

TRUST IN MUSIC:
MUSICAL PROJECTS AGAINST VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN COLOMBIA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Colombia's protracted civil war is characterized by cycles of pervasive distrust and violence. The people I work with are involved in projects across the north of the country aimed in part at breaking these cycles. In this dissertation I offer an applied ethnographic analysis of the dynamic relations between local forms of trusting, music making and (non)violence. While I recognize music's impact is sometimes minimal or negative, I focus on projects with demonstrable positive impact as part of my commitment to the struggles of my interlocutors. My account is comparative, describing individuals and groups from different towns, sub regions, and positionalities within the conflict, and engaging with similar but contrasting musical styles and projects. I show that musical practices in which participants aim to maximize the breadth of participation (the number of people engaged) tend to foster thin trusting across a broad radius of people, whereas musical practices aimed at the maximum depth of experience of a reduced number of performers tend to generate thick trusting among reduced pools of people. Peacebuilding requires both thin and thick trusting, but the latter can preclude broad organization. I consider festivalization of the musical practices I describe as a means of constructing a parallel peace. While partly successful it can reproduce in miniature some of the violences associated with clientelistic coercive trusting. I present one national project as an exemplar of best practice. The *Legión del afecto* works to generate an imbricated peace through radically inclusive projects in which young people practice and champion both thick and thin trusting, and peaceful living together, using a wide range of musical practices as part of an integrated, reflexive methodology. My arguments are based in, and seek to finesse, semiotic and phenomenological accounts of music as social life.

For my nested, overlapping and interweaved families.

And at the center, Lina.

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Note on translation, glossary, and anonymity

All fieldwork was carried out in Spanish. Recorded interviews were transcribed in Spanish and the required parts translated into English for use here. All translations of interlocutors' speech and texts originally published in Spanish are my own unless otherwise stated. Some Spanish terms or phrases resist elegant translation or serve as proper names. In such cases I typically use the Spanish term in italics, followed the first time by a brief parenthetical explanation in English. These terms are explained more fully in the glossary.

Some of the people I work with are particularly vulnerable or have a complex historical connection to violence. Although only one person requested anonymization, I chose to use pseudonyms for various others out of a concern for their ongoing safety. Working with musicians brings some complications in this regard as many are, however locally, well-known public figures. I attempted to balance respect for their musical individuality, achievements and production with the need to maintain anonymity in some cases. These complications were especially keen with the *Legión del Afecto*, and it is for this reason that I limit the use of visual and audiovisual material in chapter 5.

Introduction

In this dissertation I show the dynamic interactions of trust, music making, and (non)violence through ethnographic studies in three main sites; San Martín de Loba, Ovejas, and Cartagena, and the broader region of northern Colombia of which they are a part, commonly known as *La Costa* in reference to its Caribbean coast line (see Figure 1). I offer a phenomenological and semiotic account of how people come to trust one another through and around music making, using a broadly Peircean framework of analysis as developed for ethnomusicology by Thomas Turino, according to which people engage with the world through chains of signs (Peirce 1955; Turino 2014). A sign is anything one notices which has significance and an effect on the experiencer. Some signs have relatively stable meanings for a group of users, which permit communication.

Recent years have seen unprecedented investments of time, effort and money in reducing various forms of violence in Colombia. The most headline-grabbing of these is the government negotiations for a peace treaty with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) guerrilla group. However, efforts have been many, varied, and not principally led by the state (Bouvier 2009). The people I work with are all engaged in musical projects (broadly conceived) at various levels of institutional formality, aimed to some degree at reducing violence. I aim to show how music making works in such projects, the impacts of my interlocutors' efforts on trust and musical sound, and how we might best conceptualize these dynamics within and beyond my cases. Of course music education and music making do not offer a complete response to Colombia's many and varied cycles of violence. In some instances musical activities can stimulate or constitute violence, or simply replace one form of violence with another. Furthermore, trust is only one aspect of peacebuilding and the reduction of violence. However, I

argue that there *are* ways in which music making can increase forms of trusting that encourage non-violence, and that some musical projects offer transformative opportunities for one time perpetrators and victims of violence to become champions of non-violent conflict transformation. In line with a recent turn in heritage and peacebuilding studies away from approaches that merely probematize (Walters, Laven, and Davis 2017), I choose to work with those who ask how music can best contribute to peacebuilding. In this introduction I consider the themes of trust, violence, music, and debates about its value in peacebuilding through brief introductions of three of my closest friends and interlocutors, before offering a summary of my arguments in the chapters that follow.

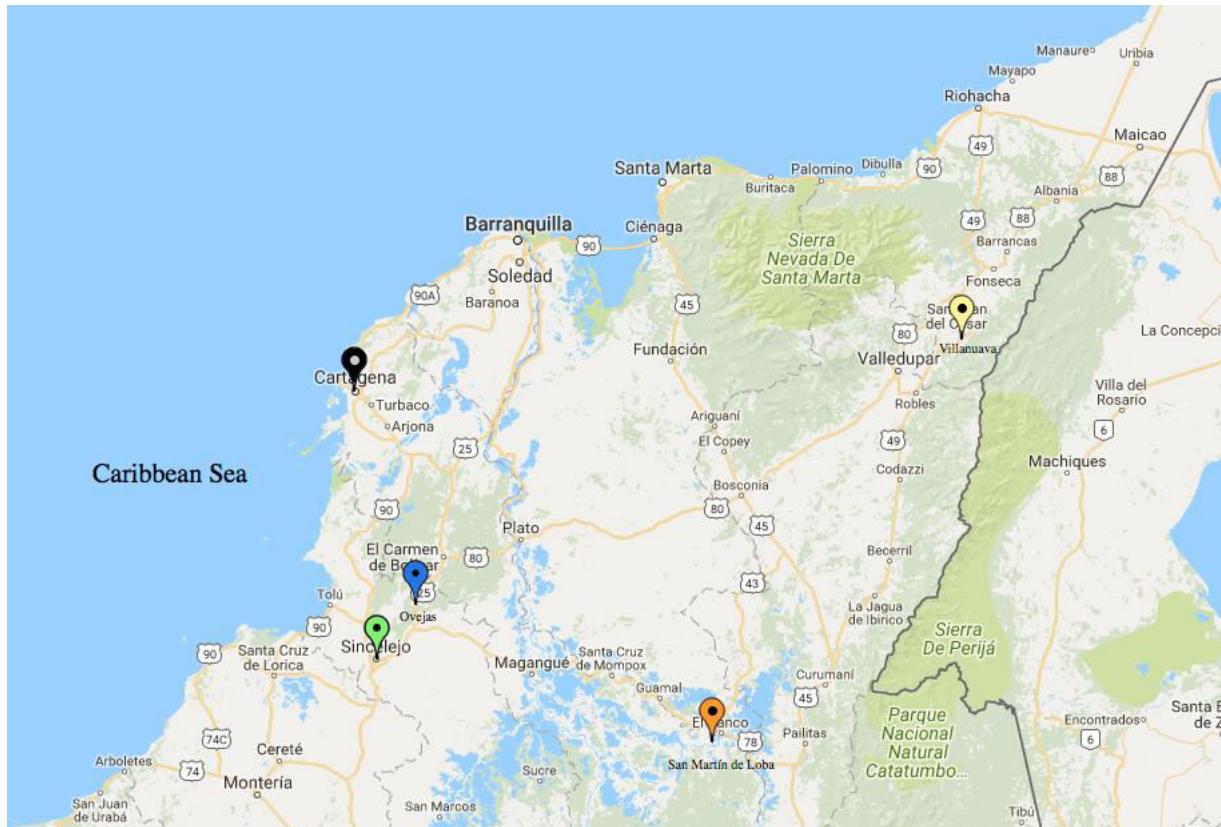


Figure 1: Map of Northern Colombia, or La Costa, showing (left to right) Cartagena, Sincelejo, Ovejas, San Martín de Loba, and Villanueva. Made using zeemaps.com.

Hidden away by six in the evening

Walking through the russet sand streets of San Martín de Loba with singer Martina Camago, she made sure to greet everyone she could: "*Adios, adio-o-o-os...*" With a characteristic giggle, she explained to me: "*Si no saludo a todos, piensan que me creo la última coca cola en el desierto!*" (If I don't say "hello" to everyone, they'll reckon I think I'm the last coke in the desert [the bee's knees]!). The first time I visited her hometown in 2008, she was there as a judge for the annual *tambora* festival. On the last night of the competition she performed on the rather makeshift stage with two *cachacos* (people from the interior of the country) also there as judges. I remember watching attentively with the members of her sister-in-law's *tambora* youth group *Juventud Sanmartinense*, crowded on and around the stage.



Figure 2: Martina Camago pictured rehearsing outside her family home in San Martín, 2008. Photo by Natalia Pazos, used with permission. All photos by author unless stated otherwise.

By the time of my last visit in 2015 the festival was much more of an *espectáculo* (a show, extravaganza, or spectacle). A far bigger, professional stage, with roadies and light technicians, played host to folk dance troupes from across the country and abroad. The audience sat on plastic seats set out on demand by beer sellers. The festival was dedicated to Martina that year, but she didn't sing. She had refused to perform without her group, and the festival organizers didn't have sufficient funds to bring them from the cities where they are based. Her allergies and the rain also prevented Martina from singing in an impromptu *tambora callejera* (street celebration with dance, responsorial vocals, and percussion) initiated by the members of *Juventud Sanmartinense*. It was a shame because she always insists she prefers street *tambora* to staged versions. On one of the many evenings we spent exchanging stories on the front porch of her childhood home, she explained part of the reason she enjoys being out in public after dark, whether singing, visiting friends and family, or just watching the world go by: "You couldn't do this when the guerrilla and those [paramilitaries] were in charge around here. Everyone was hidden away by six in the evening."

Control by illicit armed groups has violently disturbed the social life of many rural towns like San Martín. For many years people remained "hidden away" sometimes because of a clearly imposed curfew, but more often due to a vague atmosphere of fear and distrust. In a valuable ethnography of a Mexican peasant community, anthropologist John Aguilar shows the power of greetings and related everyday social interaction to maintain trust among residents (Aguilar 1984). In places deeply affected by Colombia's civil conflict, people's capacity to build trust in this way has been limited. One interlocutor of anthropologist Lesley Gill, in her work on the city of Barancabermeja, summarized the situation succinctly: "'The big problem [...] is who you can trust'" (Gill 2016: 228). This is a recurring theme in the literature on Colombia's conflict, the

testimonies of victims collated by authors like Sibylla Brodzinsky and Max Schoeming (2012), and the reflections of my interlocutors (see chapters 2 and 4 in particular). In San Martín, at least, *tambora* music and the festival dedicated to it provided some means of resisting, reacting or accommodating this effect of the conflict.

Trust

Building trust is fundamental to the development of self (Erikson 1963), and social interaction (Luhmann 1979), but also the functioning of democracies, and peacebuilding. Since the early 1990s increasing scholarly attention has been paid to the connections between participation in voluntary groups, levels of trust, and the peaceful functioning of democratic societies (Putnam 1993), and hence the importance of trust in efforts to (re)establish peace in areas affected by violent conflict, through restorative reconciliation (Aiken 2008). Some research suggests that musical activities can be particularly powerful in increasing the levels of trust among participants (Keil 1967; Monson 1996; Stolle 2001; Palmer 2005; Khodyakov 2007). However, much of this trust is related to musical tasks, what Monson calls "musical trust" (Monson 1996: 175), and little is known about spillover into broader social interaction, especially in musical projects developed in situations of violent conflict. Furthermore, little attention is paid to the phenomenological experience of participants. I aim to fill these lacunae.

I believe trusting is a human universal in the sense that all people engage in acts or ways of being that we can fairly accurately describe as trusting. However, particular local forms and conceptions of trust are culturally relative. One of the central aims of this dissertation is to offer an ethnographic treatment of trust in my field sites, and show how it relates to music making. In the conclusion I return to the question of trusting in general, beyond the specificities of my

interlocutors and their social groups. However, in order either to discuss particularities or draw generalized conclusions from them, I need a broad working definition of the term "trust" and a consideration of some conceptual questions. A brief example will help.

When I asked Joche Álvarez (see below) to sign a consent form so that I could use our discussions in this dissertation, he quickly added his beautifully crafted signature to the back without reading the text. Despite my insistence that he should take his time to understand it and ask me any questions, as many other interlocutors had, he replied: "No. Why? I trust you!" His declaration seemed unequivocal, but it actually raised many questions: How is trust different from related phenomena like faith or confidence? Does it consist in acts like Joche's declaration, or does it somehow endure between and beyond them? How far is it based in a rational calculation of the likelihood of others living up to our expectations? Is trust absolute, as Joche's statement suggests, or relative to certain contexts and tasks? And can we somehow measure it?¹

Many accounts of trust treat it as a rational decision, or calculation of risk.² While rational trusting may exist, and such accounts may help us understand it (Gibbons 2001), I believe they fail to capture Joche's experience on this occasion, and a large portion of human trusting interactions in general. Psychologist Tom R. Tyler argues that such accounts are "rooted in a particular conception of what people want from other people" (Tyler 2001: 287), namely that people want to gain resources for themselves and minimize personal losses as individuals, and so are motivated to engage with other people only insofar as they can strategically achieve this self-serving desire. This description may be largely true of some people some of the time, especially in highly neo-liberal and late capitalist economic contexts, but fortunately it does not sufficiently describe all human interaction. I agree with scholars who recognize that human interaction, and

¹ See Middleton (Forthcoming) for an analysis of trust and music through these conceptual questions.

² This is especially true in economics, business studies, and some experimental psychology, where the application of "game theory" prevails (see, for instance Yamagishi 2001).

hence trust, is never completely rational or calculative (Aguilar 1984: 6; Fine and Holyfield 1996: 25-6; Hardin 2001: 5).

Some accounts of trust treat it as a passive state or disposition (Erikson 1963; Giddens 1990; Hardin 2001), or emphasize the decision or willingness to rely on someone, rather than the act of relying on them (Messick and Kramer 2001). While this captures part of what Joche means when he says, "I trust you!" it fails to capture the fact that by signing the form, he was carrying out an act of trust in me. This becomes clearer if we recognize that while we loosely talk of simply trusting someone, all trust is in fact specific to a task, or set of tasks, and particular situations. When he signed without looking, Joche thereby trusted me not to trick him by using his signature or information for ulterior motives. This act was also situated in a chain of interaction in which Joche and I have relied on each other for a range of tasks and have developed a trusting relationship, but Joche does not trust me to do absolutely anything, and has only come to trust me with music making tasks in recent years, as my skills have increased and I have shown my willingness to uphold his views of how one ought to play.

I therefore align myself with processual accounts that allow discussion of acts and relationships of trusting (Bacharach and Gambetta 2001; Smith 2007; Gambetta 2009; Six, Nooteboom, and Hoogendoorn 2010). Felicity Laurence argues for a similar processual model whereby we replace talk of empathy, as a thing we have, with talk of empathizing as a mode of being (Laurence 2008). Criminal Justice Scholar James Densley offers what I consider to be the clearest conception of trust, showing how "encounters involving trust are typically embedded in a series of interactions and based upon expectancies of individual behavior rooted in the past" (Densley 2012: 303), and furthermore, these expectations are typically about the *future* actions of the trustee (*ibid*). I had behaved well towards Joche up until the point of the form signing, but

despite his conviction, there was no guarantee I would not take advantage of him in the future, and so his signing without reading counted as an act of trusting me to behave benevolently in future.

Most closely informed by the definitions of Densley (2012), and Michael Bacharach and Diego Gambetta (2001), I define trusting broadly as relying on oneself or another (person, group, system, or thing) to carry out a range of tasks that you value, while not being sure of the other's willingness or ability to carry out the tasks at hand – they may always fail, trick you, or abuse your trust to their own benefit. More fully; a person, or group of people, *A* trusts a person, group, or system, *B* to perform a task, or set of tasks, *x* if and only if *A* believes or feels *B* would do *x* and at some point *A* actually relies on *B* to do *x*, and three further conditions hold:

1. *x* is important to *A*
2. *A* has some indication of *B*'s capacity and willingness to do *x*, but not enough to know *B* will do it
3. Not doing *x* would (at least initially) benefit *B* in some way (if only by not having to go to the effort of doing *x*) (Middleton Forthcoming).

When a person trusts someone else, she thereby becomes more vulnerable to that person, but trusting others allows us to accomplish things that might otherwise be impossible. It is important to distinguish between trustworthiness and the ability of trusting in others (Hardin 2001). The ability to successfully trust in others can be viewed as a form of social capital, permitting possessors to take opportunities that would otherwise be missed (Yamagishi 2001). Conversely, generalized distrust impedes the development of these skills (*Ibid*), and can create a vicious spiral towards persistent existential anxiety (Giddens 1990), like that commonly experienced in Colombia (see below).

Ethnographic studies of trust are necessary to show particular, culturally relative forms of trusting. I see my work as engaging with relativistic accounts offered by such scholars as Aguilar, who gives a vivid analysis of trust among Indigenous people Chiapas, Mexico (Aguilar 1984); social psychologists Alan Fine and Lori Holyfield, who offer an account of trust within a mushroom collecting society in 1990s Minnesota (Fine and Holyfield 1996); and sociologist Sandra Smith, who shows that a central factor in the social disadvantages correlated with being African American is a particular form of pervasive distrust (Smith 2007).

I am skeptical of accounts that attempt to measure trust straightforwardly, especially across culturally different social groups (Stolle 2001). However, I do believe we can make some sense of rises or drops in trust at the personal and social level. I record increases or decreases in trust, as experienced by interlocutors, along three axes: the "thickness" of a trusting relationship as members come to know each other over time (Messick and Kramer 2001); the range of tasks one trusts another with (Hardin 2001); and the "radius" or number of people one generally trusts with everyday tasks (Fukuyama 1996; Harriss 2003). "Thicker" trust is not necessarily better. Putnam and Kristin A. Goss suggest that humans need a balance between thick and thin trusting relationships for effective social life (Putnam and Goss 2002). Consistently successful trusting also involves understanding who to trust with what tasks. The aim of peacebuilding with regard to trust should not simply be to increase it without a consideration of these factors, but to empower more people to be more effective trusters.

That's where they roughed me up

On the back of a borrowed motorbike, with Joche Álvarez Jr. at the controls, we trundled over the rolling hills of his hometown of Ovejas in the chain of hills known as *los montes de María*,

which straddles the departments of Bolívar and Sucre. Joche shouted the names of the people he knew as we passed them, and greeted others in a stylized, booming, voice playfully exaggerating the vowel sounds of slightly overly formal phrases: "*Buenas no-o-oches.*" We were on our way back from visiting an older *gaitero* (player of the long duct flute known as a *gaita*, or any instrument of its typical ensemble) friend in a nearby hamlet, and the tension I had felt in Joche on the way there was easing. He explained: "*Ahí fue que caí en el retén de la guerrilla por segunda vez. Ahí me maltrataron.*" (That's where I was stopped at a guerrilla checkpoint for the second time. That's where they roughed me up). Fearing for his life, he had moved away from Ovejas over fifteen years ago. Making a living in the cities of Barranquilla and Cartagena through instrument making, performance and teaching in musical social projects had been very tough, and Joche was clearly more at ease in his *pueblo*, now the threat of violence had diminished sufficiently for him to visit.

Later that week the group *Gaiteros de Ovejas* played an extended set as part of the town's carnival celebrations. Joche played *gaita* at points, eyes closed in a characteristic gesture of deep concentration and pleasure. Bu he mainly took on the role of *animador* (roughly "emcee" charged with "animating" the corwd). In the same stylized, booming voice as before he loudly encouraged everyone to dance, to shout, to applaud the "artists" on stage. He named friends in the crowd, especially the man who had paid for the event (whether out of his pocket, or council funds was unclear). The friend had recently been elected to a local government post, and had promised Joche a job at the *casa de la cultura* (the town's cultural center). If he came good on his promise, which Joche felt confident he would, it could signify a welcome, and more permanent, return to Ovejas for Joche.



Figure 3: Joche Álvarez pictured making gaitas in Cartagena 2008.

Gaita music had provided Joche with a means of survival, deeply pleasurable escape from boredom and depression, a vocation in musical social work, and now the possibility of a return to the region from which he had been violently displaced. However, like many musical social projects, this depended on the will and ability of a friend to negotiate the vicissitudes of local politics.

Violence in Colombia since 1948

I conceive of violence broadly as harming oneself or others.³ The physical violences of war are perhaps the most obvious, and often most salient to many of my interlocutors, so when I write about violence I often mean the brutal killing, injury, displacement and dispossession based in and around Colombia's civil conflict. However, it is equally important to draw attention to less frequently recognized forms such as sexual, psychological or "symbolic" violence (the imposition of a particular way of thinking or experiencing the world), as well as more structural violences of exclusion or oppression that often become normalized and accepted by vast chunks of any given social group. Following Johan Galtung I accept that human interaction will never be without conflict, but that it need not necessarily be violent. Peace involves "the capacity to transform conflicts with empathy, creativity and nonviolence" (Galtung quoted in Urbain 2008: 4). To understand peacebuilding in Colombia it will help to summarize some of the intricate forces of violence in the country's history. I do not pretend to offer a complete treatment, but rather a cursory synthesis of the aspects my interlocutors consider most salient.

Some of my interlocutors draw a straight line back from recent waves of violence in Colombia, through *latifundio* land distribution inequality of the nineteenth century, and the Colonial brutality that proceeded it, to the arrival of Europeans on the continent (Fals Borda 1979). However, most see the assassination of Liberal presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán in 1948 as the beginning of Colombia's current period of violent history (Guzmán Campos et al. (Guzmán Campos, Fals Borda, and Umaña Luna 2010a). The years since have been characterized by extreme political polarization and violent struggles between various

³ In the ethnomusicological literature, the most elegant definition of "violence" I have found is that adopted by Louise Meintjes and Julie Taylor, on which violence is a heightened form of social exclusion (Taylor 1998: 70; Meintjes 2003: 176). While this conception is useful, especially for understanding terror and a lack or recourse to systems of support, I do not believe it is accurate enough because including someone in a group or activity that harms them can also be a form of violence.

groups, none of which has succeeded in maintaining nation-wide dominance, hegemony (Gramsci 1989), or a monopoly on legitimized use of force (Webber 1946). The killing of Gaitán sparked riots in the capital, known as *el bogotazo*, and catalyzed brutal waves of partisan violence concentrated in the Colombian countryside, which became known as *La Violencia* (*The Violence –capitalized*) (Guzmán Campos et al. 2010a [1962]: 48; Taussig 2003: 194). Citizens were polarized as Liberals or Conservatives with each side attacking the other in supposed retribution for previous attacks, dividing cities, towns, and families. These waves of killings, persecution and land grabs were calmed somewhat by 1958 with the establishment of a power-sharing deal between the Liberal and Conservative parties, but issues of land reform were never resolved (Richani 2002).

The 1960s saw the formation of militant leftist guerrilla groups in support of Marxist reform, mainly in terms of land redistribution. The largest and most famous guerrilla group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) or FARC, was formed in 1964 (Ibid: 59-92), and is only now beginning its life as a non-militant political party as I write in 2018, following years of peace talks with the Colombian government and an agreement to disarm in 2016. Since their inception, the FARC has taken control of pockets of the country, made targeted political assassinations, engaged in kidnappings, extortion, illicit activity, and bombings, and has been responsible for atrocities and the killings of civilians.

