establishes that “community” is an inherently contradictory concept. He writes, “Community as local and therefore particular and, on the other side, community as ultimately universal. This conflict has never been resolved and has endured to the present day when we find two kinds of community in conflict: the cosmopolitan quest for belonging on a global level and the indigenous search for roots” (2003:14). This contradiction also arises within discourse about community. Community is not reducible to a single idea or equated with a place, but a community always exists within “socially structured discourses and a historical milieu” (3).

In the 21st century, more types of community have arisen that often take on characteristics of circumstance, historical milieu, and social structures that contribute to the formation of a contemporary community. Delanty offers a few examples: “collective identities” that emerge in short bursts of time where colleagues spend work hours together or parents gather to pick up children from school; “contextual fellowship” emerges at times of emergency or grief where people experience a common bond that momentarily links them together; “liminal communities” that come about in the in-between moments, in such places like the ritualistic commute to work on public transit; and “virtual communities” that are technologically mediated communities, facilitated by social media, chat rooms, and even webpages (2003).
Connected to the broader notions of community, scholars have recently focused their attention on the practice and presence of community music. Bush and Kirkun contextualize the history of community music in North America, writing that organized community music came about in the 19th century. Since the 19th century, community music schools share a legacy in promoting U.S.-based democratic ideals and cultural integration and support for immigrants. Aside from inculcating and assimilating immigrants to U.S. ideals, community music has a dual function to help immigrants to remain connected to their culture and teach younger generations about ethnic and national heritage and to give people a social outlet (2013:13-22). The description of North American community music points to the overall multifaceted and fluid quality of community music (Velblen 2013:1). There is no single set of characteristics or ways of being that can define community music. Instead, community music lies in a continuum of tendencies with local particularities that define each individual musical community.

Kay Kaufman Shelemay identifies a type of musical community connected to late 20th- and 21st-century circumstances and social structures highly associated with notions of “taste.” She writes:

A third type of community, defined largely by affinity, emerges first and foremost from individual preferences, quickly followed by a desire for social proximity or association with others equally enamored. Music proves to be a particularly powerful mechanism for catalyzing affinity communities, in which straightforward aesthetic and personal preferences may, but do not necessarily, intersect with other powerful diacritica such as ethnic identity, age cohort, or gender identity. (2011:373)

In providing her own research with the Ethiopian diaspora in the U.S., Shelemay shows examples of the “powerful diacritica,” but she does not abstractly elaborate more than mentioning “identity, age group, and gender” as being possible diacritica. Here, I see a productive and expanded analysis of community and the “affinity group” when placing
Shelemay’s text in dialogue with Delanty and others. The “powerful diacritica” for an affinity group are the circumstance, social structure and historical milieu that Delanty mentions (2003). For a cosmopolitan and transnational community, the tastes of individual members largely dictate the “affinity” that binds the group. Instead of an ethnic or national tie, taste, political ideology, and world view become the most salient characteristics that bind the community. While taste or world view become central to a community, they are nonetheless still products of a historical milieu and social structure.

In this dissertation, son jarocho is analyzed as the musical taste of the community. However, more than just a musical taste, “son jarocho” comes from a historical legacy (from a specific region of Mexico with its own historical connection to notions of *mexicanidad* or “Mexican-ness” in the post-Revolutionary era), from a contemporary social discourse about the music’s community-building “power” (late 20\(^{th}\)-century revivalists and intellectuals espouse this notion of the genre’s inherent democratic and community-building potential), and from a circumstance of mostly middle-class urban Mexican immigrants and U.S.-born individuals who find themselves looking for a community in the present moment within New York City’s increasingly unaffordable and alienating landscape.

Before further defining the particularities of the son jarocho community in New York City, I review recent scholarship on community music provides more context to collective music making.\(^9\) Community music making is a global phenomenon that takes many different forms, which is partly why there seems to be so many internal contradictions when defining and analyzing what “community music” is. “Community choirs” are one of the many forms of

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\(^9\) Some of the recent scholarly activity around community music includes, the *International Journal of Community Music* published its first edition in 2008 and the Community Music Activity Commission was founded in 1983 but has expanded membership in the last decade.
community music activity across the globe. Cindy Bell proposes a few requirements for a community choir definition. For instance, it is important to consider whether the choir holds auditions for membership (2008:240). In the “democratic spirit” of community music making, Bell asserts that community choirs should not have auditions for the fact that if a community choir seeks diverse and inclusive membership, any audition would limit that membership. Other scholars of community music agree that for a music making group to be considered a “community,” limitations to membership must be absent (Higgins 2012, Bithell 2014).

The absence of auditions complements Lee Higgins’s notion of community as “acts of hospitality” (2012). He writes, “My proposition is that hospitality encompasses the central characteristics of community music practice, broadly understood as people, participation, places, equality of opportunity, and diversity. I do not argue that hospitality should replace the term community, but that hospitality evokes the practical meaning of community in the work of community musicians” (133, emphasis in original). However, what Higgins identifies as “unconditional” hospitality is anything but “unconditional” by the very nature of social and material circumstance. When a musical community is absolutely “open” and “unconditionally hospitable” to existing and potential new members, this creates an opening for communication, however unexpected that communication may be. He continues, “In short, unconditional hospitality embraces a future that will surprise and shatter predetermined horizons” (140). In that way, the act of hospitality necessarily maintains the community music group as an open and dynamic entity, subject to change from fluctuation in membership numbers and character, access to material resources such as space and place of music making, and greater societal shifts that could impact the conversations and content of the music making itself. Moreover, the open quality of “hospitality” prohibits any stable definition of a community ensemble or community
choir, and in that way, Shelemay’s suggestion to define a musical community “in action” leaves the opening for dynamic and fluid definitions that fit the community in question rather than an abstract idea or “future” community (2011:364).

With a general principal of “hospitality” or inclusion at the core of community music, it makes sense that a community choir does not hold auditions. Likewise, a community ensemble would not hold auditions or require reading knowledge of music. These requirements would create barriers to membership and negate the basic work of community musicians that emphasizes “people, participation, context, equality of opportunity, and diversity” (Higgins 2012:4). Within these characteristics of community music, the tension between the local and universal of “community” surfaces again. While community music will be defined by its membership in some way, the tension lies in the outward actions of the community. Bell points out that there is an outward-looking and democratic quality in community choirs that is reflected in the community choir performances. The community choir or community ensemble performs for free and for the public (2008). In this way, the membership and total relations of community ensembles and choirs require an audience. Taken together, the community choir or ensemble is at once made up of musicians (amateur and professional) and the audiences that support and listen to the music making.

Those who are part of the son jarocho community in New York City are less likely to understand themselves as part of a late-20th century social anxiety in the Mexican context, but nonetheless share a greater societal anxiety that is embedded in late capital and globalism. The forces of late capital and what has been identified as “neoliberalism” can be theorized as part of a continuing disintegration of society and perpetual alienation of the social world. It is, indeed, this anxiety that many in the New York City son jarocho community feel—a feeling of alienation and
social separation that is brought on by the demands of living in a city like New York. The remedy—or recovery—for such alienation and social isolation is social re-integration through symbolic ritual in collective music making, which already has more than a century-long history in the U.S. (Bush and Kirkun 2013). Specifically, the son jarocho community uses the fandango as their tool for social reintegration.

Thus, “community” can be understood in a few ways for the case of the New York City son jarocho community. First, the community, in the most basic definition, is a set of social relations; a group of people that interact with each other on a regular basis. However, in breaking with classic anthropological and sociological theory, the members of the community are not in a fixed location or always in immediate proximity to one another. There are tiers of local and transnational networks and communities that affect the character and make-up of the New York City son jarocho community (from local to transnational): 1) New York City community that meets regularly with occasional participation from the East Coast son jarocho networks in Philadelphia and Washington D.C.; 2) Interaction with U.S.-based son jarocho communities through travel and social media interaction; and 3) The exchange between U.S. and Mexican son jarocho networks through social media and travel to Mexican heritage sites of son jarocho.

Second, the community’s ties come from both an affinity for a music, dance, and poetic practice—son jarocho—and from a cosmopolitan world view that community can bridge geographic space and connect disparate groups of people from diverse backgrounds through a musical affinity. More importantly, the son jarocho community shares an ideological affinity for participatory music making that son jarocho fulfills. It must be clear that while “son jarocho” is the affinity for this community, it is one of the many varied interests of the multifaceted identities of the community members. Many community members participate in a variety of
other affinity groups ranging from indigenous dance collectives and folkloric dance troupes, to professional networks of Latin American and Latinx music and other community organizations. Thus, this community complements the many interests that individual members have, while ideologically connecting individuals through a shared world view around “authenticity” in amateur music making and “tradition” as a recoverable and transformative process in that music making. Therefore, the son jarocho community demonstrates the common contradiction between the “cosmopolitan desire for global belonging” and the “indigenous search for roots” (Delanty 2003:14). This community is simultaneously conservative (seeing traditional music as “recoverable” through revival) and outward looking and cosmopolitan (understanding that music making can socially connect diverse groups).

Third, this community is essentially middle-class in make-up, and socio-economic class is the most important quality with regards to the “tastes” of the community members. Although there are sincere and intensive efforts among community members to include working-class Mexican immigrants into the community, the structural limits within the neoliberal space of New York City prevent the comprehensive incorporation of working-class individuals in significant ways. For working-class individuals to be fully integrated in the community and in active participation in a majority of events and gatherings, the community would have to have substantially more financial resources. If the community had these hypothetical financial resources, the structural limitations of class, the time-consuming labor working-class individuals must perform, and the economically segregated neighborhoods of New York City prohibit sustained interaction which would lead to broader community integration. Aside from occasional fandango and workshop participation, the participant roles for most of the son jarocho community’s working-class members are relegated to audience. This is not to say that the
audience for son jarocho is any less a part of the dynamic and necessary exchange that sustains the continued performance of son jarocho, but a more limited form of participation.

In sum, the New York City son jarocho community can begin to be defined through the following concrete and abstract characteristics:

1. An affinity for son jarocho and related musical and dance;
2. Mostly middle class and Mexican in make-up with age groups spanning 12-75 years old;
3. No musical knowledge is required for participation (no auditions, no previous formal music training);
4. Ideologically focused on participatory music making and its democratic potential;
5. Many community members are actively engaged in more than one musical community as part of their total identity.

Convivencia\textsuperscript{10} and Cosmopolitanism

Considering the social structures of New York City such as lack of affordable housing, the economically segregated neighborhoods, and the economic necessity of work, the limits of Higgins’s notion of “hospitality” and the ethics of *convivencia* (conviviality, coexistence, or collaboration) are apparent. Similar to Higgins’s discussion of hospitality, the notion of convivencia is central to the revivalist son jarocho project. Within the New York City community, members often cite “convivencia” as a way of playing music and collaboratively organizing a fandango. Scholars of revivalist son jarocho also cite convivencia as a principle or

\textsuperscript{10}“La Convivencia” is also a common theory in the study of al-Andalus (Moorish or Muslim Spain) from 711-1492. This line of theory romanticizes how Muslims, Jews, and Christians coexisted peacefully in al-Andalus and was central to Spanish cultural historian Américo Castro’s theory of the origin of Spanish identity. This peninsular Spanish scholarship does not seem to be related to the son jarocho ethos of convivencia. For an examination of La convivencia in Moorish Spain, see: Dario Fernández-Morera’s “The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise” (2006).
ethic in their research and performance communities (Martha González 2011; Habell-Pallán 2017; Daria 2018). James Daria describes convivencia:

> Participation in a fandango enacts an alternative, performance-based known locally as *convivencia* (or conviviality). Conviviality roughly means to live in harmony with those who are different and provides an ethico-aesthetic model of human sociality grounded in a subaltern cosmopolitanism. The epistemology of convivencia harmonizes individual musical and poetic expression with the collective goal of participatory aesthetic performance. (2018:94)

Daria’s description for convivencia comes from his own work with musicians in Veracruz who espoused this “ethico-aesthetic model” as the method for cultural and musical transmission. He identifies how musicians from Veracruz, who see themselves as carriers of intangible heritage, advocate for the free exchange and transmission of the music in order to promote the ethics of convivencia (2018:96-8).

Convivencia is not exclusive to son jarocho but a practice that is still invoked and practiced in present-day Mexico. Indeed, the discourse around convivencia has recently been developed by academic and elite son jarocho spheres, but the principle of coexistence and collaboration resonates with broader social practices in Mexico. Outside of the fandango community context, scholars of Mexican culture and society have described a general reliance on social relationships for survival and everyday necessities. Anthropologist Claudio Lomnitz describes modes of Mexican citizenship in terms of an “unpredictable” dependence on social relationships because “Mexico has never had a state that was strong enough to provide services universally” (2001:59-60). He notes that even Mexican middle classes must rely on relationships for access to social services and daily necessities. In a recent investigation into the lives of poor,

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rural Mexican women, scholar Ruth Trinidad Galván observes “convivencia” (she defines as social relations) as one of women’s pedagogies of survival in rural Mexico that include communal living and the development of community savings and educational groups to uplift the women in the community (2015).

Recent scholarship on son jarocho has also cited convivencia as an aesthetic or theoretical frame work. In a conference in April 2017, which thematically focused on different forms of zapateado dance across the Americas and Spanish peninsula, there were three separate papers, including my own, that incorporated convivencia as a theoretical tool to analyze the social practices in son jarocho communities. Moreover, participants in the movimiento jaranero, which “revived” son jarocho and fandango practices, have created a discourse of convivencia to the extent that it is becoming more regularly invoked by academics. The Veracruz practice of sharing and collaborating in everyday needs and music making is explicit in contemporary son jarocho camps that many of the New York City community members have attended.

Yet, when enacted and discursively invoked in New York City, convivencia has structural limits, revealed by the failure to include working-class members universally. In the New York City context, as in the entire community participation, convivencia only materially reaches those present in the events of the community. Convivencia symbolically encompasses an ideal that comes out of a broader pedagogy of son jarocho and world view that binds the community as an affinity group. But, like the total actions and character of the community, convivencia cannot bridge social structures such as income or housing inequality—the material

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12 Conference “Spaniards, Natives, Africans, and Gypsies: Transatlantic Malagueñas and Zapateados in Music, Song, and Dance” at University of California at Riverside, April 6-7, 2017.
barriers and circumstances that potential working-class community members face. Instead, convivencia in the New York City context reveals the limitations of class. To enact convivencia, one must be able to access the social space of the fandango, a space often only accessible to those who have a degree of flexibility and mobility within New York City. Likewise, those that benefit from enactments of convivencia—loaning a jarana to someone for at-home practice—must be inscribed in the social spheres of the community. In other words, beneficiaries of convivencia and the community at large must be already part of the social structure and middle class with a degree of expendable free time.

Musically, convivencia is a principle encapsulated in fandango performance, where fandango participants actively and willingly participate in as many parts of the fandango as possible. For example, at different times throughout a fandango, it is very common to see individuals showing less-experienced performers a hand position on the jarana or a step pattern on the tarima. In these moments, convivencia represents a principle for sharing knowledge inside and outside of the fandango. Besides music making at the fandango, community members enact convivencia through the sharing of resources, including but not limited to, providing housing to visiting musicians, pooling together resources to help a community member in times of economic hardship, and donating time to community organizations in the form of music and cultural performances. Again, these collaborations and sharing of resources are still often limited to the highly classes spheres of interaction, where working-class members may not be entirely included in the social network.

For this dissertation, I use convivencia as a theoretical lens to analyze music making at fandangos and social relations that are collaborative and supportive within the community. I observed explicit use of the word convivencia in conversations at fandangos and in music
workshops. More often, there were many moments that I witnessed implicit enactments of convivencia where the social actors did not invoke the word, but demonstrated its principles. While the development and use of convivencia among academics and elites from the movimiento jaranero are more examples of “reinvention” regarding son jarocho and fandango aesthetics, I think that the term is simultaneously a local practice and concept from Veracruz, not theoretically constructed, and a concept that is newly emphasized and brought to the forefront for the purposes of transmission and maintenance of the fandango tradition.

Thomas Turino identifies the U.S. as an “advanced society” in which many people do not socially interact through music making. He writes, “For people in the capitalist-cosmopolitan formation where music and dance have become more specialized activities, it might be hard to imagine that music making and dancing are as basic to being social as the ability to take part in friendly conversation…” (2008:29). However, in the jaranero community of New York City, the members of the community actively seek musical participation that resists a capitalist formation where music is performed only by professionals. Here, the “affinity” for the community is the act of making music with other people and building social bonds. Turino continues:

For this reason, in places like the United States participatory traditions tend to be relegated to special cultural cohorts that stand in opposition to the broader cultural formation. Participatory activities exist beneath the radar of mainstream official and popular attention in staunchly capitalist societies, and yet they still exist—some people seek them out or create them because they offer special resources for individual and social integration and experience, flow, and fun (36).

The jaranero community can be considered as a “special cultural cohort” for its interest in non-consumerist practices of music, and because the New York City community is connected to a broader, transnational network of son jarocho communities, it should be evaluated as an emergent form of dissonance in capitalist-consumer societies.
Furthermore, there is a tension in Turino’s use of “cosmopolitan” to describe societies that value presentational and recorded music and have little to no significant practice of participatory music. He is also right to point out that, in a place like the U.S., some people may seek out participatory music communities or create them out of a desire or need to participate in music making. Turino’s assessment is paralleled by Mirjana Lausevic’s work on Balkan music communities in the U.S., which are made up of individuals who are mostly white and from the educated middle and affluent classes (2007). Like the son jarocho community, the Balkan music enthusiasts seek (what they see as) non-consumerist and participatory models of musical performance. The tension arises in this assessment from the fact that the individual who seeks a participatory music community is probably a “cosmopolitan” him/herself. The average U.S. citizen who is not born into a participatory music making community will probably never seek one. However, an educated person with exposure (and access to that exposure) to participatory music making is more likely to engage with a participatory community. Many U.S. people who engage with participatory music may begin through music classes in public school, but only some have the resources to continue musical practice and education—a commodity in the U.S. that is not accessible to all people. For the U.S.-born members of the son jarocho community, many first experienced son jarocho from travel or a study-abroad experience, which ignited their interest in participatory music—again, a privilege not shared among all classes of people.

Perhaps this distinction of privilege and education is why the non-Mexican members of the son jarocho community are well-educated (all have a college degree and some with post-graduate degrees), have significant travel experience to Mexico and other places, and have the ability to spend free time in music lessons and practice music at home. Many have some musical education, mostly coming from other folk and community-centered dance scenes. One individual
regularly participates in a Cajun dance scene in Manhattan and another began his interest in folk music by learning banjo in college (interview July 17, 2016). Even though owning an instrument is not required to participate in the son jarocho community, it is extremely useful. Additionally, the instrument cost is not huge, but spending $200 on a jarana is just simply outside of many people’s budget. For that reason, one of the leaders of the community constructs and builds jaranas out of repurposed materials so that the less-privileged members can have their own jaranas for practice. (As a doctoral student on a limited budget, I was only able to purchase a jarana in 2016 after receiving research funding from my university). Of the non-Mexicans who participate regularly in fandangos and son jarocho lessons in New York City, some professions include college professor, documentarian, painter-artist (with a corporate day-job), and massage therapist.

The Mexican-born members of the community are more diverse in terms of class and educational backgrounds. This has to do with the fact that many individuals are actively seeking a place to learn more about their homeland, regardless of whether or not what they learn is from their region or state in Mexico. They are typically already active in another Mexican musical community, such as the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York, or they regularly attend Mexican music performances. Some of the working-class members of the community joined not only to learn more about Mexico in general, but also to learn music. In many cases, the son jarocho community offers working-class immigrants from Mexico their first accessible and affordable opportunity to learn music and play an instrument. For instance, if anyone wishes to attend a workshop but cannot pay the small class fee, he or she is still welcomed and the fee is “waived.” However, to be clear, the Mexican immigrants in the son jarocho community include educated professionals as well. Some are professional musicians who seek to expand their
performance repertoire and others are teachers and artists looking to learn more about Mexico
and its diverse culture.

Son jarocho music and the reinvented fandango have uniquely become central
community-building tools for a transnational group of people. The Mexican immigrants who
teach and perform son jarocho are not from Veracruz, nor is ethno-regionalism a central concern
for the jaranero community. Rather, this community reinforces the notion that tastes and interests
are circulated internationally and are more important for a community in a “global city” like
New York City, particularly in this contemporary capitalist formation.

Methodology

I attended my first local New York City son jarocho event in the fall of 2013. It was the
third annual Encuentro de Son Jarocho. I was invited by a new acquaintance that would later
become one of my friends and interlocutors for my dissertation research. In attending the
Encuentro, I noticed the overwhelmingly friendly and supportive atmosphere: friends and
families were smiling, the mood was elevated, and all audience members reacted positively with
support for all performing groups. My friend performed with his amateur son jarocho group, Son
Pecadores (Son Sinners or They Are Sinners), a name that is both a joke about the group’s
amateur status (making errors in playing sones) and a pun for being sinners themselves,
especially the “sin” of playing poorly. As I watched my friend and his bandmates, my musically
trained ears were surprised that I was not offended by slightly out-of-tune singing and the
occasional performance error of a misplaced chord. I was happy to see people simply enjoy their
musical performance and the experience of sharing that performance with others who were also
in the process of learning the same music. From that night forward, I decided that my dissertation
research had to move in the direction of amateur performance, live music making among Mexican immigrants, and the ways music is used for relationship and community building.

By the next spring 2014, I slowly began to engage with the son jarocho community in New York City and, by the end of the summer, I had begun to regularly take jarana workshop classes and attend the monthly fandangos. This participant observation intensified by the beginning of 2015, when I joined Son Pecadores and performed in several concerts at museums, church events, and public theaters around the New York City area to further expand my participation in being an amateur jaranera. After my dissertation proposal was approved in November 2015, I started my formal dissertation research, which involved more workshop and fandango participation, attending concerts, and formal interviews with select leaders and participants from the jaranero community. By the end of summer 2016, I had interviewed key members of the community and started to analyze my interview and field data.

Most of my interviews were conducted in English because many of my collaborators are either fluent or comfortable speaking in English. It is also important that the language in which the interlocutor and I speak represents our relationship language. Some collaborators and members of the community met me in Spanish, others met me in English. These linguistic encounters and first meetings are important and often direct the linguistic shape of the relationship. All conversations with visiting Mexican musicians were conducted in Spanish for our relationship began and developed in Spanish, while Mexican Americans born in the U.S. share a native language with me, English, and to speak in another language always simply feels odd.

Aside from interviews and participant observation, I used recorded materials. For examples of verse poetry and lyrics, I consulted a number of recent son jarocho recordings that
have been produced since the movimiento jaranero began. Many of these recordings are by prominent son jarocho musicians, many of whom have visited New York City to teach and perform son jarocho.

**Outline of Chapters**

Chapter 2 introduces the historical, cultural, and social circumstances for the emergence of the movimiento jaranero within post-Revolutionary Mexico (1910-present). The chapter examines some of the motivations behind the revival of son jarocho and cultural position of son jarocho within Mexico’s national imaginary—within recorded music, film, and popular culture broadly. The movimiento jaranero, like most revivals, aimed to “rescue” or “revive” a traditional music that was believed to be dying or dwindling. It was also a reaction to the commercial forms of son jarocho that had prevailed for much of the twentieth century. In this reaction, the movimiento jaranero sought to rescue the communitarian practices of the fandango at a time when, for the first time in Mexican history, most of the population lived in urban areas rather than rural. This new urbanization caused anxiety and was seen as societal disintegration. The revivalists saw the fandango and communitarian practices of son jarocho as tools to rescue the campesino (peasant) way of life that was rapidly disappearing in Mexico by the 1970s.

Chapter 3 focuses on the ways the New York City jaranero community replicates the revivalist actions taken by the movimiento jaranero. Aside from musical actions that transmit and maintain son jarocho, the New York City community adopts the principle of convivencia for teaching, performing, and living as a jaranero. The musical actions that came out of the revival preserve and disseminate the music, but they are not always as “authentic” as presented. The New York City jaranero community integrates movimiento prescriptions while revealing the
ways the movimiento altered or reinvented the practices of the son jarocho fandango. New York City, a “global city” with constant flows of people and practices, is an ideal place for adaptation and reinvention of a traditional music. Because of place-specific circumstances, New York City places some limitations on communitarian performance, principally through insufficient access to time and space, and simultaneously opens other possibilities for community-driven projects.

Chapter 4 analyzes the understudied aspect of son jarocho and the fandango: the dance zapateado. This highly important aspect of the fandango, according to those that follow the movimiento jaranero aesthetics, has been understudied by scholars and musicians alike. It is also an interesting point of intersection for questions around gender and participation in the fandango. While women have always been part of son jarocho’s formation—whether participating in a fandango as dancers or as the subject of poetic verses—women’s visibility in son jarocho has expanded tremendously since the late twentieth century. Without a doubt, more women have not only begun to dance, but have also become important and influential teachers, performers, and organizers of son jarocho and fandangos. Also important to the study of zapateado within the world of son jarocho, in the post-movimiento jaranero era, professional son jarocho recording artists have integrated the dance into recordings and stage performances. The examples of professional zapateado in New York City illustrate the ways the genre is still in the process of revival or reinvention as new presentational and participatory modes for the dance emerge out of the thoroughly transnational context of contemporary son jarocho.

Note on Language, Translations, and Spanish Vocabulary

For the most part, all Spanish words are introduced in italics at first appearance, then immediately translated. From then on, the Spanish word is presented in Roman script. All
translations from Spanish are my own for both bibliographic and interview citations. Other Spanish words that are also English homophones such as “son” are in italics to distinguish them from their English counterparts. However, compound Spanish words like “son jarocho” are not italicized since they are distinct. Additionally, Spanish-language publications and interviews are referenced in English translations. All translations are my own.

I use “son jarocho community” and “jaranero community” interchangeably to identify the group of people who make up the community of New York City. It should be noted that “jaranero” comes from “jarana,” meaning “one who plays the jarana” but also has the connotation of “son jarocho player.” The use of this word in general “jaranera/o” or movimiento jaranero demonstrates the instrument’s importance and centrality to the reviverist formation and dissemination of son jarocho. Most of the time, I am specifically speaking about people who are living in New York City, but there are some instances where the jaranero “community” refers to the transnational network of people that perform and disseminate son jarocho music. This transnational group is always identified as the “transnational jaranero community.”

Last, in both my analysis and the existing literature about son jarocho, there are multiple forms of “son jarocho.” Generally, the simple phrase “son jarocho” refers to the cumulative practices that comprise the genre, related to what Madrid and Moore call a “performance complex” (2014). The “performance complex” of son jarocho is a diverse set of practices including both historical and contemporary presentational son jarocho performances in professional and amateur settings as well as past and present participatory fandango performances. Likewise, “zapateado” describes not only the percussive dance, but also a variety of performance settings (folklórico and professional concerts, recordings, and amateur fandango
performance). “Zapateado fandanguero” better identifies the type of improvisational and participatory dance that is in a fandango.

When describing specific, historical forms of presentational or staged son jarocho performance, I use “urban” or “commercial” son jarocho to identify the *conjuntos jarochos* (jarocho ensembles) that developed during the commercialization period between 1940s-1960s. “Son jarocho fandanguero” identifies the son jarocho performed at the participatory event of the fandango and implies a more informal performance setting. “Fandango” always implies an event in which participants play son jarocho music in an informal, participatory setting—a setting where the distinctions between audience and performers is blurred and both amateurs and professionals collaborate in the music making.
Chapter 2: The Movimiento Jaranero and its Connections to New York City Fandango: A Musical Revival that Reinvented Son Jarocho from a Local Music in Veracruz to a Transnational Genre

Before one of the first fandangos that I attended in 2014 in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, I met a member of the community, Calvin Burton. We were speaking in Spanish before I realized that we were both native English speakers. I asked him where he is from and we then both switched to English. He was originally from Nevada, but “I have moved around a lot” he said. After a discussion about our common U.S. backgrounds, he went on to tell me that son jarocho had been recently “discovered” and was being revived. After only a short conversation, the fandango began. Everyone formed a circle around the tarima that was placed under a tree in the park. The fandango began with “El siquisirí,” the traditional opening son of fandangos. In each son that was played at the fandango, each member of the community sang a verse, played a jarana or another instrument, and danced zapateado on the tarima. I had never danced on a tarima until this fandango, when my new friend and New York native Mehmet Kucukozer invited me to dance with him. Although it was terrifying because I did not know any of the dance’s steps, dancing with new acquaintances and soon-to-be friends was a welcoming and fun experience. In that inviting atmosphere, something else was apparent. The circular formation of the fandango, the active participation from all fandango participants, and the inclusion of performers from every level of musical skill were exemplifying what I would later understand as the ethos of convivencia and the reinvented fandango.

Sunset Park, Brooklyn is one of the New York City neighborhoods with a significant Mexican population. Prior to the arrival of the Mexican community, the neighborhood was largely Puerto Rican, laying a Spanish-speaking foundation for future Hispanic immigration, including Mexicans and Central Americans.
When speaking to the members of the son jarocho community in New York City, their perspective on the music and where it comes from becomes immediately clear. As the jaraneros of New York City open up about their son jarocho teachers, many names are repeated and patterns emerge. Many in the community reference who first taught them to dance zapateado or play jarana. In many cases, these students learned from well-established son jarocho musicians who were foundational to the revival movement that began in the late 1970s and early 1980s and continues to the present day. At other times, community members recall that their first son jarocho listening experience came from a CD recorded by Chuchumbé (¡Caramba Niño!, 1999), an ensemble that continues to promote son jarocho in line with the principles established through the revival. Overwhelmingly, the son jarocho musicians in New York City carry with them a sensibility about son jarocho that has developed over the last 30-40 years. This sensibility is not just deep musical knowledge of son jarocho, but also a practical understanding of how the music functions socially. There is a consensus that the fandango is the central and principal social context for this music. Then, secondarily, there are staged performances and other presentations of the music, including recordings. But always first is the fandango.

The fandango is the participatory music celebration or *fiesta* that is central to understanding contemporary son jarocho practices. The fandango-centered approach to son jarocho has existed in an ongoing way probably since the beginning of the genre, and recent scholarship supports this theory. Within the rural settings of colonial Mexico, the fandango likely functioned as both a musical celebration and an enactment of social order and hierarchy (Beezley 1984). For people who live outside the traditional homeland of son jarocho, the commercial recordings from the mid-twentieth century may be the only kind of son jarocho they know. Nevertheless, the genre has deep colonial roots in Mexico’s Sotavento region in the modern state.
of Veracruz, and son jarocho’s contemporary formation draws upon recent scholarship about its centuries-long history. At times in interviews and in workshop settings, the jaraneros of New York City directly and tangentially reference recent academic work from Mexico that historicizes son jarocho and values the movimiento jaranero and its revivalist work.

In this chapter, I analyze the groundwork of both the musicians and the cultural workers of the movimiento jaranero through the scholarship that is related to the movement’s success. The movimiento jaranero is simultaneously a localized effort by musicians, cultural workers, and intellectuals from Veracruz and a transnational vehicle to disseminate son jarocho across the Americas and elsewhere. In addition to being a grassroots effort from musicians and cultural workers, the movimiento jaranero has also had state sponsorship and can be understood within the larger scope of revivalist movements in Latin America. Within the context of Mexico’s twentieth-century, post-revolutionary development of national music and arts, the movimiento jaranero can also be seen as a reaction to the commercialization and standardization of certain Mexican regional musics. However well intended, the movimiento seems to condemn commercial son jarocho and privilege “rural” aesthetics without a consideration for the types of social hierarchies that rural traditions upheld. Yet, not only is the movimiento jaranero important to how the community in New York City practices and understands son jarocho, but it is also important to a wider transnational network of jaraneros today. In short, the movimiento jaranero and son jarocho’s 20th-century history reveal how a once rural music was transformed at the local level to become part of an international circulation of ideas and community, while reinventing fandango practices for contemporary social relations.
**What is the Movimiento Jaranero?**

The movimiento jaranero can be loosely described as a revival of traditional, rural son jarocho. Beginning in the late 1970s, musicians, cultural workers, and intellectuals deliberately sought to rescue the dwindling practices that originate in the Jarocha region, which is also named the Sotavento region. Generally, 1979 is considered the year in which the revival began because, in that year, son jarocho musicians held the first *Encuentro de Jaraneros y Decimistas* (Gathering of Son Jarocho Musicians and Décima Singers) in honor of the feast day of the patron saint of Tlacotalpan, Veracruz, *La Virgen de Candelaria* (Candlemas or Virgin of the Candles). This feast day is on February 2nd and the Encuentro generally occurs throughout the week leading up to the Candelaria. The 2017 Encuentro was the 39th since its inception. The movement sought not only to revive the music of son jarocho, but also to maintain it and secure its future by establishing methods of transmission and dissemination. Regardless of the intentions of those who have participated in the revival, son jarocho is no longer a musical form that is slowly dying in rural Mexico, nor is it preserved in rigid, choreographed dance steps on a folkloric stage. It is not just for the Veracruz portion of the Ballet Folklórico de México (Mexican National Folkloric Ballet) stage presentation or the small conjuntos of seafood restaurants, playing for tourists. Son jarocho is a vibrant, contemporary music with many varieties of performance practices ranging from participatory formats to professional stage acts. It has become an internationally circulated genre, practiced by many different people inside and outside of Mexico. Because there are

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14 The movimiento jaranero was not explicitly named as a “movement” until it was later analyzed and written about by historians. “Academically” knowledgeable musicians (or ones who have more contact with universities) have articulated that “movimiento jaranero” is a term that has been developed more recently to name the efforts to revitalize son jarocho over the past several decades (interview with Laura Rebolloso, March 13, 2016).

commercial and national, state-sponsored varieties of son jarocho, it is worth reviewing some of Mexico’s political history and how Mexican music underwent changes in the last hundred years.

**Latin American Nation-Building in the Twentieth Century**

At the turn of the twentieth century, Mexico, like other Latin American nations, underwent a process of nation-building with the aim of creating a more homogenous and unified national identity. Scholars of Latin American history have documented the ways nations developed their own discourses of nationhood, Cuba, Argentina, and Brazil being prominent examples. Thomas Turino analyzes these patterns of nation-building in his article “Nationalism and Latin American Music” (2003). Turino distinguishes twentieth-century nationalist movements from independence struggles from the early nineteenth century. Citing Eric Hobsbawm, Turino contends that the nineteenth-century independence movements were economically focused, and concentrated in the hands of the *criollo* (people of Spanish descent born in the Americas) power centers. In contrast, about a century later, the nationalist movements in Latin America became more popular in character, in that they focused on building a culturally homogenous nation, not just an economy independent from the colonial power (2003:176-177). In his discussion of the twentieth-century nationalist turn, he writes, “Another common form of musical nationalism in the twentieth century involves the reformist fusion of local, non-cosmopolitan instruments, sounds, and genres within a largely cosmopolitan aesthetic, stylistic, and contextual frame” (175).

One example that illustrates a national incorporation of “local, non-cosmopolitan sounds” and musical forms is found in 20th-century Cuban musical formation. Robin Moore analyzes the process of Cuban incorporation of blackness and Afro-Cuban-ness into the national idea of
“cubanidad” (Cubanness). This was not a grass-roots transition, emerging from the “black street culture,” but, rather, a transformation led by intellectuals and cultural elites (Moore 1997:2-3). The top-down formation of national music in Latin American nations in the early decades of the twentieth century is a striking pattern that many scholars have observed (Turino 2003:170).16

**Mexican Nation-Building Post-Revolution**

After the Mexican Revolution (1910-1921), Mexico began to re-articulate and re-conceptualize its national character and identity away from the pre-Revolution *Porfiriato* (dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, 1876-1911). In the nineteenth century and during the Porfiriato, the elites and upper classes of Mexico favored European music, while in rural Mexico, the regional *son* traditions were popular (González Paraíso 2014:47). The Mexican Revolution not only marked the end of the dictatorship and a beginning with a new democratic constitution (1917), but also a transition that included the incorporation of popular regional music into Mexican nationalism and a rejection of the pre-revolutionary elites’ music.

Immediately following the Revolution, Mexican intellectuals were closely tied to the process of post-Revolutionary nation-building. José Vasconcelos, the Mexican intellectual and writer who developed the theory of the *raza cósmica* (cosmic race),17 was the Secretary of Education, under President Álvaro Obregón (1921-1924). Vasconcelos theorized what is now understood as “mestizaje” or racial and cultural mixing. At the time, this ideology challenged

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17 *La raza cósmica* was originally published in 1925. In this publication, Vasconcelos explains his vision of how the Mexican race is the future, mixed race, which largely comes from the mixture of Spanish (European) and indigenous people. His theory of Mexican race leaves little conceptual space for additional racial mixture and excludes people of African heritage.
Western conceptions of racial superiority and introduced the belief of cultural advancement through racial mixture. However, when certain populations of Mexico did not meet the “mestizo,” “mestizaje” or mixture ideal, they were seen as less developed, backward, and fixed in the past. Speaking of Latin America as a whole, Peter Wade offers both an evaluation of how scholars have analyzed mestizaje and a critique of why these previous assessments are too simple. He writes:

Scholars have recognised that mestizaje does not have a single meaning within the Latin American context, and contains within it tensions between sameness and difference, and between inclusion and exclusion. Yet a scholarly concern with mestizaje as ideology has tended to privilege two assumptions: first, that nationalist ideologies of mestizaje are essentially about the creation of a homogeneous mestizo (mixed) future, which are then opposed to subaltern constructions of the nation as racially-culturally diverse; and second, that mestizaje as a nationalist ideology appears to be an inclusive process, in that everyone is eligible to become a mestizo, but in reality it is exclusive because it marginalises blackness and indigenousness, while valuing whiteness. (2005:240)

In his analysis, he proposes that mestizaje must be examined as a “lived process,” rather than a binary theory of inclusion/exclusion. Further, the binary theories of inclusion/exclusion or homogeneous/racially diverse are not necessarily in opposition, but are two processes that are reproduced unevenly in daily life. For example, in the case of Mexico and mestizaje, son jarocho has typically been framed as a thoroughly “mestizo” (Spanish and indigenous) music, and therefore, it has been used by the state and state-sanctioned entities for the promotion national mestizo narratives (Hutchinson 2009a:212-3). However, it is only recently that scholars and musicians of son jarocho have advocated for the inclusion of the “third mestizo root” or the Afro-Mexican legacy. Wade continues,

If one looks at mestizaje as a lived process, the relationship between inclusion and exclusion is not best conceived of as one of superficial mask and underlying reality. Rather it can be understood as the interweaving of two processes, both of which have symbolic and structural reality. These, in turn, constitute a mosaic, at the level of the embodied person and the family as well as the nation. (2005:240)
Although this dissertation does not directly engage with questions of the “lived process” of mestizaje in Mexico or in New York City, Wade’s critique and explanation of this widely circulated theory in Latin America illuminates the ways the nation-building process of Mexico should be complicated as a “mosaic,” one in which some regions and populations became favored and better represented over others in the process of post-Revolutionary nation building.

With the theory of idealized racial and cultural mixing, Vasconcelos directed the development of national curriculum and construction of public schools across Mexico. In her dissertation, González Paraíso (2014) explains that, at the start of 1922, Vasconcelos commissioned cultural missionaries and sent them to rural regions throughout Mexico to establish schools. In the SEP (Secretaría de Educación Pública, Ministry of Public Education), Vasconcelos introduced populist education that would begin to forge a common mestizo nation. Essentially Vasconcelos set out to unite mestizo and indigenous populations under a common cultural education (2014:81). The work of Vasconcelos and the state was not only to educate the nation’s population, but also to inculcate a sense of Mexican-ness and develop popular unity. This is often referred to as creating *lo mexicano* or *mexicanidad* (Mexican-ness).

At the same time that the Mexican government established schools and the educational system, it also began to consolidate its regional music, namely the different *son* traditions, to establish an arts curriculum and, ultimately, a national repertoire. Under the direction of the state, “Teachers, musicologists, scholars, anthropologists, and folklorists carried out the gathering of songs and dances throughout the country, a selective and uneven endeavor in terms of amount of material collected, quality, and regional representation. Stereotypes of songs, dances, and musical practices were molded to fit representations of ‘*lo mexicano*’” (González Paraíso 2014:82). According to Pérez Montfort (2007:261), the central and western regions received
more attention than other regions in this process. It should be noted that these central and western regions include the state of Jalisco, the center of *son jalisciense* (Jalisco son) that become the primary source for mariachi repertoire. Aside from mariachi repertoire, the son jalisciense was used as primary source material for arts and music education in Mexican public schools. One prominent example is the “Jarabe tapatío” dance (Tapatío or Guadalajara medley, sometimes referred to as the “Mexican hat dance”). Under Vasconcelos’s curriculum design, all school children would learn the dance of “Jarabe tapatío,” inculcating Mexican youth with a sense of shared mestizo culture (Beezley 2011:431).

González Paraíso goes on to explain that these stereotypes of Mexican music also manifested as images of men and women—the *china poblana* (woman from Puebla) and the *charro* (cowboy). The china poblana is a mestizo woman wearing a white blouse with colorful embroidery around the neck and a long skirt typical from the state of Puebla. The charro is a horseman, cowboy-like figure wearing black pants, jacket, and vest, which became the standard mariachi uniform. Yet, these stereotypes emphasized the mestizo heritage of Mexico at the expense of African ancestry (González Paraíso 2014:82). The mestizo images were also nationally circulated in a state-sponsored calendar. By the 1930s, such calendars were distributed throughout Mexico, were placed in public spaces and given out freely, and featured images such as the china poblana, charro, Revolutionary soldiers, romantic pastoral landscapes, the Virgen de Guadalupe, and the “Jarabe tapatío” (Beezley 2011:430-31). Additionally, González Paraíso notes that the central and western regions of Mexico were given more attention because several of the intellectuals who were part of the nation-building project came from these regions (2014:85). Nonetheless, the selective process for curriculum building and eventual development
of regional practices into national images and symbols illustrate the problematic nature of representation through the ideology of mestizaje for a nation as large and diverse as Mexico.

Eventually, this consolidation project resulted in the establishment of a national music, mariachi. Much of the consolidated repertoire became standard for curriculum, national arts and folkloric ballet, and popular music, including radio and film production. Not only were popular music and dance traditions rich sources for post-Revolutionary curriculum, but they were also the material for commoditization in the growing mass communications and media industries.

Daniel Sheehy also examines the process of nation-building and the role of mass media:

The rapid growth of the electronic media beginning in Mexico around 1930 invaded all but the most remote populations through radio, recordings, films and television. A few regional musics gained a foothold in the media, but always at the cost of transforming themselves into professionalized commodities required to have broad appeal beyond their traditional regional audience. (1999:43-44)

After the Revolution and through the post-World War II period, Mexico enjoyed its Golden Age of Film. In Music in Mexico (2013), Alejandro Madrid explains that the in the 1930s and 1940s, both private and government-sponsored projects endeavored to create standardized national images that define Mexican identity (30). Simultaneously, radio and film grew into powerful new media with which government and private industries promoted these national images throughout Mexico and internationally (30). Besides newly established mariachi, son jarocho was also part of this consolidation. Some of the *sones* in son jarocho’s repertoire became standards of mariachi performance, but generally, son jarocho was consolidated in different ways. In the late 1940s, during the presidency of Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-1952), the first president from Veracruz, son jarocho became another ubiquitous representation of Mexicanness. Alemán adopted “La bamba” as his campaign song, and as president, developed and expanded Mexico’s tourist industry, using son jarocho as a promotional tool to attract visitors to Mexico.
and Veracruz’s beaches in particular. It is during this time period that newly professionalized son jarocho groups made their first recordings, debuted in film, and standardized their sound and image. Historian Rafael Figueroa Hernández similarly describes this change as a move towards conjunto (small ensemble) presentations of the genre for the tourist markets and integration into Mexican film. He describes the son jarocho conjunto and the musicians who wore a uniform of filipinas (white pants) and guayaberas (white, short-sleeved shirts typically from the Caribbean) as emblematic of Veracruz seafood restaurants and intended to attract tourists and represent Mexicanness. For many, this image of the son jarocho musician became the symbol of the genre and of Mexico’s southern state of Veracruz.

**State-Sponsored Dance: Ballet Folklórico de México**

In addition to the new education system that included an arts and music curriculum and the new state-owned mass-media network of radio, film, and recordings, the state-supported Ballet Folklórico de México (BFM) was founded by Amalia Hernández in 1952. Amalia Hernández was from a well-educated and elite family in Mexico City. After studying dance throughout Mexico and internationally, she wanted to establish a national dance theater in Mexico. Her design of BFM was another significant codification of popular music and dance forms that greatly affected the dissemination of Mexican music within the nation and abroad. The stage productions of the BFM can also been understood as cosmopolitan transformations of popular music, similar to Turino’s analysis of popular music during twentieth-century nationalist processes in Latin America. Likewise, the BFM is a fruitful subject for analyzing the embedded

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nationalist ideologies that were also part of the efforts by the Mexican state to collect and consolidate popular music and dance from specific regions.

Hutchinson (2009a) has examined the political ideologies implicit within the dance productions of the Ballet Folklórico. The standard BFM presentation will always include a few “indigenous” dances that are presented as “pure” and “untouched” by European culture. These indigenous dances are typically from the southern regions, which have some of the largest indigenous populations in contemporary Mexico. The bulk of the program usually relies heavily on central regions for mestizo dances—regions that are seen as having thoroughly undergone the process of mestizaje (Jalisco being the most prominent of these). Hutchinson explains that within the state-driven ideology of mestizaje, regional populations were associated with certain features and characteristics. The southern states and regions were more visibly and culturally indigenous and considered to be relatively untouched by mestizaje, and were assigned with stereotypes of “southern laziness” or “backwardness” (2009a:213). In contrast to the south, northern states of Mexico had a population that was less visibly indigenous and more European in culture, exhibited by northern music and dances like polkas, schottisches, and waltzes that came to Mexico with German, Polish, and Czech immigrants. The north represented a progressive population and culture. The central regions and states represented the areas that had thoroughly undergone the process of mestizaje, represented by the mestizo music of son jalisciense and later mariachi. In BFM presentations, southern regions and indigenous cultures are always represented as a part of a romantic past with great Aztec scientists and beautiful pastoral landscapes. The indigenous music and dance in the BFM’s programming always features drums and percussion, “ancient” costuming, and dancers with stiff body positions and unemotional faces (2009:220). Dances such as the “Danza del venado” (Deer Dance) from the Yaqui tribe depict a “nature”
setting with a hunter and deer. In the presentation, the musical instrumentation is rattles, drums, and flutes, representing indigeneity. Further, the dance places Yaqui people both in the past and in a romanticized bucolic setting, eliding the violent reality of hundred-year genocide waged by the Mexican state upon this indigenous population.

The BFM presentations display the national narrative by “chronologically” placing regional dances in an ethnic succession: from indigenous as the past to a mestizo and European present and future. This chronology places indigenous culture in the “pre-Hispanic” period even though the dances and culture are still practiced by populations in this contemporary moment. Any other ethnic group such as Afro-Mexicans or Chinese Mexicans is entirely excluded from this configuration of the national narrative of mestizaje or assumed to have been completely and already blended. Again, specific regional stereotypes of Mexican people are emphasized to fit the state narrative of mestizaje, or cultural mixing, that results in the new mestizo race.

In the twentieth century, the Ballet Folklórico became an essential institution of the Mexican state. It not only transmitted the state’s interpretation of a unified Mexican nation through choreographed articulations of mestizaje, but also became the face of Mexican culture abroad and for foreign tourists. Ruth Hellier-Tinoco (2011) examines two mestizo dances from the central state of Michoacán that were standardized and promoted as icons of Mexicanness and tourist attractions for over 90 years following the end of the Revolution. She writes, these dances “were used to perform, image, construct, and imagine Mexico and Mexicanness, for the multiple objectives of incorporating disparate peoples, enabling economic development, fashioning a future, attracting tourists, and creating collective identities” (2011:4). These dances were not part of the Ballet Folklórico, but are nonetheless another example of the ways in which the Mexican
state promoted specific regional dances and music for commercial, tourist, and nationalist agendas.

The standardization of dances, whether in the Ballet Folklórico de México or in Mexican public schools, has had a lasting effect upon the Mexican population at home and abroad. For example, New York is home to the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York (BFMNY), partly funded and supported by the Mexican state through New York’s Mexican Consulate, which reproduces stage presentations that were originally developed by Amalia Hernández.19 The standard dance presentation of BFMNY features an indigenous past, a mestizo Revolution, and mestizo present and future in Mexican history. Clearly, the Ballet Folklórico in New York does not disrupt the official state narrative. This demonstrates how Mexican nationalist ideologies and views of Mexican culture are still maintained and organized through state sponsorship even in the ever-growing Mexican diaspora.

Many people in the son jarocho community in New York have participated in BFMNY productions, or have been exposed to BFM in Mexico in some way. For example, in an interview with Paula Sánchez-Kucukozer, a Mexican woman originally from Guadalajara, she explained that she was initially only exposed to the Ballet Folklórico interpretations of Mexican dance in general and son jarocho more specifically, which just includes a few of the most popular sones: “La bamba,” “El cascabel,” and “El colás.” And as a former folklórico dancer herself, she knew how to execute choreographed zapateado steps that do not improvise or direct the rhythm of the other instruments, unlike the zapateado in other varieties of son jarocho. When describing her first encounter with revitalized son jarocho and zapateado fandanguero, she was intimidated and

19 The Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York has many funders, including the Mexican Consulate and New York City Arts Councils. http://www.brooklyncouncil.org/directory/23600
unsure of how to perform the steps without a choreographed prescription (interview June 9, 2016). In some ways, the learning of a new dance or music is intimidating or difficult, but Paula’s experience here reveals more about the dominant status of Mexican state-sponsored interpretations of Mexican music and dance through Ballet Folklórico and regional genres. She only knew standardized and commercial versions of son jarocho that were promoted by the state, and the idea of improvising dance steps was never a possibility until learning an alternative version of son jarocho.

**Economic Expansion and Commercialization of Son Jarocho**

Between the 1940s through the 1960s, Mexico underwent a period of economic expansion, urbanization, and industrialization. During this time, Mexico had two presidents from Veracruz: Miguel Alemán Valdés (1946-52) and Aldofo Ruíz Cortines (1952-58). Because of the urbanization of the country, many musicians—son jarocho musicians included—were able to professionalize their practice by moving to the capital Mexico City, work as musicians for hire, and live in the center of Mexico’s recording industry. During this process, the rural musicians transformed into urban ones, as Sheehy notes “at the cost of transforming themselves into professionalized commodities” (1999:43). By the middle of the twentieth century and promoted through mass media and folklore representations, the small ensemble format for son jarocho became the recognized standard. Prominent conjuntos like Andrés Huesca y Sus Costeños and El Conjunto Jarocho Medellín de Lino Chávez became famous during this period and are still well known throughout Mexico and abroad. In *Fandango: El ritual del mundo jarocho a través de los siglos* (Fandango: The Ritual of the Jarocho World Across the Centuries) (2009), scholar
Antonio García de León describes the transition from rural to urban that greatly affected the professionalization of son jarocho in the middle of the twentieth century:

After the nationalist fervor of Cardenismo, the expansion of urban life—the enthronement of the city by stabilizing development with its new middle and well-to-do classes—would allow the professionalization of some musical groups that remained to live in the capital. It is then that the new urbanized folklore became separated from the rural, country party and became immersed in the accompaniment of meals, banquets, and political activities. The presidential campaign of Miguel Alemán in 1946 used the son of “La bamba,” at the same time converting it into the “Veracruzan hymn.” It is also the moment when, in the manner of mariachi, a regularized conjunto jarocho was established, a typical regional orchestra composed of large harp, sixth guitar, third jarana and “requinto jarocho.” (2009:34)

During the Golden Age of Cinema (1930s-1960s), characterized by industrial expansion, rural to urban migration, and the burgeoning of a music industry, Mexican musicians professionalized their craft, often becoming influential contributors to the development of their musical tradition. One such innovator was Andrés Huesca, who was born in 1917 in the Port of Veracruz. He was a son jarocho harpist that would later be in the center of the recording and film revolution, taking part in 77 films, recording the famous version of “La bamba,” performing for presidents, and even participating in the creation of Disney’s The Three Caballeros (1944). He established and disseminated son jarocho in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, at a time when the sounds of son jalisciense dominated. It was during the filming of the classic film Allá en el Rancho Grande (There in the Big Ranch) in 1936 that Huesca introduced a larger harp than the traditional jarocho harp. For purely cinematographic reasons, he decided to use a larger harp from Michoacán (one common in mariachi) that would allow him to play standing (La jornada 2007).

Along with other innovators of this early cinematic and recording industry like Lino Chávez, Andrés Huesca and other early professional son jarocho musicians shaped the modern
jarocho sound and performance styles with the conjunto jarocho. One of the characteristic sounds of this time was rapid tempo and virtuosic harp and requinto playing. Lino Chávez became the requinto innovator as Huesca was for the harp. Aside from technological advancements in sound and film recordings, the Mexican state was also curating its international image to attract tourism and further embed the nationalism ideology of mestizaje in its artistic institutions. From film and music recordings to the national Ballet Folklórico stage, musics that were considered thoroughly mestizo or having undergone the process of mestizaje were at the forefront in these productions. Along with mariachi, son jarocho from the thoroughly mestizo state of Veracruz became an important genre to represent the nation-state in film, recordings, and stage.

Without a doubt, Andrés Huesca and Lino Chávez’s instrumental arrangements and ensemble contributions inspired numerous future professional son jarocho groups. The conjuntos jarocho became standardized with four instruments: the large harp, requinto, guitar, and jarana. Aside from the inclusion of the large harp, which necessitated a standing performance, the musical arrangements were also standardized. Recordings in the style of Lino Chávez and Andrés Huesca feature fast tempos, accentuated melodic runs on the harp, usually only a single lead singer, and no zapateado or percussion. Fast tempos were clearly in fashion at this time, which also displayed the virtuosity and technical skill of the performers. Interestingly, the virtuosic performance style in these conjuntos jarocho parallels what Robert Cantwell describes in his analysis of the formation of bluegrass out of oldtime country music in the United States (1984). Fast tempos and virtuosity were markers of a modern sound that was part of the birth of the music recording industry, technological innovation, and a forward-looking nation.

20 While the commercial conjuntos dropped zapateado, the Ballet Folkórico professionalized and folkloricized the dance for national and international stages.
Additionally, these commercial recordings featured standardized verse construction. Perhaps the quality and quantity of verses in the commercial son jarocho recordings are related to the limitations of recording technologies of the era. Yet, it is important to note that these recordings typically present two types of verse structure: first, one singer, who sings verses solo; second, a solo singer with a chorus responding to the soloist. In the case of a chorus responding to a soloist, the chorus responds in harmonic thirds, another typical feature of Mexican genres of the time, especially mariachi. As it will be discussed later, non-commercial son jarocho performance, especially in a fandango setting, includes many singers/callers with many responders, all exchanging turns as the callers and responders. Almost all of the son jarocho repertoire has what could be called, in Western music terminology, an “antiphonal” structure, in the sense that a soloist sings or declares a verse and another performer replies by repeating the same verse or different line of verse, depending on the son that is being performed. It should be noted that this antiphonal response structure is different from musics with a call-and-response structure found in many Afro-Caribbean genres.

In Afro-Caribbean genres such as the Cuban rumba, the call-and-response structure typically has a response that is repeated within a brief ostinato span (Manuel 2016:10). In son jarocho, the antiphonal structure is an alternation of verses between two singers, not a repeated group response that might suggest a close African musical affinity. Nevertheless, this back and forth singing and responding form is not presented this way in the commercial recordings of the 1940-1960s. Instead, the commercial recordings present vocal arrangements that aesthetically fit with trends of their time, particularly the trends set by mariachi and other popular Mexican genres that emphasize virtuosic three-part harmony.
Also important to the discussion of son jarocho recordings from this era is the absence of women. Although women are thoroughly unrepresented in commercial Mexican music in general, it is worth noting that non-commercial son jarocho has traditionally allowed space for women’s participation and performance. The percussive dance zapateado is conspicuously absent from commercial recordings and concert performances, and zapateado is a significant part of women’s contribution to son jarocho music making. This leads one to ask if this was another limitation in recording technology and techniques of the time, because the tarima may have been a difficult instrument to incorporate into studio recordings. Even though the conjuntos jarocho did not include zapateado, there was the bifurcated development of music and dance in separate spheres—Ballet Folklórico and commercial recordings. For the most part, the dance aspects of Mexican son practices became folkloricized in the staged performances of the BFM and included both male and female dancers, while the musical performances professionalized in commercial conjuntos. However, it is worth noting that women were sometimes “visible” in the commercial conjunto group, but they usually appeared in films as silent members of the group, standing with the conjunto and not contributing to the sound. In an interview with a jaranero and dancer in New York City, she sees this as the “pretty girl” addition to a group—not a participating musical member of the ensemble (interview, July 29, 2016). The gender configurations and importance of zapateado are further discussed in Chapter 4.

Since the commercial or urban form of son jarocho became the standard and widely circulated as the representative sound and image of the genre, it is not surprising that many in Mexico and in the U.S. recognize this representation as the only form of son jarocho. It must be emphasized that even though there were multiple varieties of son jarocho existing at the same
time, the commercial recording of the conjunto jarocho was, and one can argue still is, the dominant form.

Yet, while son jarocho was “alive” in the commercial conjunto presentational form, the rural practices in Veracruz were “dying out.” The local practice of the fandango was dwindling due to many factors, namely that the elders of son jarocho communities were passing away and the youth had either migrated out to urban centers for work or were disinterested in the traditions. The mid-twentieth century in Mexico was a time of great change, not just in terms of industry, recording technology, and post-Revolutionary societal restructuring. By the 1970s, Mexico’s population had transformed from rural to urban (García de León 2009:58). Fewer and fewer young people remained in rural areas as they more frequently migrated to urban areas for economic opportunity and necessity. Because of this rural-urban migration, fewer people remained to carry on the son jarocho practices of the fandango and daily music making. The movimiento jaranero addressed these issues. Both musicians and intellectuals of the movimiento aimed to rescue the participatory fandango practice in the rural areas of Veracruz and preserve the music in a way that would ensure its transmission and future practice.

**Literature Connected to the Movimiento Jaranero and Contemporary Son Jarocho**

Many actors play important roles in the development of what is now called the movimiento jaranero. The musicians that actively participated in the movimiento were from an older generation of musicians, such as the “father of the son jarocho renaissance,” Don Arcadio Hidalgo (1893-1985), who performed with and taught young musicians in the early stages of the
movimiento.\textsuperscript{21} Although academics and intellectuals participated in the revival from the beginning, the published work about the movimiento jaranero has emerged more recently. In the last decade, there have been numerous articles and monographs ranging from histories of son jarocho and of the revival, to performance analyses and music theory (Ávila Landa 2009; Cardona 2006; Figueroa Hernández 2007, 2015; García de León 2009; González, Martha 2009, 2011; González Paraíso 2014; Hernández 2013; Pérez Hernández 2003). These publications range widely from academic to popular in tone, some with rigorous archival evidence that supports the author’s argument and others relying upon anecdotal, popular histories for evidence and narrative.

In her dissertation research (2014), Raquel González Paraíso outlines four distinct stages of development of the movimiento jaranero. The first stage was the late 1970s and early 1980s. This stage came after the decline of son jarocho practices in rural areas (1950s-1970s), and coincides with the first Encuentro in 1979. At this time, young musicians were actively seeking out older musicians to learn the varieties of son jarocho. The younger musicians learned from the elders, establishing a revived fandango culture where music, dance, and traditional poetry served as the vehicles for passing down cultural heritage (2014:177). Additionally, new recordings were produced featuring varieties of the genre that were more representative of the music than the “urban” or commercialized version of son jarocho that had come to dominate radio and other media. This early stage of the movimiento jaranero occurred at roughly the same time as other folklore movements elsewhere in Latin America. By the late 1960s and into the early 1970s, movements like \textit{nueva canción} were emerging as musical reactions to commercial music and

political circumstances of the era, emphasizing a return to or re-incorporation of indigenous music and instruments. One could draw conclusions that the movimiento jaranero should be understood in the historical context of the many political movements in Latin America, movements for the independence of African and Caribbean nations, and the Civil Rights movement in the U.S.

The second phase of the movimiento falls between the years 1985-1993. During this period, son jarocho was consolidated at the regional level. González Paraíso continues, “For Barradas (2010), the most important element in this phase was the consolidation of a ‘collective Jarocho consciousness,’ which among young generations translated into politicized action channeled mostly through the reclaiming of dance and lyrics as a statement of ownership of culture” (177). Simultaneously, Californian Chicano musicians were developing their own awareness and performance of son jarocho. Steven Loza describes in his article “Veracruz to Los Angeles: The Reinterpretation of the ‘Son Jarocho’,” the development of a Chicano son jarocho through the 1970s and into the 1980s with groups like Los Lobos (1992). In an interesting correlation with the second phase of the movimiento jaranero, Loza argues that young Chicanos in Los Angeles were involved in maintaining their identities, which involved an active appropriation of Mexican traditions like son jarocho (188).

The third phase was between 1993-2000. During this phase, there was a national expansion of the son jarocho movement. The Encuentro in Tlacotalpan became even more popular, with attendees and participants, ranging in the thousands. Additionally, many more

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22 What Loza describes in Los Angeles seems to examine a middle-class movement of young educated Chicanos that were politically active rather than the many working-class musicians who performed son jarocho in the style of Lino Chávez or Andrés Huesca. Instead, his research is focused on innovators of son jarocho, and in particular, musicians who were blending son jarocho with rock and other genres.
groups were formed and began to record new son jarocho: “Coinciding with this phase was the establishment of groups such as Chuchumbé and Son de Madera, and the consolidation of other groups that were already on the music scene such as Siquisirí, Los Parientes de Playa Vicente, Zacamandú, and Mono Blanco” (González Paraíso 2014:177). At this time, son jarocho became “cool” to play in urban centers like Mexico City. It is worth pointing out that many of the popular, contemporary son jarocho recordings that the New York City community listens to and knows come from this formative phase of the movimiento jaranero, and the groups that González Paraíso mentions are some of the most popular among the New York City community members. Recordings of these groups are often used for listening practice, and arrangements of sones are imitated in the style of these groups by New York jaraneros.

In the fourth phase of the movimiento jaranero (2000-present), there has been a rapid expansion of son jarocho and movement into the international arena. Through digital media, son jarocho became easily disseminated and spread to cities in the U.S., across Mexico, and other places. The New York City community clearly reflects this aspect—much of the community’s communication occurs through the social media platform Facebook. In an interesting comparison, Lausevic notes a similar reliance on digital media and communication among Balkan music enthusiasts in the U.S. (2007). The Balkan music communities organized and generated discourse about the music through online chatrooms and internet webpages (18). The rapid internationalization and expansion of son jarocho exposes some challenges and downsides. For instance, many rural areas are depleted of musicians who have migrated outward for performance opportunities. All the good-paying and steady work is in cities and abroad, not in the rural towns. This predicament of rural-urban migration in the contemporary moment is ironic
in light of the movimiento jaranero’s initial object of revitalizing a dwindling rural practice that partially began to decline due to rural-urban migration.

Another issue that arises out of the actions of the movimiento relates to questions of “authenticity.” González Paraíso observes that, with the spread of son jarocho, elders and veteran musicians are concerned that some important concepts are not fully grasped, such as the fandango (2014:179-80). Some concerns of older generations were that the new young participants at fandangos did not fully understand the ritual and purpose of the musical event. For many older generations, the changes in the son jarocho tradition since its rebirth or revitalization are not good for the community tradition. For example, the international expansion of son jarocho has led to further standardization of tunings, when in rural settings, there has not always been a standard tuning for instruments. On the one hand, jarana tunings and key signatures for son performance have become standardized as a result of the internationalization of the movement. On the other, individual communities, New York City servings as an example, have elaborated traditions and prescriptions from the movimiento. In New York City, most teachers use the now standard tuning for jarana: (from bottom course to top) G-AA-EE-CC-G. This standard tuning is certainly used in other U.S. son jarocho sites. I encountered this when I attended a fandango in Austin, TX for example.

Overall, the academic work on son jarocho and the movimiento jaranero seeks to construct a more accurate, though still potentially essentialized, history of son jarocho’s cultural roots and musical formation. In particular, analyses of the ways son jarocho and the fandango functioned as rituals of social control and hierarchy are absent. Most scholars of son jarocho emphasize the African roots of the music, pointing to words in the son jarocho poetic repertoire that have African etymology and tracing the prominent rhythmic characteristics such as hemiola.
in son jarocho to African polyrhythms (Pérez Hernández 2003). However, very few of these scholars can point to a specific place in Africa from which these African words and rhythms come. García de León traces etymologies of particular words to specific West African languages and origins, but his work is exceptional among the literature about African origins of son jarocho (2009:27). Some scholars even claim that son jarocho has Arab legacies (González, Martha 2011:60). Again, García de León writes that son jarocho has sonic “reminiscences of the music of the Arab-Andaluz and the Maghreb from the 15th century” (2009:41). These claims regarding the “roots” of son jarocho are a central focus for many scholars (Figueroa Hernández 2007, García de León 2009, Pérez Hernández 2003, Pérez Montfort 1991). Some of the literature accurately identifies connections to musical sources and origins, but other writers tend to generalize about historical roots of the music with phrases such as “African roots.” Understandably, intellectuals and musicians of the movimiento jaranero want to uncover histories of the music and cultural heritage of the Sotavento region that were previously understudied or lacked representation in Mexico’s post-Revolutionary construction of the national narrative. However, many of these intellectual projects only emphasize questions of origin, often presenting the “origin” as static and unchanging in the past.

Despite the many contradictions, the common thread throughout this literature is that the authors adopt the movimiento’s approach to son jarocho, or the ideology of a fandango-centered and participatory form of the music. Three principal themes emerge from movimiento scholarship: 1) a privileging of the fandango and rural roots as the “authentic” performance practice of son jarocho, 2) African roots and heritage in son jarocho, and 3) an essence of resistance or social protest in the music’s historical formation. Additionally, these themes are reactions against the conjuntos jarochos and commercial recordings from the 1930s-1960s and
do not necessarily consider the historical context for the original formation of the urban conjuntos.

First, the movimiento jaranero values and promotes the fandango-centered performance of son jarocho. This comes out of the assumption that the fandango is and was the principal and original social context for the music. Furthermore, the fandango is largely framed as a rural event, even though there is evidence that fandangos occurred as urban events throughout son jarocho’s history. Ishtar Cardona (2006) explains the centrality of the fandango in the revival in her article:

By the early seventies, some voices begin to question the logic of the prevailing aesthetic in son jarocho and proposed to “rescue” the real Veracruz musical tradition, hidden under patent leather shoes and plastic fans. Young musicians, historians, and anthropologists, mostly from the region, begin to search for and retrieve old rural jaraneros from oblivion, who were never professionalized but were recognized in the former fandangos. (2006:4)

Cardona clearly references the commercial conjunto image of son jarocho: uniforms and stylized accessories. For the revivalists, the fandango is the authentic form for son jarocho, and within it, holds the knowledge of the rural jaraneros, making its rescue critically important.

Perhaps similar to other revivalist projects, there was a cultural anxiety around a changing society, which galvanized musicians and intellectuals to rescue the dying fandango practices. In her article about musical revivals, Tamara Livingston (1999) describes revivals as an important feature of the twentieth-century musical landscape. She continues, “Musical revivals are middle class phenomena which play an important role in the formation and maintenance of a class-based identity of subgroups of individuals disaffected with aspects of contemporary society” (1999:66). Consistent with Livingston’s description of revival characteristics, García de León reflects on the “disaffection” that revivalists felt and that compelled them to revive the fandango:
Consequently, the recovery of the past that was recently made was also inserted in a widespread feeling of yearning, a nostalgia born out of the sudden collapse of a past that is so close to us. Peasant Mexico was still alive at the beginning of the second half of the twentieth century. But today, we are more distant from it than the generation before ours. And it is around the postwar years, that people were still living in a social context more similar to the colonial world than at the beginning of the twenty-first century in Mexico. In this sense, many of the cultural continuities in rural life had continued to reproduce without interruption and had not been fundamentally altered, not even by the social commotions of the immediate past. However, an enormous and irreversible rupture occurred in this country in the 1960s and 1970s, when Mexican society ceased to be predominantly rural. It expanded its margins of population growth and it fully entered into an urban world of characteristics never seen before. (2009:58)

Livingston also notes that, generally, revivalists search to preserve the “authentic” music (1999:74). In the case of the movimiento jaranero, its actions tend to emphasize the rural qualities of the fandango as the “true” and “authentic” form for son jarocho performance. The rural values of community and cooperation are prioritized over style and professionalism. The concept of convivencia, which will be discussed briefly in this chapter and more deeply in the next, is the understanding that the fandango and practice of son jarocho rely upon coexistence, cooperation, and participation. Though not explicitly mentioned in most of the son jarocho literature, I argue that this is an implicit assumption of most son jarocho scholars. Furthermore, the idea of convivencia and the fandango represent a return to an idealized rural community that both the participants of the movimiento jaranero recognize and scholars point to as well.

Without a doubt, fandangos and son jarocho practice existed in the secluded, rural areas of Veracruz in the past. For instance, in his annotated collection of travel journals and accounts of Veracruz, García de León gives ample evidence that son jarocho practices existed in the rural areas of the Sotavento throughout the colonial period. In the travel journals from the early 19th century that García de León collected, writers describe the music and dance of the Veracruz people with drawings and short transcriptions. However, García de León complicates this notion
of the rural fandango and describes the urban nature of son jarocho in the introduction to his multi-century history of the genre. He describes the formation of son jarocho as a “gradual absorption” of the sonecitos del país (regional son practices from and around Veracruz) and the rural dances from the Sotavento region. Over centuries of cultural and musical exchange between the urban port area and the rural communities of the Sotavento, son jarocho also developed in the urban center (2009:18). García de León provides evidence that fandangos occurred in both rural and urban areas of colonial Veracruz, and that the genre has multiple sources, such as the Andalusian fandango and tonadillas escénicas (staged popular songs from Spain during the eighteenth century), which first arrived in Veracruz through the urban port. It is important to note the way García de León emphasizes the urban/rural mixture of son jarocho. Perhaps this could be interpreted as countering the idealization of the “rural” as an exclusive historical site for fandangos and son jarocho. Whether son jarocho was urban or rural, the participatory nature of the fandango is the central source for historical analysis.\(^{23}\)

Furthermore, the fandango is theorized and valued as a mestizo cultural form that is in conflict with Spanish colonial powers and part of Mexico’s national identity in the independence struggle. Ricardo Pérez Montfort describes the fandango as forged in opposition to the hegemonic, peninsular culture; instead of adopting Spanish cultural values, fandangos are seen as the mestizo culture that is forged from local values (1991:45). He writes, “Thus, they (fandangos) also served as an affirmation of their own—the mestizo or the creole—ahead of the rejection of the outsider—the Spaniard. Its affirmation, in this way, was not accomplished with festive ambitions of the ‘people’ but introduced a strong valorization of the ‘Mexican’” (44-45).

\(^{23}\) In light of son jarocho’s urban colonial roots, the development of the rural fandango may be understood as a gradual transformation of a staged performance to a participatory one.
This assertion may be untenable, especially in light of Turino’s analysis of early independence movements in the nineteenth century. Perhaps the “people” may have understood son jarocho as a valorization of their identities, but the Mexican state would not recognize this until a century later, after the Revolution. Nevertheless, with this argument and many others, there is an implicit acceptance of the mestizo and mestizaje narrative.

Second, scholars have recently focused their attention on the relationship between son jarocho and “Africa.” Historically, Mexico has not given much value or visibility to its citizens of African descent. The Mexican government only officially began to recognize them in 2015, in preparation for the 2020 census that will include the demographic category for the first time in the nation’s history.24 Musicians and intellectuals from the movimiento jaranero acknowledge and promote the African heritage in son jarocho and in Mexican culture for Veracruz was the slave port for colonial Mexico. Musicians and jaraneros frequently emphasize the African history of the music precisely because it has been ignored and absent from mainstream Mexican history for so long. Just in the last decade, scholars have interrogated Mexico’s colonial history that included the slave trade, practices of slavery, free Africans, and the close economic relationship between Mexico and the Afro-Caribbean. This trend is not limited to just scholarship on son jarocho, but academic inquiry into Afro-Mexico is a blooming, contemporary field. Examples of U.S. scholarship on the subject include Bennett (2009), Bristol (2007), Githiora (2009), González (2004 and 2010), Hernández Cuevas (2004), and Vinson III (2009).25 For U.S.-based

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25 Vinson III’s introduction to Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times provides a concise summary of the historical sub-field of Afro-Mexico.
scholarship, the Afro-Mexican field of research continues to contribute to the robust field of African diaspora and Black Atlantic studies.

In Mexico, a number of academic inquiries into Afro-Mexico have emerged in recent years as well. In terms of literature on son jarocho, the “Afro” question is treated differently among Mexican scholars. To date, the most in-depth historical work on son jarocho has been from scholar Antonio García de León, whose history includes a detailed collection of archival material that chronicles the genre through several centuries. García de León writes a comprehensive history without making loose claims of “African influence” or broad sweeping descriptions of “authentic rural music.” His history of son jarocho is, indeed, related to the movimiento’s preoccupation with the roots of the music, but his constructed history is even-handed and successfully contextualizes the music within its historical moments and its relationship to other places. For example, he describes the historical moment in which commerce and trade circulated throughout the Caribbean during the colonial period:

In this way, while the interior Sotavento shows a growing solidification of folklore, the port is better characterized by developing a constant adaptation to the diverse musical styles arriving from Europe, the Caribbean and other American spaces: a cosmopolitanism that until today emphatically separated it from the rural areas... Being like this, we can say that the fiesta jarocho is, originally, a singular product of the mercantile transactions shaped by overlapping layers, by ebbs and tides, and by the intense coming and going of slave traders, sailors and maritime people, drivers, passersby, and people of everyday life. (2009:18)

García de León’s remarks also illustrate that the mixture of urban and rural life that contributed to the formation of son jarocho was comprised of many different groups, including mixed-race people of both indigenous and African descent (21). During this period, slaves were circulated between key colonial ports: Havana, New Orleans, and eventually arriving in Veracruz. Importantly, García de León emphasizes that many of the African people brought to Mexico first arrived in Cuba and later came to Mexico. This flow of musical mixture complicates the notion
that the African musical contributions to son jarocho are “purely” African. Instead, African people had already been in the Caribbean, and with their arrival in Mexico brought with them syncretic religious practices and musical practices already touched by creolization in the Afro-Caribbean (27). However, his historical description leaves the reader wanting something more. His work does not overtly critique the way the Mexican state has excluded people of African descent from the national narrative. Rather, it expands the theory of “mestizaje” and the national mestizo narrative to more explicitly include Afro-Mexicans without questioning the theory of mestizaje itself.

While García de León’s work is very important to the development of an Afro-Mexican, inclusive history of son jarocho, Rolando Antonio Pérez Hernández analyzes rhythm in son jarocho to uncover its Afro-Mexican character. His most well-known theory and analysis relate to the question of binarization of African timelines and tertiary rhythms. In his article “El son jarocho como expresión musical afromestiza” (Son Jarocho as Afromestizo Musical Expression) (2003), he analyzes the rhythmic patterns in jarana strumming. In many sones, the jarana rasgueos (strumming patterns) are composed of two, six-beat patterns that contrast with each other in a twelve-beat rhythmic cycle. Pérez Hernández compares these patterns with West African timelines, drawing on the work of ethnomusicologists David Locke, Gerhard Kubik, and J.H. Kwabena Nketia. He writes, “The particularities of execution (of the jarana), just as the percussive character of the rasgueos and the diverse forms of attack and articulation in the strummed chordophones—with the consequential varieties of timbre and pitch classes—can be equally rooted in African musical practices” (2003:42). His analysis continues with a discussion

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26 In workshops with jaranero musicians, I have heard Rolando Antonio Pérez Hernández explicitly referenced in discussions about the African qualities of son jarocho.
of common rhythmic conventions, such as cross-rhythms and hemiola, found in both contemporary son jarocho and West African musics.\textsuperscript{27} Although his observations are accurate, his analysis would be more productive if perhaps other contemporary Afro-Mexican musical forms were included. In contrast, the work of Lilly Alcántara Henze examines son jarocho’s formation in the context of the different regional Afro-Mexican musics: son guerrerense and chilena from the Costa Chica in the state of Guerrero (2011). Her research does not rely on music theory and analysis, but on a comparison of fandango instrumentation and social structure among the different Afro-Mexican genres. By comparing two distinct Mexican sones with African roots, she contextualizes the contemporary formations of both son jarocho and son guerrerense. Moreover, while analyses like that of Pérez Hernández are productive for analytical purposes, they risk a continued acceptance of the mestizaje narrative that erases much of Mexico’s living Afro-Mexican and indigenous populations by continuing to position the music in the past.

Other than the rhythmic structures of jarana strumming patterns and the hemiola, some scholars label the singing structure of son jarocho as “call-and-response” instead of “antiphonal.” As mentioned briefly before in this chapter, “call-and-response” typically suggests that a music has African affinities, like the genres of Afro-Puerto Rican bomba. In his overview of son jarocho musical structure, Rafael Figueroa Hernández uses the phrase “call-and-response” to describe the singing structure of the music. He writes that the music has “pregunta y respuesta” (question and response) that very likely comes from the black side (lado negro) of the legacies of

\textsuperscript{27} Pérez Hernández’s emphasis on hemiola in son jarocho neglects the fact that other Mexican sones exhibit this rhythmic feature, such as son jalisciense and son huasteco.
Randall Kohl describes the singing form of son jarocho as *llamada y respuesta* (call and response) in which a single voice sings and various voices respond, but does not ascribe African origin to this format (2007:150). For various reasons, these authors and others may be loosely using the musical term “call-and-response” without necessarily identifying son jarocho singing structure as being of African inheritance. One notable exception in the repertoire of son jarocho that could be identified as having a “call-and-response” is the *son* “El coco” (The coco, similar to an undomesticated chicken, native to the Sotavento region). In “El coco,” the *estribillo* (refrain) section resembles a *montuno*, which Peter Manuel defines as “the final, usually longest, part of a rumba, *son*, or salsa song, employing call-and-response vocals over a rhythmic and harmonic ostinato” (2016:320). In the estribillo of “El coco,” which is the longest section of the *son* and can be extended as long as the lead singer wants, the soloist calls out a mixture of memorized and improvised verses with an alternating group responding “Coco.” The compás of the *son*, transcribed in triple meter, oscillates between the minor “i” chord and the major V7 chord, as transcribed by Daniel Sheehy (1979:192).

![Figure 2 Compás for “El coco” transcribed by Daniel Sheehy.](image)

An example of verses for the estribillo of “El coco” is below (Sheehy 1979:193). Between each line of verse that the lead caller or singer declares, a chorus—usually the rest of the fandango circle—responds with “coco!” The response lines of verse are in brackets.

\[
(Coco) \\
Te quise rendido \quad \text{I wanted to give you up}
\]

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28 “…pregunta y respuesta que muy probablemente provenga del lado negro de la herencias del *son jarocho*” (Figueroa Hernández 2007:32).
Daniel Sheehy outlines the strophic estribillo, as follows (1979:193):

![Figure 3 Alternating refrain and lead call in the estribillo of “El coco.”](image)

With the four-measure compás that oscillates between the minor i chord and the major V7 chord, the estribillo of “El coco” resembles a montuno, where the refrain or chorus repeats the same phrase over the rhythmic and harmonic ostinato. This son is unique in the repertoire of son jarocho. Perhaps it could be identified as having more affinities with Afro-Caribbean call-and-response structure, but how and when those affinities developed is another research question regarding Afro-Mexican music.

Additionally, while some scholars claim that the singing practices the participatory character of son jarocho are linked to West African practices, they may relate more to Spanish vernacular traditional dance and song transplanted to Mexico and Latin America during the
colonial period. García de León claims that the majority of sones jarochos come from the Andalusian dances from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (2009:54). Recently, scholars of Spanish popular dance and music have also inquired about the relationship between the “fandango” in southern Spain, West African dance and music forms, and the American fandango forms found in Mexico, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Panama, Colombia, and Cuba (Goldberg and Pizà, ed. 2015). According to Miguel Ángel Berlanga, the Spanish fandango of the nineteenth century (from Southern Spain, or contemporary Andalusia) can be characterized by specific musical features that resemble the music in fandangos jarochos from the same era (2015:174). Berlanga describes the common features of jotas, seguidillas, and fandangos and places them under the umbrella term: “fandango musics” from Southern Spain. Below is an abbreviated list of the characteristics he identifies. The “fandango musics” feature:

- Coplas sung by soloists with instrumental accompaniment for pairs of dancers;
- String orchestras, emphasizing strummed guitar and some percussion;
- Similar musical structures that follow: instrumental introduction, verse, instrumental interlude, verse, etc., sung an undetermined number of times, varying on every occasion;
- Triple meters with cycles of six or twelve beats with a flexible melody over a harmonic-rhythmic cycle;
- Coplas are octosyllabic and are sung in quartets and quintets. (175)

Interestingly, some of these features are characteristics of contemporary son jarocho music that is performed at a fandango. Although Berlanga’s article excludes an analysis of the physical characteristics of the dance in the Spanish fandangos, his description of the musical structure

29 The articles that research the Spain-Americas-Africa relationships in the “fandango” come out of a 2015 conference in the published proceedings (Goldberg and Pizà 2015). Throughout the conference, a number of scholars examined various musical, verse, and social characteristics of fandangos between Spain and the Americas that illustrate the historical connections and relationships, revealing the continuities and changes among the different “fandangos.”

30 Berlanga hypothesizes that the twelve beat rhythmic cycles are a musical tendency that took place in America, “possibly due to the interaction with African rhythmic precedents” (2015:175).
relies on an extremely common form: instrumental section/ lyrics/ instrumental section/ lyrics/ etc. This form parallels that of son jarocho fandangos, but is nonetheless a highly used musical structure in many genres. Berlanga also writes that the “common element between these diverse fandangos” was not in musical form, but that these fandangos were traditions “linked to specific types of dances at specific types of social gatherings, almost always danced in pairs” (174).

Further into Berlanga’s comparison between Spanish fandangos and American fandangos, he includes contrasting percussive elements: castanets and zapateado. The Spanish fandango, according to Berlanga, heavily features castanets for percussion with little “footwork.” In contrast, the American fandango does not have castanets for percussion but instead, footwork or zapateado on the tarima (177). Presumably, the percussive zapateado replaces the castanets and transforms the way dance is incorporated into the music. Moreover, the historical relationship between Spanish popular dances and music and son jarocho pertains to the processes of social and cultural integration over the centuries-long exchange that began in the colonial era.

The third area that scholars analyze is the relationship between son jarocho performance and social protest. Musicians and activists have used and continue to use son jarocho as a musical vehicle for social protest. One prominent contemporary example is the annual Fandango Fronterizo (Border Fandango) that occurs on both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border fence between Tijuana and San Diego. This past year the fandango fronterizo was held on May 28.31 For the past nine years, the fandango fronterizo has been a social action that demonstrates solidarity on both sides of the border and protests the political walls that keep families and people separated. Clearly, from the example of the fandango fronterizo, son jarocho is used as a protest genre, not unlike other folk musics. Nevertheless, aside from these obvious examples of

31 http://fandangofronterizoediciones.blogspot.mx/
protest uses, some scholars link contemporary protest contexts with an essence of resistance in son jarocho. This link is tenuous, but there is some archival evidence that son jarocho may have been used as “protest music” as early as the eighteenth century. In his chapter “Hidden Histories of Resistance in Mexico’s Son Jarocho,” Alexandro Hernández writes, “From censorship, punishment, and imprisonment of son jarocho musicians and dancers during the Holy Inquisition of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century New Spain (Mexico), to solidarity exchanges in Zapatista rebel camps in the 1990s, the son jarocho functions as a musical demand for social justice and lyrically picaresque resistance” (2013:475). Although a relationship between contemporary protest uses of son jarocho and historical resistance of son jarocho musicians seems plausible, the more tenable connection most likely lies in a method of musical practice that facilitates resistance and protest music: participation. Interviews with members of the New York City community confirm that many see themselves as political beings but not explicitly activists, and their practice of son jarocho complements their ideas about resistance to normative practices of the capitalist consumption of music. Instead of being passive consumers of music, many in the New York City community see themselves as challenging their identities as consumers by actively participating in the creation of music, especially at a fandango. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see how direct political action and explicit politics will be intertwined in the son jarocho community in New York City, elsewhere in the U.S., and in Mexico during the present political era of anti-immigrant sentiment and aggressive deportation policy that has continued from the Bush and Obama presidencies. Furthermore, although the literature on son jarocho does not explicitly identify anti-consumerism or anti-capitalism as reasons for the movimiento jaranero, it is plausible that revivalists were concerned with these issues, especially since the
revival was, in part, a response to the commercial standardization of son jarocho from the 1940s-60s and the urbanization of Mexico’s formerly rural population.