Over roughly half a century successive right-wing governments have waged war against the FARC and other leftist guerrilla groups, occasionally entering into peace talks, or disguising the conflict as "counter-terrorist" operations (Bouvier 2009: 3-13). The state stepped up its military efforts significantly in the 1990s and 2000s with vast overt support from the USA known as Plan Colombia. However, insurgents have not been the only targets of state violence.

During the presidency of Álvaro Uribe (2002-10), the number of extra-judicial killings by state forces rose, as civilians were killed under the pretext of guerrilla affiliation (Verdad Abierta 2016). These executions came to be known euphemistically as *falsos positivos* (false positives). However, this was only the most obvious aspect of state violence against civilians. The decades of structural, economic, psychological and symbolic violences that have accompanied human rights abuses at the hands of the state, have led some scholars to characterize Colombian as a "genocidal democracy" (Giraldo 1996). The targets of state (and organized political right) violence are often the non-militant organized left. For instance, Iván Cepeda shows how, following a demobilization of guerrilla fighters in the 1980s, the newly formed *Unión Patriótica* political party was systematically exterminated in what he calls a "political genocide" (Cepeda Castro 2006).

Alongside the state, and against guerrilla groups, a third kind of actor has been active in the civil conflict, namely right-wing paramilitary groups (Richani 2002: 93-132). Initially formed by landowners and businessmen to defend their interests against guerrilla advances and extortion, and reinforce their economic dominance, paramilitary groups have often operated with support from, or at the behest of, the Colombian state, US institutions, or multinational corporations. They commonly act as ultra-conservative death squads, carrying out massacres and "*limpiezas*" ("social cleansing") (Taussig 2003). They terrorize, kill and displace groups and individuals thought to be collaborating with guerrillas or simply seen as "undesirable," that is to say not conforming with their mishmash ultra-conservative morality (Ibid: 9). The largest paramilitary group, the *Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia* (United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), or AUC, negotiated a deal with the Colombian government to disband in 2006 (Tate

2012: 403). However, many of its units have remained active and grown under different names such as *Águilas Negras*, *Rastrojos* and *Urabeños* (Verdad Abierta 2015).

In the milieu of this dirty war smuggling became big business, especially the trafficking of illicit drugs to the USA and Europe. Cocaine in particular has been produced and exported from Colombia on an unprecedented scale. The groups and individuals in charge of these illicit businesses became ludicrously wealthy and powerful. The most famous of these, Pablo Escobar reportedly became one of the ten richest men in the world (Kilchand 2012). He and other drug barons headed networks of drug production and smuggling, assassins and militias. Factions of all three opposing forces in the civil conflict became heavily involved in the drug trade to further their causes. This in turn fueled a war to control the drug trade, spearheaded in part by the USA (Isacson 2012), which became more fractured after the killing of Escobar in 1993 and other drug lords in the late 1990s.

In urban areas gang violence related to the drug trade and broader conflict is ongoing. Organized crime is dominated by groups born out of paramilitaries and drug cartels, which some label *Bandas Criminales* or *BACRIM* (Criminal Bands). However, not all gangs answer directly to such groups. Some are formed by neighborhood kids out of a felt need to defend their locality from robberies and violent acts carried out by rival nearby gangs, against a backdrop of weak police presence. These small or youth gangs are sometimes called *pandillas* to distinguish them from more organized *bandas*, but divisions are often unclear and some powerful *bandas* outsource violent work to *pandillas* (Taussig 2003: 75). Many gang members report they steal to survive and they go to different localities to do so because of a sense of belonging to their patch and not wanting to do harm to their neighbors. Some gangs even act as community-building institutions, organizing cultural and sporting events (González Bolaños 2011). However, their

defense of highly local interests often escalates into violent retaliatory battles with nearby gangs and endless cycles of revenge killings. Gang violence is of increasing concern for people in more rural areas.

It would be wrong to consider these five principle kinds of actor in the Colombian conflict (guerrillas, state military, paramilitaries, drug cartels, criminal gangs) as clear, stable units, or the only agents of violence in the country (Tate 2012). They can be subdivided further and are often highly fractured, with divisions leading to high degrees of autonomy, in-fighting, power-struggles, and members moving between opposing groups. Young people thought to be acting violently for individual gain are often labeled "delinquents" and are targeted by the police or whatever armed group is attempting to consolidate power in a given area (Taussig 2003: 9). Some people not considered "delinquents" also take advantage of the confusion of conflict to settle personal scores, accrue land and possessions and otherwise empower themselves by violent means (Ibid: 57). Given the weakness of the state and the levels of corruption within its legal apparatus, many such cases go unresolved. Establishing whether or not such acts are directly related to the civil conflict or fighting between rival groups might be impossible. It was not uncommon for my interlocutors to class some fights, killings, or violent theft of land as "nothing to do with the conflict," but such a statement is often a dissimulative depoliticization of events to reduce their potential repercussions. Gill (2016), and Brodzinsky and Schoening (2012), show the ubiquity of this depoliticization of the conflict as a mechanism of self protection: "The less you know, the more you live" (Ibid: 109).

The fallout of the conflict in terms of death, injury, displacement, destruction and theft of property may be incalculable, and attempts to calculate the impact may actually impede our understanding in many ways. As the anthropologist Michael Taussig writes: "numbers numb"

(2003: 88). I focus, therefore, on lived experiences of the conflict and attempts to live through, around, and after it. Within this mêlée, interpersonal relationships and engagement with institutions can become strained or impossible. Taussig depicts some of the ways in which cycles of violence are perpetuated in Colombia through envy, witchcraft, terror, confusion, suspicion, displacement and a lack of trust (Taussig 2003). For Taussig, this constellation of factors creates a theatre in which audaciously violent acts are played out to generate, display and maintain various forms of power. Victims of such acts have little or no recourse to state systems, because the state is unable to maintain a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. Some people place their faith in illicit armed groups, or powerful individuals, but because these operate outside any clear laws or commitments, there is no solid basis on which to do so. For many people, then, daily life is characterized by a kind of existential terror arising from the impossibility of trusting others (Giddens 1990).

Working in a setting marred by violence has made research difficult (Asher 2009). One friend, a researcher and journalist from Cartagena, writes eloquently about the difficulty of identifying oneself as a researcher – "*investigador*" in Spanish also means (police) "investigator." Calling oneself a teacher fares little better as many leftist insurgents are educators, or have a *nom de guerre* suggesting a pedagogical vocation (Lara Ramos 2015). Ethnomusicologists have suffered from similar difficulties elsewhere (Keil 1979), or found it necessary to suppress issues of violence (Turino 1993), which can only later be made explicit (Ritter Forthcoming). Making these themes the explicit foci of my work requires me to anonymize some people and places, while recognizing specifics where my interlocutors and I believe it is necessary and safe to do so. This balancing act of trust is not central to my final analysis – the everyday dynamics of trust between the people I work with are much more

interesting – but it has been vital to the process of carrying out research and maintaining lasting friendships.

Now we're family

The hot wind whipped dust into our faces from the *cancha* (soccer pitch-cum-park) as Fauner Salas and I cruised through the youngest neighborhood of Villanueva, Guajira. His self-customized motorbike splashed L.E.D light on the already cracked tarmac below us. Green, black, and yellow was the bike's color-scheme at that point, though he was considering painting it gold to match his favorite cap: "When we first got here, they suspected us of being guerilla fighters, loons, even organ traffickers! But now we're family."

He was living in a nearby house he rented with three other senior members of the *Legión del afecto* (a government-funded organization in which young people do creative social work for a small social wage). Most of the kids who hung out there during the long vacation days lived in *las casitas* – the rows of small government housing provided primarily to victims of internal displacement – and Fauner made sure to visit their families when his busy schedule allowed. His warm, but deferential "*Hola mi señora!*" was greeted with broad smiles and discount snacks. The *Legión* had only been in operation in the region of *La Guajira* for three months in 2015, but it had been an intense experience for newly-promoted coordinator Fauner and the *legionarios* (established *Legión* members) he had brought from near his hometown of San Martín.



Figure 4: Fauner Salas (second from left) pictured playing pito atravesado during Christmas celebrations in San Martín, 2014 (photo by Lina Zambrano, used with permission).

The *ágape* (act of love through a communal meal and celebration) we held in a nearby hamlet was well attended, and played out as the coordinators planned, despite the attempts of a social worker from *Familias en su tierra* (the government institution "Families on their Land") to hijack the event by inserting his institution into proceedings. After eating, the entertainment began. New *legionarios* performed some mime skits and clowning, then we sang a *tambora* song made famous by Martina Camargo "*Las olas de la mar*." The young woman who took the role of the *cantadora*, like the other senior *legionarios*, had leaned *tambora* in a voluntary youth group similar to *Juventud Sanmartinense*. When Fauner played a locally popular song on his newly bought blue acrylic trombone, one of the residents got up to dance and sing a couple of semi-improvised verses. Even the social worker who had tagged along joined in. As he got up to sing

he took off his bright turquoise cap, emblazoned with the state institution logo, and began blending into what felt like a big family gathering. In the *Legión* many young people like Fauner found an organization with the ethos, methodology, and structure to challenge the various forms of violence that most strongly perpetuate the Colombian conflict, and to do so through radically inclusive creative activities, mainly musical.

Musical Practices

In this dissertation I analyze a range of activities that Christopher Small calls "musicking" (Small 1998: 9), namely all and any acts involved in making a musical performance possible. However, while I discuss such activities as festival organization, instrument building, lone practice of a musical instrument, and passive listening, I am mainly concerned with active engagement in live musical performance with other people, which I rather inelegantly call "music making," because I believe that kind of interaction is the site of music's greatest potential for influencing trust. I use "music making" to refer to a set of particular ways of engaging with other people that foreground the making of, noticing, and responding to stylized and repeated (or potentially repeatable) sonic and kinesic signs. The set is not clearly definable, or distinguishable from other sono-kinesic forms of interaction (it is difficult to draw the line between a melodic speech and song, difficult to distinguish noise music from noise), but it includes all of the forms of interaction that people label "music" and "dance" or their cognates and translations, and some other phenomena that ethnomusicologists are interested in analyzing, which may not be recognized locally as music.

I believe the set of musical activities is related by family resemblance (Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]), such that there is no single feature through which we can define them, but they share overlapping similarities, or each have enough in common with at least one other musical activity

for it to be worthwhile for analysts to group them together. If, as in one of Bruno Nettl's metaphors (Nettl 2010: xiii-xv), a single elephant serves to depict the discipline of ethnomusicology, of which historians have each felt and described only different parts, making communication about the whole difficult, then scholars of music have each been feeling and describing (parts of) different *members* of a whole family of pachyderms. Each musical "elephant" in the family may also be seen as a Russian doll, with each nested level a different musical activity or "family" of activities. These different musical ways of engaging with other people are governed to a degree by rules (explicitly expressed and enforced, or implicitly, mutually understood), characterized by strategies for success (judged differently in each musical activity), and differentiated by aims of the individuals and groups who engage in them, as well as the resultant sounds and movements that are the foci of much musical analysis.

Small emphasizes the power of musicking to represent ideal social relations metaphorically (Small 1998: 13). To analyze music, trust and violence we might consider how ideals of trusting are *represented* through music.⁴ In contrast, Turino, while recognizing the power of music to represent or help us imagine the possible, places greater importance on the actual socializing that occurs as we participate in musical activities (Turino 2008a). It is in this sense that music *is* social life, or at least an important part of it for most people (Ibid). Much of the power of music making, or any activity, to shape modes of broader social interaction comes through repetition and the non-reflexive indexical connections, habits and dispositions it tends to create. Thus I am less concerned with musical sounds or movements *about* trust and non-violence, and more interested in musical interaction that *requires, involves, promotes, and embodies* trust and non-violence. In the remainder of this section I briefly describe the musical interaction, sounds and movements that I analyze in the chapters to come.

⁴ Felicity Laurence applies Small's framework to music and empathy in much this way (2008: 15).

Over years of learning to play, understand and teach musical practices from Colombia, some of which I analyze in this dissertation, I came to see each of them as roughly distinguished by format, repertoire, geographical region, and importantly a "family" of rhythmic feels. As a percussionist I may be biased towards emphasizing rhythmic feel as a distinguishing feature, but it is central to the way practitioners make distinctions, so much so that "*ritmo*" is often used as a synonym of "style" or "genre." In later chapters I undo the heuristic of musical families to some extent, especially as tied to a particular region or "people," but it is a useful starting point.

Tambora

Martina Camargo sees herself very much as a *tambora cantadora* – a lead singer, composer and upholder of her regional musical tradition.⁵ *Tambora* is historically played in the region of *la Depresión Momposina* (see Figure 1), where the River Magdalena spreads out into two main arms and is nourished by many tributaries and *ciénagas* (lakes-cum-swamps). At points in this dissertation I simply call this "the river region." Tambora's format comprises a non-touching pair of dancers; a *cantador(a)* and *coro* (group of responsorial chorus singers); optional idiophones; and two particular drums (see Figure 6). The *tambora* drum (from which the musical practice likely takes its name) is a two-headed bass drum played horizontally with sticks on the goatskin heads and wooden shell. The *tambor alegre* (joyous drum), also known as a *currulao* in this

⁵ The word "*tambora*" is ambiguous, Colombia musicologist and composer Guillermo Carbó writes that it "is used to signify, without distinction: [1] a celebration on the eve of certain religious festivities around Christmas and the month of December [...]; [2] the music and dance interpreted during the celebration of this *fiesta*; [3] the instrumental group, or percussion and vocal ensemble, which perform the music; [4] the most common of the distinct rhythmic feels which accompany the dances and singing; and finally, [5] one of the percussion instruments of the ensemble [...] which very probably gave rise to the other uses of the word: the *tambora*" (Carbó 2001: 2-3). When necessary I disambiguate by specifying, for example "*tambora* drum." Such rendering is inelegant in its redundancy, but helps to clarify my meaning. Terms like "*gaita*" are similar (See below), and I use similar redundancies, like "*gaita flute*" to make useful distinctions.

region,⁶ is a single-headed, open-bottomed, conical hand drum with a wedge and rope tuning system (List 1983: 29-41).⁷ While the *alegre* player is quite free to vary its rhythmic patterns, the *tambora* drum plays more fixed rhythmic patterns that are fundamental to distinguishing the different rhythmic feels of the family, each of which has a different basic dance step.



Figure 5: Tambora group at the 2008 festival in San Martín. (From top left) guache (cylindrical metal shaker), tambora drum, tambor alegre (obscured by female dancer), cantador, coro, (front center) dancing couple.

⁶ Not to be confused with the dance and rhythmic feel of the same name from the Pacific coast (Whitten 1974). Whether they are historically connected is unclear (Ritter 2007).

⁷ List calls it the *tambor mayor* (main drum). While this denomination may well have been used by his interlocutors in the 1960s, I have not come across it.



Figure 6: Maracas, tambora and alegre (female drummers are very uncommon).

The most common feel of the *tambora* "family" is also called *tambora* (see Figure 7), though people sometimes say "*tambora tambora*" to show they are talking about the feel, rather than the drum or musical practice as a whole. *Tambora tambora* (a duple feel characterized by three accents on the *tambora* drum) is unusual among "traditional" feels in northern Colombia as it emphasizes the *first* beat in the cycle, rather than "offbeats" (like *cumbia* and *gaita*, see below). The dance is also distinctive as it uses a thee-step pattern with which the couple move towards or away from each other in quite expansive circular movements. Most other dances from the region are two-step and less expansive, but involve similar couple interaction (Zapata Olivella 1967).

	Claps	X		X		X		X	
	Tambora	O			O			O	
	feet	feet		feet		feet		feet	
		feet		feet		feet		feet	

Figure 7: Claps, tambora drum accents, and steps for the rhythmic feel of tambora tambora (claps = approximately 135-140 bpm).⁸

	claps	X			X			X		
	tambora		O		-		-		O	-
	feet	feet		feet		feet		feet		feet
			feet		feet		feet		feet	

Figure 8: Rhythmic feel of berroche (claps = approximately 145-146 bpm)

⁸ Throughout the dissertation to represent percussion patterns I make use of the Time Unit Box System (TUBS) first developed by James Koetting (1970). I do so for visual clarity and because I find it better represent how percussionists think and play than most other notational forms. Each successive horizontal box from left to right represents one of the fastest salient beats (Figure 8 shows tambora as an 8-box pattern, but Figure 3 shows more detail, requires a greater subdivision, and therefore has 16 boxes). If a box is filled, a tone is played on that beat, if not, the beat is silent. Boxes aligned vertically are simultaneous. Rows marked L and R show the succession of beats and silences played in the drummers left and right hands respectively. Rather than the letters used by Koetting and many percussion textbooks to indicate particular strokes I adopt the more democratic and visual approach of Hungarian-born, Colombia-based percussionist and teacher Istvan Dely, which can be understood even by textually non-literate people. On his notation system each symbol represents the shape of the hands or sticks on contact with the drum. On the *tambora* drum, because it is played with sticks, "O" represents an open stroke on the skin, "X" means a stroke on the wooden shell, "-" means a damped stroke where the stick remains in contact with the skin. A gray-filled symbol indicates an accented stroke. The symbols for the guache represent its movement. It is a metal cylinder filled with seeds, held horizontally. It is played with a downward movement coinciding with the pulse, and a wave-like motion on the offbeat. On the *currulao* hand drum "A" represents a round-sounding open stroke, with fingers together, "/" represents a dry slap, with loose fingers. See appendix 1 for a full explanation.

The second most common feel in the *tambora* family is *berroche* (sometimes spelt *verroche*). Its characteristic pattern on the *tambora* drum is roughly a double time version of that for *tambora tambora*,⁹ and the dance uses a less expansive, two-step shuffle (see Figure 8). In festivals, competing groups are also expected to play and dance *guacherna* and *chandé* (normally compound, or swung duple), but there is little agreement on how they sound.¹⁰ In some towns, the feels of *tambora alegre* (fast duple) and *tabora redoblá'* (slow duple) are also played.

Martina's performance at the 2008 festival in San Martín described above was typical of staged *tambora* performances in all but two aspects. As the *cantadora* she began each song, which lasted between two and four minutes. The small *coro* responded to Martina's strophic lines with the same repeated chorus line and clapped on the pulse. The two drummers played *tambora tambora* or *berroche*, with the *alegre* player freer to interlock, vary and ornament his patterns. Unlike most festival *tambora* performances, Martina's did not include idiophones or dancing. The clearer texture of her group and its focus on musical sound place it very much at the presentational end of the performance spectrum (Turino 2008a see chapter 1).

In street *tambora* celebrations, the musical sound is largely *for* dancing. Musicians will generally arrange themselves in a rough circle in which one or more couples dance in an improvised manner. There is often more than one *cantador* (male) or *cantadora* (female) present, who sometimes interrupt each other to insert stock or semi-improvised verses in order to keep a single song going for much longer (often over ten minutes), or take turns to lead different songs. A successful celebration continues all through the night. The group of chorus singers can expand

⁹ The first accent on the skin is displaced. Some drummers consider it to be a flam-like figure falling just behind the first beat played on the shell. Most, however, play it on the second pulse.

¹⁰ *Chandé* was introduced as part of the festivalization of *tambora* (Carbó 2001). The disagreement among groups from different regions is primarily a question of labelling: What some call "*chandé*" others call "*guacherna*", but it is framed as a disagreement over what each feel *is* (Ciro Gómez 2015).

indefinitely. Ideally everyone present who is not playing or dancing should be singing and clapping.

Gaita

Joche Álvarez is a *gaitero*; a player of the long duct flutes made of cactus and hardened bee's wax, or more generally anyone involved in the musical practice that takes its name from the instruments.¹¹ Most *gaita* practitioners and enthusiasts historicize the practice as originating from the hilly region of *Montes de María* to the west of the river region, though similar flutes and practices are found in places such as the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and it has a stronger and longer presence than *tambora* in cities of *La Costa* and beyond. Its format generally includes a pair of *gaitas* (one played simultaneously with a maraca), a *tambor alegre* (not called a *currulao* in this region), and a small hand drum of the same design called a *llamador* (caller). Most groups now also include a *tambora* drum, and many have a separate lead singer, though the lead *gaita* player sometimes fills that role. There is generally no separate *coro*, so any chorus lines are sung by the musicians (see Figures 9 and 10).

The two *gaitas* have different roles. The *gaita hembra* (female), used to play the main melody, has five holes, of which only four are used at any one time (the top hole can be blocked to lower the tonal center one tone). The *gaita macho* (male) has one or two holes and is used to play ostinati that interlock rhythmically with the main melody and shift pitch to follow or compliment its contour. The *macho* player simultaneously plays a maraca with their free hand,

¹¹ The Spanish word "gaita" has long been used to refer to both bagpipes and fifes in Spain and according to oral histories was used by early Spanish settlers to refer to pre-Columbian indigenous instruments very closely resembling today's *gaitas*. These flutes were probably smaller like the duct flutes played by Indigenous Kogi in the mountainous region of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Olsen 1998). Historiographic research by Egberto Bermúdez (2005) suggests flutes like *gaitas* may also have been played in cities of *La Costa*, across *Montes de María* and in the river region during the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. I know of no connection to the song and *cuatro* tradition in Venezuela, or the accordion tradition of Brazil, which are also called "gaita."

marking the pulse and playing variations and flurries. The *llamador* plays a very stable repeated pattern, marking the offbeat in most feels. The *tambora* drum is quite regular, but freer to vary and improvise than in *tambora* music. The *alegre* is typically free and highly virtuosic, but returns to rhythmic patterns that interlock with those of the tambora and *llamador*, and together characterize the different feels of the *gaita* family.



Figure 9: Festival gaita format. Gaiteros de Ovejas at the 2008 gaita festival in Ovejas. From left: Singer, tambora, gaita macho and maraca, alegre, gaita hembra, and llamador (partially obscured).



Figure 10: Smaller gaita format with no tambora drum or separate singer. From top right Joche Álvarez on gaita macho and maraca, Alejandro Mendoza on gaita hembra, his son Antonio Mendoza on alegre and José Álvarez Sr. on llamador. Almagra, Ovejas, 2016.

The rhythmic feel most commonly played in the *gaita* format is also called *gaita*. It is instrumental, a moderate paced duple, and emphasizes the offbeat, especially the fourth of the cycle (see Figure 11 and Middleton 2010 for more detail). The family of feels also includes *merengue* (fast duple), *porro* (generally slow duple) and sometimes *cumbia* (mid-paced duple) and *puya* (fast duple). These four can include song. In the carnival performance described above, *Gaiteros de Ovejas* mainly played in the faster feel of *merengue*, which is rhythmically very similar to *berroche*, but with the addition of the llamador marking the offbeat, and more elaborate rhythmic patterns on the *alegre* and *tambora* drum. In Ovejas and San Martín alike, faster feels index celebration.

		↓	↗	↓	↗	↓	↗	↓	↗
		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
		△	△	△	△	△	△	△	△
Tambora	Maraca	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	○
		×	×	×	×	×	×	×	

Figure 11: Simple Maraca, alegre, llamador, and tambora drum patterns for the feel of gaita.