Participants in the Movimiento Jaranero and Connections to the New York City Community

Since the beginning of the movement in the late 1970s, many different actors have been important to the realization of the movimiento jaranero. Musicians from Veracruz have been essential for their deep knowledge and understanding of the music and traditions of son jarocho, such as the late Don Arcadio Hidalgo who performed with the Grupo Mono Blanco from the early stages of the moviminto (Ávila Landa 2009:171). Cultural and educational institutions at both the federal and state level have been crucial for their network of state infrastructure and funding. Some institutions that initially supported the promotion of the movimiento jaranero at the federal level included: Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP, Ministry of Public Education), Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA, National Institute of Fine Arts), and Dirección General de Culturas Populares (DGCP, General Administration of Popular Culture). At the state level, institutions that supported the work of the movimiento have been: Instituto Veracruzano de Cultura (IVEC, Veracruz Institute of Culture), the state government of Veracruz, and the Universidad Veracruzana (University of Veracruz) (2009:168). Intellectuals have also been important to the continued development and dissemination of the movimiento’s values and goals. Prominent scholars of Mexican popular culture and history like Ricardo Pérez Montfort and Antonio García de León, who have published on son jarocho in decades since its revival, were also local promoters and musician-participants in the movement since its inception.
According to Veracruz anthropologist Homero Ávila Landa, the movement initially revolved around cultural and identity expansion within the state of Veracruz and its southern region, the Sotavento. The principal actors of this movement were the state, working through cultural institutions, programs, official promoters, and community members of the region (2009:166). The promotion of current practices of son jarocho and fandango was the central concern for the movement. In order to promote these fading practices, the movement’s actors focused on revitalizing actions. Ávila Landa lists these principal actions:

1. Execution of workshops or classes in which the knowledge of the central practices of son jarocho is transmitted. These include: performance and interpretation of sones, zapateado dance, construction of jaranas (lute-making), décima creation, and fandango grammar.
2. The celebration of community fandangos, rural and urban.
3. Celebration of Encuentros and Festivals.
4. Round table organization: seminars, publication of cultural products, exchanges of experiences and other actions to recuperate these popular expressions.
5. Carrying out of group tours and visits inside and outside the Sotavento region, allowing for the intersection of the son in national and international cultural circuits.
6. Recording of son jarocho and documentation of the peasant life with ties to son jarocho.
7. Intersection of the son in the global circuits of consumption and cultural markets. (2009:167)

Through the above listed practices and prescriptions, the movimiento jaranero dogmatically approached the revival of son jarocho. Ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade writes in *Thinking Musically* that there are three conditions that must be met for music to be preserved in a tradition. The three conditions are: 1) “One intends to remember the music precisely as learned”; 2) “a system for learning the music so thoroughly that it is not likely to be forgotten”; 3) “a system that assures that memory of the music will be periodically renewed” (2013:23-24). These prescribed actions align with Livingston’s assessment that revivals have a strong pedagogical component (1999:73). Furthermore, like a strong oral/aural system of transmission, the actors of
the movimiento jaranero sought to create a system that would renew itself and maintain practices of son jarocho into the future. In New York City, the son jarocho musicians and community members engage in all of the prescribed actions of the movimiento jaranero as outlined by Ávila Landa: weekly jarana and other workshops, monthly community fandangos, annual encuentros, and more.

As for elaborations and innovations in son jarocho, the New York City community has had multiple luthier workshops to build and construct jaranas. Instead of the traditional method of jarana construction in Veracruz, which carves the entire body of the jarana from a single piece of wood, the New York City community uses repurposed wood scraps. This approach displaces a traditional lute making method in exchange for a practical method that is both environmentally conscious and cost effective. Further, the wood used in New York City better suits the New York climate, which has greater temperature and humidity shifts. Jaranas from Veracruz tend to warp and get out of tune quite easily in New York’s climate.

Additionally, when a prominent musician from Los Vegas (a son jarocho ensemble and a prominent jaranero family from Veracruz) came to New York to teach jarana workshops to working-class youth in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, he was impressed by the fact that all the teens had made their own jaranas. He remarked, “Listen, that is not normal. Even the kids in Mexico don’t make their own instruments!” The teens in the workshop responded with proud smiles, “We’re really good like that” (interview March 22, 2015).

Most New York jaraneros do not seem overly concerned with the issue of “authenticity,” especially within their New York City context, and they understand that innovation and change will occur outside of the son jarocho homeland. Further, by living in New York City, a city with a relatively new Mexican population, the son jarocho community members are shielded from
many of the cultural brokers who might police or monitor their musical activity for “correct” or “authentic” performance. Yet, a few have had one or two negative experiences in Mexico with a Veracruzan objecting to their “outsider” invasion and appropriation of son jarocho (interview June 9, 2016).

By the early twenty-first century son jarocho has thoroughly been revitalized from the rural landscape in the Sotavento and now exists in urban and rural spaces internationally. Even though the movimiento jaranero is connected to Mexican state sponsorship, it appears to be much more organic in its contemporary formation. It clearly has a set of “rules” or prescriptions for son jarocho, but these rules do not seem to have the same weight as the state-sanctioned promotion of mestizaje through school curriculum, the Ballet Folklórico, and national tourism initiatives. The common correlation between the post-Revolutionary musical promotion and the movimiento jaranero is that they both extend outside Mexico’s borders. In a different time of communication technologies, the movimiento jaranero moved outside Veracruz and out of Mexico to become an internationally circulated idea and practice quite rapidly. The rise of digital communication and social media has coincided with the current phase and status of the movimiento jaranero. In contrast to the early twentieth-century Mexican music that the state promoted through mass media that were one-directional (radio, film, television, recordings), contemporary digital communications are more participatory or at least have the capability to be multidirectional and based on user-generated content. For instance, on YouTube there are many instructional videos created by professional and amateur jaraneros, which include content such as basic jarana strumming techniques or zapateado steps. Therefore, in this contemporary moment, the jaraneros of the movimiento are part of a larger, wider transnational community that sees itself as participating in a movement. The transnational quality of the movimiento jaranero does
not just have an “online presence,” but the active musicians of the movimiento who have access to artist visas, are constantly travelling to and from Mexico to teach, transmit, and build the jaranero network. Essentially, the New York City community is another transnational chapter of the much bigger transnational jaranero community.

Aside from the essential actions of the movimiento, Ávila Landa is also concerned with who participated in the original revitalization of son jarocho. His research focuses on the rural and indigenous youth of Veracruz, but he also provides a thorough list of cultural workers, intellectuals, and professional musicians who were significant to the revival. Many of the people and ensembles he lists are still working as cultural liaisons for son jarocho inside and outside of Mexico or are currently producing and publishing work about the music. Below are several actors of the movimiento jaranero that are directly related to the New York City community or are frequently cited by New Yorker jaraneros:

- Antonio García de León (Historian at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico), located in Mexico City)
- Ricardo Pérez Montfort (Anthropologist at UNAM)
- Rafael Figueroa Hernández (Comosuena project in Veracruz to disseminate son jarocho online)
- Rubí Oseguera Rueda (Musician in group Chuchumbé and cultural worker in Veracruz)
- Liche Oseguera Rueda (Musician in group Chuchumbé)
- Zenén Zeferino Huervo (Musician in groups Chuchumbé and Quemayama, currently living in New York City, performing and teaching son jarocho)
- Patricio Hidalgo Belli (Musician in groups Chuchumbé and Quemayama)
- Octavio Vega (Musician in Grupo Mono Blanco)
- Laura Rebolloso Cuellar (Musician in group Son de Madera, teacher in Veracruz)
- Leopolodo Novoa Matallana (musician in group Zacamandú and Chuchumbé and international performer and teacher). (Ávila Landa 2009:202-7)

Of the list above, several of these key actors, during the third and into the fourth phase of the movimiento jaranero, have come to New York City to give workshops on jarana and other instruments, zapateado, and other elements of son jarocho: Rubí Oseguera (zapateado workshop, December 2015), Zenén Zeferino (jarana and décima, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, and Winter 2017),
Patricio Hidalgo (jarana, September 2013), Laura Rebollosso (jarana and zapateado, March and August 2016) and Leopoldo Novoa (marimbol, June 2016). Although not mentioned in Ávila Landa’s list, Claudio Vega of the Vega family frequently comes to New York City for concerts and workshops. He last came for the New York jaraneros’ Encuentro de Son Jarocho in December 2016.

In addition to the people just mentioned, the son jarocho musicians and community of New York City constantly work to invite musicians from Mexico and elsewhere to teach and perform son jarocho. Every year for the past five years, the son jarocho community has hosted a number of guest teachers to give workshop series and performances around New York City. Some musicians are able to come for an extended period of time, like Zenén Zeferino who is now an artist-in-residence with the New York group Radio Jarocho since early 2016. In June 2016, Leopoldo Novoa gave a four-week long workshop (two days per week) on the marimbol (bass lamellophone common in Caribbean music). During his stay, he performed with the groups Radio Jarocho and Jarana Beat, giving concerts around New York City and at an upstate music and arts festival. Most musicians who come to New York can only visit for about one or two weeks, which is the average duration for a workshop series.

The figure below comes from the Facebook group called “Son Jarocho-EAST COAST,” which announces the upcoming visiting musicians and the logistics of the workshops. This particular workshop with Laura Rebollosso was only a week long and somewhat spontaneous.

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32 Radio Jarocho is one of the first ensembles to regularly perform son jarocho in New York City. In its current form, Radio Jarocho has evolved to feature its dancer, Julia del Palacio as the lead of the ensemble. This is a striking contrast to the commercial conjunto groups of the 1940s and 1950s, when women were almost never included in the group or only presented as an accessory to the other instrumentalists.
She had concerts scheduled in the Boston area in late July 2016, so she extended her stay in the Northeast to visit New York City and to give jarana lessons and integrated workshops.

![Advertisement for son jarocho workshops in New York City on the Facebook page “Son Jarocho- EAST COAST.”](image)

**Figure 4** Advertisement for son jarocho workshops in New York City on the Facebook page “Son Jarocho- EAST COAST.”

**Back and Forth between New York and Mexico**

Whether or not the major actors of the movimiento jaranero have visited New York City to give lessons or concerts does not limit their impact upon the New York City jaranero community’s appreciation of their work or the inspiration that has been generated to continue to learn and practice son jarocho. Many of the key members of the New York City community have traveled to Mexico and directly learned from the people of the movimiento jaranero. In response to my asking how members of the New York City community have learned son jarocho, many
have replied that they first encountered the music and culture in Mexico. Some were visiting Mexico for the first time, others were returning to visit family members, and some have brief childhood memories of son jarocho and Mexico that have been enhanced as they have become adults interested in the music.

In an interview with Julia del Palacio, who is a member of the ensemble Radio Jarocho in New York City, she fondly remembers her first childhood experiences with son jarocho. Her father was a researcher at the Colegio de México (College of Mexico, a prestigious public institution in Mexico City) and he recorded and collected poetry across Mexico for the publication *Cancionero folkórico mexicano* (Mexican Folkloric Songbook) (ed. Margit Frenk Alatorre, Colegio de México 1982). She describes her experience: “My dad did these field recordings in southern Veracruz, in Sotavento… He brought us, me and my brother went with him when we were little. And then he had these recordings at home, which were used for the book” (interview July 29, 2016). Julia shares a unique experience, one that is directly related to the movimiento activities of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The researchers of the movimiento recorded and transcribed many verses and examples of oral poetry from the southern Veracruz region. What is particularly interesting here is that Julia’s father was part of a state-commissioned folklore project, partly reflecting the post-Revolutionary collections of music in the 1920-30s. Even more, the cancionero that her father helped create is often cited by jaraneros as an excellent source for its profound catalogue of son jarocho verses.

However, Julia did not continue to listen to son jarocho recordings throughout her adolescence. It wasn’t until she was older, as an adult, that she reencountered the music:

But then in around 2000, I started dating this guy from Veracruz, he was from Santiago de Tuxla. He took me to see a fandango in Mexico City, it was like a concert-fandango in Mexico City. It was a culminating event for a workshop that Los Vega had taught, Fredy Naranjos Vega and a couple of other people had
taught. It was a jarana and zapateado workshop. And I sat there watching the concert and it was transformative for me. I remember very well seeing these dancers who had just started to dance, and dance “La guacamaya” and in a way it all came back to me those (times) when I was little when I used to listen to this music, but something clicked in me where I was like “I need…” I needed to learn how to dance this music, learn this music… So, I started taking little classes here and there… it was just starting to be taught in Mexico City. (Interview, July 29, 2016)

Julia’s experience is similar to that of others who have grown up in Mexico or Mexican Americans who frequently visited family in Mexico throughout their childhood. More interestingly, though, her relationship to son jarocho music comes through the various strains of the movimiento: from the academic researcher’s side and from the musician’s side, and from the early and later stages of the movimiento. She mentions the Vega family, which is one of the prominent jaranero families from Veracruz that have passed down the son jarocho tradition to younger generations and disseminated the music through their teaching, recordings, and concerts. In fact, both Fredy and Claudio Vega have visited New York City multiple times to give jarana, requinto, and other music workshops.

Many people in the New York City jaranero community have learned or experienced son jarocho directly from a variety of musicians that worked to revive and disseminate the music. Calvin Burton, a U.S.-born, non-Mexican professional artist and organizer in the community, first learned about son jarocho through recorded music while he lived in Veracruz after college. During his time in Xalapa, Veracruz, he was learning Spanish and exploring the art and culture of the city. He describes the first time he heard son jarocho: “And, I was in Xalapa and knew son jarocho originally from recordings because the time I first heard it I was in a restaurant and it was playing on a CD… Chuchumbé, ¡Caramba Niño!, their first CD” (interview on July 25, 2016). He continued to explain how he began to search for the recordings. From talking to locals in Xalapa, he eventually found the music. He said:
My Spanish at the time was so-so. And I was really into it (son jarocho). I went to buy the CD at a CD store and they didn’t have it, so they told me to go this cultural office where Rubí Oseguera was working. So, I went there and met her, this was in 2002. And she just gave me the CD, she just had copies of it. She was actually on the CD too I think. I think she was part of Chuchumbé.

After having found the cultural office in Xalapa and meeting Rubí Oseguera, Calvin, like others, immediately felt welcomed and more intrigued by the music and culture of son jarocho. And others from the New York City community shared similar experiences of generosity and openness in Veracruz.

In different interviews, Paula Sánchez-Kucukozer and Mehmet Kucukozer, who are amateur jaraneros, described their fascination with the ways the musicians of son jarocho in Veracruz welcomed them to learn the music. Paula, who is originally from Guadalajara, first learned son jarocho and the fandango in New York City but traveled to Veracruz with her spouse to experience the music. She and her spouse went to a week-long intensive seminar of workshops in San Andres de Tuxlas, Veracruz in the summer of 2013. This is a seminar that is held annually by the local musicians, many of whom have long been part of the revival of son jarocho. The seminar could be described as a “retreat” of son jarocho “camp,” similar to the Balkan camps described by Lausevic (2007). Paula described her experience in San Andres de Tuxlas:

I went to Tuxlas for a seminar, led by a group of campesinos (country folks). By the end of the week we were sharing our knowledge of what we learned. I began crying because of what they gave me. These people have no material possessions. Nothing. They have a “house” which is four walls and a roof. They have some land, but that’s it. Son jarocho is their generational inheritance. And they are so willing to give it to you. They give you their tradition with no strings attached. This is why I cried. They just give their culture to you. And it feels like an overwhelming responsibility, but I respect it and am grateful. (interview on June 6, 2016)

Her spouse Mehmet, a native New Yorker of Turkish descent, also described the generosity that he experienced at the workshops:
San Andres is a city, but there are rural communities all around. And we were going to those communities for fandangos. Los Baxin are from there. They were involved in the workshops. They invited us to their home. Their home was in the countryside of the city and it gave us an idea of the rural traditions and origins of the music. (interview on March 7, 2015)

It is important to note that many of the rural areas that hold these week-long workshops and seminars, were once the sites of the “authentic” rural fandango of a few centuries ago. Although the fandango lives on in these rural areas, it is sustained by foreigners and Mexican outsiders who come to learn how to play son jarocho in camp-like retreats, paying for the week-long workshops sessions. This income is one source of revenue that allows some of these rural communities in Veracruz to sustain themselves.

Besides the affective quality of many New York jaraneros’ experiences, the professional musicians in the community cite participants in the movimiento in their personal formation as jaraneros. Claudia Valentina, a Mexican-Jamaican American and professional musician and dancer formerly in the group Jarana Beat, grew up listening to Mexican radio with her family and traveling to Mexico every year, but never learned much about son jarocho outside of the commercial conjunto format. She remembers, “My dad used to take me to a seafood restaurant and one day I saw son jarocho for the first time. You know the marisquero (refers to the musicians that play at seafood restaurants) type where they’re dressed in white and the harp and everything. I was in awe. I was little” (interview August 17, 2016). Despite being of Mexican descent and having grown up in Mexico, Claudia’s and others’ experiences of son jarocho are unsurprising. Overwhelmingly, unless a person is from a jaranero family, s/he learns son jarocho through the networks of the movimiento jaranero. Claudia had a brief but lasting experience of son jarocho like Julia. Notably, Claudia’s early experience is related to the commercialized conjuntos that played in tourist areas and Veracruz-style seafood restaurants, wearing the typical
white jarocho costume. But as an adult, Claudia re-encountered the music through the movimiento jaranero’s reinterpretation and learned jarana, zapateado, and the singing style of son jarocho. Her recent learning experiences have all been with prominent actors from the movimiento jaranero. She states, “My favorite teachers have been Rubí Oseguera and Laura Rebolloso [who] just blew my mind. She opened up a whole… something… She unlocked something in the few classes that we had with her… I need to give credit to one other person. This is Fredy Vega’s wife. Rosario” (interview on August 17, 2016).

Some of the working-class individuals who have participated in jarana workshops and fandangos in New York City do not have the same diasporic relationship with Mexican music that Claudia has. Saul, a thirty-something man from Puebla, emigrated to New York City when he was sixteen. He now has a family in New York and works as a carpenter, living in Brooklyn. One point of pride for him is that he designed and built his own jarana in New York City in one of the luthier workshops led by Sinuhé Padilla Isunza, one of the lead organizers and teachers of the son jarocho community. Before one of our jarana lessons in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, he explained to me that he had never really listened to son jarocho before living in New York City. He described his knowledge of son jarocho as something that he had maybe heard on the radio a few times back in Puebla but never thought much about it. In New York City, he has the opportunity to learn how to play jarana, to sing, and to build his own instrument, all of which he never imagined for himself. He also describes his participation in the son jarocho community as a much-needed hobby for relaxation and a break from work. For middle-class individuals who have documented status and capital to travel between the U.S. and Mexico, son jarocho is understood in two temporal worlds: usually a childhood past and an adult present. For working-class individuals, son jarocho is often entirely new and an adult New York City-experience.
Nevertheless, the adult experiences of son jarocho in New York City are directly related to the dissemination of a *movimiento*-style of performance and fandango practice, regardless of class position.

**Convivencia and Fandango-Centered Learning**

In observing the experiences of individual members of the son jarocho community of New York City, it is apparent that their experiences not only intersect with the various stages or phases of the movimiento jaranero, but also reveal how the practice of convivencia is constant throughout these examples. In the example of Paula and Mehmet, the couple was astounded by the generosity of the son jarocho communities in Veracruz. They were simply floored that people with so little were so generous with their time and culture. If taken literally, the idea of convivencia is a practice of sharing with others. Teaching others a music, or imparting musical knowledge with others, are clear examples of this. Paula and Mehmet, Julia, and Calvin’s experiences reflect this simple understanding of convivencia. Whether it’s Paula’s observations about the sharing of a musical heritage, or Calvin’s experience when a cultural worker freely shares a CD and welcomes him, these experiences reveal that there is a common practice of sharing and exchange that does not necessarily reflect the mainstream, capitalist economy. Furthermore, it is this “sharing economy” that attracts many of the New York City community members.

However, there is a deeper practice and understanding of convivencia that is present among jaraneros and in the fandango. In a conversation with a jaranero from Veracruz, I was struggling for the right word to express my ideas about participation in the fandango. I said *participación* in Spanish, and my interlocutor subtly corrected me by saying, “Sí, convivencia”
(Yes, coexistence/participation) (personal correspondence with Obed Colorado November 15, 2016). Indeed, *participación* literally means participation or involvement in English, but convivencia connotes something more within the framework of participation. Here, Turino’s analysis of participatory music is productive in defining convivencia. Referring to participation in music making, he writes, “When the balance is just right, it enhances concentration and a sense of being ‘in the groove,’ at one with the activity and the other people involved” (2008:31). Convivencia is an ethos of not only sharing music with others, but also sharing the experience of music-making with others. The basic foundations of the fandango are related to this concept. In the fandango, one can witness the performance, practice, and enactment of convivencia. Turino continues, “In highly participatory traditions, the etiquette and quality of sociality is granted priority over the quality of the sound per se. Put in another way, participatory music and dance is more about the social relations being realized through the performance than about producing art that can somehow be abstracted from those social relations” (35). Turino and other ethnomusicologists have stressed this issue.

Moreover, in interviews and conversations, the members of the son jarocho community in New York City are not only interested in participatory music making, but also in a habitus of convivencia. Following Turino’s analysis, participatory music “is more about the social relations being realized” through musical performance. The jaraneros in New York City are not simply sharing music with others in the moment of music making. They live every day with a sense of sharing and coexistence—or convivencia. When discussing how she organizes visiting musicians’ stays in New York City, Claudia explains, “First of all, they (visiting musicians) still to this day stay at our house…We would always take them out, but it’s also part of the *convivencia* of son jarocho. That has to exist. So, they would always stay at our house”
Claudia has opened her home to visiting musicians, offering free lodging for their stay, organizing workshops for them to teach, and coordinating performance opportunities in venues around the city. This is a huge organizing task to take on, but for Claudia and others, this is simply part of living and practicing the ethos of *convivencia*.

One of the most important regular practices for the New York City jaranero community is the monthly *fandango familiar* (“family” or friendly fandango). The *fandango familiar* occurs every first Sunday of the month. The location of the fandango depends on a number of circumstances, including weather, season, and space availability. In the summer and early fall, fandangos are held in outdoor spaces. Some locations have been Prospect Park, Brooklyn; Sunset Park, Brooklyn; Central Park, Manhattan; and the outdoor patio of the restaurant-bar El Kallejón Lounge in East Harlem, Manhattan. The *fandango familiar* is an optional activity, but the community is encouraged to attend. The more members that attend the fandango, the more likely it will be successful. Again, “successful” is a relative term. When the fandango is small—eight people or so—the success might be that a new player sings a verse for the first time. Larger fandangos are successful in other ways—meeting new players and finding the groove with them. The *fandango familiar* is essential to practice making participatory music as a cohesive community.

The movimiento jaranero emphasizes the fandango as the principal format for son jarocho music, but presentational performances in small conjuntos still occur in the commercial spheres. In contrast to the commercial conjuntos of the 1940s-60s, the fandango does not have a standard ensemble size. Whereas conjuntos generally have four to five players, the opposite is true for fandangos: they can include very large numbers of performers to accommodate the whole group, and it is encouraged that they include as many people as possible. This reflects its
participatory quality and goals. Fandangos usually include multiple jaranas of various sizes, creating a “dense texture” that Turino describes as a feature of participatory music (2008:45). There is often at least one bass instrument, usually a leona (a bass requinto) or a marimbol. The fandango includes at least one requinto. If there is more than one requinto, these players may play similar or well-known tangueos (requinto melodies that are characterized by arpeggios) or play counter parts to each others’ tangueos (this is heard among more advanced requinteros). Violins may be present at the fandango, but harps have generally fallen out of fashion. Besides the always present and required tarima and dancers who create rhythms on top of it, there are frequently a couple of percussion instruments like the quijada de burro (donkey jaw) and the pandero (tambourine-like, octagonal frame drum). The quijada is the lower section of a donkey or horse jaw. A player grasps the quijada by the front teeth section of the instrument and alternately scraps along the sides of the teeth with a small wooden stick and strikes the side of the jaw with a closed fist.

Figure 5 Quijada del burro. Photo by author.
The fandango has implicit rules and, when broken, someone usually explicitly reminds or instructs others of these rules. The rules facilitate music-making and social cohesion. According to the jaraneros in New York City who have participated in fandangos in Veracruz, these rules can be strictly enforced in Mexico, while in New York City, the community is a little more relaxed regarding the “rules.” In Veracruz, the rules reflect the social hierarchy. Elders and professionals have a more privileged position, tending to lead the music making, and are placed at the center in the fandango in a semi-circle around the tarima. The next row behind these performers are less experienced and usually younger. This physical positioning of the players privileges musical experience and social hierarchy within Veracruz communities and lends to a well-executed fandango. Some of the basic rules are (not necessarily in order of importance):

1. If you are in the fandango circle, you must participate in some way: sing, play, and/or dance. It is highly encouraged to be able to do all three.  
2. The fandango begins with the *son* “El siquisiri.”  
3. Verses should alternate among players. Everyone should be aware and attempt to respond to verses that need a responder, and try not to repeat verses that have already been sung.

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33 This rule is probably the most apparent example of a reinvention of fandango practices outside of Veracruz. In New York City, lead organizers are explicitly vocal about heightened participation from everyone—expert and amateur, men and women—while in Veracruz, outsiders must wait until the social hierarchy accepts them as performers (Personal correspondence August 13, 2017 with Anna Arismendez, a jaranera who lived in Veracruz).
4. Dancers should not execute percussive zapateado steps while another sings a verse; only *mudanzas* (silent/quiet steps) should be used during verses.
5. Dancers should execute loud, percussive zapateado in between verses as a danced response to verses.
6. Dancers can only go onto the tarima in between verses and never interrupt a dancer during a verse. To exchange places on the tarima, between verses, tap the shoulder of the current dancer on the tarima.
7. Jaranas and other instruments should lower their volume during verses for voices to be heard and increase volume between verses.

This list of rules is not exhaustive, but it provides a sense of the order of a fandango. These rules demonstrate a practical approach to group music making that are most likely conscious revisions from the movimiento jaranero.

*Figure 7 Fandango in New Jersey. October 2017. Photo by Cecilia Ortega.*
In New York City, the order of players around the tarima is not always as strict. First, there are far fewer people at an average fandango in New York (the largest fandangos average only twenty to thirty people) than in Tlacotalpan, Veracruz, where a fandango can easily have sixty or more participants. Second, New York’s fandangos comprise more amateur players, disrupting this rule of hierarchy. The most experienced players will be in the center of the semi-circle around the tarima but are often next to a novice or intermediate player. At a New York City fandango, it is very common to see more advanced players showing chord positions on the jarana to a new learner or quietly encouraging the new player to sing a verse with eye contact or a smile. These acts of participation are not always directly part of the music-making, but are implicated in the ethos of convivencia within the fandango. And in these enactments of convivencia, the reinvention of the fandango’s inclusive aesthetic materializes. Instead of a social hierarchy that was once a strong component to the fandango’s structure, new and beginning performers have easier entry to the musical activity.
In the interview with Julia, she mentioned the etiquette and rules for the fandango. She emphasized that after attending many fandangos as an observer in Veracruz, one can eventually enter the fandango and fully participate (interview July 29, 2016). Claudia observed that the rules in Veracruz were more clearly enforced out of tradition. In an interview, she explained that in New York City, the son jarocho community is more open to experimentation not only in recordings and presentational performances, but in the fandango as well. She described a fandango in Queens that included an Afro-Colombian group that played various percussion instruments during the fandango:

I’ll always remember this one fandango that we had after Jarana Beat [concert] in Terraza. There were some members from a group called Rebolú, they’re from Colombia. They just started playing their drums and there was a whole half an hour of improvisation of verses. I can’t remember what son it was, maybe Sinuhé would remember. But it was so incredible. And then there was a Peruvian [guy] playing a charango. And it was crazy because Sinuhé [was] improvising and this guy from Rebolú was improvising. And the rhythms on the drums, and everything
worked. Everything melded together and those are the kinds of fandangos that you won’t see just anywhere in Mexico at least. (interview August 17, 2016)

Continuing the conversation, she explained why this type of improvisation and experimentation would not happen in a fandango in Mexico:

You can’t do that [experimentation], but that also has its merit. You get to a fandango and you probably shouldn’t just play. You have to find out what key they’re playing in, what tono (key), what afinación (tuning) they have on the jarana. Who’s singing because… people need to understand that here as well. The elders… how things function over there. The people with the most experience stand close to the tarima and those with less stand towards the back, but there’s a reason for that as well. No, you can’t do that kind of experimenting at a traditional fandango.

Claudia and others have mentioned these differences. They hold a great respect for what they see as traditional fandangos and son jarocho, and perhaps this is part of the inherent contradiction of revivals. It is revealing that the jaraneros in New York City seem to accept without question the hierarchy and stricter implementation of the implicit fandango rules in a Veracruz setting. On the one hand, this demonstrates the respect and reverence New York jaraneros have for culture and son jarocho practices in the “homeland,” Veracruz. On the other, the New York City jaraneros will quickly “break” the rules through experimentation, if the occasion should arise, and by disrupting the musician and generational hierarchies that are normally maintained in Veracruz. The disruption of or maintenance of the “rules” demonstrates how “tradition” is still seen as something tied to a geographical place and how a diaspora seems to be guaranteed more artistic or cultural liberties.

Conclusion

The contemporary context for son jarocho in Mexico comes from a confluence of political, social, and historical circumstances, all of which have affected the transmission and
development of the music throughout the twentieth century. Beginning with the Mexican Revolution, the early twentieth-century Latin American nationalist movements, and birth of the Mexican recording industry, son jarocho became a standardized and commercially circulated popular music and an icon of Mexican identity. It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that son jarocho underwent a revival that partly rejected the commercial formation of the genre from the first half of the century. The revival was also both a continuation of the Mexican state’s promotion of mestizaje and the national cultural mixing narrative and a more nuanced interpretation of a localized tradition from Veracruz, including significant attention to Afro-Mexican legacies in the tradition. Although the movimiento jaranero attempted to rescue son jarocho from obscurity, the rescue would never restore the “innocent” fandangos of centuries ago; this is simply not possible in the context of a modern capitalist society. As García de León notes:

In relation to the musical traditions of the Sotavento, the changes and continuities were gradually woven together. Starting in the 1970s, and trying to escape the routines of the “commercial” *son*, a new style emerges that attempts to recreate the “pure” peasant tradition, whose development is linked to the expectation of reviving the fandangos that were in clear disappearance. (2009:58)

This “new style” that was intended to be a revival or rescue of the fandango is instead something new. It is something that opens new and different social contexts and possibilities, which can be identified as a reinvention of the participatory elements of the fandango.

In contrast to the “new style” of the reinvented fandango, fandangos in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were most likely part of a highly structured “fiesta calendar” that reinforced social hierarchies and norms of Mexican society. Historian William H. Beezley and others have examined the ways Mexican society was constructed through festivals and other calendric rituals in the edited book, *Rituals of Rule, Rituals of Resistance: Public Celebrations and Popular*
Culture in Mexico (1984). Beezely, Martin and French argue that rituals reinforce and enact social hierarchy from daily life (1984:xv). In a fandango of the nineteenth century, social hierarchies of generations and gender roles would prevail, likely in the forms of courtship dance practices and generational hierarchy in physical spacing of a fandango (elders with most musical knowledge in the center with younger less-practiced musicians on the periphery). However, in New York City, these social rules do not apply. The fandango does not function as a courtship ritual nor a way to display social or community statuses. Instead, New York City jaraneros use the fandango as a tool that enacts different social structures that relate more to world views of inclusivity and accessibility to musical knowledge.

Moreover, the movimiento succeeded in establishing certain practices around maintenance and transmission of son jarocho. On the one hand, it was methodical and used practical approaches of music preservation that have been studied for decades. On the other hand, it seems to have partially replicated the nationalist state promotion of arts and music from Mexico’s post-Revolutionary period. Turino describes the Latin American state promotions as “cosmopolitan” projects. In a way, the movimiento jaranero is executing something similar. The Mexican state selected specific regional repertoire from across Mexico and then reproduced these regional varieties of Mexican musical practices as cosmopolitan representations. The Ballet Folklórico de México’s national dance productions are most emblematic of the cosmopolitan reformation of popular music and dances from different regions of Mexico. In that way, how are forced prescriptions of the movimiento jaranero “reviving” a practice that cannot exist in the contemporary, urban, and capitalist society? The better description is that the movimiento jaranero “reinvented” a tradition, emphasizing and magnifying its communitarian qualities in a socio-historical moment where traditional society was dwindling and rural communities
experienced an exodus of local musicians to urban areas in Mexico. An answer to both urbanization and the further expansion of consumer society, the movimiento jaranero was also part of global movements for students, decolonization, and democracy. Today, many jaranero musicians seem to be concerned with the power that the fandango has to build community, which is an objective that possibly developed after the original intention of rescuing a dwindling musical tradition.

The aesthetic concept of convivencia was introduced in this chapter and in the following chapter, convivencia is used as a theoretical lens. Through convivencia, taken as a reinvention of the movimiento jaranero, I outline and examine who organizes and teaches the community, the practice of fandangos, regular workshops and lessons, and special celebrations within the New York City son jarocho community.
Chapter 3: Convivencia: Building the Son Jarocho Community and Sounding a Fandango-Centered Practice

Music has the power to unite people, to create communities, to break barriers. Many people (from the movimiento jaranero) have a focus on people and participation and integration and collaboration. –Laura Rebolloso (interview, March 13, 2016).

It was Sunday, March 13, 2016 in the afternoon at El Kallejon Lounge in East Harlem, and Laura Rebolloso and her group had just finished a brunch-hour performance. After she generously obliged all the audience members that wanted to greet her and get her autograph on her CD, we sat together and discussed son jarocho, fandangos, the movimiento jaranero, and music and art in general. In our conversation, Laura identified the purpose of the movimiento jaranero as an answer to a society in crisis—one in which communities have little access to basic resources and are divided by outside political and economic power structures. She spoke about the social crisis for Mexican people specifically, but she also related some problems in Mexico to larger global issues like wealth inequality. The epigraph above is her reflection on what the movement attempts to realize. Laura believes that music can be a powerful tool to confront the problems that people face in daily life. The revival of son jarocho and, more specifically, fandango practices, are tools to unite people, create communities, and break barriers and borders. Indeed, as Higgins and other community music scholars have indicated, community music emphasizes the diversity of musics that enrich cultural life of the community within its locality and aim to “include disenfranchised and disadvantaged individuals or groups” (2012:5).

Besides working with the other musicians and intellectuals in the movimiento jaranero, Laura writes and performs music that is for and about her home in Veracruz and the Mexican

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34 The social crisis that García de León specifically identifies is the rural to urban transformation of Mexican society (2009).
people. In her music, she addresses the crises and problems of everyday people, and often sings about mothers, children, and migration. In her concerts, she often asks the audience: “Do you remember your birth?” or “Everyone has a mother even if they do not know her.” In the first track of her album *Por la esperanza de México* (For the hope of Mexico, 2013), she sings the questions: ¿Cuál será tu vocación?... ¿Para qué vives ahora?... ¿Dónde está tu convicción? (What will be your vocation? For what are you living? Where is your conviction?). The song “¿Cuál será?” is a statement about modern living, a life in which many have lost their “purpose” or place in the world. Other songs from the album include “País niños” (Country children), a song dedicated to the children of Mexico, and “Bamba-migrante” (Bamba-migrant), a new arrangement of the *son* “La bamba” with décimas about refugee and migrant experiences.

In her two-and-a-half week visit to New York City in March 2016, she performed and taught music to the son jarocho community. During this time, her message and musical pedagogy resonated with community members, many of whom came away from her classes feeling more spiritually connected to son jarocho music and the music making process. Although many different visiting musicians have given classes and workshops with the New York City jaranero community, Laura’s visit seemed to mark a formative step for members of the community. By 2016, the community had been engaging in regular activities (workshops, fandangos) for five years and were ready to immerse themselves more deeply in the fandango life: musically, socially, and critically. Laura’s music and her pedagogical methods incorporate the principle of convivencia, demonstrating the ways the fandango-centered practice of collaborative music making and building community bind the New York City jaraneros together.

In the previous chapter, the movimiento jaranero was introduced through the historical lens of post-Revolutionary, Mexican nationalism and art and music institutions. In this chapter, I
present the New York City son jarocho community as an example of how the prescriptions of the movimiento are enacted in a social setting. From fandangos and workshops to concerts and special celebrations, the New York City community executes all of the movimiento jaranero’s prescriptions. Through all of the actions of the New York City community, the idea and practice of convivencia (collaboration and shared music making) are maintained. Participation in the music and collaboration in the social network of son jarocho are essential for the success of this fledgling community. Without a set institution or secure funding, the community relies upon previously established New York City businesses, venues, and cultural organizations to donate space to for its practice. From the example of the New York City jaranero community, the “revitalized” or “revived” practices of the fandango and convivencia can be further analyzed as “reinvented” or “repurposed” tools for the explicit use of building community.

This chapter illustrates the social network of people, organizations and businesses, and events with which the jaranero community engages. The community generates musical and social relationships with each other through all music-based activities: fandangos, workshops, annual celebrations, and performances. Within these musical events that facilitate community bonds and friendship, all community members practice convivencia. Whether in a fandango or at a workshop, community members know that they must participate in the appropriate way. Besides the explicitly musical activity that demonstrates and enacts convivencia, the community engages with businesses and organizations to build relationships and networks that sustain the community’s activities. These business and social networks place collaboration and cooperation at the center, often relying on exchange of services or goods rather than monetary transactions. In this way, convivencia emerges as the central principle that binds the community in all its musical and non-musical endeavors.
Transplanted Practices and Immigrant Communities

In New York City, the rapidly growing Mexican immigrant population practices different ways of community building apart from son jarocho and fandangos, indicating a variety of community-building methods. Sociologist Robert C. Smith identifies some of the ways the Mexican consulate has been one of the organizations that has played a role in developing Mexican communities outside of Mexico in U.S. cities with significant Mexican immigrant populations (1996:58-103). He writes:

The Mexican consulate has played a central role in the emergence of an organized Mexican community in New York. Indeed, it has provided the larger organizational structure within which the various social networks and sports and civic clubs have come to connect with each other and to create an emerging, truly ‘Mexican’ consciousness and community in New York. (70)

In particular, Smith describes how the Mexican consulate sponsors amateur soccer clubs in the city as a network that connect Mexicans around a common interest and facilitates community growth. While the consulate’s investment in and support of community activities positively affect the social lives of Mexican immigrants, the consulate also has political aims to maintain the Partido Revolucionario Institucional’s (PRI) (Institutional Revolutionary Party) political hegemony in the diaspora (71).\(^{35}\)

The support of the Mexican consulate certainly provides one form of community-building, but there are other models of community-driven projects that Mexican organizations have established in New York City. As discussed in the previous chapter, mariachi and Ballet Folklórico de México (BFM) became national symbols and central to the official art curriculum

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\(^{35}\) The PRI has controlled the Mexican government continuously since the Revolution until the brief interlude of the Partido Acción Nacional (PAN) from 2000-2012, but resumed its control in 2012.

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for the Mexican nation-state after the Revolution. Besides their nation-state significance, mariachi and BFM outside of the Mexican borders function as community-building practices in the new home and perhaps pieces of homeland nostalgia. One source of community-centered work is the Mariachi Academy of New York (MANY). MANY has been educating children and adults tuition free—though spaces are limited—since 2002. The mission statement of the MANY reads:

MANY is a community-led not-for-profit organization devoted to preserving the rich heritage of mariachi to youth in New York. It intends to develop the skills in musical training, discipline, creativity and self-esteem while strengthening language, team working skills and a strong sense of identity. (Mariachi Academy of New York Mission Statement)\(^{36}\)

Likewise, the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York (BMFNY) teaches dance to adults and children, entertains community audiences with free performances, and hosts annual festivals for Mexican neighborhoods around the city, such as the Guelaguetza (a festival featuring popular dances and traditional costume originating in Oaxaca). The BMFNY mission statement places Mexican folkloric dance at the center of Mexican culture broadly:

The Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York (BMFNY) is celebrating 30 years of sharing their passion for Mexican folkloric dance with the New York community. The BMFNY is a Non-profit organization committed to sharing Mexican traditions and cultural heritage by showcasing regional dances that have shaped Mexico’s culture. (BMFNY “About Us” page)\(^{37}\)

All of these activities are intended to inculcate a sense of Mexican identity in the immigrant community. However, their significance and meaning is not static. Even though mariachi and BFMNY carry strong Mexican nationalist sentiment, the performance of these art forms becomes both a strong symbol of a past and present Mexican heritage and the marker of a

\(^{36}\) http://www.mariachiacademyny.org/about-us.html  
\(^{37}\) http://www.bfmny.org/about_us.html
new identity in the new home of New York City. The movimiento jaranero and the revived fandango practices also reconstitute what it means to be a “jaranero” or a son jarocho musician in the contemporary moment in Mexico. In reviving fandango practices, the movimiento jaranero rejects mid-20th-century commercial representations of son jarocho and privileges a reinvented political objective of communitarian education and organizing, as well as complicating the Mexican state’s mestizo mythology by including and emphasizing the Afro-Mexican root, which is erased or absent from BFM presentations. In New York City, the revived fandango practices maintain these new movimiento jaranero meanings, but operate in a different set of social contexts in which Mexican immigrants create, shape, and build communities and identities in their new home. Additionally, all of these musical activities are also performed for and by non-Mexicans in New York City, creating new patterns of community identity.

Besides the place-specific conditions of New York City that create an attractive destination for immigrants and affect the development of an immigrant community, there are other circumstances that shape the transmission and implantation of a “traditional” music in a community. Sociologist Héctor Vega analyzes what it means to study traditional music in the contemporary era of globalization, when new socio-cultural contexts reshape the circumstances for the practice and performance of a “traditional music.” He uses the examples of mariachi and son jarocho as models for the ways Mexican traditional music has transformed in meaning and symbolism. Vega writes:

In short, a musical expression—together: dance, copla, music, ritual—that is interpreted in other contexts and by other social actors that are not those that give meaning and traditional use to that expression, does not cease to be traditional, but it becomes a staging of the tradition. In that sense, it becomes a popular or folk expression of a traditional music model. (2010:156)
He continues, “Tradition, popular culture, and folklore are representations of different characteristics and objectives of the same thing, the imaginary, that is, the ways and means of expressing, creating, and sharing culture” (156). For Vega, revived son jarocho does not cease to be “traditional,” but much like commercialized son jarocho of the 1940s-1960s, the “traditional” simply becomes “staged.” While important and valid, Vega’s analysis does not interrogate the possibility of the transformation of meaning for the “new” social actors or practitioners of the “staged” tradition. His analysis can be also supported by relating this text to Hobsbawm’s notion of “invented tradition,” where a practice or ritual is reestablished to preserve a continuity with the past (1983:1). Furthermore, Vega analyzes son jarocho from a point of view within Mexico and, therefore, within Mexican socio-historical contexts and conditions. While this analysis reveals some of the Mexico-centric issues regarding revived or staged traditions, the context of immigration from Mexico to the U.S.—and to New York City—requires further examination.

Other scholars have researched the ways a traditional music transforms from a local or rural practice when staged for a global audience. Caroline Bithell has analyzed the transformation of Corsican song that was shaped through state policies (2007). The Corsican polyphonic singing practices were once a traditionally male genre, but through new policies and interaction with other Mediterranean musics, the polyphonic genre grew to include women’s performance. She notes that in the transformation, certain conceptions about the music remained in the local setting, while new ideas about the music informed the growing cohort of cosmopolitan performers and recording artists (xxix). This contemporary transformation in a local music can be productive also for an analysis of the ways the movimiento jaranero transformed son jarocho into a “global” genre, more so than the Mexican commercial conjuntos jarochos of the early twentieth century ever did.
Within a Mexican social context but engaged with questions around new social identities and practices, Raquel Paraíso examines son jarocho and fandango practices that have been revived and resignified for a contemporary society. No longer part of a rural, agrarian society, the revived fandango practices contribute to the development of new Mexican and new Veracruzan identities. In an article by Paraíso titled “Florear la tarima: un espacio para la poesía, la música y el baile en prácticas resignificadas de son jarocho” (To Flower the Tarima: A Space for Resignified Poetry, Music, and Dance Practices of Son Jarocho) (2015), she analyzes a musical practice that symbolically prepares the tarima for the fandango. The “flowering” of the tarima includes the literal placing of flowers on the tarima, the declaration of an opening décima, and zapateado on the tarima—all actions that prepare the tarima for the event. Here, Paraíso examines one dance practice that has been revived through the movimiento jaranero and argues:

The flowering of the tarima is a festive practice that opens a new space within the complex of festive and performative practices of son jarocho. This cultural space is (re)produced and (re)created by this artistic experience in multiple ways: it opens a space in the socio-cultural field of the festival and creates one which, through the intention and meaning of how it produces, establishes and fosters a fundamental aesthetic and artistic direction for the expression and experience of musician-poetic-dance that it welcomes. (403)

Aside from offering a new analysis of an under-studied music-dance form in son jarocho, Paraíso produces a theory to view revived practices of son jarocho for contemporary musical and dance analysis. She understands the revived and resignified practice of improvising décimas to “florear” (to flower, adorn) as a practice that can re-institute the centrality of the community in areas that previously were connected through religious ritual and life-cycle events. These revived practices are no longer used for life-cycle rituals that were once highly important to the structure of a rural, agrarian society, but instead they open a space for the development of new identities
for the community that do not share the spirituality of the past. She explains how revived practices serve aesthetic needs of a contemporary society, writing:

It [the flowering of the tarima] embodies and unfolds the production of identity and cultural heritage. It is not so much a scenario for the consumption and commodification of culture as it is a medium for the production of jarocha culture in general and, in particular, an expression of the Oaxacan Basin within the jarocho cultural ethos. (413-4)

Paraíso’s analysis appears immediately applicable not only to more than only son jarocho revivalist practices, but also to the ways in which music and dance serve as vehicles for communities to develop a sense of identity. Paraíso and Vega’s analyses, taken together, offer a view of “tradition” in the age of globalization, in which tradition becomes “staged,” and that staging of tradition generates new possibilities of communitarian formations. The community-building strategies of the jaraneros in New York are based in an adaptable set of practices that can be productive for all sorts of communities, not just son jarocho.

The New York City son jarocho community is not unique, in that other revitalized or rescued folk and popular musics have been used for community-building projects. One prominent example is the Puerto Rican bomba community in New York City. Bomba is a Puerto Rican musical tradition that is drum-based, combined with call-and-response singing and participatory dancing. It is performed in a circle with a lead drummer (subidor) and several accompanying drummers. While the drummers and the circle engage in call-and-response singing, one-by-one dancers enter the center of the circle to challenge the subidor in a drum-dance competition. As the dancer improvises movements to “best” the lead drummer, the drummer tries to follow and best the dancer. In contrast to a fandango jarocho which can accommodate large numbers of jaranas and other instruments, there are limited instruments available for participation—only three or four drums and maracas. For bomba, the participation
centers on the dancer-drummer relationship that occurs with every volunteer who steps into the circle to challenge the subidor.

The Puerto Rican bomba circles in New York City teach and perform the music at low cost or for free in their communities. These educationally focused groups parallel the type of revivalist work the movimiento jaranero accomplished. One performance group that offers bomba classes and workshops to the community is Alma Moyo. According to their Facebook page in the “About” section:

Alma Moyo is an intergenerational crew of Puerto Ricans and Dominicans who promote the diverse regional drum and vocal styles of Bomba with a Caribbean-blues sentiment… Alma Moyo’s Bomba is laden with revolutionary defiance, sorrowful lament, and invigorating sound… Alma Moyo’s refreshing pulse emits an Afro-Caribbean pride sailing above its cosmopolitan landscape. (Alma Moyo Facebook page)  

They emphasize cultural education within the music and dance instruction and performance to bring about a cultural awareness of Puerto Rico’s ethno-racial history and practices. This educational focus is replenished through exchanges with the island’s bomba schools and communities. The model of “retreats” to the homeland of bomba—like trips back to Veracruz—maintains and perhaps renews the conversation and knowledge of the music, dance, and cultural traditions. Also, importantly, the bomba revival and its respective communities are actively reconfiguring and growing a discourse around the history of people of African descent and their cultural practices. In her article “Bomba puertorriqueña y palos dominicanos,” Raquel Rivera confronts issues regarding the bomba community’s engagement with Puerto Rican racial history in what she calls mitología de liberación (liberation mythology) (2010). Her ethnography with young Puerto Rican bomberos and Dominican palo groups in New York City reveals the ways

38  https://www.facebook.com/pg/cultura.afroboricua/about/?ref=page_internal
musicians from the Caribbean diaspora are challenging the ethno-racial category of “Latino” by refuting it with a more radical “Afro” identity. Rivera’s examination into the musical activists’ political projects demonstrates a new form of participation in Puerto Rican activism.

This discourse continues the ongoing racial debate over Puerto Rican identity that was developed through the work of scholars such as Juan Flores (1993 and 2010) in the 1960s and 70s. Importantly, intellectuals and activists were part of reviving bomba during the same time, contributing to the development of a discourse around Afro-Puerto Ricanness. Today, many bomba performers are educators and intellectuals, including some members of the New York City group Alma Moyo, who teach and perform the music in university and classroom settings. Similarly, although to a different degree and purpose, the movimiento jaranero came about during the 1970s and intellectuals and activists eventually brought son jarocho to classrooms and universities outside of Veracruz. Movimiento intellectuals also sought to place Mexicans of African descent in a conversation about Mexican identity, emphasizing what is often called the “African third root” to the mestizo (Spanish and indigenous) heritage of Mexico. In New York City, this knowledge and discourse about Afro-descendants in Mexico is taught in son jarocho workshops and discussed in between sones at fandangos. Additionally, many of the New York-based son jarocho musicians work within Afro-Caribbean musical spaces and with Afro-Latino communities. This positive discourse around Afro-Mexican heritage has transformed the ways some Mexican immigrants think about themselves and their home country.39

39 The issue of anti-black racism within Mexico and in Mexican communities in the U.S. still remains (for more information see Smith 2006b). More research is needed to understand how anti-black racism is changing in Mexico and how some communities in the diaspora have adopted anti-racist positions.
**Participation in the Fandango**

The revived practice of the fandango is the principal vehicle for the jaranero community of New York City to build relationships among its members and establish ties with outside communities and local New York City organizations. The fandango is a participatory event in which people expect each other to contribute to the total sound and atmosphere of the event. The fandango has several meanings. It is conceived as an “event” or gathering, and is the music that occurs within the time and space of the gathering. It is also physically a circle of people, making music, and it is the sound produced from that circle. During a fandango, participants play a series of *sones* for an indeterminate length of time, typically gathering momentum and energy until the fandango reaches a cathartic ending. Within a fandango, the notion or principle of convivencia is expected to pervade all the actions of the participants.

Participation is key to the success of a fandango. Some participatory musics require all participants to perform together, simultaneously, like a circle dance or a congregation of singers collectively singing. While the fandango is a collective activity, necessitating group participation for multiple musical roles, those musical roles oscillate between solo and collective, something that is extremely common in participatory music. One by one, participants take turns contributing to the fandango as individuals performing for the circle. This configuration is similar to the way individuals one-by-one enter a bomba circle to challenge the lead drummer. Bomba, which has West African musical affinities, displays a similar mixture of solo and collective performance characteristics. As the individual enters the center of the circle to challenge the lead drummer, he or she is performing solo in front of the rest of the circle. In participatory fashion, the rest of the circle usually sings the responsorial phrase collectively.
These solo and collective actions resemble many West African musical practices where a mixture of group and individual dance and singing makes up the performance.

In the son jarocho fandango, there is also a mixture of solo vs. collective roles and what Turino describes as “sequential participation” (2008:48). Citing Jane Sugarman’s (1997) work with Prespa Albanian weddings as an example, sequential participation is a participatory form in which individuals take turns singing or playing solo, rather than everyone doing so simultaneously. One by one, dancers enter the center of the fandango circle to dance on the tarima, and one by one, performers spontaneously sing verses and others repeat the verses back in antiphonal fashion. Presumably in the past, older and more experienced male musicians would have sung more than young and inexperienced ones, and women would likely have only participated in the fandango through dance.

More relevant to this dissertation and the contemporary formation of son jarocho and fandango is how the movimiento jaranero revived and repurposed selective son jarocho and fandango practices to emphasize their participatory potential. Through its use of the musical roles of alternating solo singers, instrumentalists, and dancers, the repurposed son jarocho fandango is transformed into a space for maximum communitarian interaction. The movimiento jaranero repurposes or reinvents the musical roles to be highly participatory ones. Instead of a handful of elder (typically male) singers that would have sung verses during a son jarocho fandango in colonial Veracruz, the revitalized fandango gives priority to a multiplicity of singers of both genders and all ages, encouraging more fandango participants to sing and challenging established hierarchies of age and gender. Similarly, the “rules” (listed and discussed in Chapter 2) that the movimiento jaranero developed and are taught by the son jarocho teachers in New York City amplify the ways individuals participate in the fandango. Therefore, the movimiento
jaranero not only revived son jarocho, but also reinvented and repurposed the participatory aspects of the fandango to broaden its potential for inclusivity, transforming it into a tool explicitly for community building.

While the inclusivity of the fandango has widened in Veracruz, it has perhaps exploded in sites like New York City that do not have any preconceived notions of how a fandango should be performed. For instance, in contemporary Veracruz, more women have become involved in the performance of son jarocho in both the fandango and professional performance and recording fields. However, there are still societal stereotypes and prejudices around women’s performance. In a conversation with Anna Arismendez, a woman originally from Texas but now living in Mexico City, she explained to me that while she sees more women playing instruments like the leona, she still hears people in Veracruz express ideas such as: “Women cannot be requinto players. They don’t have the stamina. Only men do” (personal correspondence August 13, 2017). In contrast, the women members of the New York City jaranero community make up half of the performers at fandangos and all of them singing, playing instruments, and organizing son jarocho events for the community. However, while New York City women musically participate on more levels than in Veracruz, gendered dress, such as folkloric skirts, dance shoes, and Mexican embroidered blouses, still dominate fandango attire.

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40 Anecdotally, many members of the son jarocho community in New York City have mentioned ways they see Mexico-based fandangos as more conservative musically than in New York. They feel freer to improvise and include non-traditional elements in fandangos in New York, while in Mexico, Veracruz, especially, they are less confident in participating in fandangos in overt ways (singing a verse or dancing on the tarima) before a period of integration within the social circles.  
41 On one occasion, a member of the New York City community asked why I did not wear a skirt (I rarely wear skirts in general). Although it was a seemingly innocent question, another member “defended” my position and told me that I can wear whatever I want.
In New York City there are different circumstances that place limits on or, conversely, open up possibilities for a fandango. For example, in the same conversation with Anna Arismendez, she explained that fandangos in Veracruz are regularly large—sixty or more people. With those large numbers, a new jaranero learner would have more difficulty entering the fandango. In contrast, New York City fandangos hardly ever exceed twenty-five people, making maximum participation among all participants more accessible, especially for beginners.

Since the reworkings of the movimiento jaranero, the internal social and musical structure of a son jarocho fandango facilitates interaction among participants through musical actions. In New York City at a fandango, the expectation that everyone will contribute or participate in the fandango is clear. Some participants participate through all of the basic musical actions—they play instruments, sing, and dance—while others, may only perform one musical action. It is common for some fandango participants only to sing verses or only to dance. At workshops and in the fandango, more experienced or advanced musicians in the community vocally encourage and challenge others to try to participate. When someone has not sung or danced during the fandango, another player might persuade that person—“Hey, why don’t we sing a verse together?” (bending the rules of solo singing) or “Want to dance with me? Come on. Let’s dance.” Perhaps this encouragement seems forced or artificial, but in a nascent jaranero community, the fandango participation must occur, lest the community not grow.

Participants can musically contribute to the fandango with the other participants in a number of ways. The musical elements of a son are directly linked to the modes of participation. Every son has poetic verses that are associated with the son, a distinct harmonic and rhythmic cycle, and zapateado steps that are either connected to the rhythmic strumming of the jarana or specific pantomime movements for the particular son. For these reasons, every son must be
conceived as a sonic concept rather than a distinct song or composition. At any given fandango, different verses for a *son* may be sung, or a different rhythmic pattern of zapateado steps may be executed. Even though each performance of a *son* will result in a unique interpretation, there are four central musical actions and modes of participation that are constant in a fandango:

1. Singing or calling verses (ideally an individual sings a verse for every *son* that is played);
2. Responding to verses, being ready to be a responder to a called verse (completing the internal responding structure of *sones*);
3. Playing jarana, requinto, leona, or another instrument;
4. Dancing on the tarima (women are particularly needed for this, explained more deeply in chapter 4).

Each of the musical actions listed above adds to the communal sound and participation in its own unique way. And within the context of a fandango, community members consistently encourage each other to participate, urging everyone to perform one or all of these musical actions. However, the singing of verses is perhaps the most essential component to a fandango. Sung verses are certainly required for any *son* to take form. Participants in the fandango must spontaneously call out verses and, in most cases, another person in the circle must repeat or respond to that verse. Depending on the type of *son*—there are responding and non-responding *sones*—fandango participants contribute to the development of the *son* by calling out well-known verses or sometimes, if the mood strikes, improvising verses on the spot. The improvisation of verses is a difficult skill and few people in the community regularly improvise verses. Ideally, in a scenario with participants that have a deeper knowledge of the poetic repertoire, the *sones* played at a fandango would have thematically linked verses, building upon each other.

The *son* “El siquisirí,” which is the traditional *son* that begins a fandango, serves as a good example of how solo singers exchange verses in a fandango. At the beginning of a
fandango, the requinto “declares” the son by playing an introductory phrase. After an
instrumental introduction by the requinto player, the jarana players join. Then, after a few rounds
of the compás, someone must declare a verse. Someone from the circle spontaneously calls out
and sings a verso (verse). The back and forth exchange continues through the estribillo. In the
opening “El siquisirí,” the singer will commonly sing an introductory verse with themes that
implore the verses to begin and open the son, singing the lines in ABBA order:\footnote{This verse is a quintet of five lines with octosyllabic lines. The other common forms of poetic stanzas with octosyllabic lines are quatrains and sextets. Another common poetic form is the seguidilla with alternating lines of seven and five syllables. “La bamba” is an example of seguidilla structure.}

\begin{align*}
A: & \text{Al fin voy a comenzar} \quad \text{Finally I will begin} \\
B: & \text{Que a ver si puedo o no puedo} \quad \text{To see if I can or cannot} \\
\end{align*}

Then, in participatory fashion, another participant from the circle must respond by repeating
back the same verse the first caller just sang. After the response, the caller will sing the final part
of the quintet CDDE and the responder repeats the same.

\begin{align*}
C: & \text{A ver si puedo trovar} \quad \text{To see if I can versify} \\
D: & \text{O a medio verso me quedo} \quad \text{Or half a verse remains with me} \\
E: & \text{Sin poderlo declarar} \quad \text{Without being able to declare it} \\
\end{align*}

The two participants exchange singing and responding until they finish the verse and estribillo.
In the estribillo of “El siquisirí,” the responder sings different lines from the caller that create a
playful exchange between the singers, to “warm up” the fandango and invite more verses to be sung:

\begin{align*}
\text{Caller:} \\
\text{Ay que sí valgame Dios} \quad \text{Ay, oh my God} \\
\end{align*}
Lloré no había cantado  I cried I hadn’t sung
Responder:

Pues anda a Dios para hacerlo hablar  Well, go to God to make him speak
Caller:

Porque le tenía vergüenza  Because I had shame
Responder:

De hacerlo hablar que risa me da  To make him speak, what a laugh it gives me
Caller:

Porque estoy acostumbrado  Because I am accustomed to it
Responder:

De risa me da, ya se me quitó  The laugh it gives me, just left me
Caller:

Primero a pedir licencia (x2)  First by asking for permission

Donde quiera que he llegado  Wherever I have arrived

This back and forth between callers and responders happens throughout a fandango. Not all sones have a responding structure, but most do.

At the same time, the singing of verses is one of the more difficult skills to learn within the array of musical elements of a fandango, for both native and non-native Spanish speakers. Most of the people that participate in the fandango are not professional musicians; they are amateur musicians, although some can also be considered sophisticated connoisseurs of son jarocho music. Most participants in the community are native speakers, but not all. Those who

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43 Verses for this example of “El siquisirí” were transcribed from the Son de Madera recording from their album Son de Madera (1997).
are non-native Spanish speakers have learned the language in a variety of ways: through school or university, personal interest and travel, their Spanish-speaking spouses or partners, or because they are currently in the process of learning Spanish within the community. Even for native Spanish speakers, the entry points and rhythm for singing in *sones* can be difficult. For Spanish language learners, the task is perhaps doubly difficult. Even if the speaker is fluent or near fluent in Spanish, he or she must hear the verses in Spanish and be able to respond back to the fandango circle. In Spanish language poetry and singing, words that begin and end with vowels are coalesced into a single syllable, or into a synalepha. For example, the line of verse from the *son* “La guacamaya” (The parrot) “*Quisiera ser guacamaya / Para volar todo el año*” (I would want to be a guacamaya (parrot) / To fly all year), is sung “*Quisiera ser guacamaya / Para volar todo ‘l año,*” reducing the number of syllables in the second line of verse to eight syllables, the most common syllabic structure for *son* poetry. For the non-native speaker and inexperienced listener, the synalepha makes interpretation and recognition of phrasing more difficult. In workshops, participants are frequently asked to invent their own verses, using the poetic rules (octosyllabic lines for example). In writing and creating their own verses, the verse structure becomes internalized and facilitates greater inclusion in singing at the fandango.

Even though singing verses can be a difficult skill for new music learners and new language learners, the community encourages participants at the fandango to sing as best as they can. Ideally, everyone that participates in a fandango should know at least one verse for every *son* that is played. However, realistically, this is not the case. Since there are gaps in knowledge of verses and disparities in abilities to hear, understand, and repeat verses, community leaders encourage less-seasoned participants to sing vocables or “la la la” when they cannot remember or did not hear the verse clearly. Although singing in front of others seems to be the musical action
that brings about the most trepidation (like public speaking), the community makes every effort to create an inviting and nonjudgmental atmosphere to encourage the maximum amount of participation in the singing of verses. This emphasis on inclusion, which certainly opens the jaranero community fandango to Spanish-language learners and novice singers, is different from a Veracruz setting, where experienced musicians typically sing the majority of verses. At a New York City fandango on June 4, 2017, a participant brought tacos to the event. After a couple of *sones*, some leaders noticed that the newer jaraneros had not sung much. Jokingly, one leader said, “You have to try to sing! For every verse you sing, you get one taco!” Even though the tacos were already mostly eaten, the joke and imaginary prize of tacos encouraged more people to sing in the next *sones* at the fandango.

The next musical element of the fandango is the playing of instruments, with the jarana at the center. At a fandango, there are ideally many jaranas of various sizes (*mosquito, primera, segunda, tercera*), at least one requinto, a leona, and other instruments such as violin, quijada, or pandero. Jarana is the entry instrument for many participants of the fandango. It is the easiest instrument for beginners to learn and also plays the harmonic foundation of the music, thus jaranas are more abundant in a fandango. More people know how to play the jarana because it is a strummed instrument and requires less technical skill than a plucked instrument like the requinto or leona. The accessible beginning to learning the strummed instrument gives the learning participant confidence and empowerment to engage with others in the fandango. Similar to the singing of verses, if there is no harmonic foundation for a *son*, the *son* does not take form. Thus, jaranas are musically essential to a fandango.

It is common for there to be many jaranas at a fandango. If there are many jaranas of multiple sizes, the fandango will have a denser sonic texture with a thick voicing spanning
multiple octaves. For fandango participants, the denser the harmonic foundation, the better a fandango sounds. Furthermore, a dense rhythmic and harmonic texture is key feature of participatory music. Turino writes, “Densely overlapping textures, wide tunings, consistently loud volume, and buzzy timbres are extremely common sound features of participatory music throughout the world. Taken together, these aspects provide a crucial cloaking function that helps inspire musical participation” (2008:46). Indeed, unlike singing, which a fandango participant executes solo, the communal strumming of multiple jaranas draws the participant into the fandango, encouraging participation. The “cloaking function” of communal strumming and buzzy timbres of the jaranas invites beginners to participate without fear of making noticeable mistakes in front of peers. Aside from the harmonic foundation, the jaranas also create the rhythm of a son. The harmony and rhythm together make up the compás (rhythmic and harmonic cycle). Without a steady or pronounced compás, the son cannot develop or take form. Taken together, the easy entry into learning the jarana and the dense sound from many players at a fandango facilitate maximum participation. Within the New York City jaranero community, even the shyest players feel comfortable contributing to the fandango’s sound.

The last component of the fandango is the dancing of zapateado. This heel-tapping dance is performed on top of a wooden platform called a tarima. The tarima is at the center of the fandango circle. At the fandango, dancers participate by taking turns on the tarima. Like the differences between responding and non-responding sones, there are also categories of partner sones (son de pareja) and women’s sones (son de montón) (chapter 4 will present a more in-depth analysis and discussion of these differences within son jarocho dance). Generally, as a son is being played at a fandango, couples (man and woman or two women) step on top of the tarima and dance zapateado, facing each other, contributing to the rhythm. Like a sung verse,
individuals spontaneously “volunteer” to dance or participate in the activity. One by one or couple by couple, participants take turns on the tarima. Unlike jaranas that participants strum together, the zapateado dance forces a person to be in the center and perform loud percussive steps. A mistake in steps is easily noticed, so dancers have to learn to “put themselves out there.” At New York City fandangos that are small, dancers may also be on the tarima for several verses, which is tiring. The jaranero community thus encourages everyone to dance so as to share the more physically demanding dance. At a Veracruz fandango of sixty or more people, there is an endless supply of dancers to replenish the tarima constantly—no one has the chance to tire out.

In addition to musical participation, there are non-musical participatory actions that contribute to and realize a fandango. In a conversation with scholar Raquel Paraíso, she emphasized that there is non-musical labor that must be performed in order for a fandango to happen (personal correspondence, April 7, 2017). This non-musical labor can also be described as “hidden” labor, which is often performed by women behind the scenes of a fandango. Her list of non-musical labor is not exhaustive, but it offers a glimpse at the community network and effort that is required for a fandango to occur:

1. Organizing the time and place of the fandango (a particularly difficult task in New York City);
2. Bringing food or beverages for participants of the fandango;
3. Watching children for musician participants of the fandango.

This non-musical labor can also be described as the “unpaid labor” and domestic roles that women often perform in society. A recent article published by an online Mexican journal, Sinembardo.mx, states that Mexican women dedicate twice as much time as men do to unpaid
labor: cleaning the house, cooking meals, washing dishes.\textsuperscript{44} The unpaid labor of women is certainly related to certain aspects of the organizing work that women in the community perform. This dissertation does not delve into the culinary and childcare labor that are very much part of the realization of a fandango, but nonetheless, the logistics of organizing a fandango are highly important to understand how notions of “community” play out in a New York City fandango.

Ironically, as women seem to have gained more musical performance opportunities in son jarocho, the traditional domestic labor roles for women have not diminished. This also points to the contradictory character of a musical community that embraces a “recovery” of tradition together with cosmopolitan values like new gender roles.

**Organizers and Members of the Jaranero Community**

Although the son jarocho community of New York City can be counted by its various numbers—600+ Facebook members, the rotation of thirty-forty regulars at fandangos, the twelve regulars who attend specific classes, or the handful of central organizers—these numbers do not reveal the work, collaboration, and connection that the various people within the community share. Further, these numbers also obscure the complicated reality of “community” in New York City. One complication is that the city is a crowded and sprawling metropolis where the “community” itself is not centrally located in one specific neighborhood, but scattered throughout the city. The jaranero community holds its workshops, fandangos, and other events in different locations throughout New York City, and the community interacts with transnational

\textsuperscript{44} “La mujer mexicana está entre las que más trabajan en el mundo... sin recibir un salario, dice OCDE” (The Mexican Woman is among those who work most in the world... without Receiving a Salary, Says the OECD [Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development]).

jaranero networks online and within the context of globally disseminated son jarocho of the movimiento jaranero. And, like most contemporary ethnographic field sites, the community would be considered “multi-sited,” in that the larger son jarocho movement exists in Mexico, New York, Chicago, and other locations (Marcus 1995). Another complication to the notion of “community” is that not everyone can participate regularly. Some folks have children and cannot bring their new baby to fandangos, so they take a break from fandango attendance. Others have work obligations and have to sacrifice going to evening workshops during the business week. Even though people do not always attend a fandango or go to a workshop, they are still recognized as part of the larger New York City son jarocho community. Thus, the community consists of organizers and a variety of participants, with some attending events more frequently than others, multiple physical sites for events that rotate frequently, and an online network for communication within the New York City community and with the transnational circles of son jarocho. Another pragmatic reason for holding events in different locations is the geography of New York City. It is difficult to commute between the boroughs of Queens and Brooklyn with subway rides sometimes exceeding two hours.

On a regular basis, there is a very central group of individuals that organize, plan, and execute events and workshops for the broader community. These individuals have created a desire for son jarocho, and they sustain son jarocho activities in the city through their organizational work and enthusiasm for the music. One central teacher and organizer for the community is Sinuhé Padilla Isunza. Originally from Toluca, Mexico, a city located to the southwest of Mexico City, Sinuhé grew up in an artistic family of musicians and music teachers, choreographers, screen writers, and film makers. He attended the music conservatory at Toluca (Music Conservatory of the State of Mexico), but left after he grew tired of what he saw as a
limited curriculum. He wanted to learn about the history and forms of Mexican regional music, such as son jarocho and other son traditions. After leaving the conservatory, Sinuhé decided to travel throughout Mexico to experience and learn more about his own country, supporting himself by playing music and giving informal music lessons. He spent time with older musicians from rural areas and learned different son traditions. From this experience, Sinuhé absorbed a variety of musical practices and incorporated them into his own musical compositions, performance, and teaching. In addition to his interest in the history of Mexican music, he also studied indigenous cosmology for six years with a shaman, which informs his holistic approach to music, viewing the body as a repository for knowledge and history (interview April 14, 2014).

From the beginning of his music career and endeavors, he has been dedicated to understanding the “roots” (raíces) of the music. Sinuhé’s dedication to understanding the historical and cultural context of music was the initial spark in our first conversations. In our musician-ethnomusicologist relationship, Sinuhé has often described what he admires about the discipline of ethnomusicology. He values human interaction, participant/observation, expanding his own musical vocabulary, and integrating historical and cultural context into his approach to teaching and performing music. In our interviews, he has often made puns and jokes around this:

I’ve always liked history and anthropology very much. However, I am a musician… so, I was always curious about the two parts. That is what I am. I was always like this. I always liked to know why? And to completely share things. I believe that I dedicate myself to “ethnomusicology” (etnomusicología), or perhaps more to musician-ethnology (musico-etnología). Haha. (Interview March 22, 2015)

By the late 1990s, devoting time to Mexican musical traditions, Sinuhé continued to expand his musical education by traveling to Spain, where he learned flamenco guitar and played in Madrid tablaos (flamenco venues). After some years living there, he moved on again, to continue learning new musical idioms. He left Spain for Brazil in the early 2000s. In Brazil,
Sinuhé practiced different regional musics and started multiple bands that were centered on Brazilian genres but mixed with other Latin American sounds. He moved again to Argentina by 2007, continuing to practice his expanding musical repertoire. In Buenos Aires, Sinuhé developed a musical concept that incorporated his knowledge of Mexican music into his worldview and was working to create a band to execute these ideas. During this time, he met academics and university artists from New York City who were visiting Buenos Aires, and they convinced him that his musical project would fit in New York. In 2008, Sinuhé moved to New York City and started the group Jarana Beat (2008-2017), which is a culmination of his musical travels: a mixture of Mexican regional musics (namely son jarocho, huasteco, and guerrerense) together with other musical sensibilities from the Hispano and Lusophone world, and with a worldview informed by Aztec cosmology that respects indigenous practices. In addition to Jarana Beat’s performances, the group was dedicated to historically informed musical education, teaching in public schools, museums, and other educational institutions around New York City. In fact, when I first met Sinuhé, he was teaching guitar to children in Sunset Park, Brooklyn as part of cultural programming with a non-profit dedicated to uplifting working families.

Another organizer who is highly important to the communication and facilitation of events is Claudia Valentina. Claudia is from New York City, but grew up in the U.S., Mexico, and Jamaica. Her upbringing was also among artists and musicians. On her Jamaican mother’s side, her uncle Tyrone was a founding member of the ska/rocksteady group The Paragons. Her Mexican father regularly took the family on vacation in Mexico to visit family and to listen to music that her father could not find in New York City. Aside from her musical family, Claudia

45 In the “Programs” section of the Jarana Beat webpage, the group advertises that they can tailor a workshop or lecture demonstration for any educational setting: K-12 and university. http://jaranabeat.com/programs/
took piano lessons, jazz and tap dance lessons, and ballet in her youth. Like Sinuhé, these musical experiences informed her curiosity to always want to know “why?” and understand the histories of different cultural and musical forms. Professionally, she has worked as a singer and dancer for the United Nations Singers, touring internationally. In New York City, she has collaborated with different ensembles and dance companies, as well as performing her own solo music. By 2011, she began collaboration with Sinuhé in his fusion group Jarana Beat. After joining the group, Claudia became more and more interested in learning about son jarocho and practicing the fandango. That same year, she began to organize workshops with Sinuhé and created the website “Sonjarrocho.mx” to compile general information about son jarocho and to advertise workshops and fandangos in New York. Later, she built a communication network through Facebook to connect people interested in son jarocho and fandangos in the New York City area.

The third organizer for the community who works closely with Claudia and Sinuhé is Paula Sánchez-Kucukozer. Paula, originally from Guadalajara, has been active in Mexican dance (Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York and fandango zapateado) and flamenco since moving to New York City with her spouse, Mehmet Kucukozer in 2001. Before becoming part of the jaranero community in 2011, she was a high school Spanish teacher in New York City. She left her job as a Spanish teacher to pursue education and outreach in the arts. Once she changed her career path from the high school classroom, Paula began to help Claudia with the enormous task of scheduling workshops and concerts, communicating about fandango and other events on Facebook, and managing workshop and concert fees for visiting teacher-musicians from Mexico. Besides organizational work for the jaranero community, she has worked as the
Jarana Beat tour manager, and most recently, became a teaching-artist for Dancing Classrooms New York City, an organization that teaches social dance in New York City public schools.

Other organizers for the community include Calvin Burton and Renée Jimenez Orona. Both Calvin and Renée are U.S.-born members of the community and have taken on responsibilities of communicating information about workshops held at one of the community’s sites, the arts organization City Lore. Renée works professionally as a movement therapist, working with athletes and dancers to alleviate and repair bodily injuries. She has a therapy studio near Union Square that she has also used to host jarana workshops. Calvin is an artist, mostly working with paint and canvas, and he has also used his own apartment to host fandangos and son jarocho jam sessions. In addition to the people mentioned here, members of the community volunteer their time and energy to help organize events when they can. Even with little free time and space in New York City, community members constantly volunteer to make events possible.

Besides organizers, participation and engagement among the community members keeps the fandango and son jarocho alive in New York City. Most members of the community are of Mexican descent. Those that are Mexican immigrants came to the U.S. at different times. Some came as young children with their family, while others came as adults, looking for new opportunities. Other than Mexican immigrants or Mexican Americans, the next most prominent group in the community are non-Mexicans that were born in the U.S. Most of the U.S.-born community members self-identify as “white,” but some come from other Latin American backgrounds and identify with their national origin. The community comprises mostly adults, ranging in ages from eighteen to seventy-five years old, the bulk of them ranging between twenty-five to forty-five years old. However, some children as young as seven years old have regularly come to fandangos and participate with their parents. The professional backgrounds of
the community members also vary greatly. Overall, the majority of community members are educated professionals, working in diverse fields such as education, media production, art and music, massage therapy, translation and interpretation, and restaurant entrepreneurship.

In terms of socio-economic class, most community members would be considered “middle class” because of their education backgrounds. Most have at least a college degree and some have or are completing post-graduate degrees. For those that do not have a college degree, they are autodidacts that have spent considerable time educating themselves in non-traditional ways—Sinuhé’s self-education and wide musical knowledge illustrate an example of this. There are some working-class community members that work in service and construction sectors. These members of the community, unfortunately, participate in more limited ways because of their more demanding work schedules, which usually involve weekend or late-night labor.

In addition to the New York City community members, the adjacent East Coast cities of Philadelphia and Washington D.C. also have jaranero communities. Although each city has its own respective jaranero community activities like fandangos, many Philly and D.C. jaraneros visit and participate in New York City fandangos and other events. The last component of the New York City jaranero community comprises the transnational character of son jarocho since the movimiento jaranero. Although “transnational membership” to a global son jarocho community or network is an abstract notion, the international quality of the musical transmission and circulation of recordings and performers has generated an “imagined” son jarocho community. The transnational son jarocho community can be best illustrated through the online communication between different communities and individuals from the West Coast to the East Coast of the U.S. and throughout Mexico.
Beginning of the Jaranero Community in New York City

Son jarocho music came into the Spanish-sung music scene in New York City by the early 2000s when the group Semilla (seed), later renamed Radio Jarocho, formed. Before the official formation of Semilla, the founders Gabriel Guzmán and Juan Carlos Marín were playing in restaurants and bars in Queens. In their early performances, with guitar and jarana, Guzmán and Marín played *sones*, but were interested in interpreting them differently from the mariachi and ballet folklórico forms (del Palacio 2016:12). After attracting attention from other Mexican musicians in Queens who were also interested in traditional son jarocho and the fandango, a collective of musicians began to host monthly fandangos. Soon after, these fandangueros formed a group—Semilla. By 2006, Julia del Palacio had moved to New York City to start graduate school, and she joined the group Semilla to sing and dance zapateado. At this time, Semilla was hosting monthly fandangos at the East Harlem restaurant Carlito’s Café (now closed), as well as at Casa Mezcal on the Lower East Side and Terraza 7 in Elmhurst, Queens. As Semilla, they were performing a mixture of different *son* traditions: *son huasteco* (from the Huasteca region), and *son de Tíxtla* and *son guerrerense* (both from the state of Guerrero). According to Julia, the work of performing such a diverse set of *sones* involved too much effort—schlepping many types of instruments across the city became too arduous. In 2006 Semilla decided to narrow its performance focus to only son jarocho music and renamed itself Radio Jarocho (Interview July 29, 2016). After a couple of years, Guzmán returned to Mexico and the workshops and fandangos faded out, and Radio Jarocho focused its efforts on concert performances and outreach in many forms: school performances, *quinceañeras* (15th birthday parties), gallery openings, and weddings. Julia mentions that by this time (2009-2010), more Mexican communities were soliciting them for Mexican music performance, and she noticed that many people were happy to
hire Mexican musicians that played something other than mariachi. Thus, son jarocho performance was in demand and was becoming a “new” alternative Mexican music for parties and celebrations in New York City (interview, July 29, 2016).

In 2008, around the time that Radio Jarocho formed, Sinuhé Padilla Isunza moved to New York City after meeting organizers from the New York University’s Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, in Buenos Aires, Argentina who convinced him that the city was the place for his type of artistic work. Sinuhé had just begun a new concept for a fusion group that would develop into Jarana Beat. His concept was to incorporate multiple son traditions from Mexico with other Latin American popular musics and instrumentation. With help from the NYU institute, Sinuhé moved to New York City, quickly integrated himself in Spanish-sung music circles, and started to form Jarana Beat. By 2011, Jarana Beat was fully formed and releasing its first album ¡Echapalante! (Jarana Records). The CD release party for ¡Echapalante! was at Terraza 7. Sinuhé comments on the CD party:

I offered the Jarana Beat CD to the [Virgen de la] Candelaria. And that was the first Candelaria that was celebrated in New York. The disc was done. The CD release party was on the Candelaria and a fandango was held, the disc was for the Candelaria and the fandango of the Candelaria was like a celebration and we also invited other musicians from here to participate, not just Jarana Beat. That was the first Candelaria in New York. (interview March 22, 2015)

In our interview, I asked if he chose to have the CD release party on the day of the patron saint of jaraneros, la Virgen de la Candelaria. However, he did not plan to release the CD on the saint’s day, but it was a scheduling coincidence with the Terraza 7 performance calendar. He continues,

46 Sinuhé has been musically involved in numerous projects, ranging from work with Bilingual Birdies (an elementary school program that teaches music in multiple languages) to helping Mireya Ramos name her all-women mariachi, Flor de Toloache.
“Yes, the patron saint of jaraneros. Besides, it was something organic, it was not planned, as the Candelaria opened, we went ahead.”

For several uninitiated but soon-to-be-jaraneros, including Claudia and Paula, the fandango experience at the 2011 Candelaria and ¡Echapalante! CD release party was transformative. They were immediately hooked and wanted more. Claudia and Paula’s immediate attraction to the fandango parallels other descriptions of the fandango practice that have been disseminated since the movimiento jaranero. In a conference presentation, Rafael Figueroa Hernández describes this infectious nature of the fandango “bug.” He explains that all international son jarocho communities have a “patient zero.” Someone brings the music and fandango, and others become involved thereafter (Fandango Conference April 17, 2015). For the present formation of New York City’s jaranero community, the 2011 Candelaria fandango serves as the “year zero,” for it marks a new trajectory for series of workshops and regular fandangos.

Since the first Candelaria in New York City in 2011, there have been seven annual Candelaria celebrations, six annual Encuentros de son jarocho (Meetings or Encounters of son jarocho), and monthly fandangos. The monthly fandangos became regular by 2014, and since September 2014 there have been thirty-eight consecutive monthly fandangos. Now, not a month goes by without a fandango opportunity in New York City. Aside from these celebrations and events, weekly jarana workshops and active online communication continue to nourish the jaranero community’s desire for more son jarocho.

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Online Organization of Community Events

Like the transnational character of the movimiento jaranero, son jarocho, broadly speaking, exists both in real life and digitally in online communication and networks. There is a Facebook page called “Son Jarocho USA” that serves as a platform for documentation and communication about any son jarocho activity in the United States. More importantly, it also connects U.S.-based jaraneros with Mexican jaraneros. Through “Son Jarocho USA,” jaraneros from across the U.S. are able to connect with each other on a wide range of topics by writing on the “wall” of the Facebook group page. In the spring of 2017, the main topic of conversation was the Fandango Fronterizo at the San Diego-Tijuana border. Jaraneros from the U.S. and Mexico asked each other for advice about lodging, travel accommodations, information, and many other logistics. After the Fandango Fronterizo 2017 (May 27, 2017), many requested photos, videos, and other documentation from the event.

The New York City jaranero community has a digital presence for communicating the time and place of events, advertising concerts and workshops, asking questions and starting conversations on son jarocho related topics, and sharing photos, information, and many other networking purposes. The original online platform for the New York community began as “Sonjarocho.mx.” Claudia Valentina began the website as a way to consolidate all the information regarding the son jarocho activity in New York City (workshops, concerts, and fandangos) and to compile any and all son jarocho related information—history of the music, recordings, professional groups, seminars and workshops taking place in Mexico and the U.S. It was a huge project. After quickly realizing that she had taken on an unwieldy project, Claudia reworked the website into Facebook pages for the New York City and East Coast area: “Son Jarocho-EAST COAST” and “SonJarocho.MX.” The Facebook page “SonJarocho.MX” serves
as an administrative platform for the organizers to create and post events to the interactive group page “Son Jarocho-EAST COAST.”

The Facebook page “Son jarocho- EAST COAST” quickly became the central hub for all primary communication about anything “son jarocho” for New Yorkers and even jaraneros in Philadelphia, Washington D.C., and the surrounding East Coast region. The site administrators—Claudia, Paula, and Sinuhé—regularly post the times and locations of workshops, announce performances, and organize the monthly fandango through the Facebook page. They also accept and invite new members to the page—Facebook pages are generally invitation only, if they are a “closed” group. Members of the page interact with each other, generally asking for advice—“Where can I get a new jarana string? Mine broke”—or posting photos, videos, and other community-related material to the page. One recurring type of post on both the “Son Jarocho USA” and “Son Jarocho- EAST COAST” pages is the “jarana en venta” (jarana for sale) post. About a few times per month, someone posts on the wall, describing a jarana for sale. These posts come from within the U.S. and from Mexico. Other than the “jarana for sale” posts, many use the Facebook page to ask each other for items from Mexico: zapateado shoes, jarana strings, books, and CDs.
All of these communications start conversations, forge new connections, and generate a sense of community. However complicated the age of social media is, the Facebook page “Son Jarocho-EAST COAST” is essential to the fabric of the New York City jaranero community. Last, perhaps the Facebook pages also partially fulfill the roles of print media that have been analyzed as a tool for nation and community consciousness (Anderson 1983, Livingston 1999).

Other Facebook pages associated with the New York community are the “Los Soneros de Citylore” and “Jarana Classes/Clases de Jarana” pages. The City Lore Facebook page is the communication page for all son jarocho events at City Lore. For the past several years (since 2014), City Lore has hosted Monday night workshops. Over time, the workshops have changed from jarana-focused workshops to zapateado and then back to jarana. The “Jarana Classes” page was the original page for all classes, and it still serves as an archive of early jarana workshops. In
the photo and video sections on the page, the community has uploaded over fifty homemade videos of jarana lessons. The videos show Sinuhé or another instructor demonstrating rasgueos (strumming patterns) and chord positions for various sones. Similar to YouTube, which has endless instructional videos created by users, the Jarana Classes page is an excellent source for learning sones. Additionally, amateur performance groups have their own Facebook pages to communicate with each other and to promote events. For example, the group Son Pecadores uses Facebook to schedule rehearsals and arrange transportation to and from performances.

**Shared Spaces of Son Jarocho**

Workshop and event organizers communicate the community’s activity through the accessible and free platform of Facebook, but securing event space is a more difficult task, especially in New York City. One reason for the difficulty in finding event space is that most spaces in New York City require a certain amount of capital to rent or lease for business purposes. Because the organizers want to keep workshop costs to a minimum, they cannot afford a studio space. Instead, the organizers rely on a network of donated spaces for workshops and events. Many of these donated spaces come from the social and non-profit infrastructure of New York City. Without pre-existing organizations and institutions that support educational and social outreach for other Spanish-speaking immigrant communities, the son jarocho community would have less access to potential workshop and fandango spaces.