The value of thinking in terms of "families" to distinguish and compare musical sounds and practices in *La Costa* ought now to be clearer. Often the name of the "family" will be the same as the name of the most common rhythmic feel within that family,¹² and sometimes a primary instrument in the format. Most families include at least one slow feel, a fast feel and a triple feel.¹³ The same is true of similar musical practices that are not my focus, such as *bullerengue* and *pito atravesado* (also the name of the idioglotal cane clarinet pictured in Figure 4, which is alternatively called a *flauta de millo*).

Bullerengue is mostly played near the coast. Its format includes a *cantador(a)*, *coro*, and dancers like *tambora*, but it uses two hand drums – *tambor alegre* and *llamador*. Its family of rhythmic feels includes *bullerengue sentado* (slow duple), *chalupa* (fast duple), and *fandango de lengua* (triple) (Rojas E. 2013). The *pito atravesado* family includes *cumbia* (slow duple), *porro* or *bambuquito* (fast duple) and *puya* (fast triple).¹⁴ At the level of individual rhythmic patterns

¹² Compare "*bomba*" used as "an umbrella term for a broad category of rhythm[ic feels]" played in Puerto Rico (Moore 2010: 79). (Moore, like most Latin Americans, uses "rhythm" here, but I find this unhelpful because it is ambiguous between an individual rhythmic phrase or pattern and overall rhythmic feel.) The terms "*rumba*" and "*salve*" work in similar ways in Cuba and Dominican Republic respectively (Ibid).

¹³ This is less clear with the *gaita* family, although *alegre* patterns suggest a triplet subdivision (see chapter 3).

¹⁴ Here we start to see crossover between families. However, terms are sometimes used confusingly. The rhythmic feels denoted by "*puya*" and "*cumbia*" in the *gaita* and *pito* families are similar and probably show the influence of

there are similarities across families: For instance, the tambora drum pattern for *berroche merengue* are identical, their *alegre* patterns are very similar, and somewhat similar to those of *chalupa* and *bambuquito*. In all cases, since the rise of festivals that promote a particular style as representative of a region, rhythmic feels have become more clearly demarcated. Some interlocutors even claim there were not different feels before festivals (Middleton 2010). There is a broad tendency for festival organizers to follow the lead of the hugely popular *vallenato* festival in Valledupar, which stipulates four rhythmic feels under the umbrella category of *vallenato*.¹⁵

Cumbia, Brass Bands, Vallenato and Champeta

I do not analyze *cumbia*, brass band music, *vallenato* or *champeta* extensively in this dissertation, but they are so ubiquitous in *La Costa* that they warrant some discussion. "*Cumbia*" is a term applied to a wide range of quite different styles popular from Mexico to Argentina. They all probably have their historical roots in northern Colombia, though it is not clear whether they are traceable to a particular format (most likely *pito atravesado*) or a variety of practices only later formalized (Wade 2000: 60). Most styles called "*cumbia*" share an emphasis on the offbeat and a pattern played on a scraper or other high-pitched percussive instrument, like the shell of the tambora drum (see Figures 12 and 13). However, these features are also present in other rhythmic feels from Northern Colombia (compare Figure 11), and there is no standard *cumbia* format.

pito music in gaita. However the term "puya" is also used to refer to a very different feel within the family of *vallenato*.

¹⁵ See Ochoa Escobar (2013: 46-48) for a useful comparative discussion of rhythmic feels across slightly different formats.



Figure 12: Characteristic pattern for cumbia

As interpreted in *pito atravesado*, or *gaita* formats, the *cumbia* feel has become standardized (see Figure 13). However, the *cumbia* played by accordion formats, or in big bands styles made popular from the 1940s onwards by band leaders such as Lucho Bermúdez and Pacho Galán, through which "cumbia" became Colombia's "national music," are less unified and had more of an influence on the styles that emerged across the rest of the Americas (Wade 2000).

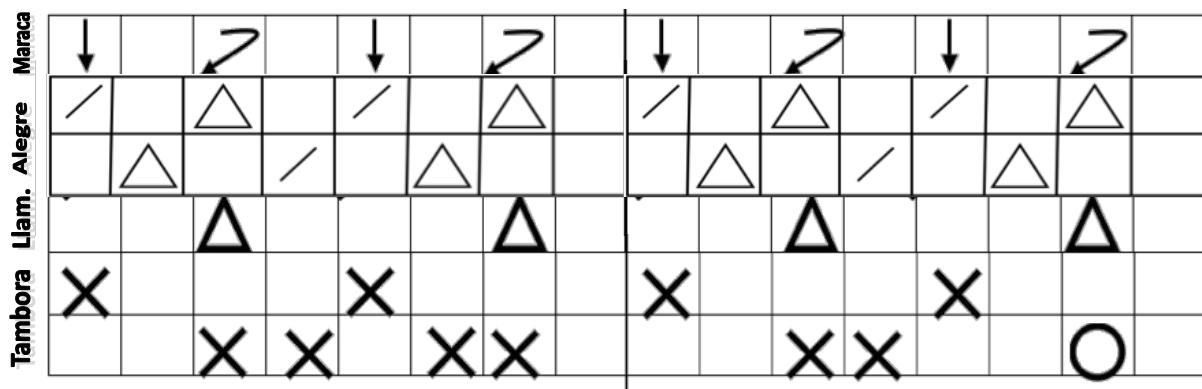


Figure 13: A simple cumbia feel in gaita, or pito atravesado formats (contrast the placing of slaps in the alegre pattern with those in the pattern for the feel of gaita).

The celebration I attended with Fauner and the other members of the *Legión* included a "roots *cumbia*" interpretation of a *vallenato* song (see below), which borrowed from elements of *cumbia* as played on *pito atravesado* and commercial big band *cumbia*. Fauner played trombone, which he learned as part of San Martín's municipal brass band.

The formats of brass bands varies across Colombia but in *La Costa* generally includes one of each percussion instrument; snare drum, bass drum, and hand-held cymbals, then at least

one of each aerophone; trombone, *bombardino* (B♭ euphonium, or baritone horn), trumpet and clarinet (Fortich Díaz 1994). In San Martín the band plays mostly in the feels of *porro* (mid paced duple) and *mapalé* (fast triple) for celebrations and bullfights, and plays the same tunes slowed down or *pasacalles* (slow duple) for religious processions.

"Vallenato" is a term now applied to most accordion-based music from northern Colombia. However, it was once used to refer specifically to "folk" music from the city of Valledupar, whether played on accordion, or guitar (Gutiérrez Hinojosa 1992). Across *La Costa* various feels have been played on accordion, including cumbia more closely associated with Montes de María and the surrounding savannah than with Valledupar (Bermúdez 2015). However, most accordion music is now played in one of four feels stipulated by the vallenato festival of Valledupar, founded in 1968; *son* (slow duple), *paseo* (mid paced duple), *merengue* (triple) and *puya* (fast triple), of which *paseo* and *puya* are the most common.

Folklorization through the festival, and closely connected literary boom from the late 1950s onwards, led to the standardization of the format to three-row button accordion, *caja* (small, single-headed conical hand drum) and *guacharaca* (scraper made from a wood called *lata*) (Ochoa Gautier 2005; Bermúdez 2015). Outside the prescriptive festival, vallenato formats grew with its commercialization, closely associated with the marijuana boom of the 1970s, to reach tropical dance band proportions. The electric bass guitar is now the clearest indicator of rhythmic feel (see Figures 14 and 15). The rhythm of the *puya* bass line is rhythmically identical to the *tambora* drum pattern for *berroche* in the tambora family and *merengue* and *puya* in the *gaita* family.

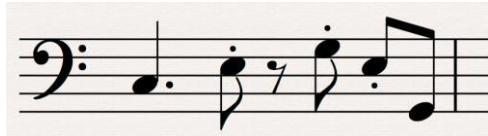


Figure 14: Typical bass line for paseo in the vallenato family (approximately 135-200 bpm).



Figure 15: Typical bass line for puya in the vallenato family (approximately 120-135 bpm).

All vallenato feels are typically danced by male-female couples in close embrace with a lazy side-to-side, step-together motion, though *puya* is sometimes a single step dance like commercial Dominican merengue. The *Legión* event described above was typical of *costeño* parties insofar as social dancing was mainly to *vallenato* or *champeta*.

"Champeta" is the name given in northern Colombia to commercial guitar dance music imported from West Africa, mainly French language soukous and Congolese rumba, as well as the local music based on it (Bilby 2000). These forms are sometimes distinguished as *champeta africana* and *champeta criolla* respectively, with "criolla" meaning "made in the Americas." Champeta criolla was initially made by looping samples from African records, MC-ing and adding sound effects from cheap drum machines (especially dog barks) over the top. Champeta is closely associated with black, working class youth in northern Colombia, and for some people also indexes gang life and violence. The term also refers to a kitchen knife that fans were rumored to carry at street parties playing the music (Streicker 1995). Dancing is typically either in a male-female couple in very close embrace, or in solo male displays foregrounding footwork or body popping.

Champeta records were popularized by mobile sound systems known as *picós* (from the English for pickup truck). Records were often imported as white labels through the ports of Barranquilla and Cartagena and circulated under local names. Like in other DJ-led dance music genres such as Northern Soul movements in the UK (Cosgrove 2016), champeta africana DJs built cache by playing hits that were difficult to acquire, and white labels were often given invented names in part to disguise their provenance, or by audiences who particularly enjoyed a given song. It was common practice to name white labels after the sound of a hook line. For instance, the song "I Know What I Know" by Paul Simon, General M.D. Shirinda and the Gaza Sisters, is commonly known in *La Costa* as "*Los sapitos*" (the little toads/ frogs) because the whooping refrain after the chorus (at around 1:00) sounds like the nighttime calls of the tropical amphibians.

While "champeta" can refer to a wide variety of styles, many records produced since the 1980s have characteristic drum kit patterns with a four-to-the-floor kick drum against a three beat pattern on snare or high hat (see Figure 16).

snare/ hihat	X			X			X			X			X
kick	O			O			O			O			O

Figure 16: A typical simple drum kit pattern for champeta (approximately 120-125 bpm)

Comparing Figure 16 with, Figures 7, 8 and 15, we can see that this champeta feel is an inversion or near inversion of many rhythmic feels already present in *La Costa*, where higher pitched sounds mark the pulse, against lower pitched three-beat patterns. This similarity partially explains the lack of resistance in adopting champeta as a "local" music across *La Costa*.

The real option to change all of this

Martina was invited to talk at a public seminar at the *Corporación Española* in the historic center of Cartagena,¹⁶ and asked me to accompany her. There were no Spanish representatives in the thick-walled colonial room, or members of "the international community" associated with state peacebuilding. Rather, a familiar mix of young musicians and intellectuals from the local "folk" scene sat attentively opposite the three speakers and chairperson, a young priest and folklorist who had arranged the talk. I recognized a few friends in the sixty-strong crowd. The talk was entitled "When memory is sung, danced and played" and gave Martina and her fellow speakers the chance to talk about their experiences, and to explain the social significance of their music and dance. Martina described one occasion when she felt the need to resist a recurring discourse through which some people dismiss her music making as worthless, when a promoter called to book her group for a performance:

He said, "I'm calling to book you to make some noise." Noise?! We don't make noise! We transmit knowledge. We delight [audiences]. We teach. I teach through my singing. I bring a message through my music. I think the way towards peace in our country is [through] our traditions. It's music. It's dance. It's the drums.

A member of the public, who introduced himself as an art teacher, agreed but lamented the lack of support from educational institutions for "the arts:"

The arts are still the Cinderella of our educational institutions. Nobody seems to have realized that they are so transversal that they basically include all other subjects. Looking at all the problems in our country, our towns, our homes, the conflicts, and seeing that the most vulnerable population is the youth, I've become convinced that the arts and sports are the real option to change all of this. My question is what are you doing to make that change happen and to offer the youth an alternative?

In her reply Martina spoke about some recent isolated educational projects she had been involved in, reiterated the art teacher's complaint about a lack of institutional support, and urged everyone

¹⁶ A Spanish Embassy institution charged with promoting "the reform and modernization of the state in Latin America" (<http://www.aecidcf.org.co/MDC/content>).

present to redouble their efforts: "We're all doing our work, little by little. There's a long way still to go – a long way – but yes, I've been working on that task. We all need to keep on working and struggling!"



Figure 17: Martina and other panelists at the talk, Cartagena, 2014.

Many musicians in northern Colombia, like Martina, view their work as central to efforts for transforming conflict, building peace, and reducing violence. They see this as a shared struggle to bring about the social change their country needs and argue that state representatives should place more trust in music, and in musicians in their efforts. Part of my task in this dissertation is to document the impacts and relative effectiveness of various musical projects in order that future potential policy may be informed by the experiences of those already attempting to build peace through music.

Research Method

I began researching musical practices in northern Colombia in 2007, and some of what I learned from those early forays has made it into my current analysis. I also conducted preliminary doctoral fieldwork in 2012, which was central to understanding Joche's work in Cartagena. I carried out full time doctoral fieldwork, framed by my current research questions, from January 2014 through August 2016.¹⁷ During this time I lived between my various field sites in northern Colombia and the city of Cali in the country's southwest. In all of these sites I carried out applied, active participant fieldwork, making music and living with the people whose musical lives I narrate. They supported me much more than I was able to support them at times, and to those with whom I share genuine friendship I remain eternally grateful. The length of time I was able to spend "in the field" and in contact with these friends adds a valuable longitudinal aspect to my experiential analysis.

Fieldwork in San Martín involved taking part in celebrations, as well as rehearsing for and competing in festival performances with the *tambora* groups JSM and Herencia de mi Tierra. I took a supporting role with these two groups, putting myself at their disposal to help achieve their aims, which involved producing audiovisual promotional material as well as acquiring or fixing instruments. In San Martín I also took part in participatory tambora and learned to play the *bombardino* to play with the municipal band *Once de Noviembre* for saint's day and Christmas celebrations. I tracked the movements of Martina Camargo, spending time with her in San Martín, on tour, but mostly in her home in Cartagena. My relationship with her became one of mutual assistance across a wide variety of activities in music, pedagogy and life

¹⁷ Preliminary research was supported by the Dorothy S. and Norman E. Whitten Endowment Fund. Doctoral fieldwork was supported by the Society for Ethnomusicology 21st Century Fellowship and the UIUC Kilby Fellowship. I am extremely grateful for all of this support.

in general. In a similar way I tracked and assisted Joche Alvarez' movements in Cartagena and Ovejas. I played less *gaita* than *tambora*, because of the virtuosity of *gaiteros*, but attended festivals in Ovejas and Cartagena and took part in informal participatory performance with friends, tracking their interaction and developing relationships. With Fauner and the *Legión* my time was shortest, but most intense. I became involved much like any other *legionario* and assisted in all aspects of the organization's activities, though I never reached the stage of being offered a social wage, or an official position. In all of my sites I used snowball sampling to grow my assemblage of interlocutors organically.

As well as performing, organizing, carrying out workshops and recording performances, I carried out interviews with interlocutors at varying levels of formality, most of which I recorded for later transcription. I elicited and developed visualizations of life stories as well as asking questions both indirectly and relevant to trust and violence. I mostly held the latter back towards the end of my research when interlocutors understood and trusted me most, and were least likely to mold their answers to what they believed I wanted to hear. I maintained many of my relationships with interlocutors virtually, enabling a degree of digital ethnography. My production during fieldwork included writing diaries and blog entries, publishing videos online, producing visual representations, and composing, arranging and producing songs, most of which I shared with interlocutors for their feedback. Attempts to carry out more structured feedback workshops and extended applied fieldwork on peacebuilding projects in northern Colombia have as yet been frustrated by logistics and corruption. I intend to integrate these into future fieldwork. My research also included engagement with literature from the social sciences, news reporting and analysis, and fiction, all manner of audio and audiovisual recordings, and my experience as a visiting professor and leader of groups who made music from Colombia in the UK and US.

Beyond explicitly musical and active ethnographic work, my time in Colombia involved a great deal of *acompañar* (accompanying, just being with) my interlocutors, to share with them extended moments of boredom, frustration, depression and struggles as well as fun, relaxation, reflection and unexpected joy.

Aims, Style, and Structure of the Dissertation

I aim to show the ways in music making helps or hinders the kind of social change people like Martina, Joché and Fauner seek, by showing the forms of trusting that different kinds of music making help build in specific contexts. I provide an ethnography of local forms of trusting in a historical setting of violence and show how music making both affects and is affected by these tendencies and specific events. Such an ethnography necessarily requires balancing narrative with a reflexive view of the various layers of analysis that permeate all experience and narration. However, my work is also applied insofar as I have worked with my interlocutors to help them realize their goals, and in that I see this dissertation as in part an argument for how music making can be effectively employed as a tool for peacebuilding through building trust, showing pitfalls, discussing difficulties to negotiate and highlighting best practice.

My work shares some of the aims of testimonial literature, and a potential shift in ethnomusicology towards a more testimonial approach. I recognize the importance of presenting the views and narratives of interlocutors with as little interpretive filtering as possible (Menchú, Burgos-Debray, and Wright 1984; Montejo 1994). In a 2017 keynote address to the British Forum for Ethnomusicology, Michael Bakan argued that in many cases our interlocutors' analyses are clear and complete, to the extent that our job as researchers is to re-present them (present them again verbatim) rather than represent them (through our own interpretive

framework). I feel that in cases as extreme as the violence experienced by many Colombians, the need for re-presentation is still more acute. However, I do not go so far as some works on Colombia that explicitly foreground the narratives of those who have most vividly experienced the conflict, pushing analysis mainly into the appendices (Brodzinsky and Schoeming 2012). Nor do I adopt Orlando Fals Borda's format of a supposedly minimally filtered "A-narrative" accompanied on parallel pages by an explicitly analytical "B-narrative" (Fals Borda 1979). Instead I situate my interlocutors' analyses alongside my own, within a broader narrative crafted to reduce distortion and facilitate the reader's understanding, while allowing me to formulate the arguments I feel are most salient, and draw points of comparison and contrast with relevant literature. Situating my points this way within a clear plot is important to me as a means of preserving and respecting as far as possible my interlocutors' tendency to avoid abstraction away from "real life" narratives.

Beyond facilitating a coherent and cohesive narrative, the order in which I arrange the chapters of this dissertation permits an expansion of scale through the cases I consider, as well as showing increasing engagement with state apparatus and the increasingly explicit centrality of social objectives to musical activities. I first focus on a particular social group in a small town whose interaction is highly disengaged from the state and involves minimal explicit intention to reduce violence, before considering interactions with public institutions across expanding geographic regions towards national-level engagement with peacebuilding. Within three of my five chapters I also oscillate between ethnography of a particular individual and the various levels of social grouping around them (chapters 1 and 4 have no particular "protagonist," though various individual experiences are explored). In structuring the text this way I take inspiration from Clifford Geertz (1983), Lila Abu-Lughod (1993), Leo Spitzer (1999), and George E.

Marcus (1995; 2009), in aiming to work from particular experiences both towards *and against* generalizations about experience of music, trust and (non-)violence. The fact that the music making described in earlier chapters is far less engaged with the Colombian state than those in later chapters allows me to deal discreetly with the difficulties of such engagement. The fact that the musical practices in later chapters are also more explicitly and intentionally aimed at effecting social change through music making also allows me to show the dynamics between precise intentions during music making, sounds and movement, the effects on trusting relations, organizational structure, broad social dispositions, working methodology and ethos.

The structure of my account also permits me to develop a theoretical intervention in ethnomusicological semiotics and phenomenology. I attempt, as far as possible, to provide a semiotic and phenomenological account, based in Thomas Turino's development of Charles Sanders Peirce's architectonic model, for a unified analysis of music as social life, and the surrounding fields of human interaction (Peirce 1955; Turino 2014). However, in Ingrid Monson's words, I allow this model to "mingle" with other forms of analysis where I believe this is useful (2008: S50), and show progressively where I believe it is lacking. There are three points where I suggest we may need to remold or develop the current Peircean model, going beyond its rigid tripartite architectonic structure, in order to make fuller sense of my cases and the general problems they point to. I offer a reductive account of "identity" *within* a Peircean framework. However, I argue that a fuller understanding of human agency might enrich our understandings of the interaction Turino analyzes in terms of experiential secondness and flow states (Csikszentmihaly 2008). I also suggest that cashing out the concept of "experiential thirdness" in terms of activities in which we follow established rules might lead us to posit a kind of experience *beyond* those offered by the Peircean tripartite model. Doing so would elucidate ways

in which people go beyond established rules, or choose their actions from a plethora of possible rule-guided options, and what makes them do so.

The styles of writing I adopt reflect a concern for balancing immersive narrative with analysis of experience. At points I make use of stylized language to evoke something of my interlocutors' experience in the reader. In doing so I am influenced by writers such as Julie Taylor (1998), Ron Emoff (2002), and Debora Kapchan (2007; 2015), who attempt to evoke in readers an embodied form of knowing iconic of their subject matter. This is especially useful when dealing with experiential secondness and flow. However, I mostly make use of the startling difference between language and music to analyze the latter using the former (Turino 1999).

Chapters 1 and 2 are in many ways two sides of a single coin. In chapter 1 I introduce street *tambora* celebrations and other forms of celebrating Christmas in San Martín. Using Turino's concept of four fields of music making, I analyze street tambora as participatory performance (Turino 2003, 2008), and show how habits of trusting are built through repetition at various scales of periodicity within the practice (Tenzer 2006; Solis 2014), from micro-timing to annual repetition. In chapter 2 I consider how, against a backdrop of violence, *tambora* was festivalized as a presentational practice, and how it came to be associated with education and a nebulous discourse of peace. I focus on Martina Camargo's processes of identification to trace these changes.

Chapter 3 begins a comparative narrative in which I turn to Joche Álvarez, his family and the *gaiteros* he associates with in Ovejas and Cartagena. I tell the story of his displacement and show how building and playing *gaitas* allows him to (re)build close trusting relationships. I also show the difficulties *gaiteros* face in building broad trusting networks, consider narratives of festivals that silence violence, and the ties that bind some *gaiteros* to political patrons.

Chapter 4 contains three narrative threads. I briefly discuss the *gaita* school of Joche's father, José Álvarez, before comparing Joche's work in Cartagena at a foundation for demobilized ex-guerrillas and ex-paramilitaries with a youth group in San Martín called *Juventud Sanmartinense* (JSM). I tackle a question left open by chapter 2, namely how effective festivalization has been in promoting non-violence among young people. The musical nucleus of the chapter is an analysis of how the members of JSM end songs, and the discourses of rules that surrounds this challenge.

Chapter 5 is about Fauner Salas' work with the *Legión del afecto* and the ongoing efforts of one-time members to continue its creative social work. I argue that the social wage paid to volunteers, and the creative, critical, reflexive and radically inclusive ethos encouraged by the *Legión* facilitate transformative experiences for many of its youth members, making them champions of non-violence, and that their ability to work effectively as companions in a shared struggle is often heightened by prior membership of youth groups like JSM.