Unlike many traditional musics found in New York City, the son jarocho community does not have an assortment of donors for its musical work. For example, there are many folkloric and traditional music ensembles and collectives that have funding through the different arts councils of New York City’s boroughs. The Brooklyn Arts Council supports music
collectives like “Brooklyn Raga Massive Weekly Concert and Jam Session” and “My Music, My Culture: Caribbean Diaspora in Brooklyn.” These musical projects are educational and outreach focused, and the projects that are funded through the arts councils are established not-for-profit organizations. The most prominent Mexican musics in New York City are represented by the mariachi groups, and notably the Mariachi Academy of New York and the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York (BFMNY). The Mariachi Academy of New York is partially funded by the Mexican Consulate and Cultural Institute of New York and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. The BFMNY receives part of its funding from the Brooklyn Arts Council and Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture without Borders. The jaranero community does not have nonprofit status and relies on the donation-based generosity of local businesses, music venues, and nonprofit community organizations for spaces to hold workshops, host fandangos, and bring people together. By securing a free space to hold workshops and fandangos, the community has the ability to host visiting musicians. This would not be possible if the community were financially burdened with rental costs of a venue or studio space.

However, the organizers’ goal for the community is to one day be able to apply for grants to pay the visiting maestros jaraneros (“masters” or teachers of son jarocho) a more substantial salary for their work. This goal has yet to be realized, which Claudia discussed in an interview. She admits, “[O]ur struggle has been to organize ourselves enough to apply for grants. I think that, especially now that we’ve been doing encuentros and fandangos for five years, we have had enough of a track record… enough of a curriculum to show that we can use a grant and use it well. I think that is our next step” (interview, August 17, 2016). Part of the difficulty in applying for grants for Claudia and the other organizers is that they would have to concretely establish

http://www.brooklynartscouncil.org/documents/2572
themselves as a cohesive “organization.” They certainly have the requisite cultural mission to educate the community and the wider New York City population about son jarocho and its historical traditions. Yet, the self-organization of completing the paperwork and navigating the bureaucracy of establishing a nonprofit status is still out of reach.49

To operate within a precarious financial situation, Claudia explained that in the beginning (2011-2013), they relied upon the coincidence of maestros who happened to travel to New York or the region. When a musician happened to have a trip planned to New York City, Claudia and others would reach out to them and ask if they had time during their trip to give workshops or join a fandango. She explains how she would find connections to traveling son jarocho musicians, “When I started out with the Sonjarocho.mx project, I reached out often to ‘Jarochelos’ César Castro, he’s in L.A. And people would contact him and he would direct them to us” (interview August 17, 2016).50 Through her contact with a well-connected jaranero in Los Angeles, Claudia was able to connect further with traveling musicians. This exchange with Castro demonstrates generosity and information sharing in the social networks of son jarocho. Since the maestros want to continue the dissemination and teaching of the fandango, they typically set aside time to teach a week-long workshop seminar, or however long their trip to New York may be. In the beginnings of the community’s workshop-fandango network, this model of happenstance has worked but may be untenable in the long term. Yet, New York City continues to attract many international musicians, so there has been a consistent stream of visiting maestros with whom the jaranero community collaborates.

49 I have offered to help them with grant writing, and hopefully, in the future, I can give back to them through writing assistance.
50 “Jarochelos” César Castro is a son jarocho musician, luthier, and producer based in Los Angeles. http://jarochelo.com/
Once the maestros arrive in New York City, the organizers make sure they have lodging. First referenced in Chapter 2, Claudia and Sinuhé typically host the musicians in their home, which is a spacious two-story house in the Bronx. Claudia continues:

[In the] beginning, [it] was taking up a lot of my time particularly when… first of all they still to this day stay at our house… We would always take them out, but it’s also part of the convivencia part of son jarocho. That has to exist. So, they would always stay at our house… there’s everything from coordinating the schedule to setting prices, to selecting photographs and creating the promotional images that we need to print posters or whatever is going on the Facebook event page. (interview August 17, 2016)

Other organizers and community members have shared the responsibility of hosting visiting maestros too. Paula and her spouse Mehmet have given lodging to visitors in their Queens home. In addition to generously accommodating the maestros, the organizers tirelessly schedule workshops and promote the maestros’ performances in donated workshop spaces. The maestros teach the workshop series, perform a few concerts at son jarocho-friendly venues, and then, according to Claudia, “All the funds that come in… everything goes to the teachers” (interview August 17, 2016).

Other than the workshop and housing logistics for the visiting teachers, the organizers and jaranero community members receive and fulfill requests through the Facebook page. Often, visitors from the East Coast jaranero communities in Philadelphia or Washington D.C. post messages to the “Son Jarocho- EAST COAST” wall, asking for a place to stay during their trip to New York City. Other times, Mexican travelers inquire about sublets or short-term rentals in New York City through the Facebook page. The New York City community answers these requests either by offering housing or connecting the inquiring person to a friend that can accommodate the request. As New York City becomes more unaffordable in terms of access to affordable housing, the son jarocho community is acutely aware of the difficulty that a working
musician faces when touring, especially those coming from Mexico. From the organizers’
tireless work to accommodate all visiting teachers to the individuals that assist outsiders, the
jaranero community of New York City makes every effort to welcome others, sharing what
(little) resources they have, continuing to demonstrate an attitude of convivencia. Yet, even
though the community hospitably shares resources, those that benefit from this generosity are
already within the social network, which is subject to social structures and material limitations.
For instance, the musicians from Mexico that have access to and can afford travel visas benefit
from the hospitality of the New York City community. Conversely, this hospitality has limits and
cannot bridge political boundaries (like visas) or the reality of working-class immigrants in New
York City.

**Businesses and Organizations that Support the Community**

Because of a lack of institutional support that would come from a grant-partnering
organization or nonprofit status, the community relies upon relationships with local businesses
and organizations for access to workshop and event space. Over the past five to six years, the
community has held events in many places, but some businesses and organizations have been
steadfast and reliable in their offering of consistent event space. These businesses and
organizations are part of New York City’s cultural landscape and socio-cultural infrastructure
that reveal the ways multiculturalism is supported and Hispanic communities have access to
Spanish language spaces. Among the different businesses and organizations that have supported
the jaranero community, four are highlighted in this dissertation for their substantial and
significant contributions to the community over the past five to six years: Mano a Mano:
Mexican Culture without Borders, Terraza 7 in Elmhurst, Queens, El Kallejon Lounge in East
Harlem, and City Lore in the Lower East Side. These three businesses and organizations are not only reliable in offering the community space for events, but are also frequent spaces for the community to gather.

Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture without Borders is a non-profit organization that celebrates Mexican culture and is dedicated to “promoting the understanding of Mexican traditions through arts, culture, humanities, and annual celebrations of holidays… as well as festivals, concerts, performances, processions, installations, and seminars” (http://www.manoamano.us/en/about-us.html). Since the early moments of son jarocho activity in New York, Mano a Mano has supported the development of the son jarocho community in New York City through the sponsorship of lecture-recitals, concerts, and community fandangos in the organization’s space.\textsuperscript{51} This non-profit does not exclusively support the son jarocho community and its activity in New York, but it has nevertheless provided important support.

Terraza 7 (within the Spanish-speaking community, it is often referred to as “si\text{ete}”) is a Colombian-owned Latin American music venue and bar in Elmhurst, Queens near the 82\textsuperscript{nd} Street stop off the local Seven train.\textsuperscript{52} The small venue has two levels: the ground floor is a full bar and above, on the second level, is the stage, which is suspended above the bar with a semi-transparent metal grate, allowing people on the ground floor to see the musicians on stage. The bar serves empanada snacks and Latin American-themed cocktails, like pisco sours. The

\textsuperscript{51} For a brief look at the past son jarocho-related events that Mano a Mano has promoted, visit the organization’s archive: http://www.manoamano.us/en/event-archive.html.

\textsuperscript{52} Elmhurst, Queens is one of New York City’s diverse immigrant neighborhoods that has Peruvian, Colombian, Ecuadorian, and Mexican populations living among East and South Asian immigrants. The Spanish-speaking populations of this neighborhood provide community and business support for art and music from Latin America.
audience sits around the edges of the second-floor walls, in three tiered levels. The total capacity of the venue is intimate, around fifty people.

Terraza 7 is dear to the son jarocho community: It is a site where some of the very first fandangos were held, and where the first jarana workshops took place. The owner Freddy Castiblanco has devoted the bar to Latin American music, especially Afro-Latin American forms, including jazz and fusion. The diverse Latin American neighborhood that surrounds Terraza 7 is also partly the reason for Freddy’s dedication to all music from Latin America. The two prominent professional son jarocho groups Jarana Beat and Radio Jarocho regularly play at Terraza 7, both citing the venue as a “home” to them. Terraza 7 is an example of the type of social infrastructure that exists in New York City; one in which immigrant communities can gather for music and culture. Without a space like Terraza 7, many musical communities including the jaraneros in New York City would not have a stable venue for work and social
El Kallejon Lounge is a small restaurant on East 117\textsuperscript{th} Street between 3\textsuperscript{rd} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} Avenues in East Harlem. Recently, Mexican immigrants have begun to move to East Harlem. Before Mexicans, Puerto Ricans were the majority of residents, since the 1950s and 60s—when the neighborhood was then named “Spanish Harlem” as a way to differentiate it from the predominantly African American central and West Harlem.\textsuperscript{53} The place is on the ground floor with an entrance at the bottom of a short set of steps. The entire space holds about 10 tables and about 6-8 stools around the bar. There is an outdoor patio that opens in warm weather months, beginning around May. The restaurant is colorfully decorated with Mexican skulls (typical of

\textsuperscript{53} https://www.nyc.com/visitor_guide/spanish_harlem.75851/
Dia de Muertos), instruments, and other Mexican popular art hang on the walls. When live music or a fandango is not happening, the sound system is typically playing Mexican pop, son jarocho, salsa, or another variety of Spanish-language popular music. The owner and chef, Nestor, is originally from Mexico City and has built his restaurant business since opening in 2012. During the past several years, he has regularly invited son jarocho musicians to play at the restaurant and given them space to hold workshops and fandangos. Many times during a fandango or workshop, unknowing customers come into the restaurant and are surprised by the “event” that is happening while they eat. One such interaction came during a winter fandango in 2015. A group of people were celebrating a woman’s birthday in one corner of El Kallejon while a community fandango occurred in the opposite corner. By the end of the night, the birthday woman decided to interact with the fandango. She joined the fandango in the closing performance of “La bamba” by entering the circle and dancing on the tarima, singing her improvised line several times, “¡Yo soy de Boriquen!” (I am from Borinquen, the Taino name for the island of Puerto Rico). In that moment, the mixture of Mexican and Puerto Rican in the East Harlem neighborhood was on display.

City Lore is an urban folklore and cultural center in the Lower East Side of Manhattan.54 The organization is an arts foundation with urban folklorists that document and present music, art, and material culture of the city. Though City Lore is not a Spanish-speaking business or institution, their arts and culture board has several folklorists who study the historic Puerto Rican communities of the Lower East Side and growing immigrant flows throughout New York City. City Lore also supports teaching artists and provides them with workshop space. The arts center has become another important place for son jarocho activity since 2013, when Calvin Burton

54 http://citylore.org/
took on the responsibility of opening and closing City Lore after its business hours for evening jarana and zapateado workshops.

These three businesses and organizations exemplify the special relationships the jaranero community builds inside and outside of the fandango. With the generosity of these and other organizations, the community can make music together and put into practice the concept of convivencia.

Figure 11 Jarana class in City Lore. Summer 2014. Photo by author.

**Convivencia and Practicing Participation**

How does one learn how to participate in the fandango? How does one teach others convivencia? Why son jarocho? Why not another type of music to build community? The task of “teaching” adults and children the act of convivencia, or the willingness to collaborate and share with others in the music making process, may seem abstract and potentially very difficult. However, the model of son jarocho and the fandango that the movimiento jaranero revived and
repurposed, placing new importance on participatory potential, complements a lifestyle or worldview that emphasizes convivencia, shared experiences, and collaboration. In an interview, Sinuhé remarks on the value of teaching and sharing the son jarocho and fandango tradition, saying, “In son jarocho, you don’t have to be a musician to live the fandango and play and everything” (interview March 22, 2015). As our conversation continued, I asked him “Why son jarocho? Why not another type of music to build a community?” And Sinuhé acknowledged that there could be a community-building project with another type of music, but that community would simply be different from the jaranero community in New York City. He explains,

Yes, it’s totally possible. If we give Huasteco classes, it’s more difficult because playing huasteco violin, you will not have a bunch of people like everyone who can play the jarana. Playing huapanguera huasteca needs more skill, right? And it is only a trio that plays. There are three, three play, all the others dance, and that’s it. So, it's a different way of doing community. It is not like the *son* [jarocho] where everyone plays, everyone is dancing, and everyone is singing. And they all enter. It is more inclusive.

Besides the fact that a son huasteco community would be possible, it would develop differently and the community members would participate in distinct ways—namely, not every community member would be able to actively make music, and most would be audience members dancing. In Mexico, son huasteco is performed in trios with the audience typically dancing zapateado. The obvious reason that Sinuhé points out is that a genre like son huasteco requires a different level of musicianship, and entry into an instrument like violin is much more difficult than entry into the jarana. However, in our discussion, I asked Sinuhé if there is another music that could generate community similarly to son jarocho and fandango. He agreed that another large-group performance genre like Brazilian *samba* could have a similar community-building potential. In that scenario, all members would play one of the many drums and percussion instruments that are also easier for beginners to learn, allowing for more inclusion.
Aside from the ways beginning music learners have easy entry into learning an instrument like the jarana and the large-ensemble format, there are non-musical elements to the fandango and son jarocho that draw people into the community. From Sinuhé’s point of view and others’, the practice of the fandango allows people to live and work together in a way that may not be immediately available to them in contemporary society. Other community members have mentioned how they feel proud of creating the music that they listen to and that they have learned to play a music with people, simultaneously making friends. Our interview continued:

Look, I think it all starts with how it’s like the animals that go down to drink water to the river and why do they all come down? Because they are thirsty. And what do they have in common? They are drinking something that nourishes them. I think that a fandango, those who arrive there is because we are thirsty for something. And we are drinking the water together and sharing that. Somehow that gives you empathy with someone, say “you and I are learning jarana together” or “we are drinking from the same source.” Then it is one in the same. I believe that friendship begins, because, in addition, as you say, we are sharing things that are fun. And like you say, in a class one is having fun or sometimes one gets frustrated like, “oh, I don’t get it!” But it’s a funny frustration too, no? And sometimes even sharing that frustration with someone who does not get it either, that already makes you friends with somebody. I say “oh, we both don’t get it.” There are many things that make people become friends in these classes and in these fandangos. (interview March 22, 2015)

Sinuhé explains how the learning process itself functions as a tool to create a shared and communitarian experience. When students of the music learn together, some of the best community-building moments come out of frustration or error. When someone makes a mistake in trying to execute a verse, a zapateado step, or a chord on the jarana, the mistake is a moment for others to empathize with each other and share the process together. Granted, not all music instructors have this empathetic and compassionate approach to teaching, but most son jarocho maestros do. Not all classroom settings are carefully constructed to be spaces of support and shared learning—in fact the opposite is true in many people’s general education and classroom experiences. For instance, Sinuhé attended the Toluca music conservatory and observed not just
a lack of curriculum in popular music, but also a lack of engaged teaching, which is needed to
cultivate a positive learning environment. He explains that he has taught many different groups
of people and they have liked his style of teaching. He thinks that students like his methods not
only because of the subject that he teaches, but also because of the affective quality in his
classes. He explains:

        But it was because I think I was very emotional. When I teach, I get excited. And
I think people connect with that; they get excited too. They are things that are
worth getting excited about. Everyone is thrilled. But sometimes in schools they
teach you with laziness, with a teacher who neither has the vocation or is not
interested anymore, they already have security in work and roll along. Or they
 teach it with laziness because that's how they were taught… There is a part of the
music, of history, of everything, which is taught very coldly and I do not like it. I
think that causes people to either lose the spark, lose interest, or start to get
frightened because they have to do it. Then they live it and they teach it that way.
(interview March 22, 2015)

Sinuhé’s pedagogical methods are based in the movimiento jaranero’s aesthetic practice and
model of convivencia. He sees his musical instruction as a way to bring people together, rather
than exclude anyone from the learning process.

        Furthermore, in any learning process, there will be mistakes. That is simply part of the
process. However, in the learning environment, mistakes can become teachable moments or
moments that hurt or humiliate students. For Sinuhé, his musical classroom must be a space free
from competition to further facilitate an atmosphere of convivencia. New learners of son jarocho
and the fandango must learn how to share music together. If there is a competitive environment
that may grow into an antagonistic relationship, then sharing music and knowledge becomes
secondary. Sinuhé explains:

        Share. Share. That is the healthy part, though, look, like everything, and here I
also speak of the other side of the coin and sometimes there is competition and
that is something I do not... I try to focus on sowing the son here without that.
Without competition. Because that happens a lot, that suddenly one group doesn’t
want to have anything to do with the other. And in Mexico it is full of that, that
one does not like how the other teaches, or some say that that is wrong, and they begin to be like enemies. They are subgroups. I hope that never happens here… And anyway, the community that we have here, I still feel that it is clean of that. (interview March 22, 2015)

This model of instruction demonstrates to students or music learners that mistakes, missteps, and errors are part of the process. With few exceptions, the music learners in the son jarocho workshops in New York City all experience this “humorous frustration” in a non-competitive learning environment. Some people in the community have stronger musicianship skills than others, but they are not fluent Spanish speakers; they are still learning the language. In the process of learning how to sing in Spanish, they make many language mistakes, providing the humbling experience of learning a foreign language. For others, they are completely new to learning music in general. The awkward moments of clumsily banging the jarana or a messy finger position that results in a dissonant chord are examples of learners trying, but failing. This failure brings humility to the learner and provides both students and instructors “teachable moments.” If the workshops were exclusionary or competitive, beginners would most likely feel unwelcome and quit before they started. The non-competitive attitude relates to one of Turino’s analogies for participatory music. He writes:

It might be helpful to think of participatory performance as being similar to a pick-up softball game. When a group of good friends come together to play, even the guy or gal known to be a lousy player will be included. Like the core musicians in participatory performance, the better softball players keep the game going and make it fun for everyone. If no one can hit, catch, or pitch, the game goes nowhere and becomes boring, just as if no one can create a compelling rhythmic groove, no one will want to dance. Competitive or deeply invested softball players may groan inwardly when an inept teammate flubs an easy fly ball, but if they have any class, they will shout encouragement, make a joke of it, or say nothing. After all, it is only a game, for fun and to bring friends together. Participatory performance is like this—it is about the opportunity of connecting in special ways with others and experiencing flow. (2008:35)
Personally, I have had my own series of missteps and errors that have resulted in humorous and teachable moments, not only for myself, but for others participating in the workshop. In one of the first few workshops that I attended as I began my fieldwork, I was the only non-native Spanish speaker in the group, the only woman, and the only adult besides the instructors. The class was small, with four teenaged boys, about fifteen or sixteen years old from working-class families in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Sinuhé was present, but the lead instructor for the class was Claudio Vega who was visiting from Mexico. Claudio was teaching the jarana chords and rasgueo for the *son* “El chuchumbé.” After Claudio explained the chords and strumming pattern, he asked if anyone had a question. I raised my hand. At this point, it was 2014 and I had never heard of “El chuchumbé.” Instead of Claudio explaining the meaning or translation of the word, he asked one of the teenaged boys to explain it. The boy immediately blushed and in very few words said, “You know… it’s a… part of guy… you know.” The other boys lightly giggled at the conversation, and Claudio thanked the student and explained a little further. “El chuchumbé” is a word that describes a man’s groin area. Many of the verses in the *son* are about the hypocrisy of the Catholic Church and priests, in that many priests are not pious or chaste, but hypocrites that engage in sexual and salacious behavior. One verse describes the way the priest lifts his vestment and shows his “chuchumbé”:

*En la esquina está parado un fraile de la merced*

*Con los hábitos alzados enseñando el chuchumbe*

In the corner stands the friar of mercy

With the habit raised, showing the chuchumbe

It should be noted that “El chuchumbé” was one of the *sones* that the Church banned during the Holy Inquisition in Mexico in 1767 (Hernández 2013:475). This historical fact about “El

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55 Lyrics for the verse of “El chuchumbé” were transcribed from the Grupo Mono Blanco album *Fandango* (2004 Alliance), a movimiento jaranero recording.
“Chuchumbé” is significant, for the son was one of the sones actively revived during the early years of the movimiento jaranero— one of the early revivalist groups took the name “Chuchumbé” and many post-movimiento recorded albums feature an interpretation of the son. In the workshop described, Claudio and Sinuhé both explained some of this history about the son to the young teens. Their musical instruction always combines music, history, and culture as equally relevant, illustrating an educational model that the movimiento jaranero implemented in its project to disseminate son jarocho and educate learners in the process. But more important, the small teachable moment where Claudio engaged the young jaraneros to be translators and cultural interpreters reveals how the son jarocho classroom demonstrates the ways sociability is simultaneously taught alongside music and history.

The educational and non-competitive environment extends outside of the jarana workshops. Usually at the end of the year, the jaranero community hosts an Encuentro de Son Jarocho. This is a free event for the public where all of the son jarocho learners and professionals gather together to perform the sones that they have learned throughout the year. Some groups are amateur and come from a workshop site. One year there was a group called Sonset Park (a pun with son and Sunset Park, Brooklyn), which comprised all the students of Sinuhé’s Wednesday evening workshop in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. Another year, a group formed from Saturday afternoon classes at El Kallejon Lounge that called itself Los Soneros del Kallejon. Other amateur groups are formed by friends that meet to practice sones outside of formal jarana workshops like Son Pecadores and Son de Montón (another pun referring to the women’s dance and the fact that the group is entirely made up of women).
At an encuentro, all performing groups share two or three *sones* to display their work in workshops or from their own practice. The atmosphere at the encuentro is respectful, supportive, and non-competitive, providing many first-time performers the encouragement and confidence to play music in front of an audience. Many amateur performers are extremely nervous to put themselves on stage, but all of them come away feeling accomplished after they complete their performances at the encuentro. After all the amateur and professional groups perform their *sones*, the community holds a fandango to close the event.

**Jarana Workshop Model**

The primary teachers for *son* jarocho workshops in New York City include Sinuhé Padilla Isunza, Cecilia (Ceci) Ortega, and Julia del Palacio. Sinuhé teaches everything about the jarana, from basic strumming and playing classes to advanced workshops in rhythm and complicated strumming patterns. He also designs and constructs jaranas from his home.
workshop and has held luthier workshop series where participants build their own jaranas. There will be another jarana luthier series in 2018 through a partnership with the Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute of the City University of New York at Lehman College, an academic institute. Besides jarana, Sinuhé also designs leonas and other chordophones for son jarocho. Although his classes are principally focused on jarana and singing, he also includes some zapateado steps to keep his students aware of the multiple layers of musical participation that happen in a fandango. Both Ceci and Julia are zapateado instructors. They both play jarana and sing son jarocho, but their expertise lies in the zapateado dance. Chapter 4 will provide a more in depth explanation and analysis of both Ceci and Julia’s engagement with workshops and their knowledge of zapateado. Aside from Sinuhé, Ceci, and Julia, a regular rotation of visiting musician-teachers from Mexico host workshops and events in New York City.

The variety of teaching styles and approaches to son jarocho and the fandango allows different points of view, and also relieves the primary musician-teachers from their teaching obligations from time to time. In addition to jarana, zapateado, and jarana construction (luthier) workshops, Sinuhé has also offered individual instruction on leona and requinto. Besides son jarocho chordophones, guest instructors from Mexico have given workshops for performance on and construction of pandero, with Andrés Flores (December 2015) from the groups Chuchumbé and Quemayama, and marimbol, with Leopoldo Novoa (June 2016), who has performed with

56 The institute’s mission states, “The Jaime Lucero Mexican Studies Institute at CUNY seeks to boost enrollment of Mexican and Mexican-American students, foster research with and about Mexico and Mexicans in the United States and collaborate with community-based organizations to support and empower the Mexican immigrant community. With a special focus on Mexicans in the diaspora, especially Mexicans in New York City. The Institute offers a space for the Mexican community to consider its own and an institutional location for support of scholarly and community advocacy projects” (http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/cuny-mexican-studies-institute/).
groups Chuchumbé, Zacamandú, and Tembembe Ensamble Continuo. Other than instrument instruction, the community has hosted workshops on décima writing and verse improvisation with Alexis Díaz Pimienta (January 2016), and a taller de telar de cintura (workshop of waist wrap or belt weaving) with Diana Fabre Olvera (October 2015).

![Figure 13 Marimbol lessons in the patio of El Kallejon Lounge, June 2016.](image)

In my participant/observation and son jarocho workshop attendance, I have observed that there are common threads that connect pedagogic methods in the jaranero world. I draw these connections from the following eight workshop series that I attended:

- Claudio Vega (December 2014 and August 2016)
- Andrés Flores (December 2015)
- Julia del Palacio (Spring 2016)
- Cecilia Ortega (Spring 2016)
- Joel Cruz Castellanos (March 2016)
- Laura Rebollos (March 2016)
- Leopoldo Novoa (June 2016)

The typical son jarocho workshop session lasts from one-and-a-half hours to up to two hours. Most sessions do not exceed two hours. Workshops also usually run once a week,
providing consistent instruction and stability for the learners. But during a period of heightened activity in the community during 2014-2015, there were three weekly sessions: Monday evenings at City Lore, Wednesday evenings at a non-profit family center in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, and Saturday afternoons at El Kallejon Lounge. In a workshop session, the instructor chooses a single *son* on which the class will focus. The single-*son* focus may seem to be repetitive or potentially boring, but because most of the learners in the workshops are just beginning their son jarocho (or music in general) education, the learners benefit from the concentration on one *son*. The workshop begins with muted strumming on the jarana. Depending on the *son*, the rasgueo may be simple—alternations of down and up strokes—or complicated patterns. All *sones* can be played with simple down/up strokes, but instructors introduce different patterns to build the knowledge and skills of their students and to diversify the jarana sound for the chosen *son*.

While resting the fretting hand gently over the neck of the jarana, the other hand practices strumming the rasgueo with the edge of the finger and thumb nails. One more complicated pattern that Sinuhé introduced to his class follows two parts:

6/8: pa-se-pa-se-se-(rest) | pa-pa-se-se-pa-(rest) or 6/8: ↓↑↑↓↓↑↓↓-

Each syllable “pa” and “se” equals one eighth note. The “pa” is a down stroke with the edges of the finger nails, and the “se” stroke is an up stroke with the nail of the thumb. After the entire class executes the muted rasgueo several times for the instructor, the instructor then moves on to chord positions with the fretting hand. If the class comprises true beginners, the students practice the chords individually, one by one, spending some time to know the feeling and sound of each chord position before transitioning to the next chord.
Once the class demonstrates the ability to play each chord in the compás, the instructor moves the class to strumming with verses. The instructor sings a verse while the students maintain the compás, repeating the same verse a few times. Then, each student tries to sing the verse with the strumming jaranas. If, at first, the verse is too difficult for a student to articulate or sing the exact words, the teacher encourages the student to first sing the melody with “la la la” or filler syllables. Also, many new learners have difficulty transitioning between chords while singing, so many instructors encourage students to sing while strumming muted strings.

After a verse or verses have been established, the class moves on to incorporate zapateado. In the zapateado-focused workshops (later discussed in chapter 4), the instructors demonstrate son-specific steps, or patterns of zapateado steps that fit a particular son. In jarana-focused classes, specific steps may be taught, but generally, an all-purpose step pattern known as “café con pan” (coffee with bread) is used.

The musical language for son jarocho instruction does not differ greatly from formal musical education. Although there is very little use of Western standard music notation, all the instructors that are mentioned in this dissertation use a “fixed do” solfege to explain the key of a son, chords, and finger positioning of the jarana and other instruments. In “fixed do,” the solfege syllables (do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si, do) are fixed to their corresponding musical notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. The “fixed do” system is common to Spanish-speaking musical education, and the uniformity of the “fixed do” system facilitates a universal language for son jarocho learners, providing them consistency among the variety of visiting instructors.

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57 In English, solfege includes “ti” instead of “si,” which is used in Spanish, Italian, and other music systems.
Among the many visiting instructors from Mexico, Laura Rebollos’s style of pedagogy stood out from others not only for the musical language she used to teach jarana, but also for her body-centered approach to instruction. During her series of workshops and performances in March 2016, Laura taught two weeks of jarana lessons at El Kallejon. Her jarana lessons were distinct from previous jarana lessons many in the community had experienced before. She began her jarana workshops with full body and voice stretches. First, she asked everyone to place all jaranas on the tarima in the center of the class circle.

![Figure 14 Jaranas on the tarima in the center of class circle at Laura Rebolloso’s workshop at El Kallejon. March 7, 2016.](image)

After everyone placed their jaranas on the tarima, she asked the class to stand up. Then, everyone stretched their bodies. First, the class stretched the thumbs and individual fingers, hands, arms and shoulders. Next, the head and neck, by rolling the head back and forth, in circles, and side to side. Last, the class bent from the waist to stretch their legs and backs. This physical warm-up of the body was something that most in the New York City community had not experienced before. One participant commented that it felt like a musical yoga class. After everyone’s bodies were warmed up, Laura moved on to stretching the voice. While still standing and not holding jaranas, Laura asked the class to open their mouths in the shape of the vowel
“U.” She instructed the class to breathe in slowly and deeply, then slowly release the breath, still keeping the “U” shape of the mouth and to let the voice vibrate. The class reverberated with a collective “Uuuuuuuu.” Next, Laura guided the class through the next vowel sounds: I, E, O, and last, A. During these body and voice stretches, Laura told the class that she wanted our bodies to be loose, to be relaxed, and to be focused.

After the body and voice stretches, Laura introduced one more warm-up before the class could begin to hold and play their jaranas. The class was still standing at this point, and she took a seat with her jarana and strummed compás to the son “El buscapiés.” She strummed the pattern:

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I                      IV    V7
6/8: ↓↑↓↑↑ | ↓↑↓↑↑↑
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While she strummed, Laura asked everyone to close their eyes and let their voices find the harmony while mouthing the different vowel shapes. First, the class sang “Uuuuu” with the compás, then the remaining vowels (I, E, O, and A). Next, she asked the class to sing the syllable “La” with the compás. The entire class sang with her jarana, collectively harmonizing in some moments and creating dissonance in others. While she played, she continued to push the warm-up further, asking the class to sing higher or lower. By this moment in the class, the extended warm-up had fully loosened the class, and everyone was singing loudly and strongly with Laura’s jarana.

The warm-up in Laura’s class not only loosened the vocal chords and the body for singing and playing the jarana, but the class also drew in the individual students by lowering the
“affective filter.” The physical movement in the class facilitated a relaxed atmosphere for the music learners, pushing out any preoccupations or stresses from the day. The vocal warm-ups also relaxed the students’ voices and created another easy entry into the musical lesson, reducing any new learners’ anxieties around singing in front of others. Personally, the lesson was an excellent model for me not only for musical but also general classroom instruction.

Once the class was fully warmed up, everyone finally took a seat and began to strum the compás to the son “El buscapiés” with Laura. The class strummed the son for several cycles and then Laura began to sing a verse. When she completed the verse, still strumming, she asked everyone to sing the verse with her. Together, the class practiced a single verse to “El buscapiés.” The verse and strumming practice went on for a little while, and then Laura introduced the class to some music theory.

Laura explained that there are positions on the jarana. She named them primera, segunda, and tercera posición (first, second, and third position). These positions are alternative names for the chords of a son and are not related to Western music terminology that refers to finger or hand position on the neck of a lute. These positions would be considered “movable do” because the first position represents the “tonic” or key of the music, not a fixed note like “do” represents the tone “C.” Primera posición is the I chord or the “do.” Segunda posición is the V or “sol” chord and tercera posición is the IV or “fa.” She said, “Close your eyes. Which has more tension?” She then played the I and IV chords. The class responded that the second chord (IV) had more tension. Then again, she asked the same question, playing I and V chords. Again, the class responded that the second chord played (V) had more tension. Next, she played I, IV, and V. At

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58 The “affective filter” is a theory for language pedagogy developed by linguist Stephen Krashen in the 1980s. He argues for a classroom setting that lowers negative emotions to benefit student learning.
this point, I asked why the tension was considered greater in the third position (the IV chord). Laura and her bandmate Alonso explained that in son jarocho, the IV chord is less stable and is often used as a passing chord between the I and V chords. In other words, she introduced the class to the idea of a hierarchy of chord use in *sones*, where the chord is named for its importance and frequency of use rather than its tonal root. This music theory introduction was new for the New York City community members, but it complemented their knowledge of *sones* and jarana chords from previous lessons.

**The New York City Jaranero Book of Verses**

Although the organizers of workshops and fandangos perform the more intensive labor in the community, some non-organizers take on difficult projects for the community. Calvin is both an active participant in the community’s events and the person who took on the responsibility of opening and closing City Lore for workshops. One of the unique contributions that Calvin has given the community is his edited book of verses for *sones*, called *Coplas para son jarocho* (Verses for son jarocho) (Burton 2017). Now in its fourth edition, Calvin originally wanted to create a booklet of his personal favorite verses for *sones*, so that he could study them and be able to sing them at fandangos. He explained:

> It was a project for personal use because I wasn’t happy with the existing book that I had, which is the Juan de Melendez book. It was a great resource but I didn’t like the way it was organized because I felt like you know… it was organized by song or *son* and the verses that I liked were scattered around and attributed to random *sones*. (interview July 25, 2016)

His edited book lists *sones* in alphabetical order, from “El Aguanieve” (The sleet) to “El zapateado.” Each entry for *sones* has anywhere between thirty to fifty individual verse stanzas that are associated with the *son*. At the beginning of each of *son* entry, the *son* is titled and
identified in two categories: First category, Se canta respondiendo (is sung responding) “R” or No se responde (No response) “NR” and second category, Son de pareja (Partner son, for men and women) “SP” or Son de montón (Women’s son, for women to dance) “SM.”

Over two years, between 2012-2014, Calvin had designed and created the book for himself, and then he had the idea to distribute it to others in the community who were interested. He never wanted to sell the book because he felt that he never “owned” the verses and this type of book should be given to others. He continues, “I didn’t write any of these verses. What right is it of mine to sell them? It certainly took a lot of effort to put it together… but if at some point down the road someone wanted to publish it I would work with the community… to make sure that everything is cool” (interview July 25, 2016). Calvin is conscious of the fact that since he is not Mexican (he identifies as white), he feels that he has no right to profit off of traditional Mexican poetry. The editorial notes of the fourth edition, Calvin writes:

Note from the fourth edition (2017):
My proposal for a new edition was, above all, more of the same: better organization, more lyrics, more corrections of errors, and more references to sources: groups, albums, authors, etc. The project of giving better "credit" to the sources is problematic because there are so many recycled verses, and in many cases it is not possible to know who was the author of a verse, who was the first to record it, etc. That is why, inevitably, the register is quite incomplete and imprecise (and if some readers find clear errors, please let me know). I hope that my attempt will be more like a beginning that starts to paint a limited perspective of some of the constellations of influence in the repertoire. (2017) 59

Another important aspect of Calvin’s contribution to the community is the sense of communal ownership. In the editor’s note of the fourth edition, he explicitly points out the problem of “authorship” in a tradition like son jarocho poetry. The problematic nature of accrediting “authorship” to a verse as well as profiting from the Mexican poetic tradition are antithetical to

59 All of Calvin’s edited collection is presented in Spanish.
the attitude of convivencia that the New York City community and other jaraneros actively seek to foster. Furthermore, Calvin turned what he called his “elaborate hobby” into something that is now shared throughout the New York City community. He printed a few dozen copies and gave them out to anyone who wanted one. Now, at every workshop and fandango, someone brings his or her copy of the book and shares with others to use.

Clearly, Calvin’s book of verses is a generous contribution to the jaranero community. Not all members could make such a labor-intensive gift for the community for a number of reasons related to education, free time, and access to resources. However, at workshops members of the community frequently offer each other small gifts or what might be called detalles (little gestures or gifts). An example of this is when Catrina, a Mexican woman from Puebla who now lives in Queens, attended a workshop and brought small attachable lights for bicycles. She casually pulled them out of her bag at the end of the workshop and offered everyone a light. It was something small but something that she could offer others, and it was welcomed by all the workshop participants. From time- and labor-intensive gifts to small gestures, members of the community continually find ways to give and share material goods and knowledge with others.

**Finding Harmony through Convivencia**

In the same way that every fandango is unique, every learner of the fandango comes to understand convivencia in their own learning process. Some come to understand it through workshops and fandangos in New York City. Mehmet Kucukozer, a sociology professor at SUNY Dutchess Community College and originally from Queens, first encountered the fandango and son jarocho when his spouse, Paula, started to take jarana and zapateado lessons. He attended a fandango with her to just observe from afar. Upon seeing how much fun she and
everyone else was having, he thought, “Why can’t I try it too?” Mehmet and Paula transformed themselves into son jarocho amateur musicians, community organizers, and advocates for the fandango community. Upon learning about other son jarocho learning opportunities in Veracruz, Mehmet decided to visit Veracruz and experience living with people who play son jarocho every day. He saw this as a way to deepen and better establish his connection to the music. Although there are several community members who fondly recount their experiences in Veracruz, Mehmet remembers his first visit with vivid intensity. At the week-long son jarocho seminar in San Andrés Tuxtla, Mehmet was a beginning jaranero and went to immerse himself and learn more about the culture of the music. In the seminar, he took a jarana class and found the unexpected:

And one day we played “Siquisirí.” I already knew a verse from “Siquisirí” and I knew how to play it because we always play it at the fandangos. And so we just start playing, and I sang and everyone else sang. And what I found such a… powerful harmony that we established. Just our little group of students that were playing. It was such a harmony that it sounded so good that at that moment, that I felt such a powerful connection to everybody there. It’s inexplicable. But an overwhelming powerful connection to everybody there. As we were playing. Everybody’s singing. Everyone is taking turns singing verses. And it was so beautiful. Just absolutely beautiful! I couldn’t… I didn’t know how what else to say about that or how to describe it. It’s just a beautiful harmony, everybody was together. People were coming out of the other workshops just to watch us and listen. All because there are classes all around us. So people are stopping their classes. All these people collected around us as we were playing “Siquisirí” and we were playing for 45 minutes. Just “Siquisirí” for 45 minutes. As we are playing, this sense of connection that I had and being awed by beauty, sheer beauty, overcame me. And I started crying like a child. I couldn’t help it. I was trying to hide it I didn’t want everyone to see me crying while I was playing. I’m like, I can’t believe this; I’ve never had an experience like this. (Interview with Mehmet, March 7, 2015).

Not everyone has the privilege to travel to Veracruz for a son jarocho week-long seminar. Some do not have the papers to leave the U.S.; others do not have the money or free time. The community’s organizers recognize these limitations and struggles that some may face, so they
make every effort to keep all workshops low-cost and accessible. The most expensive workshop in New York City costs $20, and this was only to help cover the travel expenses of the visiting instructor.

Claudia recognizes that many people in the New York City jaranero community do not have the privilege to travel to Veracruz to attend a son jarocho camp. There are many in New York City who do not have either the financial ability or the paper to be able to travel to Mexico for a son jarocho seminar. She explains her hope for a more inclusive future of workshops in the style of Veracruz’s week-long seminars:

Ever since I’ve been to Luna Negra (a son jarocho camp in Jaltípan, Veracruz), and we talk about it every year. I would love to do something like that here (New York). To have a camp once a year where somewhere maybe upstate or a park somewhere and have everyone who can… because I know time is hard here in New York City… and have a long weekend and bring some teachers from (Veracruz) and to give that experience to people here that can’t go to Mexico. Either they can’t afford to go or they don’t have the papers to do it. There’s just people who can’t. And bring Fredy [Vega], bring Claudio [Vega], bring Andrés (Flores). All the teachers there that are doing the Luna Negra in Jaltípan or the summer talleres vivenciales (experienced-based workshops) in San Andrés with Los Baxin, which is another one we did another year in another part of Veracruz. I don’t know if they have Visas. And to be in nature, the way they’re in nature. And just to play all day and to have fandangos every day. I hope we’re able to do that one day with a grant. That would be amazing. So that idea then when we were talking… the idea would be that [camp] and then everyone would come back to New York City and have an encuentro and have it every year. (interview August 17, 2016)

The experience-based workshops are a model of fandango and son jarocho instruction that has developed in Veracruz. They are intensive seminars that run for a week, offering participants musical workshops with maestros of son jarocho and the experience of living with other son jarocho learners and musicians in an outdoor, camp setting, eating, sleeping, and playing music together. As mentioned earlier, this model of musical “retreat” has been implemented in other musical revivals and has been cited as a common revival method (Livingston 1999). The musical
camps and retreats are phenomena analyzed by Mirjana Lausevic in her research on Balkan music camps (2007). Lausevic describes the American devotees of Balkan music as an “affinity group” with few ethnic ties to the Balkans. In some ways, this “affinity group” is parallel to the son jarocho community, where about a third of the community has no ethnic heritage from Mexico. Some other examples in the New York City area of revivalist communities that have established retreats are the New York City bomba community, whose members frequently visit bomba schools in Puerto Rico, and Simon Shaheen’s Arabic music retreat that occurs in Massachusetts every summer. Instead of being attracted to the music for ethnic ties, many in the son jarocho community want to learn more about Mexico through a communitarian music practice. And, U.S.-born people in the son jarocho community are sensitive to the already existing relationship the United States has with Mexico. In many ways, people in the U.S. are already familiar with some form of Mexican culture, whether that is through foodways or mariachi music. Learning son jarocho is another way for U.S.-born community members to learn more about Mexico and its people in a deeper, more culturally informed way.

The Veracruz retreat setting offers son jarocho learners an opportunity to immerse themselves in the music, language, and culture of the fandango, and ultimately, convivencia, which fulfills desires for communitarian music practices. One of the son jarocho camps that Claudia mentions is held at Rancho Luna Negra (Black Moon Ranch) in Jaltípan, Veracruz. The Luna Negra campamento (encampment) takes place annually over Semana Santa (Holy Week). In 2017, the sixteenth annual camp session was held over April 8-15. The seminars offer a variety of son jarocho workshops including, but not limited to: jarana, zapateado, requinto, and

60 The Luna Negra seminar has occurred over the week leading up to Easter since 1999. https://seminariosonjarocho.blogspot.mx/
versada (verse making). The Luna Negra camp website states its purpose and description of the seminar:

A camp for learning and analysis of our culture, history and regional development. Those who participate will know the son jarocho in its history, its musical structure, learn from its performers, its community spirit as well as other manifestations of the culture of the towns of the south of Veracruz. They will live a few days with musicians, dancers, researchers and historians, artisans and connoisseurs of the regional culture, will learn their skills in a practical way, they will enjoy our rich peasant food heritage of the past. We will visit the site museum in the community of San Lorenzo Texistepec, birthplace of the mother civilization of America, the Olmec civilization. We will perform a fandango in the community of Aguacatepec. All this while you camp on the banks of the Chiquito River, on the island of Tacamichapan, in a place set aside for the recovery of the nature of the humid tropics.  

![XVI SEMINARIO DE SON JAROCHO del 8 al 15 de abril del 2017](image)

Figure 15 Poster for Luna Negra son jarocho camp 2017.

Various members from the New York City jaranero community have attended son jarocho camps. Most recently, one younger member of the New York community had the opportunity to attend the 2017 Luna Negra camp. The young jaranero, Emiliano, graduated from high school in

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61 https://seminariosonjarrocho.blogspot.mx/
2017, and as a graduation gift, the jaranero community pooled together resources and fully funded his trip to Luna Negra.

**Fandango Familiar (or Monthly Fandango) and Annual Celebrations**

The fandango familiar occurs on the first Sunday of the month, typically from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. Unlike Veracruz fandangos which typically last for eight to nine hours, from sundown to sun-up, the New York City jaraneros must make their fandangos short and accessible in busy city life. These are free events that bring the dispersed community together to share music making. The jaranero community holds most fandangos at indoor venues or spaces because most of the year it is too cold to play outdoors. In the cold and dry winters in New York, jaranas tend to lose tuning faster and do not have the same resonance, especially if the jarana was designed and made in Veracruz, which has a much warmer and more humid climate. For this reason, many Veracruz jaranas need a humidifier. Also for this reason, Sinuhé designs and constructs jaranas using local wood materials better suited for the New York climate. In the cooler months, the community gathers at the regular indoor spots like Terraza 7 or El Kallejon. When the weather permits, the community tries to have a fandango in outdoor spaces, usually public parks. Unfortunately, the city of New York restricts gatherings of large groups of people in public parks. Groups of 20 or more are required to get a “Parks Special Event Permit,” so the fandangos in public parks do not occur as often as desired by the community. The jaranero community has been able to host fandangos without interruption from park authorities in the public parks, but the

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62 The traditional Veracruz method for luthier design is to carve the jarana from a single piece of wood. This method is unsustainable and Sinuhé and some younger luthiers in Veracruz have changed their luthier practices to design jaranas from multiple pieces of wood. Sinuhé typically uses repurposed wood that otherwise would become waste.

63 [https://nyceventpermits.nyc.gov/Parks/](https://nyceventpermits.nyc.gov/Parks/)
risk of a fandango growing too large forces the community to more carefully plan a public park 
fandango. Generally, any public park fandango occurs in the summer months when more people 
are away on vacation, somewhat ensuring the event does not break city park regulations.

Spaces that have hosted the fandango familiar:

- Terraza 7, Elmhurst, Queens
- Kallejon, East Harlem, Manhattan
- Mano-a-Mano, West Harlem, Manhattan (previously in Brooklyn and another Manhattan 
  location)
- Sunset Park, Brooklyn (in the park and at non-profit organizations)
- Central Park, Manhattan (in the park)
- Prospect Park, Brooklyn (in the park)
- Private homes (Paula, Sinuhé, others)

In addition to the monthly fandango, the New York City community celebrates some 
annual fandangos that occur in solidarity with other fandangos that are happening 
simultaneously. These events demonstrate the transnational quality of some fandango 
celebrations. The two celebrations that are highlighted in this dissertation are the celebration for 
La Virgen de la Candelaria is held in Tlacotalpan, Veracruz (and transnationally) on February 
2\(^{\text{nd}}\), and the Fandango Fronterizo held on the last Sunday of May on both sides of the border 
fence between San Diego and Tijuana. While in New York it is not always possible to hold a 
fandango precisely on February 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) for the Candelaria, the jaranero community generally holds 
its Candelaria fandango on the Sunday or Saturday closest to the official date.

**Building Energy at the Fandango**

There is no doubt among participants in a fandango that the musical elements of son 
jarocho are essential to a successful fandango that generates a sense of community and 
strengthens social relationships. A fandango familiar on March 5, 2017 at Kallejón illustrated 
just how important dance, singing, and instrumental performance are to the energy and groove of
the event. The fandango began like all others, with the *son* “El siquisiri,” the traditional opening *son*. The main requintero was a little late to the fandango, so Sinuhé improvised a requinto with his jarana. As he began to pluck the opening melody of “El siquisiri,” Emiliano had just arrived but was ready with his requinto and started to play.

Once Emiliano finished the opening movement on the requinto, the entire fandango circle of jaranas, a violin, and a pandero entered. The circle of participants ranged from eighteen to twenty-five members throughout the fandango. “El siquisiri” is a *son* de montón, so only women traditionally dance to this *son*. After a few people sang their verses with responses (this *son* also has a responding structure as observed earlier in this chapter), Paula and Alda, two more experienced dancers, stepped on to the tarima. Alda is a professional musician, a percussionist who co-founded a music project called “Mexico Beyond Mariachi,” which does outreach performances at public schools, teaching Mexican history through musical presentations. Both Paula and Alda are considered leaders within the community and are regulars at the fandango familiar. They often lead others by starting the dance at fandangos when others are too timid to begin.

Once the two women were on the tarima the groove began to build among the fandango circle participants. As Paula and Alda stepped a basic “café con pan” (a mnemonic phrase for zapateado steps that will be discussed in chapter 4) the attacks on the wooden tarima reverberated throughout the small space. The “café con pan” pattern established a base rhythm for the fandango circle participants to maintain their steady jarana strumming or to experiment with an alternative strumming. One player, Bruce, who has more experience with stringed instruments, likes to syncopate his jarana strumming in moments like these. When the zapateado is steady, others can improvise.
At that night’s fandango, New York community members were present as well as some out-of-town visitors from Maine, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. The visitors from Philadelphia were Ximena and her friends. Ximena is almost a regular participant in New York City fandangos. She is a professional musician in Philadelphia, leading her own son jarocho-fusion group Interminable (Endless) and playing with other various music projects. The folks coming from Washington, D.C. are from a son jarocho community called Cosita Seria (Serious little thing) that resembles the New York community. They regularly organize fandangos and workshops for the people in D.C. to learn son jarocho.

The regulars and the visitors made the night particularly special. In the “play list” was an unusually long “El pájaro cu,” “El bajalu” which is not usually played at New York fandangos, and an explosive “La bamba” finish. “La bamba” is the traditional closing son for fandangos (this is true in Veracruz as well). During the closing “La bamba” at this March fandango, men and women were racing to dance on the tarima. There were fewer women present at this fandango, so many women danced with multiple male partners throughout the son. At one point, the energy from the fandango circle inspired a garland of verses. “La bamba” is a son de pareja and does not have a responding structure, so singers must sing verses alone without a response from the fandango circle. Also, the “La bamba” poetic form follows the seguidilla structure of alternating lines of seven and five syllables. However, when the energy strikes, the fandango participants may sing their verses one after another. In this moment, Calvin who was playing one of the requintos, sang a verse:

\[
\text{Ojos verdes y azules (x2)} \\
\text{Bad painting}
\]

\[
\text{Green and blue eyes}
\]
Donde no hay ojos negros (x2) Where there are no black eyes
No hay hermosura There is no beauty

Estribillo:
¡Ay arriba, arriba! (x2) Higher and higher!
Yo no soy marinero I am not a sailor
Por ti seré (x2) For you I will be

While Calvin sang, Quetzal and Ximena were partnered on the tarima. Quetzal is the twelve-year-old son of Sinuhé. As they performed mudanzas during Calvin’s verse, others in the circle were gathering closer to the tarima to have their chance at dancing. Once Calvin finished his verse, members from the circle attempted to tap Quetzal and Ximena’s shoulders to exchange places, but unexpectedly, Juan Carlos (from Radio Jarocho), also playing requinto, called out another verse almost seamlessly after Calvin’s. The rest of the circle had to wait for this verse to end before exchanging places on the tarima. At this point, Ximena laughed because she too, expected to exit the tarima.

Juan Carlos’s verse:

Preso estoy en la cárcel (x2) I’m imprisoned in jail
Por tus quereres For your love
No saldré de este sitio (x2) I will not leave this place
Si no me quieres If you don’t love me

Estribillo:
¡Ay arriba, arriba! (x2) Higher and higher!
Yo no soy marinero I am not a sailor
Por ti seré (x2) For you I will be
Then, as Juan Carlos’s verse ended and the fandango participants tried again to exchange places with Quetzal and Ximena, another player added a verse to the ending of Juan Carlos’s. Alfredo from Washington, D.C. and the son jarocho collective “Cosita Seria” sang another verse, further spoiling others’ hopes of stepping on to the tarima and replacing Quetzal and Ximena.

Alfredo’s verse:

*El amor y el dinero* (x2) Love and money

*Que yo no sueño* Which I don’t dream about

*Ya que ninguno tengo* (x2) Since I don’t have either

*Y lo bien que duermo* And oh, how I sleep so well

Estribillo:

¡Ay arriba, arriba! (x2) Higher and higher!

*Te llevaré* I will bring you

*A los campos oliveros* (x2) To the olive tree fields

*Te llevaré, te llevaré* I will bring you, I will bring you

Finally, by the time Alfredo finished his verse, Sinuhé and Elie exchanged places with Ximena and Quetzal, probably to their relief. After the string of verses, which was a spontaneous and welcomed surprise, the fandango circle intensified its sound, and the dancers pounded the tarima. Sinuhé is an advanced dancer and his aggressive style on the tarima injected the fandango with energy. Elie, his partner in this moment, is new to zapateado, but with Sinuhé’s lead, she followed and offered her dance to the fandango circle. Their dance on the tarima increased the

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64 The string of verses are well-known verses from the “La bamba” poetic repertoire. Some of which are included in Calvin’s edited verse collection.
intensity of the closing son “La bamba.” Sinuhé’s dynamic movements almost resembled a bouncing ball that moved back and forth across the tarima.

This intensity lasted until the last verse.

¡Ay, te pido, te pido! I ask you, I beg you
Te pido de corazón I ask you from the heart
Se acaba la bamba (x2) May la bamba finish
Y venga otra son And let another son come
¡Ay, arriba arriba! Higher and higher!

The intensity and excitement at the March fandango familiar was emblematic of a successful fandango. Participants fully engaged with the music and found a groove with each other. Yet, none of this would have been the same without the dancers’ energy and contributions to the overall feel of the fandango. The string of verses that spontaneously emerged was not only an improvisatory act, but also a playful “dance” with the other fandango participants. Knowing that dancers cannot exchange places until verses are completed, these singers toyed with the eager dancers who were trying to swoop in at the end of the verse because the dancers must reach the tarima first before others to have the chance to dance. This and other fandangos display the cogenerative nature of the community’s relationships. They work together musically to release tension and have fun; they come together to participate in a reinvented tradition that opens new possibilities for relationships and community.

**Conclusion**

At the fandango for La Virgen de la Candelaria, held on February 5, 2017 at Terraza 7, one community member wrote several verses for the evening. Sofía, a middle-aged woman from
Mexico City who works as an interpreter in a hospital and who always brings her copy of Calvin’s edited verses to fandangos, wrote a series of verses that were in the form of verses for the *son* “El colás.” The *son* is a lively tune and a dance for men and women to dance in partners. The verse structure for “El colás” is not a typical responding *son* like others, where a caller sings a verse and another person repeats that same verse. Instead, a caller sings a verse and repeats the verse twice, and then the entire fandango circle sings the estribillo together. Typically, the community in New York sings the estribillo:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estribillo</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colás, Colás</strong></td>
<td>Colas, Colas (a nickname for Nicolas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colás de Nicolas</strong></td>
<td>Colas, of Nicolas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lo mucho que te quiero</strong></td>
<td>How much I love you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>El poco que me das</strong></td>
<td>How little you give me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Si quieres, si puedes</strong></td>
<td>If you want, if you can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Si no ahí lo verás</strong></td>
<td>If you won’t see it there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Que bonita baila</strong></td>
<td>How beautiful she dances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>La mujer de Nicolas</strong></td>
<td>The woman of Nicolas(^{65})</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

That evening was the first fandango and first community celebration since the inauguration of the 45\(^{th}\) president of the United States that had just occurred two weeks prior. Besides the new president, the evening was bittersweet for it would most likely be the last Candelaria to be held at Terraza 7. At the time, in the Spring of 2016, the property owner of the building that houses Terraza 7 decided not to renew Terraza’s lease agreement. The property would be demolished for a new mixed-use building with retail stores on the ground level and residential units on the other floors. This was devastating news to the jaranero community and the many audiences and musicians that frequent the establishment (Florio and Russonello 2016).\(^{66}\) For these unfortunate circumstances, that evening was dedicated to the community, the

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\(^{65}\) Sinuhé regularly teaches students this estribillo for “El colás.”

\(^{66}\) Fortunately, by 2018, Terraza 7 was offered a new lease for the space and plans to demolish the space have been changed (Murray 2018).
Candelaria, and Terraza 7, but there was a feeling among the community still that no one could shake. In his first speech, the new president had denigrated Mexican people as rapists and criminals and called for mass deportation while also announcing his candidacy. He also campaigned on building a border wall between Mexico and the United States and forcing Mexico to pay for the wall. Regardless of whether these promises ever become reality—deportation is certainly a reality for many—the community felt the elephant in the room.

As the fandango progressed, Sofía handed out little strips of paper, with her verses. Her verses lambasted the president, calling him names and defending the dignity of Mexican people that he denigrated in the previous year on the campaign trail. For Sofía, singing her lyrics was cathartic. No one talked about the president or explicit politics the entire evening, except when the fandango participants sang Sofía’s verses:

No somos violadores       We are not rapists
No somos asesinos         We are not murders
Sé que estás pensando     Maybe you are thinking
Más bien en tus vecinos   Rather about your neighbors
In the last few decades, the United States has shifted its economic ideology through a policy that established a new “neoliberal” economic model. David Harvey describes neoliberalism as an economic ideology that promotes deregulation of industry, privatization at all costs, and withdrawal of the state from the public sector (Harvey 2007:3). By retracting state support from social and public sectors, individuals bear the costs that were once provided by the federal government. This undoubtedly has created a financial burden for many low-income and working people, as well as middle-class people. And the current administration seeks to privatize and corrode state support of the public sector and social programs further. In this bleak political landscape, the communitarian model that the jaraneros of New York City have been practicing and implementing may be one answer to counter the social and cultural crisis that will only escalate in the coming years, regardless of who is the president. Even though private donations and generosity can never fully cover the costs that federal funding would provide, the increased effort among private citizens to support communitarian projects reveals that collaborative work might be one method for sustaining arts and cultural communities.

Furthermore, in thinking of the economic and political circumstances that immigrants and non-immigrants face in daily life in New York City—rising rents and high costs of living in particular—the jaranero community of New York City reproduces the fandango-centered practices that the movimiento jaranero revived and reinvented over the last several decades as a
response to these stresses. Perhaps with more research, the connection between a neoliberal shift in state economic ideology and communitarian movements like the movimiento jaranero can be made. However, it is clear that the community in New York City is an “affinity group” that is connected by their interest in son jarocho and participatory music making, and the community also seeks to live with others in convivencia—to collaborate with each other, maintaining a community through musical practice.
Zapateado, the percussive dance practiced in son jarocho, has an important place in the fandango. Literally, the tarima is the center of the fandango: everyone playing in the fandango circle gathers around it, and others are obliged to look toward the center of the fandango as if it were the beacon that draws any onlooker’s gaze. It is common to hear the phrase la tarima es el corazón del fandango: the tarima is the heart of the fandango. In a romantic sense, the dancer’s foot strikes the tarima and creates the “heart beat” of the fandango. In the most raucous moments of a fandango, a good dancer pounds the tarima with force, energy, and precision, accenting beats that emerge from the jaranas and improvises rhythmic adornments to heighten the rhythmic intensity and dense texture of sound in the fandango. At moments when the dancers’ steps are quiet or muted, the sway of their bodies and feet keeps time and heightens the overall movement of the fandango circle. Both sounded steps and quiet steps keep the beat and build a groove with other performers in the fandango.67 The most successful fandangos have a constant flow of dancers, all vying to have a chance at dancing on the tarima. This desire to participate and dance in the center of the fandango is exhilarating for dancers and all others making music. Despite the romantic quality of the phrase, zapateado and the tarima really are the “heart” of the fandango, without which the fandango would be incomplete.

Yet, when the son jarocho of the fandango is “translated” into stage performances and recordings, the genre crosses into a new ontology; it is no longer in the realm of the ephemeral

67 “Groove” is defined by Turino as being “at one with the activity and the other people involved” (2008:31). In this sense, dancing zapateado is a way for individuals to participate and improve their musical skills. When individuals from a range of skill levels can equally participate, a greater social and musical connection can develop among all participants.
and social. The music of son jarocho is commodifiable and potentially commercial in concert or recorded form. The music has a definite start and end time, it has a ticket price and seating, and it is intelligible to most Western concert audiences. In contrast, son jarocho in a fandango starts only when it is possible and when a critical mass of participants arrives. The fandango can be recorded but never repeated. Although the entire fandango cannot become a concert, some elements of the fandango can be and have been incorporated into staged performances, like the Ballet Folklórico’s choreographed zapateado. The many elements and people that come together to make a fandango stem from the principle and ethos of convivencia (coexistence and mutual participation, discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). There are many “moving parts” that make up the whole. Zapateado, tarima, jarana, requinto, voices, the food prepared by the community cooks, the babysitter who watches the kids so parents can play in the fandango—all of these elements and more are part of the greater whole that makes the fandango. Zapateado is just one of these essential pieces that completes the whole picture.

This chapter examines the basic functions of zapateado in son jarocho music, first in the context of the community’s fandangos and workshops, and second in New York City stage performances. Historically, in the course of the twentieth century, as the fandango and rural practices of son jarocho dwindled, commercial recordings and performances of son jarocho became standardized in Mexican popular media. As discussed in Chapter 2, the intellectuals and musicians of the movimiento jaranero sought to revive fandango practices of son jarocho and counter this mainstream, commercialized form. In New York City, zapateado is a practice that is not only a part of the revived and reinvented fandango practices, but also part of the concert and stage performances of professional son jarocho musicians. This chapter will attend to these multiple forms of zapateado because they coexist and operate within the larger son jarocho
network in New York City and transnationally. The three central forms of zapateado in son jarocho include: zapateado in the reinvented fandango, zapateado in ballet folklórico, and zapateado in other stage concerts and commercial recordings.

Apart from the multiple forms of zapateado in son jarocho, this chapter also examines the musical qualities of the dance. Aside from its rhythmic function in the fandango, the zapateado works as a musical conversation with other instruments and poetic verses. Within the musical relationships among dance, instruments, and voices, zapateado generates a social connection among fandango participants that fosters social bonding and strengthens community ties, further exemplifying the ways elements of the fandango were repurposed for community-building.

Although both men and women dance zapateado, women’s roles as dancers in the fandango are privileged in this analysis for the central reason that, in a traditional fandango (one that follows rules about dance), women must be present for dancing to occur.

There are two types of sones: sones de montón (sones for women, literally a “heap”) and sones de pareja (partner sones). There is a smaller third category of sones that allow for multiple pairs of women to dance with a single man, but the only son that is regularly practiced from this category is “El colás.”\(^\text{68}\) One notable trait is that men do not dance alone on the tarima; they must have a female partner to dance a son de pareja. Women can dance a son de montón alone, but the preference is that at least two women dance these sones. Thus, women are implicitly required for a fandango because otherwise, there would be no dancing.\(^\text{69}\) In the contemporary, post-

\(^{68}\) Much of the poetic repertoire of the son “El colás” describes many dancing women with sometimes ribald imagery, and the zapateado associated with the son allows for the dancing of multiple pairs of women with a single male dancer on the tarima (Figueroa Hernández 2007, 55-6).

\(^{69}\) Of course, there can be space to break these rules. Many of the community members in New York City would most likely be open to adapting the rules, but they agree that breaking these rules would not happen in a traditional Veracruz setting for a fandango. In contrast, the Seattle,
movimiento jaranero formation of the fandango, practitioners of son jarocho—in New York City and elsewhere—have maintained the standard of dividing *sones* into two dance categories. There does not seem to have existed a men’s dance category of *sones*. In the broader world of dance, the absence of a men’s dance is noteworthy. However, within the gender configurations of Mexico, the absence of a men’s mestizo dance is less surprising. There are procession dances and indigenous dances that men exclusively perform, but these dances fall outside of the mestizo *son* traditions. Nevertheless, there must be a closer examination of these two types of *sones* to assess their position in society and in a musical setting. Whether or not the zapateado dance reaffirms or disrupts gender norms is not in question, but how the dance symbolically reproduces ideologies about gender roles is more important. Furthermore, zapateado is an essential piece of the fandango that transforms the music into physical motion, often galvanizing the fandango.

With few exceptions, there is very little scholarship on zapateado. Son jarocho musicians almost unanimously praise and value zapateado as an indispensable piece of the music, but academic work does not reflect this reality. However, in ethnomusicology, a discipline dedicated to the ethnographic research of music, this is a striking absence, for it is a dance tradition closely intertwined with music. Son jarocho musicians deeply care about zapateado, and thus, it must be examined seriously.

Zapateado is not only an entry point for participation in the fandango, but it is also a gendered role that always involves women’s participation. Aside from this participatory role in

WA jaranero community has a substantial queer-identifying membership, and the rules for dance partners have been adapted to fit their community’s needs, according to Michelle Habell-Pallán. This was part of the discussion after Habell-Pallán’s paper at the conference “Spaniards, Indians, African and Gypsies: The Global Reach of the Fandango in Music, Song and Dance,” (Goldberg and Pizà 2015). [https://sites.google.com/site/seattlefandango/home](https://sites.google.com/site/seattlefandango/home)

70 Danza de los Diablos (Dance of the Devils) is an Afro-Mexican procession dance in Guerrero and Oaxaca, performed over the Day of the Dead festivities.
the fandango, women in New York City describe zapateado as having an overwhelmingly positive impact in their lives. They see zapateado as a transformative practice that has given them a “voice” in some instances, enhanced their confidence to be creative and improvise musically, and afforded them a different perspective of themselves and their roles on and off the tarima. One dancer described zapateado as a means for body-confidence (interview July 29, 2016). Another described zapateado as a new way to creative expression and artistry (interview August 17, 2016). Because of their enthusiasm for the dance, the community has zapateado workshops and the dance is always integrated into jarana and other classes, pedagogically incorporating the principle of convivencia. Many of the son jarocho musicians in New York City, women especially, are using their musical knowledge of zapateado from the fandango and applying it to stage performances, creating another musical context for women and developing the *convivencia* aesthetic. Although stage presentations of zapateado are not new, the musicians of New York City are creating their interpretation and translation of a fandango practice into a performative concert form.

**Scholarship on Dance and Zapateado**

Issues and concepts related to the “body” are often overlooked or neglected within popular culture and everyday parlance. However, there are significant scholarly interventions into the field of dance and the body that anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, and researchers from American Studies have produced in recent decades that provide useful foundations for examining zapateado. In “Places of the Body: Corporal Displacements, Misplacements, and Replacements in Music and Dance Research,” Sydney Hutchinson reviews the ways the “body” has been displaced in scholarship and historical reasons for the classic mind/body division
(2010). She focuses her critique on the ways this separation of the body and mind has led to racialization, gendering, and othering of musical traditions that use the body as the principal music maker. In her analysis, she subdivides the mind/body dichotomy into four subcategories to illustrate her argument: nature/culture, civilization/barbarism, white/black, male/female. For example, the mind/body dichotomy has fostered racial stereotypes with regards to “dancing cultures” as being less civilized or less culturally advanced. Within the white/black division, she writes, “‘having rhythm’ and being able to move well are abilities popularly attributed to Others—particularly blacks and Latinos” (164). Ultimately, the scholar must use the “mind” to understand the happenings of the “body,” but there can be productive, theoretical interventions into the fields of music and dance research. Moreover, scholars must engage with analytical questions that destabilize the disciplinary methods that may further reinforce the mind/body division. Some recent scholarship on dance in the fandango moves the dialogue about zapateado to include the principle of convivencia, which may disrupt some of the mind/body divisions in academia. In New York City’s jaranero community, participants in the fandango privilege pedagogic methods that are grounded in the steps of zapateado, blurring the boundaries between mind/body knowledge production.

Although Hutchinson’s critique of the ways “dance” and the “body” are racialized in popular culture certainly true, in the last two decades, there has been a growth of scholarship on dance. One foundational text for the recent development of dance studies comes from Jane C. Desmond, whose work comes out of the field of American Studies and dance and movement. In her article “Embodying Difference: Issues in Dance and Cultural Studies,” Desmond not only interrogates why dance is understudied, but also lays out fundamental questions that build a method for dance inquiry (1994). In her article, she asks basic questions that I incorporate into
this chapter’s theoretical lens: “Who moves and who is moved? In what way do the poses display one body more than another? What skills are demanded of the dancer, and what do they imply about desired attributes ascribed to men and women?” (37).

Besides these entry-level questions, she understands dance and bodily movements as cultural practices that are confluent and dynamic. Dance and movement come out of complex social systems and are in constant contact with other dance and movement practices. She writes:

‘Dance,’ whether social, theatrical, or ritually based, forms one subset of the larger field of movement study. And although we tend to think of dances, like the tango, lamabda, or waltz, as distinctive aggregations of steps, every dance exists in a complex network of relationships to other dances and other non-dance ways of using the body, and can be analyzed along these two concurrent axes. Its meaning is situated both in the context of other socially prescribed and socially meaningful ways of moving and in the context of the history of dance forms in specific societies. (36)

Whether or not change is immediately observable, dance is another social practice that is constantly developing and incorporating different streams of dance and non-dance within a broader cultural and historical framework. Juliet McMains (2015) uses this framework of Desmond’s to analyze the complex network of dance styles in salsa across the U.S. and through multiple generations of dancers. Similarly, zapateado exists in multiple forms, coming out of different historical moments, but all part of a larger zapateado complex.

Anthropologists Stanley Brandes (1988) and Zoila Mendoza (2000) offer productive analyses regarding the role of dance and performance in society. Brandes examines the ways public fiestas in rural Mexico provide order and social control while also offering a break from everyday life. In the performance of dance ritual, masked dancers enact taboo behaviors such as sex and defecation. The masked performers imitate these taboo subjects with humor, allowing the onlookers to identify with the masked characters and to be given a legitimate outlet for the taboo subject. Simultaneously, as audiences feel connection to the performance and have a space
for social release, the dance reinforces local systems of social hierarchy, maintaining state control and power structures (1988:144). While dance in the son jarocho community does not function as a vehicle for a taboo, it does enact social values of the community.

Mendoza’s research on Peruvian dance and social identity construction also reveals how performance is a contested site in which local tensions around identity and social hierarchies can be enacted (2000). In dance associations called *comparsas*, members can redefine disputed racial, gender, or generational distinctions and identities. In the performance, the dance can draw from the dichotomies that shape these disputed identities, such as rural/urban, white/Indian, highland/coastal, center/periphery (2000:5). She writes, “My research in the Peruvian Andes shows that, in fiestas and through danzas, the comparsas address and give form to ambiguous or not clearly defined relationships among local groups as well as between these and the larger context of Peruvian society and transnational ties” (41). Comparatively, in son jarocho dance, divisions of gender roles are clearly defined in zapateado performance. When dancing at the fandango, men and women dance zapateado within rules and boundaries of *son*-dance repertoire. These separations in dance reinforce social constructions of gender identity vis-a-vie the dominant man/woman gender binary.

In the field of son jarocho scholarship, there is relatively little research on the zapateado dance. Most scholars mention that zapateado is part of son jarocho. However, few researchers describe the importance of the dance, and even fewer analyze or describe the dance with much detail. In his foundational dissertation on son jarocho, Daniel Sheehy carefully categorizes and analyzes musical form, strumming techniques of the jarana, and melodies of voices and requintos (1979). In a short paragraph, he mentions that zapateado is an interesting and important aspect of the fandango in the son jarocho tradition that warrants a more in-depth study, but still maintains
the distinction between music and dance by differentiating “musical traditions” from “dance traditions” in son jarocho (147). The separation of son jarocho music from the zapateado dance is perhaps an invention that comes out of the post-Revolutionary consolidation of regional music and dance between the 1930s-50s. In this consolidation, the Ballet Folkórico de México subsumed various regional dances, including son jarocho zapateado, and the commercial conjuntos jarochos were part of the standardization the music and ensemble. However, the son jarocho of the fandango practice is an integrated art, and musicians speak of the fandango, especially, as being a place for the whole tradition, including music, dance, and poetry.

In concluding his short section about zapateado, Sheehy offers a prescription, urging that others should research it. Aside from Sheehy’s short introduction to zapateado, some historians have recently documented the general history of the dance, including Antonio García de León (2009), whose work is often cited within son jarocho networks. However, García de León does not offer musical analysis of zapateado, only a rudimentary description of the central step pattern “café con pan,” which will be discussed later in this chapter. Another prominent historian of son jarocho, Rafael Figueroa Hernández, also describes the dance but in general terms to differentiate between sones de pareja and sones de montón and to illustrate specific movements for individual sones (2007:44-73).

Some recent scholarship has begun to interrogate and analyze zapateado as part of an integrated art form. Martha Gonzalez, a prominent son jarocho musician and Feminist Studies scholar, has published analytical work on zapateado. Her research comes out of her own practice as a dancer and musician in the California-based group Quetzal, a Chicano rock band that fuses

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son jarocho, Afro-Cuban rhythms, R&B, and other genres. In “Sonic (Trans)Migration of Son Jarocho ‘Zapateado’ (2011),” González analyzes zapateado through her theory of “rhythmic intention”: “I hope to create an understanding of rhythmic intention as a way of leaning toward, but not claiming, a complete sound in reference to rhythm. In practice, the musician’s ‘purpose’ or ‘attitude’ never abandons his/her home base but rather leans towards an inflection creating a new sound” (60). Here, González offers a theory that applies to both musical and social analyses. Zapateado is a rhythmic part of the music in the fandango and the execution of the dance relies upon multiple musical and cultural sources, producing a sonic interpretation of convivencia. Using Yvonne Daniel’s work on embodied experiential knowledge in Haitan Vodou, Cuban Yoruba, and Bahian Candomble dance traditions (2005), González sees zapateado as an embodied practice that involves an individual musician’s and the collective fandango culture’s “political, social, and sonic influences” (66). Thus, for González, the “home base” is her knowledge base in terms of her experiences with son jarocho dancing and how she views that base as having its roots in indigenous, Spanish, and African practices. When she improvises on the tarima, she draws on that existing base to “lean towards an inflection” in the sense of creating her own rhythmic performance at that moment.

Using González’s theory, I see the fandango’s “home base” as more than cultural references or bodies of knowledge. The home base is also the musical base of the fandango, which is the compás or rhythmic and harmonic cycle of a son. As participants “lean towards” or engage with each other, they develop and build the son together through the layers of harmony, rhythm, and verses—or jaranas, zapateado, and voices. The reinvention of the fandango as deeply participatory is therefore reliant upon the willingness of those present to participate. Additionally, the participants of a fandango understand that no son or fandango is ever the same.
or equal to a previous or future one. There is an impossibility of exact repetition. Therefore, one cannot “claim” the complete sound. Rather, the sound of the fandango reveals that, with every fandango event, new social and musical configurations will always emerge, resulting in sound that is unique to the social and musical relations in that event. In New York City—a city with prominent Latin American music scenes and recording industry—the “home base” for New York City fandangos draws from multiple Hispanic music genres and traditions. Similarly, this interpretation follows Jane Desmond’s analysis of dance, where she writes, “every dance exists in a complex network of relationships to other dances and other non-dance ways of using the body…” (1994:36). This mixture of music and dance further reveals the complex web from which the New York City jaranero community’s fandango and performance practices emerge.

Other work on zapateado is not fandango-focused but examines stage presentations. In Jarocho’s Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance (2004), Anita González examines dance in son jarocho through what she calls the “official cultural productions of Veracruz” (7). The “official” cultural productions are government-sponsored dance companies (similar to the Ballet Folklórico de México, BFM) that perform son jarocho in stage settings. Instead of the fandango, on which Martha González bases her theory of “rhythmic intention,” Anita González focuses on the micro-expressions that emerge in the space where the individuality of the dancer, choreographic direction, and official state narrative intersect. Her work is productive for furthering analyses of stage performances of son jarocho that challenge assumptions about some of the standardization that has come about from the codification of son jarocho dance in Ballet Folklórico productions and official state discourse.

Instead of single pairs of dancers taking turns on the center tarima, a Ballet Folkórico presentation of zapateado displays dozens of male and female dancers. In the BFM staging of
dances from Veracruz, multiple lines of male dancers, dressed in white with a red bandana, jovially tap choreographed steps with the music. Instead of improvised or spontaneous zapateado steps that would be experienced at a fandango, the BFM staged dances are performed in unison and do not feature improvisation. With broad smiles and stiff upper bodies, the male dancers tap their feet and move across the stage, forming circles and horizontal, diagonal, and vertical lines of dancers. After the men have danced together for some time, lines of women enter the stage and accompany the men as pairs of dancers. Similar to the men’s choreography, both men and women create circles and contrasting lines as dancers, moving between lines divided by gender and distinct male/female dancing couples.

In New York City, Mexican musicians do not have the same artistic constraints from state authorities as what Anita González describes in her research. Instead, the musicians have more freedom to interpret son jarocho and blend musical forms. In Latin music venues and bars, musicians are expected to improvise, adapt, and mix genres. Among the many spaces of Latin music performance, the venues are socially divided along economic class lines. In the middle- and elite-class spaces, musicians have a greater artistic license to blend and adapt traditional and
folk musics of Mexico to suite cosmopolitan tastes of audiences. This place-specific condition of New York City’s middle-class Latin music venues opens a new potential for other kinds of reinvention and interpretation of son jarocho in professional concert performances. Additionally, since New York City has been a center for Latin music, particularly music from the Hispanic Caribbean, for most of the twentieth century, there are commercial and social standards and expectations in the Latin music scene. The musical contributions of Puerto Ricans and Cubans to social dance musics like salsa and mambo have not only shaped social attitudes and tastes, but also the commercial market for Latin music performance and recordings. Numerous scholars have examined the topic of identity and music performance regarding Cuban and Puerto Rican music in New York City, including: Abreu (2015), García (2006), Salazar (2002), Singer (1982), and Washburne (2008).

Rather than looking at the “official” discourse of the Mexican state, which would be more relevant in Mexico or with an artistic practice strongly supported by the New York Mexican Consulate, the standards in commercial Spanish-language music become more important for understanding the way Mexican music is positioned in New York. Mexican music operates within a diverse Spanish-language music market, which supports numerous genres and ethnic styles. There are Peruvian, Colombian, Dominican, Argentine, and Spanish (Spaniard) groups that make up some of the diversity in New York’s Spanish-language market. For example, the bar and music venue, Terraza 7, which was introduced in Chapter 3, strongly supports the son jarocho community as well as many other Latin American musicians and musical communities. Located in a Queens neighborhood with Colombian, Peruvian, Mexican, and other Latin American immigrant populations, Terraza 7 presents many Spanish-sung musics. The venue description states:
Through Jazz and Folk music of the immigrants that thrive in Queens, music workshops, progressive activism, community and political partnerships, owner and active community member Freddy Castiblanco builds an intercultural bridge, a dialogue among cultures, offering the opportunity for a cultural experiment that lets us have a better understanding of the human complexity, cultural diversity and exercising our creativity and solidarity. (Terraza 7, “About Us” website)72

Aside from the generous support of the son jarocho community for workshops and fandango space, Terraza 7 has frequently booked both Jarana Beat and Radio Jarocho, two professional son jarocho ensembles in New York City, in its musical calendar. The venue presents son jarocho as an Afro-Latin genre from Mexico, placing and advertising the music alongside other stage acts like Rebolú (Afro-Colombian percussion group), Pedro Giraudo Tango Quartet (tango ensemble), and Chota Madre (Ecuadorian fusion group). Because of the venue location and the interaction among musicians within the space of Terraza 7, interesting musical mixtures arise. For instance, between 2011 and 2013, Jarana Beat always held a fandango after their stage performances at Terraza 7. As referenced in Chapter 3, the Afro-Colombian group Rebolú was at the venue on a night that Jarana Beat performed. After Jarana Beat finished their concert, the audience and band moved downstairs to start the fandango. As the fandango progressed, the members of Rebolú joined the fandango circle, playing cajón, congas, and guiro. This blend of instruments in a New York City fandango might be expected, but this kind of experimentation would not be permissible in a more traditional fandango setting in Veracruz.

**How Bodies Move, How the Dance Looks**

In New York City, the zapateado dance is important to both the son jarocho community’s fandangos and to the son jarocho professional groups that perform around the city. Given the

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72 [http://terraza7.com/about-us/]
dance’s importance, it is necessary to understand how the dance is performed broadly within reinvented fandango practices. The dancer on the tarima stands upright, with little to no bend in his or her waist. According to Anita González, in some rural Veracruzan examples of zapateado, dancers have a more exaggerated bend in the waist. Citing Jacqui Malone’s work *Steppin on the Blues* (1996), González writes, “In the coastal towns of Alvarado and Tlacotalpan, the Jarocho (zapateado) is performed in an angular position with the torso broken at the waist, a posture that is typical of African diasporic dances throughout the Americas” (2004:56). González also notes that zapateado in the son jarocho tradition is distinct from other Mexican regional zapateado varieties because it is “polyrhythmic and incorporates syncopated improvisations that are rooted in Spanish and African practices” (57). She further explains that rural performance styles of zapateado are more “African,” while urban and staged versions adopt a more upright posture (59). The “urban” posture can also be equated with the ballet folklórico style of zapateado that emphasizes a rigid torso with no bend in the waist at all. For New York City dancers, most stand erect with little bending from the waist. This rigid torso reveals that many of the New York dancers have at least some training in ballet folklórico, another professionalized dance, or learned a form of zapateado connected to folklórico practices. However, in New York, dancers are not held to strict standards, and some dancers lean forward from the waist more than others. This variation is
merely a personal style rather than a standardized practice in New York, nor is it necessarily related to Afro-Mexican affinities.

According to Alexandro Hernández (2013), during the Holy Inquisition (sixteenth through nineteenth centuries) in New Spain (colonial Mexico), certain dances were prohibited by the Catholic Church. Because the Church prohibited what it considered “hypersexual” dances, many of the expressive qualities of zapateado were removed, “restricting the movement of the upper body and centering action on legs and feet” (473). Hernández also states that drums were taken away from people of African descent during the Holy Inquisition, resulting in the transferring of rhythms that were once played with the hands to being played by the feet on the tarima (476). Although the description of zapateado is limited, Hernández points out that zapateado has been modified for various social reasons throughout history. Perhaps over time, these various styles of performance all contributed to the varieties of zapateado performance in fandangos and on stages. Further, the rigid torso in zapateado may be compared to that of Irish step dancing, where the stiff, unmoving torso and straight arms were supposedly developed in response to the Catholic Church’s disapproval of Irish dancing (Hall 1996:255).

To execute rhythms with their heels, dancers stand with slightly bent knees. Figures 18 and 19 show the woman dancer with a straight torso and slightly bent knees. The slight bend in the knees increases the agility of the dancer. If the knees were straight or in a “locked” position, the dancers would be unable to tap their heels. With the slight bend, dancers can tap their heels without moving their torso too much. The dancer’s body bounces from the vigorous tapping, but the movement remains below the waist, mostly below the knees. However, the dance can be very hard on the knees, so it is ill advised for anyone with weak or injured knees to participate in zapateado.
For the reasons given by Hernández and the prominence of the ballet folklórico style, dancers in New York City typically perform with little movement in the torso. The dancer holds his/her arms to the sides of the body; the arms are not used for expressive movements with few exceptions. Instead of keeping the arms at the sides of the body, men sometimes place the hands at the small of their back, one hand holding the opposite wrist. At other times, a man may place one hand behind his back and the other on his hat. When he holds his hat, he tips it forward to his partner, removes it, waves it, and returns it. If women are not keeping their hands to the sides of the body, they usually hold their skirt to the sides, opening the skirt for better dance movement and sometimes waving skirts expressively.

If there are two dancers on the tarima, they face each other and mimic each other’s movements (see Figure 19 to the left). When one dancer turns in place, the other turns. When one dancer advances forward, the other retreats backward. When one moves to the other side of the tarima, the other exchanges places. Dancers do not touch each other or embrace as in many partner social dances, such as salsa or danzón. Instead, there is always space between them. Despite the lack of physical touch between dancers, there is still a “lead” dancer, but the “lead” is the more experienced dancer, not necessarily the male dancer. In the “lead” position, the dancer will direct the motion of the dance, initiating step
patterns and turns between the partners. In the nineteenth century, the dance was a courting practice where a man and woman competitively danced with each other, each trying to best the other in zapateado footwork (Anita González 2004:56). In New York City, the dancing partners engage in a friendly competition or an active learning experience. Because there are many amateur and novice dancers, more advanced dancers typically demonstrate steps to the other in an in-the-moment zapateado lesson at a fandango.

**Skills and Apparatus Required for Zapateado**

For dancers to be effective, the most important skill for them to have in zapateado is a sense of the beat. Dancers must be able to hear the basic rhythm of son jarocho and have enough coordination in their feet to tap their heels with the rhythm. For most new dancers, there is a learning curve for foot-coordination. Unlike learning the jarana, the feet are not typically incorporated into music making like the hands, and many zapateado learners experience a frustrating beginning. After a little practice, most people can tap basic rhythms with their feet. As long as the dancers can articulate the beat with their feet, they can dance zapateado.

Because the dance can exert pressure on the knees, dancers should wear comfortable and stable dance shoes. For both men and women dancers, it is common to wear a smooth, preferably leather or wooden-soled boot or heeled shoe. The heel should be wide with a thickness of at least one and half inches. Character, salsa, tango and other ballroom-style shoes are made for dancing but are not well-suited for zapateado. Their thin heels will not withstand the intensity of the

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73 It is unclear if both male-female pairs or pairs of women have equally been part of son jarocho’s history, but García de León suggests that these forms of zapateado dance have been present in son jarocho since the seventeenth century (2009:54).
dancer’s heel-stomping, and they will exert too much pressure on the knees and not absorb the shock of the stomp, causing injury or discomfort.

Women typically wear Mexican folklórico-style shoes. Men typically wear any shoe with a heel and leather soles, like cowboy boots or dress shoes. In New York, folklórico shoes are rare, especially Mexican-style shoes, so some dancers use flamenco shoes, which are common and easy to find. However, because New York is a more expensive city, and flamenco is very popular, the price of flamenco shoes is inflated. Within the flow of people traveling to and from Mexico, dancers often make requests of each other to bring back inexpensive and well-made Mexican folklórico shoes. Some female dancers prefer and wear folklórico shoes with nails or metal taps in the toes and heels, but many dancers of zapateado fandanguero say that these are unnecessary. Because the tarima is elevated and has a resonating hole, untapped heels or those without nails can easily produce a sound loud enough to be heard in a fandango.