I conclude with a summary of my failings and points made, and a consideration of the implications of my arguments beyond my cases in relation to the expanding field of music and conflict transformation. As I explain there, in order to focus on trust and (non)violence I do not place issues such as racialization, ethnicity, sex, gender and sexuality at the forefront of my analyses. Future work may benefit from doing so. Furthermore, I suggest a fuller picture of music and trust is to be gained through an as-yet under-developed theory of music based in the concept of nested games and game-like activities. The more we understand the different games being played, and game-like activities being carried out, during music making the better we can understand the ways in which music tends to build, or break down, trust and the possible contribution of different kinds of musical activity to peacebuilding efforts.

Chapter 1

Christmas *Tambora*: Trust in Periodic Participation

In this chapter I narrate my experiences of Christmas celebrations in San Martín, showing how their repetitious cycles of musical practice and sound relate to trust among participants. I consider various ways of remembering *Tambora*, positioning myself as a participant scholar providing a broadly Peircean, ethnographic analysis through the lens of the four fields of music making posited by Thomas Turino (2000, 2008, 2014). By bringing to bear literature from analytic studies of world music on periodicity, as well as anthropological and sociological understandings of trust I discuss how the repetitious nature of *Tambora* tends to generate broad networks of *prima facie* 'weak' trust, based in what Peirce calls 'dicent' signs of one's enjoyment of and commitment to the communal activity. I briefly consider the broader significance *Tambora* holds for participants, beyond the fun of participation. I also nuance my description by considering elements of current celebrations considered "non-traditional" by some *Tambora* aficionados, showing the dynamics of various forms of capital involved in negotiating often-conflicting local schemes of value.

(Remembering) Christmas *Tambora* in San Martín

On December 17th 2015, I made myself get up at 4 am so as not to miss anything. As I walked past San Martín's imposing catholic church the bells were being rung to announce the start of the day's services. I rounded the corner into *la calle de Bolívar* and the peals stopped. Ahead of me in the darkness Ismael Ardila began doodling a rhythm on his *tambora* drum. He is a *campesino* (peasant farmer) and well known locally as a *cantador* – a "traditional" singer, composer, and

improviser of *tambora* songs. Most years on this date he plays and sings in his street's celebrations. He no longer competes in the town's *tambora* festival, however. Avoids the stage.

I greeted Ismael on his front step. He complained about the late showing of the kids who had agreed to come for the parade, and about the lack of *aguardiente* (cheap sugar cane liquor flavored with anise). It was all half-joking. Eventually enough people arrived to sing a few songs. Ismael led the singing and played the *tambora* drum at the same time. I played the *tambor alegre* hand drum. The rhythmic feel for all the songs that morning was *berroche* (see Figures 8 and 20). It is faster than other feels in the *tambora* family, and so is felt to be "happier" by locals, more suited to celebration.

At that point a group of young children turned up in white t-shirts and Santa hats; the ones due to perform the *gozos* in church, the religious poems interspersed with song as part of the *novena*, the nine days of celebration running up to Christmas day. One of Ismael's young neighbors took over playing the *alegre* as we paraded the short distance directly to the church singing. It was too late to do a whole lap of town as is the norm.

In church, the service was clearly special. It included the songs and poems of the *gozos*, which Ismael led by singing and playing the *tambora* drum as the hat-clad children and rest of the congregation sang along in rough unison. The *gozos* and *villancicos* (Christmas carols) we sang are common at Christmas celebrations across Colombia and the Spanish-speaking Catholic world, but their accompaniment with *tambora* rhythmic feels is particular to the river region.¹ At the end of the service the musicians gathered around the statue of San Martín to "serenade him"

¹ For example, the *villancico* "Tutaina" is normally interpreted in a triple feel elsewhere. To make it sit within the duple *berroche* feel, Ismael uses triplet phrasing and stretches out the long notes of the melody.

with a song sometimes interpreted in street and stage *tambora* called "Campana de Navidad" (Christmas Bell).² Some people started joking about the lack of *aguardiente* again.

On exiting the church one young man let off a firework and we left behind obviously religious Christmas music, with a song adopted from commercial carnival repertoire popular across Colombia (video 1).³ The structure of the performance was typical of celebratory *tambora*. Ismael began each with the chorus, which we all repeated. Then he slotted stock verses into its melody and we all responded with the chorus. Ismael continued inserting verses in any order he felt, each an octosyllabic quatrain with an *a-b-c-b* rhyme scheme.⁴ We repeated the same chorus in response each time. The lyrics of the chorus marked a contrast with the language of the church service: "*Oh le la Joselito borrachón, Oh le la Joselito está borracho*" (*Oh le la, little José the drunkard, Oh le la, little José is drunk*). However, the rhythmic feel was the same, and the general atmosphere of celebration was unchanged. Most participants do not, I believe, draw a sharp distinction between apparently sacred devotional ritual and apparently secular celebration. What happens inside and outside the church is all part of the *novena*.⁵

² A version of this song was recorded by Carbó in the 1990s and appears as track 10 on *Tambora II: Música tradicional momposina* (2005) (see also Carbó 2003: 277).

³ Recording 1.1: <https://youtu.be/We4v6w62NQc> "*Joselito Borrachón*" was written by Milena Muñoz and Pedro "Ramaya" Beltran, and originally recorded by Beltrán in a *pito atravesado* format.

⁴ Peter Wade discusses the use of such octosyllabic quatrain verses in various kinds of *cumbia* music of *La Costa* (Wade 2000: 60). George List states "the great majority of all verses..." in the various *Costeño* song practices he studies "...are octosyllabic or hexasyllabic," which he attributes to Spanish-European cultural inheritance (List 1983:540). Robin Moore also notes the prevalence of octosyllabic quatrains in song across the "Hispanic" Caribbean, centering his analysis of this feature in "Spanish-derived" music in Puerto Rico (Moore 2010: 39).

⁵ Moore attributes similar attitudes to Afro-Dominican "folk catholic" celebrants (Ibid: 48-9). Turino describes an even more inclusive attitude towards the divine among Aymara-speaking Indigenous people in southern Peru, for whom "a sacred/secular dichotomy is largely irrelevant" (Turino 1993: 21). This contrasts sharply with the importance for Indigenous *Shona* in Zimbabwe of holding ceremonies for possession *inside* the house if possible, to increase the intensity of the participatory experience (Turino 2000: 51). Sanmartinenses generally occupy an ambivalent position between these extremes. The aim of *Tambora* is intense participation, and religious devotion, but not possession, so being inside the church or outside in the street makes little difference to the way participants experience it. Alcohol and fireworks are kept out of explicitly religious spaces out of respect for church protocol. They intensify the experience of street *Tambora*, but do not diminish its devotional nature.



Figure 18: Ismael (center, playing tambora drum) and celebrants leaving the church.

There would usually be a parade float at that point in proceedings. The previous year, four men from Bolívar street had carried a young girl dressed as the virgin Mary on an upturned table, the "traditional" form of parade floats according to Ismael (P.C. 2008, 2015). This year, however, they only managed to put out one float during the whole day, while other sectors boasted about putting out three or four different floats. There were relatively few revelers that shouted and laughed behind the tractor-drawn float entitled "The enchantment of the fairies," their heads covered against the midday sun. However, just like the previous year, they sang a song particular to their sector, through which they claimed superiority over others:

*De las cuatro barrios,
cuál será mejor?
La calle 'e Bolívar
se lleva la flor!*

Of the four neighborhoods,
which is best?
Bolívar street
takes the prize!

Each time we got back to point where we started that morning the celebrants dispersed. I headed back to the house where I always stay in San Martín to write up some notes and get some rest in preparation for the night's celebrations.

The house belongs to Álvaro Camargo, Martina's brother. It was where they grew up with their father Cayetano Camargo, locally renowned for his poetry and songwriting, and where musicologist Guillermo Carbó also stayed in the 1990s while carrying out fieldwork on *tambora*. The Camargos have been one of the families at the center of remembering *tambora* in San Martín, through informal narration, continuing participatory practices, creating and maintaining presentational practices, and as "culture bearers" and cultural elites through whom others inform their understanding of *tambora*. We developed strong, deep and broad bonds of trust as they became central interlocutors in my work (I still have a key to Álvaro's house, given as a sign of mutual trust), through which I attempt to balance the positions of an active participant and reflexive researcher, helping remember through doing, retelling and reflecting on the narrations.⁶

Martina was not in San Martín for Christmas that year, but whether visiting her natal town, or at her home in the working-class neighborhood of Cartagena where she now lives, she often actively remembers growing up in San Martín. She frequently tells the story of how she was nearly born in the nearby River Magdalena itself,⁷ and recounts how her childhood during the 1960s and '70s was filled with household chores and responsibilities, drawn-out evenings playing games in the sandy streets, and music making with her family and neighbors. Her musical influences included singing in church; picking out the melodies of popular music from

⁶ While I sometimes find it useful to separate more reflexive theoretical text from more ethnographic narrative (Marcus 1986: 175; Fals Borda 1979: 13B), it should be clear that both inform each other, just as each informed and were informed by my applied fieldwork in cycles of reflexive and unreflexive thought and action.

⁷ When Martina's mother went into labor, complications forced her to travel to the hospital in the nearby city of El Banco, which meant crossing the river by boat. That night a storm nearly stopped the anxious travelers from arriving, and almost forced Martina's mother to give birth in the middle of the river.

the country's interior on a cousin's guitar; and organizing dances with recorded commercial music from *La Costa* and the Caribbean. A far stronger influence, however, was the local music-dance practice of *Tambora*. On one of the many occasions that we sat together in the TV room at the back of her house, to capture the vague breeze of the small patio and the relative quiet away from the noise of the street and her husband's workshop, Martina explained Christmas celebrations in San Martín to me in this way:

San Martín de Loba is a town that celebrates Christmas with *Tambora*. *Tambora* is *navideña* ("Christmassy" or "part of Christmas"). The *novena* of the *niño dios* (Christ Child or Baby Jesus) is nine days and nights of festivities. It begins in the early morning of December 16 and goes on until the 24th. The first street [or sector of town] begins with a parade around the town in the early morning, around three or four. They parade through the streets of the town with tambora music, ending at the church. The birth of the baby Jesus is celebrated with *Tambora* and it's taken to the church and you sing in church. After that comes the church service, and when that is finished, you sing in the churchyard. During the day come the Christmas-themed parade floats. At night we do the *novenas* with *tableaux vivant*. After that the street [sector] sings, plays and dances tambora all night, then they pass on the *Tambora* to the next street [sector]. That's how we always celebrate. (P.C. 2008, 2012)

From a geographic and temporal distance, Martina narrates *Tambora* as being repeated the same way every year, and integrally related to the *novena* as a celebration of Christmas. However, this particular history of *Tambora* is relatively recent.

Through the presentation of various oral histories collected from older residents of towns in the River region, the Colombian composer and ethnomusicologist Guillermo Carbó notes broad agreement that Christmas has always been an important time for *Tambora*. However, he also shows that *Tambora* was historically a way of celebrating other important religious dates, as well as birthdays and spontaneous occasions (Carbó 2003: 70-89). Two of Carbó's interlocutors in San Martín remember an intentional tightening of the connection between *Tambora* and Christmas celebrations, both inside the church and in the various sectors of the town, through a liberal religious initiative of the early 1940s (Ibid 100-103). Jesuit *Javeriana* missionaries from Antioquia in Colombia's interior, and the local priest at the time, worked to promote local forms

of celebration. However, they simultaneously limited them to a few key dates in the Church calendar, and structured them within a format more closely tied to officially sanctioned *novena* celebrations. It was through their work with people in San Martín that the *novena* came to have the structure Martina describes, with church services, processions through town with or without floats, *tableaux vivants* representing nativity scenes, and a night time *Tambora* in a particular sector of the town each night.

I missed Bolívar Street's *tableaux vivant* in 2015. To be honest I had grown bored of being a passive spectator to the repetitious presentational format and nativity narrative. When I arrived for the evening celebrations I met a dozen people waiting expectantly as Regina Ardila hooked up her Christmas decorations, recycled from previous years, to an extension chord. Regina is a street vendor, Ismael's sister, and locally famous as a *cabeza* (literally head; leader, organizer, or host of a *Tambora* (see Carbó 2003: 73-4)). This term is used to refer to women who organize nighttime street *Tamboras*. Regina is consistently the *cabeza* for her sector's night of the *novena*. That year we waited for Ismael to start the singing, but, eager to get going, some of the celebrants convinced *me* to start things off. I obliged, but my repertoire of songs and verses was not large enough to maintain momentum for long. Also the chorus was too small and impassive to keep the energy up, even when Regina took over the singing (video 2: 00:24).⁸ They complained they didn't know the words, or that their throats and hands hurt with all the singing and clapping. It was a disheartening start to the night.

Ismael eventually came slinking towards the small crowd. He had clearly been drinking most of the day, but when he sang it became clear that his level of intoxication was just right for this to be a good night. He began with one of his favorites: "*La cuba é*" (video 2: 10:00). Ismael

⁸ Video 2: <https://youtu.be/rd2NNpFk6TA>. The second song "*La Pluma del Holandés*" falls apart around 6:15 and Regina complains: "*El coro no suena!*" (The chorus isn't loud enough!).

provided verse-after-verse, keeping the chorus responding without complaint, and the fuller sound motivated couples to dance. After a few minutes, another man I did not know inserted himself into the circle that had formed, taking over the lead singing with more new verses, provoking yelps of delight from participants. He and Ismael exchanged *cantador* responsibilities for seven minutes more. The song only fell apart after a total of nine and a half minutes when someone interrupted Ismael as he was beginning a new verse (video 2, 19:30). The larger group of people who had gathered by then wanted him to sing a different song. Distracted, he shouted: "Agua!" requesting another round of *aguardiente*. Someone produced a carton of the stuff and distributed a small plastic cup's worth to everyone involved.

Eventually we got back to music making. Regina took a long stick and drew a large circle in the sand of the street, implying that participants should stand around it, to make more room for dancing. Between songs she distributed *agualoja* (non-alcoholic spiced sugar-water, thought to be good for the voice), oranges recently harvested from their family's plot of land, and candies to keep energy up. Things carried on in much the same way for hours. Nearly all songs were in the rhythmic feel of *tambora tambora*: Sustaining *berroche* for more than one song gets too tiring. Songs were repeated quite a lot, but people did not seem to mind. At times it was a little difficult to maintain momentum, however. Not many people were dancing and the circle tended to open up into a stage-like horseshoe. A few young men perched on motorbikes parked at a short distance to watch passively. The music dragged when not everyone was involved. I could feel people's focus drift when the circle opened up.⁹

⁹ Writing about Shona Mbira music, Turino describes the increased focus of participants as possession of a medium is achieved, as "electric" (Turino 2008: 131). Katherine Hagedorn uses electricity as an extended metaphor for possession or '*ache'* (power) (Hagedorn 2001: 68, 78, 80, 85, 82, 120). Here, while possession is not an aim or outcome, a similarly observable or palpable intensity of focus is achieved when participation is going well. When it is not, the "voltage" seems to drop.

We kept going until about 2:30 am, by which time Ismael had stolen away (he had to be up before dawn as usual to work his small plot of land), and only a few youngsters remained testing their fledgling *cantador* abilities. Regina finally sat down for the first time that night. Her *agualoja* and treats had run out, and the music making became interspersed with increasingly long gaps, during which more people drifted away. Some of the kids would get up again in a couple of hours for the next morning's parade, and they had asked me to join them. I wondered if we would manage it.

***Tambora* as Participatory Musical Performance**

How should we understand the nighttime street *Tambora* and the *tambora* that forms part of the Christmas parades as described above? In his 2008 book *Music as Social Life*, Thomas Turino develops work by Charles Keil on musical participation, under the influence of Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social fields, to posit four fields of music making (Turino 2008: 23-65; see also Turino 2000: 47-59; Keil 1987). Turino argues that we should consider *participatory* music making a different kind of practice from *presentational* music making. In the latter there is a division between performer and audience, while in the former everyone present is a potential participant.¹⁰ The central distinguishing aspect of music making within each of these fields is *intention*. People involved in participatory music making primarily aim to maximize the intensity of the experience of participation itself, often by maximizing the number of people participating. The intentions of people involved in presentational music events are more varied, but conglomerate around a mindset in which the performers prepare music to engage or entertain a largely passive audience.

¹⁰ Furthermore, these practices are distinct in intention and sonic characteristics from both high-fidelity recordings and studio-created sonic art.

Street *Tambora* fits very well within the ideal type of participatory performance on this conception. It is an activity that everyone is welcome to participate in, as long as they respect the implicit rules. There are two immediate aims, and each reinforces the other: to enjoy oneself by participating actively in music making (which includes dancing); and to encourage more people to become active participants, engaging them as intensely as possible, so that everyone present can enjoy themselves more. The *tambora* music that accompanies parades is also largely participatory. There is a degree of presentational intent in that the paraders want to show their musical prowess, and the effort they have put into their float, to the passive spectators they pass. However, it is mutually understood that anyone wishing to join the parade and sing along is welcome. Furthermore, parades are informally judged to be successful in large part by the number of people involved. Years ago, when all sectors of the town held night-time street *Tamboras*, the *novena* as a whole involved sequential participation (Turino 2008: 48-51), with each sector taking part in turn on its designated night. A good night's Tambora in one street would serve as audible motivation for people in the next street to enjoy themselves (Martina Camargo P.C. 2008, 2012).

The sounds and movements of street *Tambora* exhibit the general sonic qualities that Turino argues are shared by participatory music the world over with regard to structure, density, repetition and variation (Turino 2008: 59). In *Tambora* celebrations, not just songs, but also days of celebration, and the novena as whole, make up "a collection of resources refashioned anew in each performance like the form, rules and practiced moves of a game" (Ibid).¹¹ Rhythmic

¹¹ Turino writes of "pieces" in this passage. It is useful sometimes to have terms like "piece," "song," or "tune" in our lexis. However, when considering practices like participatory *Tambora* where "songs" are mostly just a chorus with a melody to be alternated with stock or improvised verses, I believe we gain a clearer picture by avoiding the hypostatization of "pieces" in our ontology. Many musicological analyses are weakened by a doxic acceptance of a "piece" or "work" concept within the discipline, for example, Ingrid Monson's analysis of Jazz rhythm section improvisation considered below (1996).

patterns, dance steps, verses, and some entire songs, constitute "short, open... forms" that are "redundantly repeated," making *Tambora* "highly repetitive" on these various levels (Ibid). There is a "constancy of rhythm, meter [and] groove" (Ibid), which is varied little through the whole night. The vast majority of songs are interpreted in either *tambora tambora* or *berroche*. Rather than clear, planned, uniform boundaries, songs and whole nights have "feathered beginnings and endings" as participants engage and disengage (Ibid). Cantadores generally start, and percussion and chorus fall in to the groove when it suites them. Songs fall apart in an unpredictable staggered manner at unplanned moments as a drummer stops playing and others follow, or the cantador(a) stops offering new verses, like when Ismael was interrupted by calls for a different song (video 2: 19:30).

Participatory practices generally have "dense textures" that encourage participation by masking individual contributions to the gestalt, thereby reducing anxiety (Ibid 44-47). In *Tambora* asynchronous (or "horizontal") density is ensured through the interlocking of drums and other percussive instruments, as well as the responsorial form of vocal parts. Figure 19 shows that the interlocking rhythmic patters of the *tambora* drum and *currulao* in the rhythmic feel of *tambora tambora* leave only the fourteenth beat of the sixteen beat cycle silent. Simultaneous (or "vertical") density is aided greatly by the raspy, metallic timbre of the *guache*, but also by broad tuning of chorus singers.

claps	X			X			X			X		
guache	↓			—	—		↓			—	—	
tambora	●			X	X		○	●		X	X	
currulao	△	△		/			△	△	△	/		△
feet	跣			跣					跣			
				跣					跣			

Figure 19: A typical gestalt rhythmic pattern resulting from the combination of claps, guache, tambora drum, currulao hand drum, and dancers' feet in a tambora rhythmic feel (dancers' steps are not audible, but are necessary parts of the overall groove).

The role of cantador(a) is generally filled by a person with quite precise pitch.¹²

However, anyone can join the chorus. While some participants attempt to match their melody closely with that of cantador(a), others tend to sing in whatever melodic range they find comfortable, without attempting to tune their pitches closely in relation to other singers. The resultant chorus typically includes a broad range of melodies with roughly the same contour, starting at different pitches and not tuned tightly to any particular harmonic framework. This combination of heterophony, broad tuning and absence of strict harmonic framework leads a dense overall texture to the chorus, masking singers whose tuning might be considered too inaccurate for the stage, reducing any potential anxiety associated with sounding "out of tune," and encouraging even more participants to join, thereby increasing the density of the sound.

However, chorus singers tend to coordinate their parts in quite tight rhythmic unison. In this

¹² Carbó 1993 notes that many cantador(a)s raise the tonal center of their verses as a song develops. Unlike Anthony Seeger (2004 [1987]: 93-129), he does not devote much analysis to *why cantadores* sing this way. I believe they do so because they get increasingly excited and increase their effort to sound loud and joyous as rising numbers of participants do similar. There is sometimes an audible tension between a lead singer and a chorus as they negotiate in real time how much the vague tonal center of a song will rise. This negotiation is largely low in participants' focal awareness, but is related to how much everyone is enjoying themselves. Going with the rise can be a way to give oneself over to the collective fun of the group, a sign to others that one is doing so, and encouragement for them to follow suit. All of this can happen at a low level of conscious focal awareness and is iconic of broader social expression of excitement.

sense, textures are clearer than in some participatory traditions.¹³ This may be due to the close relation of Tambora to the church, and its festivalization, both of which encourage more presentational modes.

As in other participatory musical practices (Turino 2008: 46-7), *Tambora* participants limit their variations and restrict them to specific areas of musical interaction. There are "few dramatic contrasts" (Ibid: 59), and none are planned. Within a song being interpreted in the feel of *tambora tambora*, the lead singer can cue a switch of feel by singing the first half of the chorus line and waiting for the chorus to respond with the second half. This cuts in half the length of the responsorial phrases. Dancers often respond by shifting to a two-step shuffle, and drummers sometimes shift to a rhythmic feel sonically identical to that of *berroche*.¹⁴ This is known as "*la bozá*" (or *la abozá'* or *el aboza'o*).¹⁵ If a cantador(a) introduces another full length

¹³ Most famously Steven Feld shows how the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea favor dense textures resulting from the overlapping of in-sync-out-of-phase melodic phrases, or "lift up over sounding" (Feld 2012 [1982]). Michelle Kisliuk shows similar for the BaAka people of Centrafrique and the Republic of Congo (Kisliuk 2006). Paul Berliner demonstrates how Shona Mbira players and singers at *bira* ceremonies achieve a similar effect by staggering their melodies (Berliner 1978: 88-111, 192). See Turino (2008: 45) for a comparative overview. In Colombia, a similar style of melodic overlapping is present in the Afro-descendent funeral songs of *Lumbalú*, most prominently practiced in San Basilio de Palenque, in Montes de María (List 1983: 471). The slightly out-of-sync heterophony of vocal lines of female *cantadoras* during *Lumbalú* contrasts with the in-sync responsorial vocal lines in celebratory *bullerengue* performed by the same singers. Compare "Canto Lumbalú" to "Tres golpes na' mas" both sung by the group *Alegres Ambulancias* (Alegres Ambulancias & Sexteto Tabalá 2016)

¹⁴ E.g. video 2: 11:37 - 11:34; 12:35 - 12:58; 14:31 - 14:34; 15:44 - 15:54; 16:09 - 16:12; 17:15 - 17:21; 17:53 - 17:55; 18:26 - 18:33; 19:20 - 19:29. Older drummers will often play through short *bosá* sections, only switching if it is extended. For example, listen to "La Ceiba" as performed by Venancia Barriosnuevo and musicians from Hatillo de Loba, track 1 on *Tambora II - Música Tradicional Momposina* (2005). At 00:30 singers move to the *bosá*, but percussionists do not. After a brief return to verses (00:47), singers again go to the *bosá* (01:01), and this time percussionists *do* switch their groove. At around 01:25 the group returns to verses in the feel of *tambora tambora*, before all musicians switch to another extended *bosá* section from 01:50 until the song falls apart around 02:25.