Some dancers in New York City have described this tap sound as “too metallic,” negatively referring to the ballet folklórico style shoe and norm of wearing shoes with nails or taps. According to Quetzal Flores from the California Chicano rock group Quetzal, the nails in dance shoes were part of the “modernity” project of early twentieth-century folklórico dance and music, in that they were meant to create a more “modern” sound. Also, perhaps the nails in folklórico shoes facilitate a louder sound for large stage presentations. In recent decades, during the movimiento jaranero, there has been a conscious effort to use non-tapped shoes (personal correspondence with Quetzal Flores, April 7, 2017). In New York, the nails in the shoes are a personal preference. One dancer who has experience in Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York and in fandango zapateado, explicitly instructs new dancers to look for non-tapped shoes because the taps are unnecessary (personal correspondence with Paula Sánchez-Kucukozer,
February 10, 2016). If a dancer does not have “dance” shoes, they will not be excluded from participating in the fandango.

The other apparatus—better, instrument—that is needed for zapateado is the tarima. Even though a tarima is not an absolute requirement for a fandango or for zapateado, it has become an essential piece in the fandango for many practitioners who follow the prescriptions of the movimiento jaranero. The tarima is a hollow box with two resonating holes cut on the long sides to allow a better, louder sound. Tarimas can be a range of sizes: from small, individual-sized tarimas for a solo dancer to large platforms that can hold multiple partners. The tarima familiar to the New York City community is a constructed tarima that is rectangular with dimensions of about four feet long, three feet wide, and five inches deep. Although a box-like tarima is now common practice across Mexico and the United States, according to Raquel Paraíso, historically, tarimas were made from materials from the surrounding environment and did not necessarily conform to a uniform shape or style. If a community does not have a constructed tarima, they
may use a simple wooden board, placed over a hole in the ground. Some indigenous groups even used turtle shells in the past for the many varieties of zapateado found in Mexico (personal correspondence with Raquel Paraíso April 6, 2017).

Similar to the fandango tarima in son jarocho, other Mexican genres use a tarima for dance. North of the jarocha region in Veracruz, the Huasteca region carries its own son tradition: son huasteco. In this regional music tradition, the musical ensemble is typically a trio of violin, *guitarra quinta huapanguera* (a guitar-like instrument with a deep body), and *jarana huasteca* (like the jarana in son jarocho). In its dance tradition, the trio plays sones and couples dance on a very large wooden platform—so large that a dozen couples can dance simultaneously. The tarima is closer to a giant wooden platform. Like zapateado in a fandango jarocho, couples do not embrace but dance facing each other without touching. Unlike the fandango, the tarima is not a small platform in the center of a circle of instrument players, but a huge space that the huasteco trio performs for, in more clearly defined performer/audience roles. Interestingly though, both son traditions have a structure where the dancers silence their steps when a verse is being sung. As a huasteco trio performs, typically on a stage apart from the dancers, the dancers silence their steps during verses. Once the singer has finished a verse, the entire dance floor returns to sounded zapateado steps that rhythmically accompany the music.

**How Zapateado Functions in the Fandango**

To understand zapateado in the fandango, González’s concept “rhythmic intention” is productive for both musical and social functions of the dance. The most basic understanding of zapateado is that it is a rhythmic element in the music and the tarima is a percussion instrument played with the feet. In the fandango, the dancers contribute percussion, and the more advanced
and practiced the dancers are, the more they can improvise, making a thick polyrhythmic texture with the other instruments. The rhythm that dancers create with their feet is a mixture of fixed step phrases that accompany specific sones, combinations of very short rhythmic phrases (usually only a measure of three beats) that can accompany any son, and free improvisation that includes spontaneous composition and combination of steps.

The intention of the dancer is not only to create rhythms but also to create a conversation among the fandango participants. The dancer must listen to whoever is the singer at the moment in the fandango circle and never loudly strike the tarima when a person is singing. Dancing zapateado over another person’s verse is a major faux pas: it is akin to interrupting a speaker from the audience, or a band member playing over a fellow member’s solo. Zapateado carries the fandango in specific moments. After the estribillo is sung, for example, players increase the volume of their instruments and the dancer does as well. She might explosively unleash an improvisation or forcefully execute a common rhythm with the jaranas. The entire fandango has an ebb and flow in dynamics among voices, instruments, and particularly zapateado. Additionally, the dancers’ moving bodies build and maintain the groove. The swaying body in the center of the fandango circle at a minimum creates a flow within the collective rhythm to reinforce the groove among participants. Lastly, zapateado contributes to the overall dense texture that is characteristic of participatory. All of these qualities reinforce the guiding principles of convivencia and participation. Below is a list of musical functions of zapateado in the fandango:

- To create a rhythmic conversation with jarana strumming patterns;
- To create a conversation with voices in the fandango circle;
- To add to the rhythmic density and overall dense texture of the music;
- To build the groove with the fandango circle;
- To create a conversation with other dancers on the tarima.
To execute the musical role of zapateado, fandango participants must follow some general “rules.” The rules are explicit etiquette in the fandango. The code of conduct realizes the musical relationships and guiding principle of convivencia. In New York City, these rules are discussed in workshops to prepare new fandango participants. It is unlikely that a new fandango participant would ignore the clear social decorum enacted at the fandango, but the workshop instructors try to educate and inform all learners. Some of the rules are directly related to the musical exchange within the fandango circle, such as “not to zapatear loudly over a sung verse.”

In a jarana workshop, a student once asked what would happen if a dancer were to strike the tarima very loudly over a singer. Sinuhé, a key teacher-musician and organizer for the community, was the instructor for this class and he responded that in a “traditional” setting, as in Veracruz, where this social code is more strictly followed, a leader among the fandango circle would call “¡una!” (“one,” the call that ends a son) and end the son. Then, the dancers would clear the tarima, as always when a son ends. Perhaps to send a message, once the “loud” dancer leaves the tarima, the son that was just ended would be restarted to let the singer be heard.

Another aspect of social etiquette of tapping a dancer’s shoulder to trade places also demonstrates the kind of social respect expected at a fandango. The polite tap acknowledges the other person without completely disrupting their dance. These rules always reinforce both the musical and social relationships in the convivencia principle.

Rules for zapateado in the fandango that reinforce convivencia and musical functions:

- Dancers should not tap sounded steps during verses (only mudanzas or quiet steps);
- Dancers can tap some sounded steps and light patterns during estribillo;
- Dancers execute sounded steps that are set patterns or improvised between verse/estribillo, during instrumental sections;
- Dancers can only exchange places with other dancers during instrumental sections;
- Dancers must touch the shoulder of the dancer on the tarima to exchange places;
• A dancer cannot leave the tarima until he/she is relieved by another.

It is not clear when or where the rules for zapateado etiquette were developed for the fandango. The social etiquette likely coalesced over the historical formation of son jarocho. However, since the inception and development of the movimiento jaranero, teachers and performers of son jarocho music have emphasized these rules to new learners of the music. Many of these teachers cite their own learning experiences from son jarocho seminars in Veracruz, such as the week-long seminar of workshops that takes place on the Luna Negra ranch in Jáltipan, Veracruz, Mexico.

**Teaching Zapateado**

In addition to jarana workshops which occur at least once a week, zapateado classes have been the other most frequent workshop within the New York City community. Beginning in earnest in 2015, weekly zapateado lessons were offered at the Lower East Side folk arts organization, City Lore. Previously, zapateado lessons were offered at Terraza 7 from 2011-2013 as the community was just beginning, but ended when the primary instructor moved away from New York. The relationship between City Lore and the jaranero community stems from a community member, Henry Chalfant, who works as a documentarian and City Lore board member. Henry is a New Yorker who has documented hip hop culture since the 1970s and Latin popular as a co-producer of films like *Style Wars* (PBS 1983) and *From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale* (WNET 2006). In the son jarocho community, Henry has been taking jarana lessons and attending fandangos regularly for several years. Because of his involvement with and connection to City Lore, he worked with the organization to arrange a time for the jaraneros to have a space for music practice. From this connection and donation of space, the community was
able to host Monday evening jarana classes beginning in 2014. After about a year of jarana classes, mostly led by Sinuhé with occasional guest maestros, the focus of the classes shifted to zapateado.

An active community member, Calvin Burton had previously been entrusted with the City Lore house key and was responsible for opening and closing City Lore on Monday nights. After Sinuhé and others had scheduling conflicts and could no longer teach the jarana classes, Calvin had the idea to redirect the focus of Monday evenings at City Lore. Even though all son jarocho classes are integrated with the multiple musical elements, Calvin thought it was a good idea to center zapateado in a weekly class. There was already one large tarima in the basement of City Lore, so Calvin took it upon himself to build several practice tarimas. Carpentry and design are also among his many artistic interests. Calvin designed and constructed four “nesting” tarimas that could be stored within themselves in the cluttered basement of City Lore. The community affectionately refers to these tarimas as the “Russian nesting tarimas.”

Additionally, the classes at City Lore fulfilled another practical purpose. Unlike jarana or singing, which are not excessively loud, it is difficult to practice zapateado without disturbing or angering neighbors in New York City apartment buildings. Just the thought of a neighbor pounding a wooden platform in the above apartment would likely be unwelcome. Therefore, there was a clear need for a class that could cater to zapateado and give community members a space to practice the percussive dance.

Each class was taught by Cecilia (Ceci) Ortega or Julia del Palacio, again with occasional guest instructors from Mexico. Ceci is one of the few community members from Veracruz, but she did not begin to practice fandango zapateado until living in New York. She is a dancer, teacher, and activist who teaches indigenous history and culture in public schools through music
and dance performance. She has a background in folklórico dance as well. Julia is the lead dancer of the group Radio Jaroch. She completed her Ph.D. in History at Columbia University and is now an administrator for the Kupferberg Center for the Arts at Queens College and the CUNY Dance Initiative. Some of the guest instructors from Mexico include Laura Rebollos, Natse Rojas, and Claudio Vega.\(^{74}\) Regardless of who is teaching the class, the focus of each lesson is an individual son, like jarana workshops (in Chapter 3). One week the focus was the son “El buscapies,” the next was “El ahualulco.” The main teachers, Ceci and Julia, have different approaches to zapateado and teaching, but they follow the same “one son focus” per lesson.

The differences among teachers of zapateado vary on an individual basis, but they share a common direction in their instruction—to teach and prepare for a fandango setting. This approach to teaching is often called the taller integral (comprehensive or integrated workshop). In a taller integral, the instructor teaches to the whole fandango, and for zapateado instruction, this translates to conceptualizing zapateado as part of a whole, not abstracted from its place in the fandango.

In the beginning of the zapateado series, both Ceci and Julia focus on certain basic step patterns—sometimes called tacón or taconeo (literally, the heel of a shoe)—and mudanzas (bodily movements), typically as a warm-up for the class. This teaching strategy is common to other integrated workshops. For example, Sinuhé includes simple zapateado steps in his jarana classes, and though more advanced, Laura Rebollos taught most of her workshop series using

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\(^{74}\) In chapter 2, Laura Rebollos and Claudio Vega were introduced as frequent visiting instructors to New York City. Rebollos is also an important figure in the more recent decades of the movimiento jaranero.
zapateado steps to build a *son* from bottom-up, moving from the feet, to the hands, and then to the voice.

All the basic steps, mudanzas, and imitative movements are covered in the City Lore classes. Beginners on the tarima are encouraged to follow the accented beats in time with the music. For example, most *sones* are in triple (3/4) or compound duple (6/8) meter, so the easiest way to dance to the *son* would be to mark the accented downbeat of each measure. The dancer strikes the tarima with the heel of the shoe on the first beat of a three-beat measure, alternating between left and right feet: (right) stomp-2-3 / (left) stomp-2-3.

The next most common step that beginners learn is “café con pan.” This phrase is the single most used rhythmic cell in the fandango. It is usually notated in triple meter as:

![Figure 21 Rhythmic cell “café con pan”](image)

The footwork of “Café con pan” is usually executed starting with a double tap with one foot for the two syllables of “café” and alternating between the feet for “con pan:” RRLR / LLRL. This short rhythmic cell is extremely flexible in son jarocho. Most of the *sones* are heard in either triple or 6/8 meter, and “café con pan” often adds hemiola or a cross-rhythm to the music. The phrase is frequently used throughout a fandango. It is like a “home base,” to which dancers who lose their place in a more complicated step pattern will “return.” With café con pan, a dancer can always find their place.

The rhythmic phrase also transforms depending on where the accent lands. Again, depending on the *son*, the accent may fall on the “con” of “café-CON-pan.” When the accented beat is placed on the “con” or “pan,” the character of the step changes considerably. The example
below shows the rearrangement of “café con pan” to “pan café con,” which is a common arrangement of the rhythmic cell where “pan” is accented and counted as the “one” or the downbeat of a son.

Another common mnemonic phrase for dance steps and jarana strumming is “cara de pato” (face of (a) duck). This phrase does not have the same flexibility as “café con pan” in regards to accent placement. Although the phrase could possibly be adapted to suit anyone’s practice, the accent is over the “to” of “pato.” The phrase accompanies many sones that are “a contratiempo” (literally: against time, or off beat). Contratiempo sones in 3/4 time use this phrasing in the jarana strumming patterns.

Aside from the sounded steps of zapateado, there many mudanzas, which are silent or muted. The common mudanza is performed by lightly brushing the sole of the shoe on the tarima to count the beats in a rhythmic cycle. Most zapateado is counted in three, so the mudanzas typically follow a one-two-three movement pattern. To illustrate this pattern, a dancer brushes her foot in a triangular pattern on top of the tarima (See Figure 24 below). Starting with the feet directly below the hips with weight balanced between each foot, the right foot slides straight
forward (beat one), then back and to the right, outward and perpendicular from the hip (beat two), and finally back to center, under the hips (beat three). Then, the pattern repeats on the left side. The “one” is out in front of the dancer and “three” is both the starting place and the ending of the count. This shape and flow of the movement generates a never-ending cycle, contributing to the ebb and flow of energy of the fandango. This simple three-step mudanza is used in many sones. While a player from the fandango circle sings a verse, the dancer or dancers move to this pattern. The effect is twofold: First, the mudanza keeps the dancers’ bodies in motion, allowing them to count the beats and follow the music internally. Second, the quiet brushing contributes to the sonic density, and the physical movement leads others in the fandango circle in the groove—perhaps she is a bodily conductor, all within the framework of participation and convivencia.

Figure 24 Movements of a common mudanza.

In addition to the sounded steps and mudanzas, zapateado has non-foot movements that imitate or pantomime images from the lyrical content of the sones. Some prominent examples
are the *sones*: “La manta” (blanket or muslin cloth), “El butaquito” (small arm chair, or rocking chair), and “La guacamaya” (macaw or parrot), all of which are *sones de montón*. However, pantomime and imitation are not limited only to *sones de montón*; some *sones de pareja* also include these imitative movements.

During a performance of “La manta,” a pair of women dancers use a piece of cloth, usually a shawl from their shoulders or waist, and hold the cloth between them. With the “manta,” dancers sway back and forth, raise and lower it, and turn each other, wrapping each other into the manta. While a singer sings a verse, the dancers gently sway back and forth to the triple meter or dance a simple mudanza to keep time: sway-2-3 / sway-2-3. Once the verse finishes and another singer responds by repeating the verses back, there is a second round of responding verses. In the second set of responding verses, the dancers begin to execute sounded steps, marking the down beat: stomp-2-3 / stomp-2-3. Then, when the estribillo starts, the dancers unravel the “manta” and shift from mudanzas and lightly sounded steps that mark the down beat to lightly stepped “café con pan” (1 & 2, 3…) while swaying the “manta” back and forth between them. Once the estribillo is completed, the dancers increase the intensity of their zapateado, and the “manta” is replaced on one of the dancer’s shoulders or waist, depending on whether the “manta” is a shawl or a waist tie.

Similarly, during “El butaquito,” two women create a cradle or seat of a chair with their arms in an interlocking embrace. Each dancer extends her left arm to hold her partner’s elbow, while her right arm is extended and bent at a right angle, holding her own left elbow. A “seat” or butaquito is created with their arms. While a singer sings a verse, the dancers sway back and forth with their arms interlocked, as if they are the rocking chair.
Last, when dancers perform “La guacamaya,” they imitate a flying bird in the estribillo. The caller begins the estribillo with the phrase: “Vuela, vuelas, vuelas” and the entire fandango circle responds “¡Vuela!” As the estribillo starts, the dancers stomp “café con pan” and gently “fly” with their arms, imitating the guacamaya’s wings. This continues through both the caller’s and the responder’s estribillo.

Example of estribillo in “La guacamaya”:

Caller:

\[ \text{Vuela vuelas vuelas (¡VUELA!)} \quad \text{Fly, fly, fly} \]
\[ \text{Vuela guacamaya} \quad \text{Fly, guacamaya} \]
\[ \text{Ahorita me despido} \quad \text{Now I am gone} \]
\[ \text{Pero te veo en la pitaya} \quad \text{But I will see you in the dragon fruit} \]

Response:

\[ \text{Vuela vuelas vuelas (¡VUELA!)} \quad \text{Fly, fly, fly} \]
\[ \text{Vuela palomita} \quad \text{Fly, little dove} \]
\[ \text{No le hace que yo sea feo} \quad \text{It doesn’t make me ugly} \]
\[ \text{Si me quiere una bonita} \quad \text{If a beauty loves me} \]

Example of a Zapateado Integrated Workshop

On October 31, 2016, about a dozen members of the son jarocho community, including myself, gathered at City Lore in the Lower East Side of Manhattan for a zapateado workshop. In the City Lore basement, the participants helped clear the table and chairs and laid out the practice “nesting” tarimas. With all the “nesting” tarimas out, the cement basement floor was converted into a partially wooden floor with enough space to accommodate two to three people on each
tarima, totaling about a dozen spots for dancing participants. Among the participants, there were about even numbers of men and women, and that evening, one working-class mother brought her six-year-old daughter because of her difficulty in finding affordable childcare. Natse Rojas was the special guest instructor for the week and was giving dance workshops at City Lore and other locations for the jaranero community. Natse is a young, early 30s jaranera, originally from Puebla City, Puebla, Mexico. She noted at the beginning of the class that she was not from Veracruz and did not grow up with son jarocho. Instead, like many people in the room, she learned zapateado and developed her jaranero life as an adult.

She designed her workshop to engage all levels of dancer by asking everyone to forget momentarily any prior knowledge of zapateado. She encouraged everyone to listen to their bodies and to dance with the music, building a rhythm internally and from bottom-up. The workshop revolved around the son, “El butaquito,” which is a son de montón and a tiempo (with time, or with regular accents). At the start of the lesson, she laid out the “rules” of the class:

1. Forget and do not do the zapateado steps you already know (i.e.: “café con pan”).
2. Find the beat or accent and go from there.
3. Do not look at your feet.

The class began by listening to “El butaquito” in partners. “El butaquito” is a son de montón, so the class suspended the “rules” for the male participants to practice. This may be a moment when New York City “breaks” the rules. Each person was encouraged to clap whatever rhythm that they felt and to clap creatively, to experiment within the son’s compás and the rhythms of the jarana. In pairs, each partner tried to clap a rhythm and their partner tried to clap a rhythm back in response. The goal was to create a rhythmic dialogue within the pairs. After many cycles of the compás, everyone switched partners and repeated the same exercise with a
new person. Again, after a couple minutes of the compás, the son ended and everyone regrouped into one large circle.

At this point, Natse asked how everyone “felt” the rhythm. She pointed out that everyone should have felt the rhythm differently with each partner. Everyone in the class agreed that they experienced these rhythmic differences. Then, the class continued with the same son, and Natse asked a few participants to clap one of the rhythmic patterns that they came up with their partners. First, Renée clapped her rhythmic pattern, which was a simple line of subdivided beats, (1&2&3&). Renée clapped her rhythm and the rest of the class followed. Next was Iván and then Calvin. After the entire class repeated the clapping patterns of the three examples, the class collectively practiced dancing the patterns.

The whole class stomped and tapped on the tarimas that lined the floor. After practicing the zapateado interpretation of the clapped patterns, some volunteered to demonstrate the patterns individually. Again, at this point, Natse pointed out that each person’s zapateado sounded different. Even though each person was trying to execute the same rhythmic pattern, each person’s feet attacked the tarima differently and sounded somewhat unique. Her lesson was a very effective workshop in finding rhythms, embracing one’s personal zapateado sound, and keeping a rhythmic dialogue on the tarima. She emphasized that the fandango is about a group and individuals. The group makes music together, but the collective music making only comes from individuals who bring their individuality to the fandango. This lesson could be summarized as “every foot sounds differently” and directly connects to Martha González’s theory of rhythmic intention. With every step that an individual dancer makes, she is offering and sharing her sense of rhythm to the overall sound. Because of the collectivity and shared experience of the fandango, the individual can never make claims over the whole sound event but connects with
other participants in the shared music making experience. In the ethos of convivencia, every step, every foot can only contribute to the collective whole.

Aside from everyone having a “unique” zapateado voice, zapateado is an instrument and players must develop their method of attack and determine which shoes provide the optimal sound. Tarimas will vary as well. The “nesting” tarimas at City Lore are simple and do not have deep bodies with resonating holes. At the community fandangos, a very worn and heavy tarima is used. All of these different instruments or apparatuses, from type of shoe and heel to the tarima, will affect a dancer’s technique and sound.

The zapateado workshop with Natse is an explicit example of the ways the New York City son jarocho community works to enact collective music making and thinks about inclusivity and participation in the fandango. The workshop focus of “rhythms” in the jarana also emphasizes at least two important dynamics in the fandango: 1) the zapateado is rhythmically connected to the jarana strumming patterns, and 2) a dancer must rhythmically communicate with his or her partner on the tarima. Natse’s approach to zapateado instruction is not all that different from other maestras. She asked her students to “listen” to their bodies while listening to the compás from the jarana. By listening with the body, the distinctions between the mind and body are not as clear. Simultaneously, this connection between the feet (zapateado) and hands (jarana) reinforces the principle of convivencia, where individuals work together through their respective musical roles to create the whole fandango.

**El pájaro carpintero**

In addition to the jarana and partner communication on the tarima that were explored in Natse Rojas’s class, an experienced dancer tries to answer both instruments and voices in the
fandango. Some *sones* have short spaces between verses when the singer pauses, and the dancer tries to fill in the space with a rhythmic response to the singer. One example of this internal call-and-response structure is in the *son* “El pájaro carpintero” (the woodpecker). Many *sones* have a structure where a caller sings a line of verse and someone from the fandango circle repeats or responds to the line again. This *son* does not have a responding form in the verses, but there is a responding structure for zapateado to complete rhythmic phrases after sung verses. This structure is also part of the internal conversation that requires fandango participants to always be listening to fellow players, being ready to respond.

“El pájaro carpintero” is “a contratiempo” and has a harmonic cycle that has two parts. The phrasing of *sones* “a contratiempo” has irregular accents. In this *son*, the last stroke of the jarana phrases is accented. Below in Figure 25 is a basic strumming pattern for “El pájaro carpintero.” A simple version of the *son* has ten strokes on the jarana, beginning with an up-stroke, using the nail of the thumb. By beginning the phrase with an up-stroke, the player can easily end on a down-stroke, creating an accented tenth stroke in the phrase. After ten strokes on the jarana, there is a short pause before the next phrase. The transcription below represents these ten strokes on the jarana, each arrow equaling an eighth note with the compás below the strumming pattern. In jarana classes, instructors typically divide the compás into two phrases, to emphasize the ten strokes of the twelve-beat rasgueo. Two sets of twelve beats, or four 6/8 measures, complete the first section for “El pájaro carpintero.” The notation below shows the simple up-down strumming pattern for the *son*, but more advanced jarana players sometimes ornament the last stroke by making it an *abanico* (fan). The abanico strumming technique is not the same as a flamenco guitarist’s outward fanning of the fingers, but an elongated strum that is slower, producing an extended note.
Jarana strumming pattern and first section of the compás for “El pájaro carpintero”:

The first section of the compás is repeated ad infinitum until a verse is sung. Before someone in the fandango sings a verse, this harmonic cycle begins to build the groove with the participants. At this point, before any verse has been sung, the son is in a type of holding pattern with the expectation of a verse to be sung. Once a caller sings a verse, the son is set into new motion. Sung verses have two distinct sections and phrasing in “El pájaro carpintero.” The first section of the compás follows the harmony outlined above, and the second section functions as a cadence to close the verse.

The first section repeats twice for the first portion of verse. The lines shown below are one of the poetic verses that is associated with “El pájaro carpintero.” When singing this verse, a singer will sing the first two lines of the five-line verse or quintet, and then repeat the first line to create an incomplete quatrain: 1-2-1-(voice rests).

Example verse for “El pájaro carpintero”:

1. *Yo vine de una prisión* I came from a prison
2. *Donde no vale el dinero* Where money has no value
3. *Puedo salir cuando quiero* I can leave when I want
4. *Porque me dio la oración* Because he gave me the prayer
5. *El pájaro carpintero* The woodpecker

Below is the phrasing and arrangement for the first section of the compás, with harmony indicated below the first word of each line of verse:

1. Yo vine de una prisión  
   (I)
2. Dónde no vale el dinero  
   (V7)
3. Yo vine de una prisión  
   (I)
4. [Voice rests]  
   (V7)

Then, after the first phrase that follows the first section of the compás, the singer will sing the last three lines of the quintet, repeating the fourth line to complete the quatrain, similar to the first half of sung verses. In this second section, the singer also follows a new harmonic progression, the *descante* (descant, or second theme).

The compás for the descante follows:

![Figure 26 Second section of compás for “El pájaro carpintero.”](image)

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This line of verse can be also interpreted for its spiritual meaning. The woodpecker is a bird representing a carpenter or Jesus Christ. Many of the poetic verses of “Pájaro carpintero” have spiritual and religious connotations, and the use of birds and nature as images of spirituality is common in son jarocho.
The sung verses of “El pájaro carpintero” must have four octosyllabic lines. Furthermore, it must be noted that the first line (1) of this verse has eight syllables, but the open vowel syllables are condensed into a *sinalefa* (synalepha). In making a sinalefa, the first line becomes seven syllables: “Yo vine d’una prisión.” Now, because the poetic line only has seven syllables, singers commonly add another syllable at the end of the line to complete the octosyllabic form: “Yo vine d’una prisión-ay.” The second and fourth lines (2 and 4) also carry a significant sinalefa because the lines contain nine syllables. The sinalefa comes between the last two words of each line: 2: “Donde no vale l’dinero,” 4: “Porque me dio l’oración.”

Each section of sung verse must contain four lines, so singers will repeat some lines to fill in this form. Because the first section of the verse only has two lines, and only one line is repeated, the voice is silent in what would be the space for the fourth line. In the fourth line’s absence, the dancer completes the line or responds in this empty space. The zapateado steps mark the absent syllables and the strokes of the jarana in the second part of the first section of the compás. “R” and “L” represent the right and left feet, each step equals one eighth note, and the dashes represent eighth rests. A common step pattern for this *son* is: RRLRL|RRLR— (accent over the last R step, which is in bold).

Complete quatrain verse with zapateado:

1. *Yo vine de una prisión*
2. *Donde no vale el dinero*
1. *Yo vine de una prisión*
2. *RRLRL|RRLR—*

While the singer calls the verses, the dancer will perform mudanzas, keeping time and waiting to complete the first quatrain. From one perspective, the zapateado steps can be
understood as a conversation or dialogue with the voice and poetic verse. Alternatively, without negating the first perspective, the zapateado is also a “voice” in the music, rhythmically aligned with the strumming pattern of the jarana. Then, in the second section of the son, the descante, the zapateado returns for the final twelve-beat cadence in the phrase. The dancer can strike the tarima in this moment because the cadence and ending line of the verse is generally known—most verses end with “el pájaro carpintero”—and the sounded zapateado steps will not over power or diminish the voice. The voices sings lines 3, 4, 4, 5 with zapateado during the last line of verse (line 5).

Zapateado steps for “El pájaro carpintero”:

![Zapateado steps for “El pájaro carpintero.”](image)

*Figure 27 Zapateado steps for “El pájaro carpintero.” The zapateado steps were transcribed here in 6/8 to align with the jarana strokes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puedo salir cuando quiero</td>
<td>I can leave when I want</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porque me dio la oración</td>
<td>Because he gave me the prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porque me dio la oración</td>
<td>Because he gave me the prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El pájaro carpintero</td>
<td>The woodpecker</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are many possible alternative zapateado patterns for “El pájaro carpintero,” depending on the ability and skill level of the dancer. An alternative step pattern is a series of three strikes on the tarima. The pattern is more uneven and creates more rhythmic tension between the jarana strumming pattern and the zapateado. To enhance the “a contratiempo” feel
of the *son*, the dancer accents every third foot strike, emphasizing a “short-short-LONG” pattern with the accent coming at the end.

![Figure 28 Alternative steps for “El pájaro carpintero.”](image)

The scheme for the steps depicts a right-foot dominant dancer. These steps could easily be left-foot dominant or switch evenly between the feet to distribute the attacks.

In the fandango, when participants play this *son*, the energy is more contemplative and meditative. The poetic stanza provided above is representative of the themes found in the *son*. The poetry of the *son* has many allusions to prayer and images of Jesus Christ. The fandango participants may not view this *son* as overtly religious but rather as a more spiritually themed *son* that contributes to a reflective mood in the fandango. The tempo of the *son* is usually moderate, but not too slow. “El pájaro carpintero” might come after a fast tempo *son* like “El colás.” Also, “El pájaro carpintero” is a *son* de montón, and does not have a responding structure in the verses. All of these qualities give it a very different feel, and participants play it at the fandango to “cool off” from a high-intensity *son*. Furthermore, “El pájaro carpintero” is representative of the ways zapateado functions within a *son*—how it relates to the jarana, the jarana rasgueo, and its placement vis-à-vis the voice. Within the social context of a fandango, these musical arrangements play out as relationships and collaboration rather than only musical elements. As participants play a *son*, the principle of convivencia is enacted in this musical and social arrangement.
Gendered Roles of Dance and Participation in the Fandango

Aside from the musical qualities that categorize sones by verse and vocal arrangements, responding and non-responding sones, sones are categorized in social and dance terms. First, there are two main types of sones in terms of dance. Traditionally, there are two categories: “son de pareja” and “son de montón.” The most obvious observation here is that traditional dance configurations lack a men’s dance. This conspicuous distinction does not seem to concern most fandango participants. If people do acknowledge the absence of men’s dances, they usually shrug it off as just “tradition” or status quo. Indeed, the majority of mestizo dance traditions in Mexico do not include men’s dances. The only exceptions to the nation-state canon are Ballet Folklórico’s cosmopolitan adaptations of specific folk dances into choreographed stage presentations like the mariachi standard “Son de la negra” (Son of the dark woman) where men dance in a single, choreographed line, and are later joined by a line of women to partner with them. This well-established division of women’s and partner dances within Mexican dance, broadly speaking, and continued emphasis of these dance-gender distinctions in revived son jarocho practice highlight the conservative nature of Mexican music and dance that has been historically used for nationalist purposes. For the New York City community, while the community has made claims of inclusivity for LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people, to break the dance traditions remains to be seen.

Clearly, gendered roles are embedded within the dance traditions and prescriptions for son repertoire. Many of the partner dances have roots as “courting” practices from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when men and women could only publicly socialize or “flirt,” but not physically touch, in a ritualized social form such as the fandango. Many of the sones de pareja still enact some form of courtship. According to Rafael Figueroa Hernández, “The sones de
pareja, which tend to be faster and more energetic, are danced by a man and woman and are more choreographically colorful” (2007:45). The son “El ahualulco” is a prominent example. In the dance of “El ahualulco,” the male dancer typically moves his female partner back and forth on the tarima, and engages her by turning and swapping positions on the tarima. Although partners do not physically touch each other on the tarima, their movement with each other is electric. It is as if they are two magnets, with their like poles repelling each other with an invisible boundary between them. The male dancer advances as the female dancer retreats, always maintaining a space between them. While they dance, the male dancer tips his hat in a gentlemanly manner toward her. Even if the male dancer does not have a hat, he will imitate the movement, placing one hand behind his back, leaning slightly forward from the waist into his partner, and tipping an imaginary hat forward. The choreographic gesture of tipping a hat and moving his partner back and forth on the tarima all occur during the verses of the son.

Zapateado rhythm for “El ahualulco” and example of verse:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonito es Guadalajara</td>
<td>Guadalajara is beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quién estuviera en el puente</td>
<td>Who was on the bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con su chinita en los brazos</td>
<td>With his lady in his arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirando pasar la gente</td>
<td>Watching the people pass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 29 Zapateado steps for “El ahualulco.”

The verses of “El ahualulco” follow the same rhythmic pattern as the zapateado steps (Figure 29) that are present between sung verses, during the instrumental sections. The two-sixteenth-note pick-up before the downbeat of the phrase is also typically danced in a bouncy hop. Visually, the dancers look as if they are making a small jump on the tarima, nimbly and
lightly tapping their heels before accenting the downbeat. This action of the dancers builds energy with the fandango circle and momentum for the zapateado section of the son.

In the estribillo of “El ahualulco,” the rhythm changes to double-time and the dancers energetically and quickly stomp their feet on the tarima while turning circles in place opposite each other. With each line of the estribillo, the partners change direction—right circles, then left circles—always mirroring each other, totaling four circles.

Estribillo example for “El ahualulco” that follows the zapateado rhythm:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y ahora acabo de llegar del ahualulco</td>
<td>And I just arrived from ahualulco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De bailar este jarabe muy risueño</td>
<td>To dancing this very smiling/bright medley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Como dicen que lo cantan y lo bailan</td>
<td>As they say they sing it and dance it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Las mujeres bailadoras del ingenio</td>
<td>The women dancers of the mill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This dance is particularly popular at the fandangos in New York City because of its fast and energetic estribillo, and it is one of the more dynamic partner dances the community has come to know.

Nevertheless, the paradox remains that for men to dance—traditionally speaking—it can only occur with a female partner. Women must be present for zapateado to happen at the fandango. In Veracruz, it is a given that this structure is maintained, although in New York City, the rules may be broken. However, they are not broken frequently, and it is rather rare to see
these dance norms disrupted. Partly, these “rules” are deeply embedded in U.S. society, generally speaking—men dancing with other men is still taboo for parts of the U.S. However open the U.S. may be to alternative expressions of gender and sexuality, even in a cosmopolitan place like New York City gender configurations still adhere to the heteronormative standard that dominates son jarocho and fandango practices. Still, it is not clear why there is not a solo dance for men or a men’s dance. No sources mention men’s dances in son jarocho, only men dancing with women. Perhaps the socio-historical use of the dance in son jarocho that is linked to practices of courtship is why men’s dances do not exist. Further, the presence of women’s dances perhaps indicates that women’s dancing may have also been implicated in courtship practices. Women most likely danced to display youthfulness and other desirable qualities for a potential partner.

Comparatively, one can also think of the ways other Latin American and Caribbean partner dances unfold in the New York club—men and women partner in salsa, and women can partner with each other if they choose. Yet, men coupling as salsa partners is still rarely seen outside of LGBTQ-friendly spaces that ensure explicit social acceptance of these expressions of gender and sexuality. For example, some gay bars host “Latino nights” that feature popular dance music like salsa, bachata, and reggaetón.

Still, even in a cosmopolitan and open community such as the jaranero community in New York City, there are few instances of disrupting these norms. The only instance that I observed where dancer-gender norms were broken occurred in a backyard birthday fandango. A

76 In New York, there were archaic dance prohibition laws—the “cabaret laws”—which regulated the use of public space for dancing (Correal 2017). These outdated and seemingly arbitrary laws were rooted in racist policy that were originally intended to restrict spaces of African Americans, prohibiting dance in places of jazz performance. Although New York City’s dance prohibition laws were not historically connected to Mexican dance traditions, they certainly highlight the ways dance could be racialized and stigmatized through public policy.
young man who was new to the fandango and son jarocho came to the backyard fandango party. He did not play jarana or know verses to *sones*, but he clearly enjoyed zapateado. So, breaking from traditional practice, he decided to dance alone on the tarima during a son de montón. No one “corrected” this action and no one seemed to care that this action “broke the rules.” At the fandango there was even a visiting maestra from Veracruz, but she did not mind the change. However, in interviews, most people in New York City acknowledge that “experimentation” with the norms of the fandango is not permissible in a more traditional Veracruz setting.

Furthermore, on the issue of LGBTQ-identifying members of the community, there are very few people that openly identify as gay, lesbian, or transgender. One exception is a woman who is openly lesbian, but even she does not break son de pareja rules to dance with her girlfriend or another woman on the tarima—she adheres to the norms of dancing with a male partner. Nevertheless, although the New York City jaranero community does not have many self-identifying LGBTQ members, this does not preclude some sort of adaptation of zapateado norms. If the situation were to arise where a pair of men wanted to dance together, it is very possible that this would not be seen as transgressive, but simply accepted. Yet, it is important to note that the lack of a LGBTQ presence may be more closely related to the identity configurations for gender and sexuality within the Mexican population of New York more broadly and how those identities align with particular tastes in popular music. In contrast, from previous research, I have observed a large, openly homosexual Mexican audience at night-clubs and DJ parties that play electronic dance music, cumbias, and other Mexican commercial popular music. At these DJ parties, it is common for men to dance with each other and can be understood as an extension of homosexual night-life scenes from Mexico City. Also, there are many openly gay Mexican men that participate in Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York. However, in
BFMNY only heterosexual partners dance, upholding the nation-state narrative of official Mexican dance repertoire.

**Women’s Dances and Participation- Son de montón**

Women’s dances have existed alongside the sones de pareja and other dance forms since the formation of son jarocho. According to García de León, both sones de pareja and sones de montón have origins in seventeenth-century Andalusian dances and have a “strong resemblance to other zapateado dances from other Hispanic American regions” (2009:54). Since women’s dances have been part of the son jarocho tradition for centuries, it is necessary to examine both women’s roles as dancers and their other contributions to the music and sociality of son jarocho performance, whether in fandangos or concerts.

Sones de montón are often stylized differently than sones de pareja. Women’s dances are usually performed at slower tempos, in an “unhurried pace” (Figueroa Hernández 2007:44). In the fandango, the series of *sones* that is performed generally alternates between partner and women’s dances. It is common for two women’s *sones* to be played back-to-back, but less so for partner *sones*. For example, below is the “playlist” of the February 5, 2017 (Celebration for La Virgen de Candelaria) fandango in New York City. Each son is identified as either son de pareja (SP) or son de montón (SM):

1. El siquisirí (SM) (moderate tempo)
2. La morena (SM) (andante or moderate tempo)
3. El colás (SP) (allegro or fast tempo)
4. Pájaro cu (SM) (slow tempo)
5. El ahualulco (SP) (allegro)
6. El buscapiés (SM) (largo or slow tempo)

7. La bamba (SP) (allegro)

The alternating dances contribute to the overall dynamic quality of the fandango. The ebb and flow of fast, moderate, and slow-paced *sones* is part of the constant collaboration among the participants to build a groove together.

Given that women must be present to dance in either type of *son*, women’s presence in the fandango is essential. Furthermore, traditionally women have always participated in a fandango in more ways than the zapateado. Fandangos are sites of popular celebration and socialization, and in traditional societies, women are the principle cooks and caretakers. Even at the New York City fandangos, there are women in the community that not only organize the fandango by securing a space at a local restaurant or other venue, but also often coordinate the food for the event. There is even a *son* dedicated to the women that cook for the fandangos, called “Las cocineras” (the cooks). In an interview with Claudia (a professional musician and dancer in the community), she mentioned the *son* for the women cooks, “What comes to mind, when I think of their (women’s) roles, is when we went to Luna Negra, or my experiences there on the farm, (is) their role as women cocineras… There’s a *son* called Las cocineras… They’re venerated” (interview, August 17, 2016). These non-musical contributions are part of the larger collaborative endeavor to bring people together in participatory fashion and create music.

Without a doubt, women in rural societies in Mexico perform essential labor for their communities within a framework of traditional gender roles—as mothers, caretakers, cooks, and wives. Even in a cosmopolitan city like New York, women still perform these traditional roles while engaging in alternative gender configurations. In New York City and other urban son jarocho communities, more and more women are playing instruments, teaching the music and
dance, and leading their communities through their roles as organizers. In contrast, Anita González notes that few women played instruments in the traditional fandango settings in Veracruz (2004:57). However, this is changing. An experienced jaranero who has lived and performed in fandangos in Veracruz recently, Anna sees more and more women playing not only jarana, but also leona, violin, and other instruments (personal correspondence with Anna Arismendez, August 13, 2017). As discussed previously, women in the New York City community are core organizers of the community. Their roles as teachers of dance and leaders in the fandangos also foment a community attitude of participation and convivencia through their example. Moreover, the non-musical labor of women organizers is another essential piece of the multidimensional character that keeps the community whole.

Musically, women dancers perform the part of percussionist or rhythm-maker in the fandango. As outlined throughout this chapter, the zapateado is part of the musical and social conversation that happens at fandangos. Zapateado aligns with jaranas and responds to voices that sing verses. Like the quiet mudanzas and pantomimes, another often unseen and silent component contributes to the musical dynamism. This is the visual communication between dancers on the tarima. Taking Natse Rojas’s workshop as an example, the rhythms that emerge between two dancers will always be dependent upon the two individuals’ communication. While tapping their heels, two dancers must not only communicate sonically through their steps, but also through silent, non-verbal exchanges, primarily eye contact and body language. When communicating through eye contact or body language, a dancer can “tell” another dancer to slow down, change the mudanza, turn in place, or exchange places on the tarima. If communicated effectively, the dancers appear connected and in sync with each other, positively impacting the fandango circle. The two dancers will sway together and bounce on the tarima, ultimately
contributing to the groove among all performers. This silent communication is yet another layer to the socially dense exchanges occurring simultaneously throughout the course of a fandango.