¹⁵ Carbó calls it *el aboza'o* (2003: 214-222). *Gaita* music contains a similar section where the lead flute (*gaita hembra*) relaxes. The group do not change rhythmic feel, but simply maintain the groove with less variation. There is some speculation as to the significance of the term "*bozá*". It seems to relate to "*bozar*" meaning to tie up with rope (e.g. moor a boat, put simple reins on a horse, or muzzle a dog) (Ochoa Escobar 2013: 96). It may have a historical connection to "*bozal*" a term used in colonial times to refer to enslaved people recently brought to the Americas from Africa. In *chirimía* music from the Chocó region and brass band music from Northern Colombia the term also refers to "more relaxed" or "more restricted" sections, often led by the clarinet (ibid). According to Ochoa Escobar's interlocutors, in *gaita* music the section is known as *la bozá* because it is felt to be more "moored," "secured," or "restrained" than other sections of a performance (Ochoa Escobar 2013: 95-6). Fortich Díaz (1994), and Bermudez et al. (1987: 86) note the use of the same term to refer to a section in northern Colombian brass band

verse, all participants switch back to the *tambora* rhythmic feel. This is often where a new cantador(a) will take over the role of lead singer. These improvised structural switches not only provide interest for participants and keep them attentive, but also provide the *cantador(a)* with time and mental space to think of another verse. Importantly, their positioning is not planned and they do not necessarily signify structural features of songs such as an impending ending, in contrast to *bozá* sections in presentational settings (see chapter 4).

	X			X			X			X		
claps												
guitar												
tambora	X	●		—	X	—	X	●		—	X	—
cantado	—	△	/	/	—	/	—	△	/	/	—	△
feet	feet			feet			feet			feet		

Figure 20: A typical gestalt pattern for the feel of berroche or the bozá section of a song in the feel of tambora tambora.

What Turino calls "intensive variation" in sonic interaction (Turino 2008: 59), small-scale improvisation away from the otherwise repeated patterns, occurs most notably in the hand-drummer's accompaniment, as he is freer than the *tambora* player to improvise.¹⁶ The hand

music (see below) in which the bass drum player only plays on the shell, trumpets stop, and clarinets and euphoniums exchange phrases (Wade 2000: 59). In *Tambora* some songs have particular vocal sections for the *bozá*. For example "*Hombre de la nación*" (Man of the Nation) includes a new melody and lyrics (Camargo 2009: track 13). However, most involve the divided repetition of the chorus as described above.

¹⁶ Carbó notes the relative freedom of the hand drummer to vary one's groove and draws a parallel with the relative freedom of men to behave less predictably than women *during celebrations*. This may explain the male gendering of the name for the hand drum (*el currulao* or *el tambor*) and the female gendering of the name for the sticked drum (*la tambora*). I am skeptical about so straightforward a comparison and the ascription of gender to inanimate objects based on the gendered nouns used to refer to them. The female *gaita* flute is much freer than its male counterpart (see chapter 3), but this does not correlate with greater freedom of female-gendered people in *gaita* celebrations or in places where *gaita* is played (Quintana Martínez 2007). However, it is noteworthy to draw a comparison between the predictable sobriety of Regina and the less predictable intoxication of Ismael during his one day of rest in relation to Carbó's argument. In general I would argue that people in the river region and northern Colombia as a

drummer's variations typically increase asynchronous density (see Figure 21, video 2: 01:33; 01:50; 10:48). However, he generally sticks close to his rhythmic pattern so as not to disturb the gestalt groove. A *tambora* drum player will very occasionally play a variation of the groove to maintain people's focus, but returns quickly to the main groove (see Figure 22, video 2: 00:57; 01:06; 10:33). These variations normally come at the beginnings of phrases,¹⁷ but happen at unplanned, irregular intervals and infrequently. Importantly, in most *Tambora*, in contrast with *Gaita* (see chapter 3), virtuosity of variation in drumming is not a high priority of most participants. Some traditionalists often complain that younger musicians or non-locals play with "mucho revuelo" (too many variations or soloistic phrases deviating from the groove).

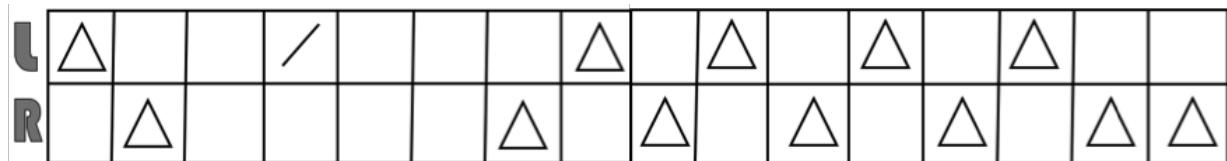


Figure 21: A common variation of the tambora rhythmic feel on the currulao hand drum.

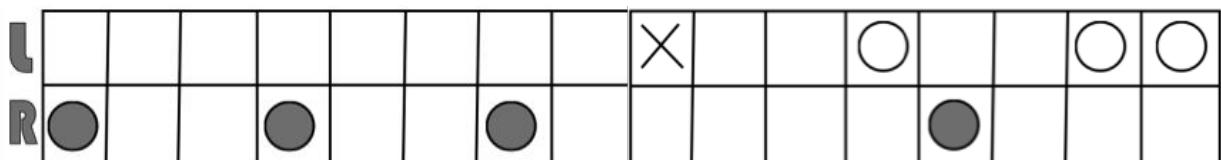


Figure 22: A common variation of the tambora rhythmic feel played on the tambora drum.

Cantadores sometimes vary their singing in interesting ways. Some take the beginning of a verse as a kind of prefix, repeating it several times with different endings, before moving on to

whole, who are gendered as non-male are significantly less free to behave in unpredictable ways, not only during times of celebration.

¹⁷ Charles Keil argues that a similar response "at the beginnings of things" among audiences at urban blues performances shows they are committed to the event as a ritual, rather than as a passive audience appreciating musical sounds (1967: 39, 158-9, 162).

another set of similarly connected verses.¹⁸ Importantly, because of the redundant repetition of chorus lines within songs, and verses across different songs, the intentionality of lyrics becomes progressively less central to participants' focal awareness than the continuation and variation of the groove through singing. That is to say what song lyrics are *about* is less important than what they are *for*, namely keeping the celebration going. Song lyrics are not principally experienced as propositions or arguments to be interpreted through analysis (Peirce 1998: 204, 218, 308; Short 2007: 233; Turino 2014: 213). Rather, experience of them foregrounds their nature as stock moves in a game played for fun, to be reacted to with yelps of joy and continued engagement in the doing of *Tambora*, what Turino, following Peirce, calls emotional and energetic (dynamical) interpretants (Turino 2014: 202, 214-5), or effects of the signs and what they index; in this case, mostly previous celebrations. During the procession, the celebrants of Bolívar street were not *arguing* their sector was the best, they were attempting to make it so by stimulating participation. Varying verses and occasionally shifting to the *bozá* helps maintain participants' interest by

¹⁸ One common 'prefix' is "*De los pájaros del monte yo quisiera ser...*" (Of all the wild birds, I'd like to be...) which is followed by the name of a local bird and a line that rhymes and somehow humanizes its characteristics, for example "... *el toche, para cantar tu belleza todo el dia y toda la noche*" (... the flame-rumped tanager, to sing [about] your beauty all day and all night. Some verses contain a pair of 'prefixes', for example: "*Por aquí me voy metiendo como raiz de...*" (Here I go, worming my way in, like the roots of...). This can be followed by a particular plant, for example "...*caña brava*" (...the gynerium plant) or "... *caña dulce* (sugar cane). The second half of the verse begins "*la mujer es la que pierde*" (the woman is the one who loses), and the line ends with a rhyming phrase, "...*y el hombre no pierde nada*" (and the man doesn't lose anything), or "...*y el hombre siempre se luce*" (and the man always comes off looking good). These verses are often used to interrupt another singer, the "Here I go worming my way in..." being a dicent declaration of the act of interruption. Another common "prefix" is "*Por arriba corre el agua, por debajo...*" (Up above runs the water, down below...), which can be followed by "... *piedrecita, desde lejos se conoce la mujer que es señorita*" (... little stones, from a distance you can tell whether a woman is a virgin). This line may make reference to the practice of placing flowers in female participants' hair. According to some interlocutors, a bloom on one side of the head signified the woman was a virgin, and hence available, whereas a bloom on the other side signified the woman was not. An alternative ending to this verse is "... *caracol, desde lejos se conoce el hombre que tiene amor*" (... shells, from a distance you can tell which men have love). The form of lyrical variation here is similar to *gaita* flute and *alegre* drum variation discussed in Chapter 4. Cantadores will sometimes insert stock, or improvise formulaic lyrics that make participants take notice of their propositional meaning, providing "indexical nows" (Turino 2008: 58, 69). One example calls attention to a female dancer "*Aquella que va bailando me dijo que no sabía. Mira como da la vuelta de la misma picardía!*" (The woman/ girl who is dancing told me she didn't know how. [But] look how she spins so mischievously/ craftily/ cheekily/ coquettishly). Hence, the referential meanings of words and phrases are useful in sung verses, but the main intention of singers is to promote participation rather than represent or argue.

providing what Turino calls "indexical news" (Ibid, 196, 214), moments of sufficient surprise to re-engage participants with what is happening in the moment.

Tambora dance involves a high degree of variation within a highly restricted range of acceptable moves. It is mutually understood that dancers should form male-female couples, with only one or two couples dancing inside the circle at any one time. They should never touch, and as one dancer pursues the other in circular motions their foot movements generally stay constant (see Figure 19).

At the *Tambora* hosted by Regina I mostly played the *tambora* drum or *guache*, but at one point I was singing the chorus and clapping in the circle and nobody had begun to dance yet. From across the other side of the circle came a tall, svelte, older woman (I later learned her name is Bertha), dancing with elegant poise towards me. Her upper body seemed to float as her feet marked the standard pattern (see Figure 19). She fixed me with an intense gaze, came right up to me, her hands holding the edges of her long skirt a little way away from her knees, then backed away with a slight bob. I moved forward, following her towards the center of the circle. There were none of the stock dance sequences I had come to know from staged tambora. Rather, I followed her as closely as I could while she backed away in circular movements. When I got too close, or held her gaze for too long, she spun away from me. At such points I mimicked her turn, catching her gaze again as she began another circular retreat or advance. A friend thrust a *concha 'e jobo* (straw hat) into my right hand and I tried to take the initiative, gesturing for Bertha to circle me, following the hat as I backed away in an arc. The first time she ignored the hat, even as I flicked it to attract her attention. She spun away. The second time she acquiesced to the suggestion implied by my gesture and circled me, gaze fixed all the while. Sometimes our feet flattened out the pattern to a triplet figure. Keil would describe this as a "participatory

discrepancy;" a small deviation from precise microtiming that shows we know where the standard rhythmic pattern "should" fall, but are willing and able to stretch our movements out to increase their fluidity and add to the discrepancies of the gestalt, encouraging more participation (Keil 1987).¹⁹ When the musicians transitioned to the *bozá* we shuffled in a two-step pattern.

On one occasion as the musicians returned to the tambora groove, they seemed to pick up the pace and intensity a little. In response, (or were the musicians responding to her increased intensity?) Bertha advanced towards me faster, closer. Someone in the circle shouted out: "*Túmbelo!*" Bertha was trying to make me loose my balance, and the other participants were encouraging her. I just manage to keep my footing, but my stumbles provoked laughs from the circle. In later interviews some older participants told me that years ago the custom was that if a woman managed to make a man fall while dancing *tambora*, he had to by the next bottle of aguardiente, though others discount this as myth. Could Bertha have been trying to oblige me to buy more drink for the celebrants? The musicians switched to the *bozá* again (I think it was the third time, but I had lost count) and we switched our step once more. At that point the groove fell apart and Bertha returned to her side of the circle. We did not make eye contact again. We only spoke when I noticed she was leaving and made a point of asking her name and thanking her, switching into (less participatory) researcher mode.

This concentration and attention to one another's actions involved in this encounter is a common way of being in the world, but it is noticeable in this case because of the intensity with which it is felt. I analyze this in more depth in relation to *gaita* music in chapter 3. For now I

¹⁹ Lise Waxer discusses a similar phenomenon among accomplished young salsa dancers in Cali, Colombia, who dance just behind the beat (Waxer 2002: 148-9). Julie Taylor also notes how *milonga* style tango dancers in Buenos Aires move just behind the beat, cramming their foot adornments to basic steps into the last possible moment (Taylor 1998: 28). A more detailed measurement of accomplished *tambora* dancers may reveal a particular microtiming feel or 'swing' for the style (Gerischer 2006). I discuss swing in relation to *alegre* drum playing in *gaita* music (chapter 3).

simply concur with Turino that in successful participatory music making, because of a lack of preordained structure, "special attention to what is going on in the moment is required" (Turino 2008: 43). A central aim of many *Tambora* participants is to experience this special attention, and provide the sounds and movements necessary for others to experience it. It is present in all aspects of *Tambora* participation, but felt most intensely towards the center of the circle where most intense variation takes place. While variation from one's established patterns, or from the patterns of other participants, is important in *Tambora* as in all participatory music, it requires constancy in other parts. In the following section I focus on repetition and constancy of attention, to show how they contribute to the construction of trust among participants.

Participatory *Tambora* and Trust

One central feature of trusting others is that it involves predictions or feelings about their *future* behavior (Luhmann 1979: 13; Hardin 2001: 17; Densley 2012: 303).²⁰ Turino argues that "[t]he heightened repetition of forms and melodic material in participatory music provides *security in constancy*" (Turino 2008: 40, emphasis in original). However, it is not simply that participants feel they can predict what sounds will come next, but also that they feel confident of what the people around them will do next because they share a set of dispositions: "performance competence [in a particular style] is *both a sign and simultaneously a product of* shared musical knowledge and experience – shared habits "(Ibid 43; emphasis in original).

²⁰ Emancipatory theories of trust (e.g. Yamagishi 2001), and costly signaling theories of trust (e.g. Bacharach and Gambetta 2001) both emphasize this aspect. Both theories, as represented in extant literature, place too great an emphasis on rational acts of trusting, resting on what Tyler calls a "social exchange model" of human interaction (Tyler 2001: 287). Costly signaling theory fails to take into account that potential trustees notice non-purposeful as well as purposeful signs a potential trustee. However, both accounts capture a central facet of trusting, namely that when one person trusts another she believes or feels something about the trustee's *future* behavior. Trusting others is easier when (we believe or feel) their future actions are more predictable.

An important aspect of security in the constancy of other people is the timescale(s) at which periodic repetition occurs. Michael Tenzer argues for this "periodicity" as a fundamental tool of musical analysis across culturally different practices (Tenzer 2006). Two recent analyses of African-Diasporic musical practices apply Tenzer's concept of periodicity in ways that are useful for thinking about how trust develops among *Tambora* participants. In a recent article on Capoeira Angola, Juan Diego Diaz shows how players negotiate repetition and variation in order to manifest *malícia*: cunning or trickery, which is indexical of virtuosity in the game and highly valued among players (Diaz 2017). Diaz focuses on mid-level periodicity within a game, the repeating patterns and variations of players lasting seconds, but suggests that:

A combined focus on patterning at micro, medium and meta levels will broaden our lens when looking at how musicians shape the performance *capoeira* and other groove-based musics, and also in understanding one of *capoeira*'s most elusive and fascinating features - *malícia*. (Ibid: 66)

I attempt to unify a consideration of the micro, medium, macro and meta (bridging) in the musical practices I consider. However, I focusing not on cunning or trickery, but what is often thought of as its opposite, namely trustworthiness or reliability.²¹

In his work on the Thelonius Monk Quartet, Gabriel Solis considers periodicity at the medium and macro-level (between different performances of the same tune) to show how order and unpredictability relate to improvisation and composition at varying scales of performance. Perhaps even more than jazz performances or *capoeira rodas*, *Tambora* is "made up of cyclic repetitions in [overlapping and] nesting orders of magnitude" (Solis 2014: 9). The focus of *Tambora* participants tends towards repetition and displaying mutual support, rather than creativity or cunning. It provides an opportunity for participants to observe and display reliable

²¹ However, as indicated by Bertha's dancing, *tambora* does involve elements of trickery, and future research would benefit from investigating this further, especially to consider how such trickery is related to pointedly gendered and gendering interaction. It may be the case, for example, that playing with trickery is mainly between people of opposite genders, whereas reliability is mainly intra-gender.

behavior, which is difficult to fake, thereby developing trust in each other for tasks of increasing levels of importance over increasing periods of time.

The behavior of good participatory *Tambora* musicians is predictable on many time scales, and this predictability intensifies as we move towards the center of sonic interaction to the person playing the tambora drum. With each beat of the drum, good tambora players maintain a consistent dynamic level to maintain a strong groove without drowning out singers. I was struck by the physically demanding nature of this aspect of *tambora* drumming while rehearsing for an upcoming festival with the youth group *Herencia de mi Tierra* (Heritage of my Land) in San Martín's *Casa de la Cultura* (cultural center) (see Ch. 3). The *tambora* drum player helping lead the ensemble had a remarkable ability to maintain a constant, intense, loud groove. When he left, I took over *tambora* responsibilities and felt the physical demands of never letting the intensity of my beats lag. If I ever let the dynamics drop, I received questioning looks from the young musicians. A drop in tempo was simply not an option. Every evening of rehearsal was a sweaty business. Outside, at night, in a street *Tambora*, it is less sweaty, but no less demanding. Musicians playing the *tambora* drum rarely vary their pattern, dynamics or tempo.

With each cycle of the rhythmic pattern, good *tambora* drum players order and space the beats correctly and maintain a constant tempo, to keep singers' and dancers' interaction coordinated and constant. Their variations are minimal and very infrequent. They pay attention to the *cantador(a)* and shift into the *bozá* when required. They stop playing only when other musicians do. They stay around between songs, so that when a *cantador(a)* starts singing, they are ready to accompany them. They stay at the *Tambora* every night, and get up early every morning they are required so that the celebrations can take place. They are there year after year for their sector and town so that the tradition of marking Christmas does not crumble away

entirely in the face of alternative modes of engaging with music and celebrating. As such, good tambora players are reliable, at least with regard to music making, at vastly different levels of temporal magnitude from the few seconds of a precisely timed individual rhythmic pattern cycle to the decades of a lifetime's commitment to celebration.

The reliability of a player is potentially maximized through participation over a period of years. Showing oneself to be a good player has the catalytic effect of others allowing you to play more, gain experience and become even more reliable. *Tambora* performers do not have a strong discourse of "talent" (Seeger 2004.; Rice 1994). However, they do show some preference for people who "are good at" playing or singing. So when a player is playing well, not only are their present actions predictable, but each time they succeed in carrying them out, they also show they are capable of what is required of a good player, and are therefore considered more trustworthy to carry out the role in future. This is one of the beauties of the iterative nature of musical performances (Goffman 1959; Butler 1988), and is especially true of participatory music making where repetition dominates at so many time spans.

In *Tambora* the magnitudes of periodic repetition range from seconds to a lifetime, and potentially across generations. A rhythmic cycle lasts about one to three seconds, and is repeated for all or the majority of a song. A performance of a song generally lasts between two and fifteen minutes and can be repeated various times on one night, over the nights of a *novena*, and over the many celebrations through the years. A *novena* lasts nine nights and is theoretically repeated in much the same way year after year, potentially generation after generation.

Of course real *tambora* players sometimes fall short of the ideals I present above. When they do so, another drummer will normally take the sticks away and take over the drumming, without comment. When participating in Christmas street *Tambora* I found that if my playing

ever lacked conviction, other players were quick to take the sticks away from me and take over drumming responsibilities, concerned that the music wasn't grooving as it should. This happened once mid song and once before a song that was to be interpreted in the uncommon feel of *tambora redoblá'*.²² The other musicians predicted that I did not know, or could not be relied upon to perform consistently, this relatively obscure groove.

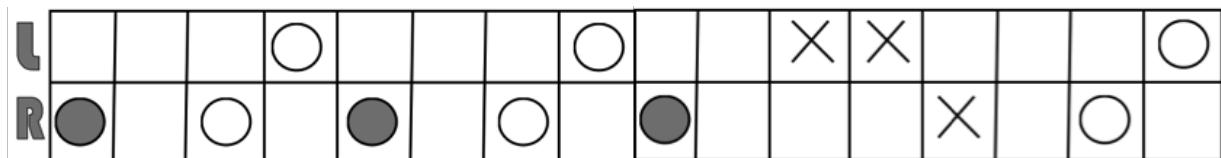


Figure 23: A typical pattern for the feel tambora redoblá' (approximately 110-130 bpm)

All the time a good player is showing his trustworthiness, his actions (and it is normally a man) also depend on the actions of others. As such, he is necessarily required to trust them with certain specific tasks. He needs the cantador(a) to maintain interest by repeatedly singing new verses and switching to the *bozá* occasionally. They in turn both rely on the *currulao* player to provide interlocking or heterophonic rhythmic patterns that complement their own and add rhythmic and tonal density to the gestalt percussive groove. They depend on the *guache* player to mark a consistent or slowly accelerating pulse, and highlight moments of interest with variations. They need the chorus singers to be numerous and strong, constant in their claps and widely tuned to increase their own number by encouraging others to sing and thereby encourage the *cantador(a)* to perform their role with more vigor and flair. They need dancers to provide kinesic feedback on the groove of the musicians and visual interest for other participants. People who take time out of singing or playing to dance in the middle of the circle need other participants to keep the sonic groove going. All of these people also need a *cabeza* like Regina who can get

²² "Redoblá'" or "redoblada" comes from the verb "to roll" as in perform a drum roll. "Redoblante" means snare drum, and some songs typically interpreted in the feel of *tambora redoblá'* make reference to military figures like Simón Bolívar and Napoleon, so it is possible the feel has an (imagined) historical connection to military drumming.

people to congregate and organize them to a degree. They do not need passive spectators, in fact if the people present are not actively engaged in the doing of the musical activity, participants cannot continue with the same intensity of experience, attention wanes, and music making sometimes stops all together.

In different songs, participants make repeated use of the same sonic and kinesic resources. For example, Ismael Ardila starts nearly every song he sings with the same verse:

*Toma niña esa paloma,
que volando yo cogí
Tu madre quedó llorando
como yo lloré por tí*

Girl, take this dove,
which I caught as it flew
Your mother was left crying
just like I cried for you

Hand claps, choruses, vocal reactions, dance steps and gestures, rhythmic adornments and variations can be repeated incessantly without the feeling of redundancy (Turino 2008: 47).

Jokes can be retold in verses throughout the night without getting old. One of Regina's favorites goes:

*Me levanté una muchacha
Me la llevé a la casita
La heché por la mañana
Era tuerta la maldita!*

I picked up a girl
and took her home,
but I kicked her out in the morning
The damned thing only had one eye!

Every time she sang it we laughed, partly at the joke, partly at Regina's delivery, partly humoring her use of what could be interpreted as a misogynistic joke, but also at the experiential mixture of humoring her and enjoying the joke.

In her study of Jazz rhythm sections, Ingrid Monson discusses this kind of reliability in the performance of sonic musical tasks (Monson 1996). She calls trusting someone with sound-productive musical tasks "musical trust" and focuses mainly on contexts where at least some musicians are taking musical risks. In the case of street *Tambora*, unlike the jazz musicians Monson studies, the main focus is on repeating musical material and avoiding taking significant risks in music making. Nonetheless, in both cases participants "rely on one another to orient and reorient themselves" within the repetitive cycles of various degrees of magnitude I outline above (Ibid: 175).

Importantly, because good participatory *Tambora* performance does not foreground virtuosity, many people are able to take up one or more roles without great difficulty. This has implications for what I call participants' radius of trust, that is to say the number of people a person tends to trust with a given range of tasks,²³ and the thickness of the trusting relationships formed (Mesick and Kramer 2001). In thicker relationships of trust people's knowledge of each other, and therefore their ability to predict future actions is far greater. *Tambora* provides a sharp contrast to more virtuosic performance practices like the Balinese *belenganjur* drumming studied by Michael Bakan, where trust is developed slowly between a small radius of people considered capable enough to take on the virtuosic musical practice, which is part of highly valued rituals of death (Bakan 1999: 328-33). This process results in "the precious achievement of a trusting partnership realized and represented in that playing" (Ibid 228). Bakan describes the development of a thick relationship of trust, among a highly restricted radius of people, in his

²³ Smith (2010) talks of "particularized" trust, that is between members of a particular social group. She contrasts this with talk of "generalized" trust, a term common to many sociologists, meaning from a particular person to "all people." What I believe such distinctions fail to recognize is that what we mean by "everyone" is always relative to a particular group, whether one's immediate social group, country, racialized group, those considered sane, non-criminals, or so on, muddying the distinction between "particularized" and "generalized." Specifying the radius we are concerned with (as well as the range of tasks) can help avoid such confusion.

case only two, for tasks that are particularly important to them. In distinction, while some participatory *Tambora* performers have thick trusting relationships, making music together tends to help them form broad radii of thin trust among the many people who are capable of performing some role within the format, for musical tasks that they enjoy and value for their religious efficacy, but do not see as central to their everyday lives.

In his seminal work on trust and civic engagement in Italy, the sociologist Robert Putnam, following Mark Granovetter, argues that such "weak ties" (read thin relationships) of trust, are more effective in promoting community cohesion than "strong ties" (thick trusting relationships) of close friendship or kinship. This is because "networks of civic engagement that cut across social cleavages nourish wider cooperation" rather than promoting cooperation *within* a particular small group of people, against their neighbors (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993: 175; Granovetter 1973). In later work, Putnam argues that humans likely need a balance of thin and thick trusting relations for a successful social life (Putnam and Goss 2002: 10-11). In an ethnography of trust in an Indigenous Mexican village, anthropologist John Aguilar argues that in a context of pervasive distrust, locals strategically form a wide network of acquaintances linked by thin trusting relations related to everyday tasks, so as not to ask too much of any one person in particular (Aguilar 1984: 25). I believe people like Ismael and Regina promote participatory tambora in part because they believe in the benefits of such a broad network of thin trusting relations. However, the radius of *Tambora* participants has decreased in recent decades, making the tasks involved more onerous for those who continue.

People who repeatedly take part in exhausting all-night street *Tambora*, which offers few direct rewards beyond the activity itself, tend to become more trustworthy in the eyes of their fellow participants. This is because of the way people's actions function as signs during

performance. Interlocutors told me that years ago there were more *Tambora* participants in each sector, and that *Tambora* lovers came from nearby towns for Christmas celebrations, so the burden was shared more lightly (Ismael Ardila P.C. 2008, 2015). However, nowadays many of the same individuals reappear daily behind the parade floats of different sectors, and at the street *Tamboras* that go through most of the night. Some even play in the brass band too. To sustain such activity for nine days requires great stamina.

Over the two years that I took part in these celebrations it became clear to me that given the sleep deprivation and hard, synchronized, physical activity required in making music and dancing, showing oneself to be a reliable *Tambora* participant who enjoys the activities involved is, in the terms of costly signaling theories of trust, difficult to fake (Bacharach and Gambetta 2009, Densley 2012). As such, repeated participation functions for most observers as a dicent sign of one's enjoyment and commitment to the mutual fun. A dicent sign is one which is taken to be caused by what it signifies (Turino 2014: 213; Peirce 1955 [1940]: 103, 115-117; 1998: 276-7), in this case sustained participation is taken to be the direct result of genuine love for the activity and commitment to the enjoyment of other participants. Christmas *Tambora* provides a good opportunity to get to know what people are really like, what they genuinely enjoy. People are more likely to produce dicent signs of long-lasting dispositions (or "personality traits") when they do not have the energy to put on a front, or focus on saving face (Goffman 1959). Frequent participants in Christmas *Tambora* publicly demonstrate their dedication to the enjoyment of people in their sector, and thereby increase their trustworthiness in the eyes of other participants. Among nuclei of frequent performers, their trusting relations can thicken. This is especially true when family members or close friends are also the nucleus of *Tambora* participants. Their trusting relationships are thickened outside of music making for a broad range of tasks. In

extreme cases this can lead to dispositions of distrust towards others outside the nucleus, which is why increased participation, broader radii and thinner trusting relations are generally preferable for participants.

The main tasks with which participants are considered trustworthy are those necessary for performing good *Tambora*, which in relation to everyday life is a severely restricted set of tasks (Hardin 2001), and may even seem facile or frivolous. Above I argue that the business of sustaining one another's fun is a serious business. Furthermore, while the main immediate aim of *Tambora* participants is indeed to maximize engagement, participation and fun, less obvious aims of *Tambora* bring multiple layers of significance to their actions. This cluster of associations tends to make participants come to essentialize each other as generally trustworthy, that is, with a wide range of tasks. I describe these layers of significance briefly in the following section, before turning to alternate modes of Christmas celebration in relation to broader schemes of value.

Less Immediate Goals of *Tambora* Participants

Participatory *Tambora* bears multiple indexical connections with religious and social value. A closer look at these will allow us to understand dynamics of trust not easily captured by some broad sociological models. Putnam and his sympathizers consider trust to be part of a social group's combined social capital, which he defines as: "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit" (Putnam 1993). To get more nuanced vision of trust among sectors of a social group, or individuals, I suggest we benefit from the finer grained view of social capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), which I continue to develop in the following section. This is part of the move

away from viewing trust as a thing that communities have in certain quantities, towards a processual view of trusting between people, groups, and systems.

For most people involved, street Tambora is "*navideña*" (Christmassy), not just in the sense that it happens near the time of Christmas, but in that participating is a sign of religious devotion. Guillermo Carbó claims that street Tambora has been secularized (Carbó 2001). I think the current situation is more complex. According to my interlocutors, it used to be more common for celebrants to enter the church at night during the *novena* to serenade San Martín. The church is less central to people's celebrations nowadays. Songs and verses that explicitly mention religious themes are also currently less popular with many participants. Also, during daytime processions, not all floats have an explicitly religious theme. However, many people still attend church services in the morning, and some sectors, like Bolívar Street, still integrate tambora in this part of celebrations. Perhaps more importantly, believers see themselves as celebrating the birth of the baby Jesus, the earthly incarnation of their God, through *Tambora*. I am sure that during the revelry, this is not foremost in the minds of most participants, but it *is* an important layer of significance for many.

Most people involved in Christmas *Tambora* conceptualize God and patron saints as real, interventionist beings with supernatural powers to grant favors to individuals based on their relative devotion. As such, honoring God or a saint is a means of securing a better life for oneself and loved-ones. Doing so publicly provides double security by displaying this religious devotion to other people in one's community. If God does not solve one's problems directly, powerful

people in the community may do so if they know you to be a good, devout believer, and hence worthy of favor and trust.²⁴

Tambora is associated with respectability, non-violence, and a nebulous abstract concept of "culture" in contrast to some other musical practices. In San Martín, the river region, and *La Costa* in general, listening to recorded music in bars, or going to live concerts given by commercial artists in public spaces, can often end in fights between men. These can sometimes turn serious, especially when brawlers are armed, or connected to armed groups. I discuss this issue in greater depth in chapters two and five. Here I will simply mention that when I asked people whether there were ever fights at street *Tamboras*, they commonly laughed. They found the idea absurd. Participating in *Tambora* is generally considered a "decent," "respectable," or "healthy" form of pleasure, because it involves not being too drunk to perform well, having fun while being conscious of the fun of others, interacting with likeminded people, and inverting the typical day-night work-sleep routine, providing relief from the rest of the year, which for many is dominated by both hard work and hardship. Nowadays, many participants see *Tambora* as one of the practices that identifies locals, and value it as a "cultural" activity (see chapters 2 and 4).²⁵ To the extent that these levels of significance function for locals, being a trustworthy *Tambora* participant is also an indication of one's trustworthiness to remain "decent" and not allow celebration to get out of control, not to engage in violence against other celebrants, and to respect local culture. That is to say the range of tasks with which one is trusted is expanded by these associations.

²⁴ See Smidt (2003) for a consideration of this theme. In early work, Putnam argues that "Organized religion, at least in Catholic Italy is an alternative to civic society, not a part of it." (Putnam et al. 1993:108). However, in later work he presents more nuanced views that align more closely with those I present here (Putnam 2002).

²⁵ Young multi-instrumentalist, choreographer and social worker Fauner Salas said of *Tambora*: "I became so enamored with it that now I would defend to the death my tradition; the thing that identifies us as people from San Martín and people from the river region" (P.C. 2015). For people like Fauner, keeping *Tambora* practices alive is a matter of defending one of the few unique practices that identifies people from his town and region.

Participatory *Tambora* provides few opportunities to make money or abuse the trust of others, so frequent participants come to see each other as generally not motivated by economic gain or swindling others. Little or no money is paid to those who play behind the parade floats (musicians typically volunteer for their own sector's parades) and none is involved in nighttime street *Tambora*. After all, who would pay whom? Some refreshments are provided by the *cabeza*, but alcoholic drinks are generally bought in a roughly equitable manner *before* drinking, and then distributed to anyone present who wishes to drink. By contrast, in bars the tab for a group of drinkers is often totted up at the *end* of the night, providing an opportunity for freeloading by ordering rounds, drinking and leaving others to pay. People are often on the lookout for "*rateros*" (roughly petty thieves or filchers), and it is not simply paranoia. Indeed, I came to realize some people value the *malicia* (cunning) it takes to swindle others. At a *Tambora* there is little or no opportunity for swindling or duping anyone. In this sense, *Tambora* is an atypical public activity in San Martín. When the main thing at stake is fun, it is hard for *rateros* to operate. The only time I have heard about something being stolen during a nighttime *Tambora* was when a researcher's camera was taken. As soon as the robbery was discovered, it was immediately blamed on a local who had been dancing for part of the night that people referred to as "*el loquito*." "*Loquito*" is a hazy term applied to anyone from the clinically insane to people with learning differences, and social outcasts in general. Although the subsequent police investigation was inconclusive, most people I spoke to felt sure that only the "*loquito*" would contemplate stealing from a fellow *Tambora* participant. For sane people, it was simply unthinkable.

It would theoretically be possible for *Tambora* participants to embarrass each other by ridiculing their dancing, singing or playing, but I have never witnessed this. The play of dance falls short of outright ridicule. Any criticism of participants is generally done after the event, and

on the understanding that different levels of ability do not really matter. This makes sense if we remember each individual is motivated to enjoy herself by helping others enjoy themselves. This is why if a participant thinks she can do a better job than the person currently singing, drumming, or dancing and feels it is important to do so to maintain the groove and general pace of the night, she simply takes over. While this occasionally leads to frustrations, there is always a role for everyone to slot into – the chorus has no maximum number – and there is generally time for most people to take on most of the roles they wish.²⁶

Many participants in Christmas processions take a great deal of pride in the idea that their sector's float, music, decorations and overall experience is better than those of other sectors.²⁷ The *novena* provides a chance to display visually and sonically, the relative economic, cultural and social capital of each sector by convoking more people during parades, providing a better show through decorations and *tableaux vivant*, and generating a more intensely pleasurable, and "decent," experience for participants in night-time celebrations. In Bourdieu's terms, the *novena* provides opportunities for the different sectors and individuals to convert economic and cultural capital (the cost and knowledge that go into making appealing celebrations) into social capital (by mobilizing people to participate), and thereby into symbolic capital (the honor of having put on a successful day and night of celebration). As described above, thinking of one's own sectors

²⁶ Further research beyond my scope here, would show ways in which this analysis is idealistic. Closer attention to dynamics of gender and sexuality would be especially fruitful in nuancing this picture as heterosexual men tend to dominate instrument playing. Gay men seem to be included in *tambora* more than most aspects of social life, but their acceptance is generally limited within roles of singing and dancing.

²⁷ Informal competition like this, with no judges, officially declared winners, or physical prizes, is a common feature of many musical celebrations across Latin America. Turino describes simultaneous competition between indigenous community ensembles in the Andes (1993: 65-67; 2008b: 32). In San Martín, in contrast, the competition is between sectors of the town on successive days and nights of the *novena*. In some cases, this kind of competition is highly formalized or dramatized (Ibid: 71-96). David M. Guss shows how one such competitive tradition in Venezuela is related to church societies, gender, colonialism, and continued coloniality (Guss 2000: 135-172). In the case of San Martín, it should be remembered that the formalization of celebrating the *novena* in successive sectors was initiated by the church. Further research might indicate to what extent this and similar interventions in promoting competition manifest strategies of dominance, governance, or community building on the part of religious institutions.

as the one that "*lleva la flor*" (takes the imaginary prize) is a matter of importance for many celebrants, and is debated during and after the *novena*. The discussions of which celebration was best are perhaps as important as the events themselves for convincing locals of the sectors' relative social and symbolic capital. Convoking participants, and publicly debating their number, is not simply a matter of fun, but also a means of increasing sustained social and symbolic capital beyond the time of the *novena* by displaying the sector's power to bring people together through the musical and creative abilities of residents, or their power to pay for such services from others.

Participatory *Tambora* as described above was the main musical way of celebrating Christmas in San Martín from at least the early 1940s until around the 1980s. Nowadays only Bolívar street consistently celebrate the way Martina and I describe above. While other sectors may sometimes hold all-night *Tamboras* or include *tambora* in some form, they also select from or create alternatives. In the final section of this chapter I nuance my picture of Christmas in San Martín, showing how some alternative forms of musical celebration provide means of demonstrating and exchanging forms of capital in relation to broader sonic values. I argue that these practices feed off of, supersede, or nullify, the potential of participatory *Tambora* to help generate trust.

Nuancing the Picture

Colombian musicologist Ana María Ochoa Gautier shows how nineteenth century intellectuals from Europe and the cities of the Americas inscribed sounds of the Magdalena river region, and other marginalized, non-urban locales, into their writings (Ochoa Gautier 2014). She argues that they characterized as non-musical, or non-human, the unclear or loosely pitched sounds of *bogas* (boatmen working on the Magdalena), which incorporated the sounds of animals and mimicked elements of the sounds made by the rich European or Euro-descendent people they were

transporting (Ibid: 37-43). Further, nineteenth century "lettered" modes of understanding "unlettered" others were fundamental to the projects of folklorists in the early and mid twentieth century, who sought to define and ascribe clearly distinguishable "genres" as representative of the "souls" of particular racialized groups within the nation (Ibid 94-5). These ideas still hold sway today in discourses of "local culture" (Ibid: 3), wherein cultural elites work towards the fixing of one "genre" to represent one "people" and simultaneously arguing this relationship existed before their influence.

The danger of thinking in terms of discrete pre-formed "genres" or focusing on one particular "genre" when discussing a given social group is not simply to misrepresent their sonic practices, but also to reduce our understanding of them to one way of being. In extreme cases, like some of the Colonial texts Ochoa Gautier considers, this results in the dehumanization of those people. In writing and audio recordings produced on the river region there is a tendency among local organic intellectuals and cultural elites, as well as some researchers from outside, to essentialize the river region as the land of *Tambora*. Simplified descriptions like that of Martina above, as well as scholarly works that focus exclusively on a single form of music making, such as that of Carbó, contribute to this discourse. I also run the risk of doing so in this dissertation as I limit the scope of my analysis in part through a focus on *Tambora* and *Gaita*. The following section is in part an attempt to resist such essentialization by showing how people in San Martín incorporate the sounds and movements of *tambora* and other styles into varied forms of celebration or bypass them all together. The form of celebrations on any given year in San Martín depends on the dispositions, desires and actions of the groups and individuals who take part.

On December 20th 2014 I was woken up at around 5:30am by the sound of two churches competing for the faithful. A nearby evangelical church set up in a neighbor's house was playing Christian pop in Spanish over their PA system. The bells of the catholic church four blocks away cut through, and they too were playing a similar pop-influenced recording through their slightly more powerful PA. By the time I left the house the churches were silent, but the dawn was interrupted by sporadic "clacks" of a few locally made fireworks. That day was the turn of *la calle del trébol* (Clover Street), directly behind the house where I always stay with Álvaro Camargo and his family. I could hear live music as I rounded the corner. The celebrants had already returned from mass.

The smell of gunpowder faded as women, girls and a few boys danced and cheered to the sounds of a small group of musicians in an improvised format. Fauner Salas played commercial songs well known from recordings, first on a *pito atravesado*, an idioglotal clarinet made of millet cane also known as a *caña de millo* (see List 1983: 53-61), then on a borrowed *bombardino* (B♭ euphonium or baritone horn, see Figure 25). Accompanying him were three young men on *tambora*, *guache* and a *currulao*.



Figure 24: Fauner Salas (center) plays pito atravesado, accompanied by Luis Fernando Mendoza on tambora drum, Brandon Holguin on guache shaker and Luis Madrid on currulao hand drum. Photo by Lina Zambrano.

The dancers became most excited when Fauner shifted into a *mapalé*, a fast-tempo, six-beat feel popularized on recordings by big band leaders like Lucho Bermudez and Pacho Galán from the 1940s to '60s (see Figure 26; Wade 2000: 83-87, 118-120, 144-147). Most of the men present stood watching, or recording on videophones. A few of the girls were wearing "traditional" skirts and were swishing them accordingly, but most of the women were not. They had just come back from church or out of their houses to join in. I was dragged into the circle to dance "*La pava*" (The Turkey Hen) interpreted in a *berroche* feel (see Figures 27 and 20, and chapter 2 for a further discussion of "*La pava*"). To close the morning session, the group played a quick rendition of "Happy Birthday" (also in *berroche*) for one of the ladies who had been dancing. Fauner and the boys played for various sector's parades that year with similar formats,

and the following year, when Fauner was away for work (see chapter 5). I was asked to fill in with *gaita* for a few parades. Their approach was pragmatic, balancing the desire for "tradition" with whatever means they had at their disposal to provide contagious sonic signs of celebration.



Figure 25: Fauner on bombardino and women beginning to dance mapalé. Photo by Lina Zambrano.

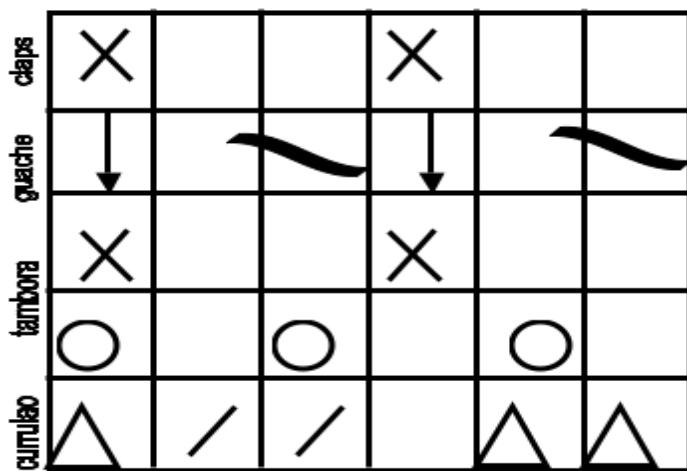


Figure 26: A typical gestalt groove for mapalé percussion.



Figure 27: Celebrants, including the author, dancing "La pava." Photo by Lina Zambrano.

Later that morning I followed the first of three parade floats. Four teenaged girls with Cleopatra eyeliner and headbands sat atop blue fabric in front of colonial columns and cat statues rendered in cardboard and polystyrene. The title at the back read "Moses saved from the waters." Kids sprayed foam at each other and scratched in the dirt for the candies thrown for them by enthusiastic adults, as the Municipal brass band, *Once de Noviembre* (named after the town's patron saint's day) played behind the float. The nine-strong group interpreted mostly *mapalés* to match and maintain the children's sugar-fueled frenzy. Martina on the phone from Cartagena complained that the processions were becoming too much like Carnival in February: "Foam, disorder and the band all have their place. Christmas floats should be with *Tambora*, and none of that mayhem" (p.c. 2014).

After dark I left the house with Álvaro and family by the back door to see the decorations. Good reviews all round for the unified moon-and-stars theme: Light bulbs inside tissue paper crescents and fairy lights strung through *atarraya* fishing nets, held up on sticks. It takes a degree of organization to persuade all members of a street to adopt a single theme, and attempts do not always succeed. One of our neighbors had got his sound system out for the night. He played mostly tambora tracks to start off with. Some were from Martina's studio-recorded albums. Others were bootleg recordings of one of her live stage shows. When *La Pava* came on Álvaro Camargo was one of two men who got in the circle to dance: "I dance, but *my way*. I don't pay attention to those stage rules!" he explained later. After a while of recorded *tambora*, it was back to normal with *vallenato* (commercial accordion music ubiquitous in *La Costa*) and the occasional salsa blasting from the bass-heavy speakers. The sound system rattled our bed frames until at least 4am.

On that occasion, participatory *Tambora* played a less central role in proceedings. Some traditionalists like Martina would say that the day was less successful as a result, but others would argue quite the opposite. The sector's committee chose to hire Fauner and friends in the morning (who played some tambora, but mixed in other styles) and the full brass band during the day (who do not interpret tambora music). They had to pay more to secure these musical groups. A group of four kids playing *tambora* to accompany a procession from their own sector will not charge, but to play for other sectors they try to secure around \$60,000 pesos (roughly \$20 USD) total. The Municipal band charge at least double that, to have something worthwhile to go around the seven or more musicians. Hiring the band is a sign of prestige for the street, just like being able to put out more floats with more beautiful decorations and people on top, attract more followers, or decorate the street more pleasingly at night. It shows their sector has more

disposable economic capital. Spending in this way can generate social capital for the sector, it's committee or particular residents by displaying publicly their ability to mobilize people through spending and forming a rowdier procession, and thereby strengthening their networks of people they can influence (Bourdieu 1977 [1972], 1986).