In order to communicate with the other dancer, one must recognize the other’s skill level or ability on the tarima. Although one dancer can execute more complicated steps even if her partner is a beginner, this may not result in the best and most effective outcome. For example, if one dancer is an expert but ignores her partner and does not try to communicate and adapt to the other’s skill level—essentially leaving the other behind—their dance will be disjointed and out of step. Then, their dance will probably not positively impact the fandango. Claudia also explains that she tries to recognize these aspects when dancing on the tarima. “If it’s someone who doesn’t know, or someone I don’t know very well. That’s when my role comes in as ‘I’m going to teach you… On the tarima, it depends on who I’m dancing with. I want to share my steps with someone” (interview, August 17, 2016). Claudia’s remarks are similar to what others say about zapateado, and they reveal an attitude of convivencia, further demonstrating how fandango participants coexist both musically and socially to share the music making process. For Claudia or another advanced dancer to “show up” their less-experienced partner would inject an element of competition and negate the objective of sharing the musical experience. Although there is a practice of friendly competition in Veracruz, it will be more difficult to enter the center of the fandango circle there to dance as an outsider or “new” dancer than in U.S. fandangos. There is also a friendly competitive atmosphere among more advanced dancers in New York City. However, the leaders and teachers of the New York City community are very conscious of creating and maintaining an inclusive atmosphere. This way, the new son jarocho learners can have a chance to dance on the tarima with little to no experience.
No Male Gaze on the Tarima

Both types of dances in son jarocho require communication and interaction between the dancers, but another socially important dynamic is occurring between two women dancers in a son de montón. Unlike many partner dances from Latin America, zapateado does not have the same gender configurations of the “male lead and female follow” model. Even in the sones de pareja, the male dancer does not “lead” in the sense that his female partner must mirror his lead, letting him control the movement. In both partner and women’s dances, women can respond through a “rhythmic intention” that completes the sound and engages with the whole fandango—not merely following the male lead. Martha González mentions that zapateado in the fandango is unique in that it does not exist for the “male gaze” like many other musical forms in Mexico’s “nation-state canon” (2011:64). González refers to the feminist theory that comes out of film studies, in which scholars have analyzed how women characters exist for specific voyeuristic purposes in male-directed film. In her use of this theory, González distinguishes the commercial son jarocho of the mid-twentieth century that was produced for Mexican film and stage entertainment from the non-commercial fandango. This analysis of the fandango zapateado can also be reinforced by notions of participation and convivencia. The action on the tarima does not serve as a spectacle or for the pleasure of another’s gaze, but for musical and mutually beneficial social experiences of the entire group participating in the fandango. In New York City, I can see where González’s observation holds true, but the woman-centered understanding of the dance is certainly a reinvention from the rural courtship practices. Of course, gender hierarchies

77 In contrast to the reinvented position of zapateado in the fandango, the historical legacy of courtship practices in fandangos involved a “male gaze.” However, this male gaze is not within a commercial production of son jarocho, but a rural agrarian society’s courtship traditions. Again, this zapateado is a contemporary adaptation of a courtship practice that most likely included young dancers of marriageable age.
and differences still exist within son jarocho broadly, and in the fandango; these are cultural forms that do not exist in a vacuum. Yet, when participants organize and hold a fandango, there is a place for women to participate, an important place that is not exclusively dominated or directed by men. And ultimately, besides the sound from the dance, the communication between two female dancers is about their moment and their contribution to the fandango—they are indispensable percussionists, groove makers, and revelers in the music making.

In addition to this important gender relation within fandango zapateado, the dance is attractive to women for other reasons. Zapateado is not a professionalized dance the way flamenco has become professionalized or competitive salsa. For both flamenco and competitive salsa, dancers must commit themselves to serious studio practice. For many amateur dancers, this time commitment is impractical for their busy lives and economically inaccessible. In New York City, practically anyone can access zapateado lessons because they are either free at a fandango or low-cost in a community workshop ($10-15). In contrast, salsa clubs typically have a cover charge and a strict dress code. Physically, with exceptions that relate to persons with dis/abilities, any gender or body type can dance: children and elders, men and women, tall and short, plus-sized and petite. The dance in its contemporary reinvented form is also technically accessible. Like most elements of son jarocho, it is relatively simple in its basic design and easy for a novice to begin dancing. These qualities of the dance allow for more accessibility and inclusion, facilitating participation. Through this inclusivity, many dancers feel empowered, whereas in other dance forms they may not be even able to begin practice. Second, dances of zapateado are not only dancers interpreting the music in motion; they are percussionists that accompany the other instruments of the group. The musical quality of the dance gives dancers another sense of empowerment precisely because they know their dance affects the fandango circle.
The Dwindling of the Fandango and Zapateado during the Development of Commercial Son Jarocho

Contrary to the historical and contemporary importance of zapateado in the fandango for both men and women, the commercial conjuntos jarochos in the twentieth century took on a different character. The commercial groups of son jarocho in the 1940s-60s were all-male string ensembles that did not include percussion, let alone zapateado. In the recordings of this period, zapateado simply did not exist. There were some visual representations of female dancers in son jarocho film, but they were in image only, usually off to the side and not sonically contributing to the musical performance. This peculiar difference—in light of the profound importance of the dance and women’s roles in the fandango—represents some of the ways Mexican mass media shaped stereotypes and the dissemination of popular music in the early twentieth century.

Figueroa Hernández notes that during this time, rural jarocho musicians migrated to the urban and cultural center, Mexico City to form what is called “son blanco, son urbano, son comercial, etc. (white son, urban son, commercial son)” (2007:87). In this period of mass media codification, as Figueroa Hernández argues, “The problem was that the entertainment industry did not permit son jarocho to continue transforming itself, but again and again asked the groups that were successful, to keep repeating themselves, if at all, with variations in lyrics, but not in the music nor in the instrumentation” (88). The commercialization of son jarocho during this period is emblematic of the ways genres become consolidated and standardized across the musical spectrum through mass media.

For this reason, the mid-century recordings of son jarocho have arrangements that are strikingly homogeneous. Granted, this early period of recording technology and techniques
contributes to the homogeneity of son jarocho recordings. However, the musical and instrumental arrangements are standardized: harp, requinto, jarana, and voice. The aesthetic goals of the conjunto jarocho recordings of the 1940s-1960s are different from the goals of a fandango jarocho. The conjuntos and their recordings also accompany folklórico staged dancing as either live or pre-recorded sound, eliminating the need for zapateado in the recording. It makes sense that a studio recording cannot capture the ephemeral qualities of a fandango: the build-up of rhythmic and social tension among participants, the un-sounded movements and steps of a dancer, and other un-recordable elements. These differences are so great that some “purists” may distinguish these forms as “son jarocho” and “fandango.” But not all are concerned with making this distinction.

It is understandable and reasonable that zapateado is not as valued and privileged in concert settings because the musical goals are different from the fandango’s musical and social goals. The fandango is participatory with goals of social bonding, inclusion, and attaining a “groove” with other participants. A concert has different and nonetheless, valuable goals. The concert often features virtuosity on the requinto, violin, or harp. The concert can present thoughtfully selected verses that illustrate the poetic depth and perhaps a thematic arrangement of lyrical content. These are valuable and important aspects of the son jarocho tradition that may be secondary in a fandango when less-skilled musicians participate with limited knowledge of verses. Yet, this does not explain why zapateado cannot be presented as a virtuosic feature of the music. The scope of this dissertation cannot answer why zapateado was excluded from the commercial son jarocho of the mid-twentieth century, but some research questions to consider would include: Were there limitations in recording technology or technique that contributed to the exclusion of zapateado in 1940s-60s commercial recordings of son jarocho? Or, was there a
lack of professionalization of zapateado and therefore limited access to commercial recording
studios at the time? And, was this lack of professionalization and commercial access gendered?
Further, how do all-male ensembles fit into the development of Mexican mass media and nation-
state narratives?

In an interview, Julia discussed this tension between revived fandango and commercial
son jarocho from the 1940s-1960s. The stage presentations of son jarocho do not necessarily give
the same importance to zapateado as the fandango. Julia acknowledges how this has carried over
in contemporary commercial recordings and concert performances. Even today, in the recording
studio, no one seems to know just how to record the tarima. In her experience, it is recorded last
and with less attention to the sound. And for some groups today, the dance is still misunderstood.
Julia explains, “If you go by the fandango, I mean a fandango without dancers is like… it’s cool
of course” (interview July 29, 2016). She continues saying that musicians “will tell you that it’s
more fun when there are dancers. They say the tarima es el corazón del fandango [the tarima is
the heart of the fandango], right? It’s a little bit of a tension because, yeah you’re so important in
the fandango but you’re performing and they’re like ‘oh, just do your thing.’” When Julia said,
“do your thing,” and explained this scenario of musicians in performances, she waived her hands
as in a dismissive way. The indifference that Julia has experienced points to gaps in the
professionalization of zapateado recordings, gendered perceptions of dance, and the ways
zapateado is currently undergoing a process of reinvention, especially in commercial spheres.

Also, what Julia described may be an indifferent attitude toward dance, which adheres to
the mind/body distinctions that Hutchinson examines (2010). Musicians that do not have a
relationship with dance often separate musicians from dancers in a hierarchy of knowledge.
Dancers are seen as not having adequate or much musical knowledge and are “extra” to the
music. This separation of music/dance is further embedded in the male/female divide that Hutchinson also describes. From a U.S. perspective, Hutchinson notes (2009b) that “dancing cultures” from Latin America are seen as feminized in the U.S. And from that same U.S. perspective, dance is often used for visual purposes as Julia describes.

One argument that disrupts some of what Hutchinson argues is that during the modernization period in post-Revolutionary Mexico, the Ballet Folklórico de México took on the consolidation and standardization of dance while the commercial recording industry standardized the conjunto jarocho format. Prior to the artistic divisions of dance and music in distinct industries, Mexican society displayed these gendered divisions between “musician” and “dancer.” It was not until the contemporary era that more women began playing instruments and singing verses in public fandangos.

Julia continues to discuss the tension between son jarocho in the fandango and the recorded and stage presentations of the genre. She explains, “there’s obviously a place for women in this music that’s more than me being the cute dancer on the tarima doing your thing. You have to sort of… reclaim that place that women used to occupy in the 19th… or early on before son jarocho went a little… I don’t want to say died, or died down, but sort of dwindled” (interview July 29, 2016). She explicitly points out that the dance is not a frivolous addition to the music that is just for spectacle. From her perspective, the 1940s-60s commercial recording industry and field of stage concerts have contributed to the further dwindling of son jarocho. In this post-movimiento jaranero (1979-present) contemporary moment, Julia sees an opportunity to “reclaim” a space for the tarima and zapateado in performance, where they have been absent in most of the twentieth century, commercial son jarocho.
With the advent of the movimiento jaranero, women, their roles in son jarocho, and zapateado have been (re)integrated into commercial performance and studio recordings. Yet, women are still a minority in terms of professionalization in the commercial performance sphere of son jarocho generally. However, there are some strong female figures with their progressive, male band mates that have (re)inserted tarima and zapateado into commercial son jarocho, trying to bring about more of the fandango aesthetic in their recordings. During the third phase of the movimiento jaranero (1993-2000), some of the groups began to use zapateado in their recordings, including Chuchumbé, Son de Madera, Grupo Mono Blanco, and Los Utrera. A few of the women who have developed son jarocho in recording and concert formats are the same women who have impacted the musical formation of New Yorker jaraneras. Those influential women include Laura Rebolloso (of Son de Madera and Laura Rebolloso y Ensamble Marinero) and Rubí Oseguera (of Chuchumbé and Son de Madera). As an example, zapateado is featured on the following recordings that can be described as “movimiento jaranero-inspired.” For a more detailed list, see the Appendix at the end of this dissertation.

- Son de Madera, *Son de Madera* (1997), “Olas del mar”

As the *movimiento jaranero* has developed and more musicians have disseminated son jarocho to international sites, more women have become active in fandangos as well as stage performance and recording of the music, perhaps because son jarocho communities have emerged in urban places among educated populations. In New York, many women of the community are from cosmopolitan and educated backgrounds and have social support from the community, which is also largely cosmopolitan and educated in its makeup. This is compounded by New York City, one of the more progressive cities in the U.S. in terms of its public policies.
for women, people of color, LGBTQ communities, and undocumented immigrants. The women in the jaranero community come from a place that supports them, so for them, participating in music is a non-issue. There are no societal or cultural (let alone, legal) barriers to the integration of women in public and commercial performance. Though women are still under-represented in commercial and professional music, New York City’s Mexican music scene has many women that perform in a variety of genres, including an all-women mariachi, Flor de Toloache, a highly successful group that has two Latin Grammy nominations and a Grammy for best Ranchera album in 2017.

In the social and cultural context of New York City, women musicians are composing, performing, and innovating across genres and music scenes. The jaraneros in New York are “reclaiming” the tarima for stage performance. Many feel a strong sense of agency and power from their participation in fandango zapateado, and they are translating the fandango zapateado into stage performance. In this sense, they are reclaiming a space traditionally for women in the fandango, while carving out new spaces for zapateado in commercial performance and in the recording studio.

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78 For example, New York is currently one of the few states that has not enacted any regulatory restrictions on women’s health services and is one of the leading states for marriage equality and most recently, trans rights within the contemporary public restroom debate (Dawsey 2016). Additionally, New York state and the City of New York are so-called “sanctuaries” for undocumented people (Robbins 2017). All of these qualities support an atmosphere that enhances women’s and other marginalized groups’ visibility and importance in society.

79 Their first album Flor de Toloache (2015) was nominated for Best Ranchera album in 2015 and their recent album Caras Lindas (2017) won Best Ranchera album at the 2017 Latin Grammys. Flor de Toloache became the first all-women group to win the category.

http://mariachinyc.com/albums
From Choreography to Improvisation: Integration of Zapateado in New York

Many of the zapateado dancers in the jaranero community and those who perform the dance professionally share a common theme in their dance formation: Ballet Folklórico. In her work on zapateado in the fandango Martha González discusses her transition from folklórico to fandango in her formation and development of her “home base.” She shares personal stories of how she learned to improvise and conceptualize the dance. Similar to many of the dancers in the New York City community, González first learned Mexican dance through a Ballet Folklórico curriculum that was taught to her in California public schools. The dancers in the New York City community have also learned Mexican dance primarily through Ballet Folklórico, but as adults. Some of the women in the son jarocho community were dancers in the Ballet Folklórico Mexicano de Nueva York or Calpulli Mexican Dance Company (another Folklórico-like dance company in New York City). Whether from BFMNY or Calpulli, the dancers of the son jarocho community frequently refer to the folklórico style of dance as less engaging. Though they have a specific purpose, these dance companies teach dance through choreography, which contrasts greatly with the fandango-centered teaching in the son jarocho community. González points out that she was both intimidated and confused by the improvisatory style of fandango zapateado at first. She writes, “It was not so much the technical aspects of the dance that were difficult for me to nail, but rather the cadencia or cadence (‘swing’ or ‘groove’) of it” (2009:367). The “groove” that González and others had to take time to understand is not just the polyrhythms and the rhythmic density of son jarocho, but also the interaction between players in the fandango. She continues, “Improvisation is essential in all aspects of this musical-dance form. After observing zapateado in its natural environment on and off for about two years, I was

80 http://calpullidance.org/
finally able to begin to feel comfortable enough to join some of the señorases en la tarima.” In chapter 2, Paula (organizer for the community) describes her experience in similar terms, by referencing how she had to internalize the idea of improvisation rather than set steps (see page 58).

Interestingly, some dancers in New York eventually grew tired of Ballet Folklórico’s standardized choreography and sought out a more engaging dance experience, where they could have space to learn more. The jaranero community of New York attracts and fosters educated people that seek to continue their personal education through musical practice. In some ways, the engaged community member always seeks to expand his/her “home base” for musical expression. Many came to zapateado fandanguero and found the musical depth they were looking for. Paula commented on the process of learning in zapateado and in the fandango generally, “We can always learn as adults. There is no room for ‘I can’t’ in son jarocho. We are a community of people that are learner-musicians. By working together, we make something unrepeatable. From this community, I have met so many people who have become mentors and friends that have inspired me to learn more and improve” (interview June 9, 2016). Similarly, Claudia was also searching for a musical experience and community that emphasized growth and learning, rather than only execution of prescribed steps. She explained her relationship with Calpulli Mexican Dance Company and how she eventually left the company in search of a different musical learning environment:

I was very much in ‘why?’ Where does this dance come from? Who in this dance company can point out Yucatán on the map? We were dancing all these regions, but what about them? Ok, the costume is pretty and the music is nice, but what about that? What does all that mean? And they didn’t seem to be very interested in all that. (interview August, 17, 2016)
After leaving Calpulli, Claudia was asked by Sinuhé Padilla Isunza to work with Jarana Beat in their upcoming CD release and performance in 2011. Sinuhé was looking for dancers that could sing and play jarana or guitar. She says that she enthusiastically joined the project because she knew that Sinuhé and Jarana Beat were a group that were concerned with understanding roots of music, history, and cultural connections. It was at the CD release party for ¡Echapalante! (Jarana Beat, Jarana Beat Records 2011) that Claudia experienced her first fandango. She explained:

And I guess my first fandango was after the CD release. We had a fandango after the concert and that’s where many more questions started coming up in my head. And right after that, it was February of 2011, and I started doing research. I needed to know more about this. I had to know where it was coming from and I found Luna Negra the son jarocho “camp,” so to speak, in Jáltipan, Veracruz. (interview August, 17, 2016)

Reclaiming the Tarima for Performance

The two prominent son jarocho groups in New York City that have featured zapateado are Radio Jarocho and (formerly) Jarana Beat. The other significant professional group in New York City that performs son jarocho is the Villalobos Brothers, who do not have zapateado in their performance arrangements.81 The leadership of Jarana Beat and Radio Jarocho makes these groups embrace zapateado in both their stage performances and recordings. Both groups comprise multi-instrumentalists, vocalists, and dancers, and their band members often participate in the monthly fandangos in the community, creating a continuity between their stage performances and participatory music making. As explained before, musicians performing stage presentations or recording son jarocho have different aesthetic goals and cannot exactly replicate a fandango in these formats. Thus, the objectives for stage presentations and recordings are not

81 The Villalobos brothers perform son jarocho with three violins, guitar, bass, and drum kit. Their style of performance blends son jarocho with other Mexican folk, jazz, and classical music (Villalobos website in the “About” section: http://villalobosbrothers.com/about/).
participatory, and performances will have a predetermined arrangement that shapes the delivery of the performance. However, a preset arrangement and musical score do not preclude the incorporation of fandango-derived musical elements like zapateado. Moreover, concert performances and recordings of son jarocho in New York City are inspired by movimiento jaranero, following one of the principal actions outlined by Ávila Landa and reviewed in chapter 2 (2009:67).

**Jarana Beat**

Jarana Beat (recently disbanded in 2017) was a band that performed a fusion of different Mexican *son* traditions (jarocho, huasteco, and guerrerense), popular Mexican genres like *norteña* and *cumbia*, and a mixture of other Latin American sounds, including Caribbean percussion. The ensemble was large, with ten regular members and some guest collaborators. Jarana Beat performed within the Spanish-language and world music venues in New York City. Some of their regular performance venues included Terraza 7 (Latin American music bar in Elmhurst, Queens), Subrosa (the Latin jazz extension of the Blue Note in the West Village, Manhattan), and Barbès (world music bar in Park Slope, Brooklyn). The group also played in educational and non-profit spaces like Teatro SEA (Society for Educational Arts on the Lower East Side) and New York City museums and public schools, and toured outside of New York, mostly recently traveling to Mexico in 2016.

List of former band members of Jarana Beat:

1. Sinuhé Padilla Isunza (musical director, composer, producer, lead vocals, leona)
2. Juan Lucero (requinto, jarana, vocals)
3. Claudia Valentina (vocals, zapateado, jarana)
4. Felipe Fournier (vibraphone, percussion)
5. Lautaro Burgos (drum kit, percussion)
6. George Sáenz (trombone, accordion, vocals)
7. Hugo Moreno (trumpet, flugelhorn, jarana, vocals)
8. Argelia Arreola (zapateado, percussion)
9. Noemi Gasparini (violin, background vocals)
10. Guillermo Barron (percussion)\(^2\)

The founder and artistic director of Jarana Beat was Sinuhé Padilla, who comes from an educated and artistic family of musicians, choreographers, and film makers. He studied dance and music in high school and in the conservatory in Toluca, Mexico before leaving to better learn what he describes as “the roots” of Mexican music (interview April 16, 2014). He became disenchanted with his conservatory training because it lacked any curriculum that taught folk or popular music of Mexico. Like most music conservatories, it only taught classical music with some attention to jazz and maybe Piazzolla’s tango, which were considered “popular.” In the interview with Laura Rebollos, also classically trained in guitar, she said that she too disliked the glaring absence and exclusion of popular traditions in Mexico’s conservatories (interview March 13, 2016). From discussions with Leopoldo Novoa (marimbol instructor, member of Tembembé) as well, I have learned that it is a common trend for movimiento jaranero participants to have come from classical or conservatory-trained backgrounds and to have left that classical world for a dedicated career in disseminating son jarocho. Their backgrounds in musical education contribute to their embrace of new learning experiences and teaching of son jarocho, which ultimately further facilitates the continued work of the movimiento jaranero.

Moreover, Sinuhé embraced his knowledge and background in dance to incorporate zapateado in his compositions for Jarana Beat. Claudia and another dancer Argelia became dancers and percussionists for the group. They typically performed on individual-sized tarimas at every Jarana Beat performance. Argelia has a background in West African dance which has

\(^2\) The band list is organized according to the order provided by the Jarana Beat official webpage: http://jaranabeat.com/portfolio-category/the-jarana-beat-gang/
allowed her to transition to son jarocho, rhythmically speaking. In addition to folklórico dance, Claudia has training in ballet, jazz, and tap dance, giving her the tools to quickly become a zapateado dancer.

In a Jarana Beat performance, many songs featured zapateado percussion and often the dancers enacted movements that imitate lyrics. Though not an original composition, Jarana Beat performed the *son* “El camotal” (The sweet potato field). In this performance, both Argelia and Claudia sang the chorus “*saca camote con el pie*” (take the sweet potato out with the foot) while miming the action of digging out a root vegetable from the ground with their feet. Here, the dancers were not executing a sounded rhythm but a movement in time and significant to the lyrical meaning of the song. Further, the extra-musical movement heightened both theatricality and musical efficacy. As the movement illustrated the words, the audience (in New York who may not know Spanish) had a better sense of the rhythm and groove from seeing the dancing bodies. Regardless of the specific effect that the dance had upon the audience, the dance enhanced the performance in some way.

From an unreleased album, Jarana Beat composed a song called “Diablos” (Devils), which featured prominent polyrhythms with zapateado and the quijada. The instrumental arrangement, verses, and dance were interpreted from contemporary practices from southern Mexico’s populations of African descent. The song has verses that describe the *Danza de los diablos* (Dance of the Devils), a processional dance practice that is performed in the southern states of Guerrero and Oaxaca (containing part of the Sotavento region and bordering Veracruz). In this practice, men dress in “diablo” costumes, wearing masks with horns, resembling a devil-like animal figure, and they form multiple lines and move, swinging their arms to each side as they slide their feet in the procession. The danza de los diablos happens over the Catholic All
Saints’ Day and Dia de Muertos festivals (November 1-2), as part of the commemoration and honoring of the deceased. Similar to the Guerrerense and Oaxacan dance, the dancers of Jarana Beat moved their arms and body as they incorporated zapateado percussion into their performance. Both Claudia and Argelia were on small, individual-sized tarimas, leaning forward from the waist. As they stomp the rhythm, they dramatically swung their arms from side-to-side, as if they were in the procession too.

The performance began with quijadas, playing a fast 6/8 rhythm. The rest of the percussion entered with zapateado. Rhythmically, the zapateado was similar to the rhythm that dancers in Guerrero execute, not on tarimas, but on the ground, usually wearing flat shoes, such as sandals. However, in the zapateado on stage, Claudia and Argelia executed the swaying rhythm for three measures of 6/8. In the fourth measure, they struck the tarima four times, to accelerate the motion back to the beginning of the four-measure rhythmic cycle.

![Figure 28 Partial percussion section featuring quijadas and zapateado for “Diablos” performed by Jarana Beat.](image)

After about half a minute of the percussionists of the group playing the rhythmic cycle, Sinuhé played a short harmonica solo and then began to sing the verses. Sinuhé sang the copla of the verse and the ensemble responded, repeating the copla back. Each sung verse follows the antiphonal structure that is familiar to son jarocho.
Verses and translation:

*Llegaron los diablos*  The devils arrived  
*De África primero*  From Africa first  
*En México vivimos*  In Mexico we live  
*En Oaxaca y Guerrero*  In Oaxaca and Guerrero

*Llegaron los diablos*  The devils arrived  
*Que burlaron a la migra*  That outwitted the immigration police  
*Y llegaron tocando*  And they arrived playing  
*Con la charrasca y la tigra*  With the charrasca and the tigra (a scraped instrument and drum from Guerrero and Oaxaca)

*Llegaron los diablos*  The devils arrived  
*Chancleando hasta aquí*  Swaying here  
*Y vamos comenzando*  And we’re starting  
*Los de Jarana Beat*  Those of Jarana Beat

The verses reference the “diablos” (or the procession dancers), the Afro-descendent heritage of the south of Mexico, and the movements of the dancing diablos that one would see at a Día de Muertos festival in Oaxaca or Guerrero. Specifically, Sinuhé used a Mexican colloquialism *chancleando* (waddling or swaying) from the verb *chancelar*, which comes from the Mexican word *chancla* that translates to a slipper or flip-flop sandal. The colloquialism refers to the way people sway or waddle in chanclas, and specifically, the way the dance of the diablos looks as though all the dancers are swaying back and forth. The performance of “Diablos” was illustrative
of the ways Jarana Beat incorporated dance, zapateado percussion, and many Mexican cultural symbols and references that highlight the ethnic and cultural diversity of Mexico.

Jarana Beat was a group that was open to fusion and experimentation, giving its dancers space for their own personal expression. Whether dancing in a fandango or in a staged performance with Jarana Beat, Claudia was always trying to unlock rhythms by listening with her feet. After learning zapateado from several accomplished Mexican dancer-musicians that are considered important participants in the movimiento jaranero, Claudia started to “unlock” her performance style to become a fandango bailadora. She explained how she has been unlocking her creativity through zapateado performance:

When it’s me in a performance, then I just, especially within the past few months… with Laura (Rebollosos)… that’s when I start getting lost. I start losing that sense of self and I listen to the requinto and I’m listening to the leona and whatever instruments are playing and I start finding conversations with them. That’s… I guess it’s similar between fandango and performance. In performance I experiment more (interview, August 17, 2016).

The typical stage presentation of Jarana Beat placed Claudia to the left or right stage, on a small tarima. She played jarana, sang, and danced as part of the rhythm section of the band. Her role as a bailadora was to bring a piece of the fandango on to a stage setting. Obviously, the participatory engagement of a fandango could not be fully realized on stage, but subtler improvisatory ornaments within Claudia’s steps produced a distinct sound for Jarana Beat. The inclusion of women was not only a reflection of Sinuhé’s fandango-centered approach as musical director of the group, but also the greater culture of fandango inclusivity. Audiences might have seen Claudia and Argelia as the “pretty girls” on the tarima, but they soon saw that they were active members of the band playing instruments and singing and not just visual adornments.
Radio Jarocho

Radio Jarocho should be credited as one of, if not the, first groups to regularly play son jarocho in New York City. The original formation of the group was in the early 2000s with Gabriel Guzman and Juan Carlos Marín before Julia del Palacio came to New York City in 2005. Over time, Gabriel left the group and returned to Mexico, and Julia grew into the leadership position of the group. The current formation of Radio Jarocho, in addition to Julia, is Juan Carlos Marín (requinto), Carlos Cuestas (leona), Víctor Murillo (contrabass), and—serving as an “artist in residence” for most of 2016 and into 2017—Zenen Zeferino (jarana, vocals from Chuchumbé).

Like Jarana Beat, Radio Jarocho has female leadership and performance centered in their group presentations and recordings. Julia was not a founding member of the group, but as the band evolved, she became the central figure and leader of the group. In stage performances, she is always center stage with her bandmates to her sides. She sings, but she is principally the percussionist of the group. Julia also rejects the tired notion that women in musical groups are the “pretty girls.” She describes her perspective on son jarocho and women in performance: “I think that there have been changes regarding… the dancer is not only anymore a beautiful thing to look at but is there to contribute to the music. But also to provide a strong presence not just a pretty thing, but an important part of the culture.” Julia is very conscious of the ways audiences perceive women in music. Yet, she is not concerned with judgmental perceptions that tend to place women in limited roles, such as “the sexy girl” or “too forceful to be feminine.” She explains, “To me, very personally, I feel very comfortable with expressing a femininity and conveying traditionally feminine movements and movements that can be qualified as ‘sexy’ or whatever” (interview July, 29, 2016).
In performances, Julia tries to bring in new expressive movements on top of the rhythmic steps of zapateado. She is aware that these expressive arm and hip movements are not part of the traditional zapateado in rural Veracruz or at fandangos. She explains that in Veracruz, dancers only move their feet with very little upper body movement, with the exception of pantomime movements. She states, “Here in New York, I feel like it’s not only more open because we’re not in Veracruz and no one is saying ‘oh, that shouldn’t be like that.’ That happens quite a bit. In other parts of the U.S. as well… California is like the police of son jarocho. Like Chicago a little bit” (interview July, 29, 2016). In New York, she does not have to be concerned with that conflict. She wants to evolve and always improve her stage performance. Being in New York City facilitates a developing hybrid of zapateado with other dances. Having trained in flamenco, Julia uses techniques she learned as a source for expressive movements. Also, the prominent Caribbean dance and music in New York are important sources for inspiration and creativity for Julia—and other dancers as well:

It’s [New York City is] more open. But it’s not only that… there’s more demand for more… you have to step up your game. Here in New York City with how much dancing there is and how much… I don’t want to say competition because I’m not talking about it in competitive terms. You see incredible music constantly being played and incredible dancing all the time. And in a way, although obviously son jarocho has a very big value in terms of like just staying the way it is, it’s already beautiful to me. I don’t think it needs to change by any means, the dancing. But at this point, and performing in New York City and performing in other parts of the U.S. I want to do more. My hands want to move and my upper body wants to move.

In a performance at the Greenwich House Music School on April 6, 2017, Julia displayed some of the new expressive movements that she has incorporated into her dance practice. While Zenen Zeferino (jarana, vocals) sang verses from the son “El cascabel” (The bell) at a very slow tempo, without jarana but with a slow meandering requinto and sparse percussion, Julia lightly brushed the tarima with her feet and, turning circles with her body, swirled her arms around the
space above her head. Drawing circles around her head and torso, Julia incorporated flamenco flower gestures with her hands and other expressive movements on the tarima. Her hips swayed from side to side, and very gently she tapped short bursts of zapateado steps as a percussionist might do with rattles or a shaker to create ambient noise. The result of this arrangement transformed “El cascabel” from the typical fast-paced and energetic son into a piece that seemed contemplative and dreamy. The sparse percussion from Julia’s steps on the tarima also brought zapateado into abstraction, disconnecting it from the its usual standard rhythmic phrases like “café con pan,” which is the traditional rhythmic foundation for the son “El cascabel.”

Conclusion

Zapateado is a dynamic dance that New Yorkers are adapting to their musical practice. The dance has obvious importance in the fandango and it serves as one of the focal points on which the community can build their practice together. Through missteps and error, especially with a musical form that is performed with the feet, the community members work to improve their dance and their rhythmic foundations. No one is immune from feeling the discomfort of their first awkward steps on a tarima. However, throughout the son jarocho community, there is a deep appreciation for zapateado and an expectation to experience it in live performances and in recordings of son jarocho. This expectation is certainly related to the work of the movimiento jaranero that rescued the fandango tradition and all of its musical parts.

For zapateado, the amalgamation of cultural flows includes sources from multiple historical periods and through different media that filter the cultural transmission of the dance. In New York City, many dancers have learned zapateado from cultural brokers and educators, inspired by the movimiento jaranero. The movimiento jaranero itself is codifying and reinventing
certain aspects of the son jarocho music, dance, and poetic tradition for cultural transmission. Specifically, it is unclear how zapateado was affected by the revival other than that the dance is more privileged in more places than just the fandango—namely professional musicians are more often using zapateado in commercial performance and recordings. However, the movimiento jaranero potentially has other sources for the dissemination and codification of zapateado. Flamenco precedes zapateado in terms of international circulation, as well as West African dance. These two “cultural dances” (McMains 2015) are taught in dance schools and studios at an international level. To what extent are these forms incorporated into a contemporary zapateado? The dancers in New York City are interested in and are taking flamenco lessons. Other dancers have training in West African dance. Some movimiento jaranero dancers, such as Rubí Oseguera also have flamenco training. Furthermore, how does the mid-century ballet folklórico choreography affect the revivalist interpretation of zapateado? Have any of these steps from BFM of BFMNY been incorporated into the zapateado practices in New York City (or elsewhere for that matter)? All of these questions point to the contradictions of a musical revival, where participants claim to be deliberately reviving a dance or music, but in reality, the dance or music become hybridized through conscious and unconscious changing the character of dance movements.
Chapter 5: Conclusion

Since the late 1970s, the participatory elements of son jarocho have been revitalized and reinvented not only for the preservation of the fandango, but also for the purpose of creating a community-building tool that can be adapted and applied to create musical communities. The New York City jaranero community demonstrates a number of revivalist qualities that Livingston identifies, such as being a middle-class phenomenon and educationally focused (1999). In particular, the community comprises mostly well-educated and cosmopolitan Mexican immigrants, with some individuals who are self-consciously continuing movimiento jaranero-style son jarocho pedagogy and fandango practices. Although there is some involvement in the community by working-class Mexican immigrants, the majority are middle-class individuals. The middle-class character of the community reveals the inherent social and structural limits to the inclusivity of this community. Aside from the community’s weekly workshops, both professional and amateur groups do educational outreach performances to teach and disseminate son jarocho and Mexican culture in public schools.

The jaranero community contrasts with many other Mexican music scenes in New York City, namely the commercial circuit of norteña, banda, and sonidero-type events that draw audiences of mostly working-class men. Cathy Ragland points out that, at these working-class immigrant concerts and events, audiences create musical spaces for nostalgic reminders of home (2003). The mariachi and ballet folklórico events in New York are similarly community-focused, but only present music and culture from the Mexican state’s traditional canon and arts repertoire. In contrast to the mariachi and BFMNY musical events that have direct state sponsorship through the Mexican consulate, the son jarocho community does not have state sponsorship: instead, it is a self-organizing and self-sustaining project. Perhaps the Puerto Rican bomba
community in New York City shares the most commonalities with the jaranero community, in that both are educationally focused and centered on participatory community music making. However, in contrast to bomberos in Puerto Rico who risked arrest or physical danger for performing a “black” music in the twentieth century, performers of son jarocho in Mexico never experienced this type of extreme marginalization for playing their music. In the last century, son jarocho was valued by the Mexican state for its mestizo qualities, unlike bomba, which was denigrated and, in some cases, banned for being an Afro-centric music in Puerto Rico (Barton 2004:77). Thus, the revival project for son jarocho was never to bring something from the margins of society, but to reframe fandango aesthetics within mainstream society while expanding discourse around Afro-mestizo identity and history.

In Veracruz the fandango has become a social event that is central to community life in both rural and urban spaces. Cities like Tlacotalpan host regular town fandangos that are large and popular and are now a mainstay for the social and cultural life of residents. The rural communities outside of the cities of Tlacotalpan, San Andres Tuxlas, and Xalapa hold annual retreats and son jarocho camps, providing much needed income for these communities. These son jarocho camps and regular fandangos mirror other efforts to re-establish traditional music in contemporary Mexican life. In the Huasteca region, the town of Xilitla, San Luis Potosí has reinstated son huasteco and the huapango (son huasteco music party) into the town’s weekly life. As documented in a 2013 film by Roy Germano, every Sunday, the town holds a massive huapango, with a large wooden tarima upon which dozens of dancers stomp zapateado to the sounds of son huasteco.

The son jarocho community in New York City clearly exemplifies what ethnomusicologist Kay Kauffman Shelemay has identified as an “affinity group” (2011).
Shelemay generally describes the members of an affinity group as having similar musical tastes, which is indeed true for the son jarocho community. The affinity for son jarocho parallels what Mirjana Lausevic identifies in the Balkan music “village” in the U.S., with striking similarities in their use of the internet for community communication and musical exchange (2007). However, aside from obvious interests in son jarocho music, the community is connected by ideals around social interactions. The “interest” is political and emphasizes a preference for anti-consumerist models of music making. As Turino points out as well, participatory music making reproduces and enacts social values. The values of inclusion and collaboration reject a capitalist model for music making. Instead, members of the community have mentioned the ways making music with other people helps them feel less alienated and more included in something socially and artistically meaningful (interview March 3, 2015). In an interesting comparison, the Balkan music villages also valued an anti-consumerist model for music. Both the Balkan music “campers” and many son jarocho community members see themselves as actively seeking non-commodified music. Ironically, while son jarocho community members talk about anti-consumerist models of music, they actively attend concerts, buy son jarocho CDs, and contribute to the growing niche market of revivalist son jarocho.

When, in an interview, I ask Sinuhé what his main objective is in teaching son jarocho and the fandango in New York City, he stated, “It’s just that I think I’m part of a movement. Consciously and unconsciously” (interview March 22, 2015). He directly referred to the work of the movimiento jaranero that has inspired many musicians to disseminate and perform son jarocho and teach the fandango across Mexico and in the U.S. He is also “unconsciously” part of a movement to teach music to a community. In our conversation, Sinuhé clearly described how
his simple goal is to help build communities through music, and son jarocho and the fandango are tools to accomplish that goal.

Others in the community are not as self-aware in their participation in this transnational revival movement. Many have never explicitly identified the movimiento jaranero as the source of their son jarocho knowledge, nor have they indicated that they are aware of the revival’s relationship to the transnational character of the son jarocho and fandango practices that have been transplanted in New York City. In contrast to the acute awareness that Sinuhé demonstrates around his participation in the movimiento and the teaching of son jarocho, many people in the community see themselves as engaging with a new learning opportunity that is a cultural practice from Mexico. Others sees themselves as participants in an alternative form of music making vis-à-vis the normative, capitalist-consumer model that dominates most people’s experience of music in the U.S. They are music makers without having to become professionals, and the community experience of weekly lessons, monthly fandangos, and yearly encuentros reinforces the notions that individuals reproduce social relationships through musical interaction.

In some ways, this involvement with community-based music making is highly political, but not “political” in the sense that the participants all subscribe to the same political party or engage in explicit protest or direct action in public spaces. Instead, the political lies in the ways musical values are taught within the community and how individuals interact with each other inside and outside fandangos. For example, the organizers and teachers of the community are less inclined to dedicate their time to protest marches and more inclined to creating educational spaces for community members to learn music, history, and culture. Coming from a culture that is wary of the Mexican state’s power to detain, dispossess, or—worse—disappear an individual, Sinuhé sees political activism as something that must be performed carefully. Sinuhé also
remarks on political activism, saying, “Because I believe there is a way in which I can be subtler for a cause. I make songs, and my lyrics say it and raise awareness in other people. I do not have to go scream outside the palace, although I respect that. I believe that education is more powerful than protest… the obvious and apparent protest” (interview March 22, 2015). In our discussion, Sinuhé was directly referring to political action in Latin American countries like Mexico or Chile that have a history of state repression of leftist protest. However, there is less fear of state repression of free speech and protest in the United States, and because of this different political context, Sinuhé and others from the community frequently attend marches for immigration reform, attend rallies outside of the Mexican consulate, and perform at political fundraisers. For example, when I was performing with the amateur group Son Pecadores, we donated a performance for a benefit concert for the families of the disappeared 43 Ayotzinapa normalista (school teacher) students.

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83 It should be noted that while the community attends marches and rallies, they are not organizers of these political actions. Their organizing capacity is primarily musical and educational activities.

84 On September 26, 2014, during a protest and commemoration of the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre, the 43 students were arrested by Guerrero municipal police and handed over to a local crime syndicate, Guerreros Unidos, and killed (Goldman 2016).
The New York City community reveals the most important revitalization, or better reinvention, of son jarocho: pedagogical methods and educational practice. The music itself may have been rescued from possible disappearance as the rural communities in the Sotavento region were depleted of their musicians and practices, but the pedagogic methods that were thoroughly implemented to disseminate and maintain son jarocho and the fandango will have long-lasting and potentially profound effects inside and outside son jarocho communities across Mexico and the U.S. These effects are already apparent in the numerous academic conferences and seminars devoted to son jarocho. In April 2017, I presented some of my ethnographic findings regarding the aesthetic of convivencia and its relationship to teaching zapateado in a conference. The co-presenter in my panel also presented a paper examining the ways convivencia could be integrated into academic institutions and a model for collaborative work in the university. In Michelle Habell-Pallán’s presentation, she asked questions about how convivencia could inform academic practices. She writes in her conference paper abstract:

Learning to practice fandango compelled me to experience the complexities of convivencia within an institutional setting. I came to the practice as a space of healing, with no intention to write my experiences. Yet my involvement has informed my own scholarly work to collectively transform knowledge production. I am now compelled to reflect upon what [sic] the ethics and responsibilities of senior scholars who have established themselves in fields other than those that include fandango practices that deliberately utilize son jarocho as an organizing tool. (Habell-Pallán 2017)85

In my view, convivencia asks for instructors and community organizers to be actively inclusive and collaborative with knowledge production and resources. How does a convivencia-modeled classroom look? What are the pedagogic methods that could put these ideals into practice? Does

a convivencia classroom emphasize student-centered pedagogy? Perhaps, through a student-centered approach in the classroom, every student will have a stake in the curriculum and each student can meet the course content on his or her own terms, making the curriculum concrete and no longer an abstract idea from academia. Likewise, convivencia informs the musician to share musical knowledge with others and invite collaboration to build a mutually benefitting relationship.

The relationship between convivencia and its potential for new research and pedagogic models in academia can be productive for a diversity-driven and inclusive twenty-first-century classroom: a model that allows students from different socio-economic backgrounds and racial identities to incorporate their knowledge sets and experiences into their curriculum in meaningful and purposeful ways.

Broadly, the New York City son jarocho community upholds certain findings on participatory music and “affinity groups,” as well as common models of revivalist groups. However, the reinvented aesthetic of convivencia and privileging of participation in the community are both extensions of the movimiento jaranero and new sets of practices that are suited for the needs, interests, and character of the New York City community. It is the community’s emphasis on participation that makes this affinity group distinctive.

Recent dance scholarship (McMains 2015) examines how historical threads of salsa and multiple generational layers of dance practice have created the complex of “diverse movement practices” of the genre. Similarly, the New York City jaraneros perform zapateado and the son jarocho tradition, carrying within them a complex of relations to other dances, music traditions, and commercial innovations. Future research is needed to untangle some of these threads within the zapateado and son jarocho complex. How are other zapateado and son traditions in Mexico
connected to contemporary son jarocho performance? How have other world dances, namely flamenco and West African dance, been absorbed into both zapateado performance and pedagogy? I see these as some of the most salient questions for future and continued research in son jarocho, as well as the potential application of reinvented son jarocho pedagogy in university classrooms.
Appendix

Table of some examples of artists from the third phase of the *movimiento jaranero* that began to incorporate zapateado in recordings of son jarocho.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Artist/Group</th>
<th>Album</th>
<th>Tracks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Son de Madera</td>
<td><em>Son de Madera</em></td>
<td>“Las olas del mar”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1997)</td>
<td>“La morena”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Orquestas del Día</em></td>
<td>“Los juiles”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“La fantasia de Santiago”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orquestas del Día</td>
<td></td>
<td>“El cascabel”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orquestas del Día</td>
<td></td>
<td>“La bamba”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Tuza”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Café con pan”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Aguanieve”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Bamba”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuchumbé</td>
<td><em>Contrapuntea’o</em></td>
<td>“Siquisiri”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2004)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>“Peregrino”</td>
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<td>“El toro zacamandú”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“El cascabel”</td>
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**Discography**