The band tends to attract more attention than tambora musicians, because it is louder. Various interlocutors told me parade committees started hiring the band in the late 1990s and that the first committee to do so was *la calle de las flores* (Flower Street) where most of the town's businesses and more prestigious houses are located. Some people, like Martina and her sister Cecilia Camargo, argue that parades ought only to be accompanied by tambora. Cecilia even claims that tambora attracts more people as it is more participatory: "People get involved, singing and clapping" (P.C. 2014). Others hold that having the band is now also "traditional," that it is positive to support the musicians, who otherwise find it hard to get paid gigs, and that band music can be equally participatory. Although paraders don't generally sing along with the band, some dance, and the band's repertoire is made up of popular tunes that locals know from records, the radio and the town's patron saint festivities in November. It is difficult to ascertain from my photos and videos whether Cecilia is right about numbers, but her perception and assertion of tambora's dominance is interesting. It resonates with the message and effect of the song mentioned above through which Bolívar Street come to feel, through participation and repetition, that they are the most successful sector.

Martina and other long-term participants of *Tambora*, as well as many non-participant cultural elites like teachers, value *Tambora* highly as local "culture" and indispensable tradition. However, such views are contested within complex social dynamics involving various vectors of value. There is a more general hierarchy of value regarding musical forms for most

Sanmartinenses and Costeños, namely a hierarchy of volume: Generally, the louder the better.²⁸ I noticed this principle through observing the competing church PAs, my training with the municipal band which emphasized the ability to blow strong, powerful tones, the consistently high-volume demanded of *tambora* drum players, and general conversation, especially between men, in which high dynamics are expected and encouraged. It was perhaps most neatly summed up, however, on Christmas day 2014. I was struck by the number and volume of sound systems taken out into the street to be listened to, full blast. Their interlocking songs produced a constant wall of sound for people who sat drinking, or walked past, the silences between tracks were always filled by another nearby sound system. One interlocutor explained the competitive nature of this activity succinctly: "*El que mas suena!*" (He who sounds the loudest [wins]!).

Owning a powerful sound system is a serious financial investment, once reserved for the rich, or those who would use it commercially, playing at parties (Streicker 1995), but now common across socio-economic classes due in part to increasingly available credit. They can attract people to the owner's gathering in order to show their generosity, and hence disposable economic capital, by offering drinks and food. This can secure social capital by generating the sense that people owe you a favor for your having hosted a good party, or that you are trustworthy as a person who can convolve and motivate others.²⁹

In a broader sense, musical formats tend to be ranked according to their decibel level. The value that listeners attribute to musical sound tends to rise from a single singer with guitar, through a tambora group, a small vallenato *conjunto* without amplification, a municipal band, a full vallenato group with amplification, up to recorded music played through a powerful PA system. Bass frequencies are all important through this hierarchy, in part because they carry

²⁸ Edgard Benítez, a musicologist and DJ from Cartagena helped me develop this idea.

²⁹ I develop these ideas in relation to trust and reciprocity in chapter 4.

furthest, offering the greatest spatial range for one's musical signs. I also suspect that they are valued for their visceral quality, literally making your guts rumble at the right frequencies, and the concomitant tendency to encourage dancing, drinking, or simply stave off reflective thought and feelings of solitude. In *Throwing Stones at the Moon*, one interviewee, a survivor of a massacre in the west of Bolívar province, talks vividly about returning to her town after the event and being terrified by the relative silence "you could hear the solitude" (Brodzinsky and Schoeming 2012: 43). I believe the ubiquity of continuous loud sound in northern Colombia may be in part a strategy of people who have experienced similar violence to avoid "hearing the solitude" or remembering its violent indices.³⁰

The broad valorization of high decibel levels makes sense of the neighbor's use of a sound system on the night described above. He negotiated the desire to have tambora present with the desire to bring lots of people together, show off a powerful sound system and generate social capital by hosting a generous event. Interestingly, he did so in a way that straddles Turino's fields of high fidelity recording, presentational and participatory music making. He played high fidelity recordings of a presentational performance thereby encouraging participation through dance. Some celebrants took his selection of presentational *tambora* as a sign of the host's good taste. Martina's presentational *tambora* (with its closely tuned and harmonized chorus and clear textures) is in their view more "refined" than participatory forms. It is telling that the following year the host of the party ran for election to a local council post, and was voted in. Local political campaigns are normally won or lost not on policies, but on the candidate's ability to gain people's explicit public backing for them as an individual (see chapter 4), thereby gaining

³⁰ I discuss further uses of music to combat and perpetuate sounds and silences of conflict in chapter 3.

the trust of other potential voters that you will have the social capital necessary to make an impact within the highly clientelistic political system.

By including *tambora* to some degree, the neighbor showed himself to be a lover of local cultural expressions and hence having a high degree of cultural capital.³¹ But by pumping *recorded* tambora music out of a powerful PA, rather than having a live performance (participatory or presentational), he simultaneously displayed his economic capital and avoided being outgunned by some capricious neighbor who might decide to get their sound system out and play what they want to hear. He thereby mobilized a broad range and large number of people to his celebration, and by showing publically his ability to do so, improved his chances at the upcoming election by making himself appear trustworthy with tasks that involve mobilizing groups of people or exploiting contacts. Importantly, while attendees at the party had the opportunity to develop trust among themselves by dancing, their participation in music making was limited in comparison to the participatory *Tambora* in Bolívar Street. There was greater focus on the attendees coming to trust the individual host.

In extreme cases the use of higher volume can serve to display dominance and control. The night before the neighbor's celebration, when the novena had been hosted by *Los Callejones* (the Alleyways/ Side streets), a group of young people (mostly members of Juventud Sanmartinense (see chapter 3)) had tried to hold a street *Tambora*. Though proceedings started promisingly for us, at around 10pm a neighbor decided to play *vallenato* on his monster sound system. We could not hear ourselves sing. There was no question among participants of asking

³¹ In contrast to the practices relating to *música antillana* (Antillean music) and salsa music in Cali discussed by Waxer (2002), there is not mass commercial circulation of *tambora* recordings. For Caleños, collecting, playing and discussing *musica antillana* and salsa records served to display cultural capital by showing an engagement with cosmopolitan currents (Ibid 3, 112, 140-141). Somewhat paradoxically, many cultural elites of the river region engage with *tambora* in similar ways precisely because it is a local practice, but one that they see as appreciated more outside the region than within. There are few commercially available recordings of *tambora*, however, so owning recordings normally requires personal contact with the other local cultural elites who make, and circulate recorded *tambora*.

the neighbor to turn down, or stop his music. He had imposed his mode of celebration as the only possible way. We were denied the possibility of paying special attention to one another, supporting each other's enjoyment, and developing trust through *Tambora*. I interpreted this as an instance of symbolic violence – the imposition of a single way of celebrating or interacting musically – and began to get rather annoyed. My young companions did not express much visible disappointment or anger. They accepted as normal the fact that we had to give in to the person with a louder sound system. We simply stopped, *outlouded*.³²

Summary

In this chapter I have presented *Tambora* as a musical form of Christmas celebration in San Martin de Loba primarily through two ethnographic analyses of my experiences in 2014 and 2015, and with Martina Camargo and her family since 2008. I situated my positionality between academic non-participant and non-academic participant accounts, attempting to balance a focus on *Tambora* with a nuanced view that avoids essentializing the River region in relation to a single musical practice. I characterized Christmas *Tambora* as a participatory musical practice, wherein periodicity at multiple levels of magnitude from the micro to the macro, and interdependence between participants, tend to generate trust among participants that strengthens with increased intensity of engagement towards the spatial center and over iterations of the activity of mutually reinforcing enjoyment. The tendency of practices like *Tambora* to build trust in this way is in large part because the know-how involved is difficult, or even impossible, to fake. The doing of it involves dicent signs of one's ability and commitment to the practice. The particular participatory nature of *Tambora*, which emphasizes non-virtuosic performance and

³² Gage Averill notes a similar phenomenon in Haiti whereby parading bands on foot were purposefully drowned out with amplified music (Averill, 1997: 63).

maximizing the number of participants, tends to result in broad networks of thin trusting relationships for most participants. Because of broader associations of *Tambora* with "respectable" celebration, non-violence and care towards other participants, a nebulous concept of local culture, and religious devotion, repeatedly trusting someone with the musical tasks of *Tambora* tends to lead to trusting them with a broader range of tasks.

However, *Tambora* is not the only way to celebrate Christmas in San Martín, and it is not simply the case that being a *Tambora* participant makes one more trustworthy or more trusting, all things considered. I indicated multiple modes of celebration, some of which involve *tambora* in less typical, or less participatory forms. I considered these in relation to different forms of capital and a hierarchy of musical sound that prizes loudness. I argued that people in San Martín negotiate the often-conflicting social dynamics involved, depending on their particular aims, thereby shaping the form that *tambora* and Christmas celebration in general take on any given year. Some of these modes of celebration involve nurturing trust in one's ability and willingness to use social capital effectively in future. Others involve the symbolic violence of imposing a particular mode of musical interaction as the only possible one, as when we were prevented from making participatory *Tambora* by the owner of a loud sound system. In chapter two I develop further the theme of violence and responses to it, as I discuss some of the threats to the continuation of participatory *Tambora*, consider how local cultural elites festivalized *Tambora*, and show how this process relates to education, non-violence, and ideas of "identity."

Chapter 2

Identifying as Peaceful Educators through *Tambora*

I first went to San Martín de Loba for the yearly *tambora* festival in 2008. When I arrived Martina was already there. She and her brother Álvaro met me at the port. Riding on the back of Álvaro's motorbike he explained the raised roadway that lead us away from the river and into the town: "This levee is the reason why the town doesn't flood any more in the wet season." The Colombian sociologist Orlando Fals Borda (1979) famously characterized people of Loba, and the river region as "amphibious man": uniquely adapted to their particular ecosystem, with a life both on land and water, accommodating biannual floods.¹ During his fieldwork in the 1970s he was surprised by a social structure "differentiated in class, but flexible, solidary and informal, with very few of the strained feudal ties known in the Iberian peninsular" (Fals Borda 1979: 161A), and high levels of *confianzudez*: informal trusting relations that constantly undermine formal hierarchy (Ibid: 153B).² The impressions of Fals Borda and his fellow researchers were undoubtedly colored by the romantic Marxist idealism that dominated emergent Latin American social sciences research at the time, but they provide great insight into the encounter of urbanite intellectuals and their rural interlocutors.³ Fals et al. pointed to polygamy, open concubinage and *compadrazgo* (co-parent relations) as reasons for the local socio-cultural particularities of the

¹ For Fals Borda they were also members of the "*raza cósmica*" prophesized by Mexican polymath José Vasconcelos (1997 [1925]), for whom connections to European colonialism and continuing coloniality were backgrounded. Fals Borda described them primarily as descendants of Indigenous groups,¹ enslaved and free Africans and their descendants, and the mobile *bogas* (probably of both Indigenous and African background) who transported goods and people along the river Magdalena (Ibid: 44-50; Ochoa Gautier 2014: 31-77; Peñas Galindo 1988), the arterial vein of colonial and early republican Colombia.

² Because of the unique cultural and social features he observed in the region Fals Borda lobbied for the creation of a new province (*departamento*) to legislate in the area. However, this never came to fruition and the area remains divided between three provinces, contributing to its continued marginalization through political neglect.

³ Fals Borda's unconventional methodology included informal "round tables" in his rural field sites with invited urbanite intellectuals and local cultural elites. Among the discussants in San Martín was Alvaro Mier, one of the group of teachers who would later found the *tambora* festival in San Martín.

river region. In the previous chapter I argued that practices like participatory *Tambora* also helped construct loose networks of trust that resist strong hierarchy.

The years succeeding Fals Borda's work have seen changes in these ways of being in San Martín and the surrounding river region. Some have resulted from a drive towards "progress" like the construction of the levee to prevent flooding. Others have arisen from economic booms, various new forms of feudalism, struggles for dominance in the region, as well as physical, economic and symbolic violence against local people and their ways of life. Álvaro often makes sense of these changes with reference to the first book he ever read cover to cover, namely Eduardo Galeano's *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina* (1971). His view is a common one among people of the river region; that their veins are truly open, some have been bled dry, and others remain poisoned by the violence centered in, and spilling out from, Colombia's civil conflict.

In this chapter I consider some of these changes and threats before turning to one powerful reaction from local cultural elites, namely the founding of a *Tambora* festival to preserve or rescue local "identity" and disassociate the river region from the violence that engulfed it. I offer a reductionist account of "identity" focusing on acts and processes of individual and group identification. I show how, through its festivalization, *tambora* and those who practice it have come to be associated with education and an idea of peace running parallel to the country's civil conflict. I conclude by considering why *tambora*, rather than other practices, was considered a good vehicle for this project, elucidating the associations, mentioned in chapter 1, that it already had with non-violence.

"Identity" Lost?

Martina, Alvaro and I arrived at the Camargo family home and sat outside to talk. In many ways the family history frequently remembered in that house typifies the violent changes people of San Martín have suffered to their way of life since the time of Fals Borda's work. Alvaro has some nostalgia for the times before the levee.

When we were children, it used to flood up to the back of this house. That was our swimming pool! People from these lower parts used to move in with family on higher ground during the floods. That was nice. Everyone opened their doors to you. People were together. It brought great abundance of fish too. (P.C. 2014)

The times of flooding and abundance of fish used to be punctuated with celebrations: First the procession of the figure of San Martín through the town in November, accompanied by the municipal band *Once de Noviembre*; then *Tamboras* in each main street of the town on successive nights of *la novena* (the nine nights running up to Christmas); in January when floodwaters typically began to recede, a procession of *los reyes magos* (the three kings), often accompanied by *tambora* music; and then cross-dressing dances of *las pilanderas* (the rice pounders) and *las farotas* (the "hussies"), as well as *los indios* (the "Indians") accompanied by an ensemble including a plastic mass-produced recorder, *currulao* hand drum and *guache* shaker. In dry seasons, the large, fertile floodplains exposed by receding waters were used for communal farming.

However, Alvaro manifests a common ambivalence towards the flooding of the past: "It brought a lot of diseases too with the insects, and people would have to repair their house every time." Like most people in his family and a great many of those in his town he admires "progress" broadly associated with aspects of modernity, formal education, and infrastructure

projects.⁴ This attitude was inculcated in Álvaro and his siblings in largely part by their father Cayetano.

Cayetano Camargo worked as a lumberjack and transporter of logs along the river Magdalena, but also had a small plot of land that he farmed, fitting Fals Borda's archetype of "amphibious man" almost perfectly. He arrived in San Martín during the times of *La Violencia*, when he was forced to leave his hometown of Cantagallo due to partisan violence. He was also creative. Although he did not have access to formal education, he was an avid reader, poet and songwriter. He was at the center of the group that Alvaro, Martina and other siblings first sang with. Much of Martina's current repertoire was composed by him. She often sings snippets of his songs to punctuate conversation. Many of them were written for festivals and comprise thematically unified arguments about local history. On this occasion she chose an apt example; *La Mina de los Lobanos*, which recounts an emotive history of gold mining in Loba, with a chorus that incessantly declares who the composer takes to be the true owners of the mine:⁵

*Cuando vino mister Beca',
'compañ'a'o de mister Morgan,
Cantidad de oro sacaron
y Loba quedó en la olla!
La mina de los lobanos, la mina de los lobanos, La mina de los lobanos*

When Mr. Beckham [/Becker] came,
accompanied by Mr. Morgan,
They took away huge quantities of gold
and Loba was left ruined!
The mine of people from Loba, the mine of people from Loba, the mine of people from Loba

⁴ Arturo Escobar, following Pieter de Vries, warn against the poststructuralist tendency to critique notions of "development," arguing such critiques overlook the desire for development among the poor (Escobar 2008: 175; de Vries 2007: 30). They suggest that for some poor social groups maintaining such a desire for what development projects promise but never deliver can actually be a mode of resisting projects of capitalist modernization to which discourses of development and the generation of unsatiated desire have been so central.

⁵ Listen to track 15 of the album *Aires de San Martín* (Camargo 2006):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjF8v04wy6A>

San Martín has long been a site of gold mining at varying levels of formality, legality and technological complexity. There is evidence of pre-Columbian indigenous gold processing in the area (Fals Borda 1979: 30A), and local historians believe enslaved Africans were first brought here to mine gold. Nearby San Antonio is said by some to have been established as a *palenque* (maroon community) by people fleeing slave labor in gold mines and on haciendas. British mining companies, with their 'Mr. Beckham's and 'Mr. Morgan's, excavated gold in San Martín in the early twentieth century. However, by the late 1970s, when Fals Borda was undertaking his research for the first of his four volumes on the history of *La Costa*, "only a few locals arrive[d at the mines] now and then, after a storm, to search with their shovels, pans and magnetic stones in the streams that formed at the foot of the hill" (Ibid).

A major gold boom came in the 1980s. Locals initially benefitted from new discoveries of large deposits, easy to excavate. News of the find also attracted prospectors from around Colombia. Like many local young men, Álvaro Camargo did some gold mining in his youth, but got out when he realized the dangers. Typically, local miners work for a *patrón* (roughly patron, in this case boss) who owns the land to be mined. The mining is dangerous, physically draining work with many unmediated risks for the miners and no guarantee of profit for either party.⁶ However, some prospectors made a great deal of money quickly. "People got used to *the easy life*," claimed Álvaro. "It was drinking every night in bars and brothels. People had money to burn, but it didn't last" (P.C. 2014). In San Martín the increasingly industrial mining, now dominated by companies from Colombia's Antioquia region and China, has had three major impacts: waterways were diverted for processing earth containing gold; those remaining were polluted by the mercury and other toxins used in the purification of the metal; and many people

⁶ Alfredo Molano (1990) describes the opportunism, rampant exploitation and incredible levels of suspicion and terror surrounding similar gold boomtowns in the borderlands of the Vaupés region of South East Colombia.

have become accustomed to a life of intense debt and chasing after apparently easy riches, increasingly monopolized by big business. Álvaro laments the destruction wrought by some methods: "The streams that used to run into the river, they were pretty. That's all dead now: Contaminated and dried up by the mining."

Other options for the apparently "easy life" came with coca and commerce. In the 1990s many farmers in the region, whether freely or under duress by powerful drug lords, others simply for profit, stopped cultivating the staple foodstuffs of maize and cassava in favor of more profitable coca plants, the leaf of which is the raw material in the production of cocaine (Thoumi 1995; Paley 2014). Nobody I spoke to admitted to having grown coca, but many told me that other people had. Commerce grew in tandem with this new industry and the gold boom. Some locals who could afford to buy consumer goods go misty-eyed at the thought of the stores there once were in the town. Many more remember fondly the *caja agraria* (state-owned agrarian bank) that allowed them to make deposits and take out loans without having to travel to bigger towns as they do now.

In parallel came leftist armed resistance to late capitalism. The bank was destroyed in one of the guerrilla attacks on the town.⁷ Left-wing guerilla groups had been growing in the region since the 1960s, and benefitting from the growth of the coca trade since the 1980s (Brodzinsky and Schoemig 2012: 26). San Martín suffered three *tomas* (literally "taking of"; captures/occupations/ attacks) by leftist guerrillas from the late 1980s through the late 1990s (Anon. 1998).⁸ Guerrilla groups did not station themselves in the town for long, but rather camped in surrounding rural areas. However, they maintained a degree of control over the town's

⁷ Bombing agrarian banks became a common tactic of leftist insurgents nationwide as a means of funding the conflict and demonstrating their ability to attack the few outposts of the state and its capitalist networks in remote rural areas.

⁸ Michael Taussig analyzes *tomas* as "symbolic event[s] in the theatre that is war... a *toma* of your town means you have become a chess piece in someone else's fantasy (Taussig 2003: 63).

governance for many years. Politicians appointed or intending to run for local office had to be approved by guerilla leaders, and guerrilla troops would often extort, and sometimes kidnap, local businessmen and cattle owners. The town and surrounding area increasingly gained a reputation as a *zona roja*: a violently disputed area largely controlled by guerrilla groups.

Responses to armed insurrection in the region came from state armed forces and police, bolstered by US aid,⁹ and armed groups not officially part of the state, but often indistinguishable from the war machine it partly controlled (Taussig 2003: 23). Illegal paramilitary counterinsurgency groups grew in the area in response to guerrilla presence and extortion of landowners, and in attempts control the coca trade and displace *campesinos* for control of the land. Around San Martín this included the control of gold mining and the expanding cattle ranching business, often on land that had previously been used seasonally for communal farming.¹⁰ In recent years paramilitary activity has been linked to the establishment of agro-business, especially African palm monoculture (Verdad Abierta 2013). Most people in San Martín were unwilling to share details about who coordinated the paramilitaries, whether seasoned leaders from elsewhere, or local economic elites.¹¹ They talk about this time in vagaries: "A lot of people were killed." Locals suspected of collaborating with guerrillas, or simply not fitting the ultra-conservative views of the paramilitaries, were rounded up and killed. Their bodies left as a threat to others, or dumped in the river. A blue pick-up truck the paramilitary death squads used for these rounds became known as "*la última lágrima*" (the last teardrop) as anyone taken away in it was sure to shed their final tear and never return.

⁹ This swelled with the initiation of Plan Colombia in 2000.

¹⁰ This would appear to be a recurring experience for *campesinos* en Loba. Fals Borda describes a similar process in the 1910s and '20s whereby cattle ranchers of the US-based American Colombian Corporation, backed by Colombian economic elites, began appropriating and fencing off land that had previously been used for communal farming. In the face of resistance from local *campesinos*, who would destroy the fences, the corporation organized an armed defense force, beginning a conflict known as "la guerra de La Burrita" (Fals Borda 1984:165-182).

¹¹ One interlocutor claimed Salvatore Mancuso had led operations in the area. The AUC leader was officially accused in 2010 of the assassination of San Martín's mayor in the late 1990s (Verdad Abierta 2010).

The violence in San Martín and the surrounding region is largely silenced by locals, purposefully and violently by those who wish to hide their guilt, and reluctantly by those who fear reprisals (Trouillot 1995). Silencing has also occurred at the level of national and transnational institutions. For instance, according to a 2011 report by the lawyer Roberto Vidal of the Juridical Clinic of the *Universidad Javeriana*, by earlier decreeing that the inhabitants of *Las Pavas*, a particular area of San Martín, had *not* been victims of paramilitary violence, institutions including the one he represents were part of the silencing:

All of the executive and legislative authorities were mistaken: The Constitutional Court, the Office of the Attorney General, *Incoder* (the Colombian Institute of Rural Development), the Juridical Clinic of the *Universidad Javeriana*, the Magdalena Medio Development Plan, the British and Swiss Embassies, and foreign NGOs. According to the prosecutor [Myriam Martínez] all of these institutions participated in the creation of an enormous machinery to deceive and defraud the entire state. That gives us great concern (Verdad Abierta 2011).

What is more, the processes of forgetting, enforced or otherwise, or voices that speak out against the silencing, are themselves largely silenced as they develop. Revelations such as Vidal's receive little circulation locally, in national or international media, or academic work.

The Camargo family suffered a micro-displacement that resembles in microcosm many of the broader trends of the region with regard to its violences and silencing. After Cayetano Camargo's death in the late 1990's, Álvaro took on his small plot of land, living in the *finca* (small farmhouse) there. However, low level border disputes with the owners of neighboring fields became increasingly tense and eventually reached fever pitch. Álvaro's side of the story is that his land includes a stream to which his father had always allowed his neighbor access to water his cattle. The borders were legally established on paper, but the agreement of access for the cattle was verbal. After Cayetano's death the neighbor began putting up fences around his territory, but these went the wrong side of the river, encroaching on Álvaro's plot. Successive

attempts to resolve the dispute verbally led nowhere and eventually led to violence. Álvaro told me:

Some time after that a man arrived at the house with a gun, ordering me off the land. The neighbor had sent him to kill me. I knew it. That family's supposedly mixed up in that paramilitary business. Anyway this guy was trouble, but he was nervous too - he'd been drinking. My dogs were wary of him, agitated. I stood up to him and told him where to go. I'm no fool. He shot at me. He tried to kill me, but he missed. I went into the house to get something to defend myself, and the dogs went after him. One of them managed to bite him, but he ran away. I went to the *fiscal* (local prosecutor) afterwards to report him and she didn't believe me. She said if I didn't have any proof she couldn't do anything. What did she want, my dead body? There was nothing we could do. And that man's still around. He went away for a while, but he came back. (P.C. 2015)

Like so much of the violence in Colombia, it was unclear whether Alvaro's case was one of paramilitary violence or a family dispute that got out of hand. In his ethnographic diary of social cleansing by paramilitaries in South West Colombia, Michael Taussig shows how this lack of clarity is precisely the way paramilitary (state? trans-state?) violence silences itself and continues to thrive (Taussig 2003). However, the confusion of the civil conflict also cloaks the violent settling of individual grievances, such that all violent actors benefit from a climate of epistemic indeterminacy and legal impunity. While in cases like that of *Las Pavas* above, some people have remained members of peasant farmer associations, and have brought legal cases against their alleged attackers, many people like Álvaro remain isolated and have given up attempts to develop a legal case.

The fact that there has been no legal proceeding around the case means Álvaro's family still live with a degree of fear and anger, and without access to the land that is legally theirs, or its potential production. Álvaro's wife Eugenith added:

The *fiscal* (public prosecutor) didn't believe us. She said: "If there's no mark, how can we prove what happened?" And our word? It doesn't count for anything. The police didn't believe us either. They told me it couldn't have been that man, because he was in prison. How could he be in prison if he was just at the *finca* with a gun? There was never any justice. I still see that man in town sometimes. He passes right by the house. When I see him it gives me... all sorts of emotions. So who can one trust? Only oneself. (P.C. 2015)

Eugenith's last point is insightful. With neighbors who seem willing to hire a hit man to claim land, and fellow residents willing to take on the job of assassination, the radius of trust of people like Álvaro is severely diminished. Furthermore, Álvaro and people like him had no recourse to expert systems with a monopoly on legitimized violence at the time when they most needed them (Hobbes 1994 [1668]; Webber 1946 [1919]). He could not trust local representatives of the police force or representatives of the justice system to do their jobs. Apparently the *fiscal* did not trust Álvaro or his family to tell the truth about the attack and the police were either incompetent, confused, or in some way accomplices to the crime.

Álvaro and Eugenith moved into the family home in town, where they now scrape a living by collecting milk from various cattle ranches to make cheese. They have not been back to the *finca* since. He talks a lot about his youth there and the magic of rural life, the benefits of informal cooperative farming and labor between neighbors. He still thinks in terms of yuca and maize, but this thinking is now largely metaphorical and analogical:

I'm sewing the seeds now so the next generation can harvest. I like to work hard at the beginning so I can relax later. It's like planting yuca. You have to put in the effort at the beginning, and it takes a long time for the roots to grow, but then you can harvest, and really appreciate it. That's why I'm working every day now in the only job I can, so my children can go to university and have a better life in the future (P.C. 2015).

His habits of action in working the land have been severed. His connection to the land is now mediated by cattle ranchers, the willingness and ability of local government to maintain the tracks in a decent state, dairy buyers in the city of El Banco, and the national markets. Furthermore, he never registered with the state as a displaced person, and is in no way interested in regaining or returning to the land:

It's just abandoned up there. It's completely overgrown. I don't even want to think about it. I'm not a man who gets scared easily, but that *does* scare me. People talk about the restitution of land, but I wouldn't go back there if you paid me! (Ibid)

Many people like Álvaro across the country are unwilling to engage with government schemes for displaced people and the restitution of land.¹² The Camargo family plot remains abandoned, the house in disrepair and Álvaro has reluctantly moved on to a different way of life, unable to continue his father's amphibious existence on river and land, and against his will, drawn into a far more dependent relationship with fluctuating markets of production and consumption, increasingly dominated by big business. He may still occasionally dance *La Pava* at Christmas celebrations (chapter 1), but otherwise he tends not to associate with his neighbors, distrusts many of them, and maintains a small network of highly dependable business associates, friends and family (biological and fictional) rather than a broad network of acquaintances. Similar processes of violence elsewhere have displaced people to San Martín, where they live in newer neighborhoods on the outskirts of the old town, poorly integrated into its increasingly fractious social life. Across the river region it is increasingly difficult to be the unified, amphibious people of informal broad trusting networks that Fals Borda documented.

The River Magdalena, its *ciénagas* and tributaries, as well as the land they historically intermingled with and nourished, that signified for many people in the river region life, abundance of food, cyclical social lubricant, are now also indices of death and mystery, mercury-poisoned, dried scars on the landscape, graveyards to untold numbers of the disappeared, increasingly "othered" by physical and emotional boundaries erected in the name of "progress."

I had hoped to find in my research that the lyrics of new *tambora* songs might provide a means of unsilencing. However, at present few songs address these themes directly.¹³ In many

¹² Santiago Arboleda describes the unwillingness of Afro-Colombians in the Pacific coastal region to identify as displaced (Arboleda 2004)

¹³ Some songs address a desire for peace. "Canto a la paz" (Song for Peace) by Ángel María Villafañe asks God for peace and mixes references to violence during the wars of independence with vague mentions of more recent killings across the country (Villafañe 2014: track 11). "La paz que todos queremos" (The Peace we All Want), written by Alcibiades Romero Duque and performed by Ana Matilde Alvarado Sanjonero (*Tambora* 2015: track 4),

ways it feels too soon for *Sanmartinenses*, *ribereños*, and *costeños* to process the events. Veiled references, however, hint at the difficulty of thinking them, and some touch on my central theme of trust. In 2015 Martina Camargo sang me a few verses of song she had recently written in which she addresses a personification of the river:¹⁴

*Quiero contarte mis penas
porque eres muy discreto
En tus aguas muy profundas
se guardan tantos secretos*

I want to tell you my sorrows
because you are very discrete
In the deepest of your waters
so many secrets you keep

Martina explained to me that she thought of the river metaphorically as a confidante because it was "good at keeping secrets." Some secrets are positive, buoyant – the encounters of young lovers along the river's banks, the games of children out of parent's view – but others far less so, and merge with the darkness at its depths:

With all the violence... all the people that have been killed and thrown into the river... the people who are still missing, it's possible that the river received them. He [the river] knows what's happened. It's a secret he keeps in his deepest waters (P.C. 2015).¹⁵

It is too soon for many people to know or talk openly and in detail about the secrets of paramilitary occupation and the effects on social life. However, non-performers of *tambora* have

mixes calls for the government, armed groups and civilians to search actively for peace with some vague, but frank accounts of violence : "La vida que es tan bonita ya nos la quieren quitar, ya nos sacan de la casa para irnos a matar. No se respeta la vida del hombre ni la mujer, mucho menos la de un niño que nada tiene que ver. Labriegos son masacrados de su campo no quieren salir, ellos dicen que no salen no tienen a donde ir" (Life, which is so beautiful, they want to take away from us, they drag us out of our houses to kill us. They don't have any respect for the lives of either of men or women, even less for that of children who have nothing to do with the situation. Peasants are massacred they don't want to leave their land, they say they won't leave [as] they have nowhere else to go).

¹⁴ Listen to "Paisaje Divino (Río Magdalena)," track 1 of the album *Paisaje en Tambora* (Camargo 2016).

¹⁵ I was reminded of the images of a fictional River Magdalena running through the tropical rural idylls and eternally drizzly Andean capital of a composite Latin American republic with which Louis de Bernières peppers his novel *The Troublesome Offspring of Cardinal Guzman* (De Bernieres 1992). The stench of the waterway torments the titular figure, but he seems incapable of connecting it to the disappearances of thousands of young poor people, which he obstinately ignores. De Bernières reveals to the reader the open secret which the Cardinal fails to acknowledge, with vivid glimpses of the mutilated corpses clogging up the river bed.

been instrumental in founding festivals that seek to strengthen elements of local musical practices, which they see as central to the river region's "identity" and a means of resisting some forms of violence.

"Identity" as a slippery term best left alone

In the sections of this chapter that follow I engage with disciplinary and transdisciplinary questions over the use of "identity" as an analytic tool. My contribution to the conversation is derived from my attempts to understand the lives of my interlocutors. In 2010 the ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice caused some controversy by questioning the degree to which scholars in this discipline theorize the concept of "identity" (Rice 2010: 318; 2007:20). More broadly in the social sciences, the 1980s and '90s saw a boom in literature on the theme, in tandem with a rise in mainstream media's treatment of identity politics. In Colombia, following the demobilization of the M-19 insurgent group and their integration into unarmed political life, 1991 saw the drafting of a new national constitution sculpted in part with the tools of identity politics and leftist, multiculturalist scholarship and activism (Asher 2009). Some of my interlocutors are well versed in these discourses and have intervened in musical practices precisely because of deeply held beliefs in the value of local, national or transnational "identities." Since Rice's article there has been a drop off in the use of the term.¹⁶ However, I have found no evidence of a concerted effort either to define or deconstruct the concept.

¹⁶ At least in titles of articles published in *ethnomusicology*. Rice counted seventeen articles with "identity" in the title between 1982 and 2006, whereas there have been only three since 2010. Margaret Kartomi (2017) is concerned with the survival of "Malay identity." Benjamin Krakauer (2015) goes to great lengths to show how identities are constructed he still sometimes uses the term "identity" as if it referred unproblematically to something real beyond social constructions. Jonathan Dueck (2010) asks: "what do we, as ethnomusicologists, really mean by the words 'conflict' and 'identity'?" His discussion of the moral position of the scholar who adopts either or both terms usefully shows how focus affects analysis, and his use of "binding" and "loosing" points towards a processual approach.

I engage with talk of "identity" because it is important to my interlocutors, because the disciplinary dispute has gone quiet without significant advance, and also because it is important to my central theme of trust. The available literature shows a close correlation between "identity" groups and trust (Tyler 2001). All else being equal, humans tend to trust more the people they identify with more closely. Furthermore, the power of musical activities to affect the ways people identify is well documented (Sugarman 1997; Turino 2000; Askew 2002), and has significant implications for trust and (non)violence. If people tend to trust most those they identify closest with, and they tend to identify closely with people they make music with, then we might think the central link between music and trust is identity.

The radius of general trust that a person or a group of people has is often related to identity groups. General trust can often be basically correlated with in-group trust. For instance, Turino writes that while Indigenous Conimeños generally had good relationships based on egalitarianism and solidarity among themselves, they "frequently harbor[ed] a great mistrust and dislike of *mestizos* and... avoid[ed] social interaction with them whenever possible" (Turino 1993: 26). Katherine Hagedorn writes of the radius of general trust of most Cubans not extending to those identified as "black" (Hagedorn 2001). Writing about Prespa Albanians in North America, Jane Sugarman writes:

To whatever extent possible, they have tried to live overseas as if they were still in their villages, raising their children according to the values they grew up with and socializing almost exclusively with other Prespa families. To outsiders they are an "invisible" community (Sugarman 1997: 15).

Sugarman's analysis of developing researcher-interlocutor relations suggests that one reason for this lack of interaction outside the group of tight-knit Prespa families is a general lack of trust in others:

... we were only permitted to attend events hosted by families who felt that they could trust us. Ultimately, this trust required months of cultivation on our part... While most individuals

overcame [their] suspicions [of me and my husband], a few held to them for the duration of my fieldwork (Ibid).

However, in the case of *tambora* in San Martín making music together does not straightforwardly lead to identity groupings, and identity groupings in turn do not necessarily form the primary basis for trusting. Therefore, in order to understand the power of music making to affect trust, we have to look deeper into the experience of participants, which will in turn require a deeper understanding of "identity."

I follow authors such as Stuart Hall who argue that focusing on *processes of identification* can help to demystify the theme (Hall 1996: 11-13). In contrast to Hall, however, and in line with Brubaker and Cooper, I believe analysts "can do better" than continue to use the term "identity" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 1). We do better by taking a reductive approach, analyzing in terms of acts and processes of identification, rather than "identities." That is to say, while we may stand shoulder to shoulder with activists who use the concept of "identity" for political ends, when we have on our "analyst" hats, we should not posit things called "identities," constructed, multiple, fluid or otherwise. We can instead analyze in terms of semiosis, the processes of experiencing, understanding, acting on, and making signs, which we already have in our analytical toolkit to analyze musical sound as social life. This theoretical move is not simply a blind application of Ockham's razor to slash concepts, but an ontological and epistemic shift towards a processual view at various levels of human interaction (Laurence 2008; McDonald 2014), that helps us explain salient issues with greater clarity and unity of thought.

According to the model I suggest an act of identification involves the production and perception of a sign, or set of signs, by one person on a particular occasion that allows the actor or others to identify him or her in certain ways. This is necessarily an abstraction from the overlapping and entwined semiotic chains that make up everyday life. By "identify" I mean to

categorize oneself or another person, to associate them with other people, or to ascribe them particular characteristics. This can occur at various levels of conscious awareness from the production of extended descriptions, such as ethnographies or biographies, through explicit thoughts or declarations, however vague, like "He's a good guy!" to reactions like getting a bad feeling about someone. The act of identification includes the socially perceptible signs and the categorization, whether internal or explicit, as well as the resultant social interaction. It may depend to a degree on signs beyond the immediate control of the person being identified a certain way, for instance their skin tone, eye color, body shape, accent, and is of course limited by the conceptual categories in play at the time, for the identifier and identified, including any associated prejudices. Identification sometimes breaks down if categories are not shared or if the parties ascribes different values to a given category. The signs people produce in acts of identification may involve the intention of one person to be identified in a particular way, for instance explicit declarations, performances, judgments, choosing what clothes to wear, or how to style ones hair with the awareness of how one will be labeled. Here my thinking is informed by the literature on performativity (especially Bauman and Abrahams 1981, Butler 1998, Goffman 1959, Turner 1987, 1988), but makes room for signs we do not perform. In this way we can also go beyond costly signaling theories of trust, which only consider intentional acts (see chapter 4; Densley 2012).

In contrast to individual acts, processes of identification are complex and extended in time. They comprise numerous acts of identification, but also involve various levels of reflection, affect, remembering, and in many cases the naturalization or hypostatization of the process itself. In such cases the person involved comes to feel she has a solid, unchanging "identity," which should be taken seriously as a guiding feature of their way of being in the world. One's sense of

ones own gender, sexuality, "race," "ethnicity," or nationality can often be like this. Some processes may last a lifetime, and in that sense truly characterize a person, others are short-lived, or phase in and out of relative importance depending on context. Typically a person, or group of people, sustains many mutually interacting processes of identification over any given period of time. The important aspect to recognize is that these processes only exist to the extent that they are constituted by individual acts of identification, based in genuine semiosis, which straddles personal, introspective moments and public, interactional, negotiated acts both intentional and unintentional, reflexive and habitual.

I propose three general forms that acts of identification can take (though there may of course be more): 1. Identification of oneself or another *as* a kind of person (under a particular conceptual category); and identifying *with* a group of people either by 2. *contiguity* (being in the same place at the same time), or by 3. *resemblance* (looking, sounding, moving etc. like them). These three forms of identifying line up with Peirce's second trichotomy of semiosis as symbolic, indexical, or iconic respectively:¹⁷ to *identify as* is to produce a p-symbol, to *identify with* through contiguity is to produce an index, while to *identify with* through resemblance is to produce an icon (Turino 1999 (226)), where in each case, the sign is (an aspect of) the person identified and the object is the kind or group of people with whom they are identified. The interpretant varies depending on the perceiver and their history of semiosis. Thus in acts and processes of identification there is no guarantee that one's ideas of one's own "identity" are successfully transmitted. They involve communication, and hence the reactions and interpretations of perceivers. Communication is not always successful. On occasion, one's attempts to have others identify you a certain way do not succeed and instead they come to

¹⁷ Thanks to Jon Hollis and Peter Wellington for helping clarify the three forms, as well as their relation to Peircean Semiotic models of meaning (as developed by Thomas Turino (2014)).

identify you differently. As Wittgenstein's famous comment about the impossibility of understanding a lion implies (Wittgenstein 2001: 190), successful communication requires actors and perceivers to share at least some categories of thought, ways of experiencing the world and each other.

I do not mean to suggest that people are free to identify in any way they wish. One's biological, social, historical and psychological makeup affects the ways one can identify, or tends to be identified by others. Acts and processes of identification are necessarily social, and occur within dynamics of power and resistance (Foucault 1976). Following Brenda Farnell, I take it to be a fundamental condition of humans that "we employ intentionality to act (Gibson 1979: 218-19) that is embedded in intersubjective practices" (Farnell 2000: 409). However, these intersubjective practices frequently involve limiting the repertoire of de facto possible thoughts and actions. Struggles to identify in a particular way are embedded in processes of identification that involve shifting possibilities. For example, the struggle of people to identify as Afro-Colombians involved the development of this conceptual category in state demographic apparatus, which was only adopted after the demobilization of the M-19 guerrillas and subsequent constitutional reform of 1991. Similar processes are underway for people who wish to identify as LGBQIA, or under associated categories, and lobby for equality of rights to redress historic and continuing discrimination.

We can see processes of identification clearly only by considering various acts and the impacts they have over an extended period of time, making extended ethnographic fieldwork well suited to their study. All of this is useful to conceptualize what is occurring in San Martín where processes of identification have been threatened and brought into question by various forms of violence and social change.

"Identity" Found? Tambora Festivals

In this section of the chapter I consider music making at festivals, which takes a more presentational form than the street *tambora* described in chapter one. I show that the group of people involved in *tambora* has expanded through the establishment of educational clubs where young people learn from older musicians. A shift in repertoire has accompanied this change, as children's music games have been included. I go on to consider the arguments of locals who claim that *tambora* festivals help minimize violence in the region by strengthening community identification, preventing the desertion of young people to armed groups, and allowing towns to present themselves publicly as non-violent. I show three central ways in which, for many people of the region, *tambora* bears significant associations with peace. My claim here is not the naïve one that the mere act of presenting a group of people as non-violent through music and dance can eradicate violence. However, I do hope to show that there are multiple layers of significance linking musical activities to peaceful coexistence, and that the social habits which the musical practices signify and partially constitute, can explain the drive of festival organizers and participants to promote festivals as a means of diminishing violence.

San Martín's festival was established in 1984 by a group of schoolteachers, Martina Camargo's brother Javier among them. The founders were young people who had left San Martín to study at university and returned as teachers with ideas of the importance of local identity and tradition. With the rise of festivals in the region, came a new form of music making for tambora musicians.

The annual festival in San Martín is a three-day event held around the town's patron saint day and national holiday on November 11th. It has come to supersede Christmas traditions as the town's main *tambora* event. It is typical of rural music festivals in northern Colombia insofar as

it is a competition for music-dance groups that is free to enter, but has cash prizes for winners.¹⁸

During the day the competition's preliminary rounds are carried out in private or with only competitors attending (often on school premises, see figure 5). There are also parades (figure 28), and academic fora addressing the concerns of organizers and attendees. At night, competitors perform on stage in a prominent part of town (see figure 29). These performances are open and free to the public, and in addition to the competition, include "folkloric displays" by groups from different traditions, and usually a show by a commercial music group to top the bill.¹⁹

¹⁸ I still do not fully understand why nearly all festivals in Colombia are competitions. It seems to be a combination of three factors: 1. a doxic acceptance on the part of organizers that musical performance they consider beautiful, or representative of tradition (though these may be in tension) should be rewarded financially to demonstrate its value, as well as their genuine concern for the wellbeing of people who have come to be seen as representatives of the tradition, who often live in poverty; 2. a pragmatic means of encouraging musicians to participate in the new festival format; 3. a pragmatic means of ensuring financial backing from regional and national "cultural" institutions. These latter probably hope to police style and celebration, and eventually package consumable creative "products" that can be sold, and exported, through "cultural markets" (see chapter 3). The ways in which local cultural elites engage with, resist, or promote these discourses deserves further research.

¹⁹ On festivals in the coastal region see Carbó 2001; Carrasquilla Baza 2010; Rojas E. 2013; Ciro Gómez 2015. The festivalization of participatory musical forms in Colombia deserves its own study. I deal with it only to the extent that it intersects with my principal themes.



Figure 28: Daytime parade at San Martín's 2015 Festival



Figure 29: Nighttime round of San Martín's Tambora festival in 2008.

The musical practice of *tambora* has gone through many sonic and social changes with the rise of festivals, some of which have been well documented by Guillermo Carbó (Carbó 2001). He describes mostly sonic changes that result from turning a participatory practice into what he calls a "*televisual*" one (read presentational). The fixing of particular sounds as *tambora* through these festivals mean that the organizers very much created the "genre" they thought they were saving.²⁰ I develop an argument about the social impacts of these sonic changes in chapter 4. One social aspect which Carbó notes but does not expand upon is the emergence of a new social group (Ibid: 9). While before festivals, people would participate in *Tambora* with family and neighbors, they had very little contact with people who did similar in different parts of the river region.²¹ Nowadays, while fewer people in any given sector of a particular town may take part in participatory street *Tambora*, many more from different towns come together at various festivals across the region precisely because they value tambora. They have become acquaintances and in some case friends as a result. I will call this emergent, expanding group the *tambora cohort* (Turino 2008: 158).²² People in the river region may once have constituted a

²⁰ Carbó notes the "officialization" of four rhythmic feels, and awards for new songs, which are both still in place, as well as the introduction of drum soloing and *piqueria* (improvised vocal duals), both now abandoned, (Carbó 2001: 9). The four feels are *tambora tambora*, *berroche*, *guacherna* and *chandé*. The "correct" forms of the two latter especially are still contested (Ciro Gómez 2015). Carbó (2001) shows that historically not all four rhythmic feels were played by all musicians in the river region. Some began learning certain feels at festivals themselves.

²¹ Ismael Ardila remembers a people coming to Christmas *Tamboras* in San Martín from neighboring towns (P.C. 2008, 2014), but their numbers were very limited in comparison to the dozens who attend festivals.

²² It is important to note that this cohort is not simply a regional identity group. Most people who are part of the cohort come from the river region and they do stress the importance of tambora as a regional identifier. However, some members of the cohort come from outside the region. Interest in tambora, not provenance, is the factor that defines membership. The tambora cohort is also embedded to some extent within the broader cohort of "folk" festival enthusiasts across Colombia and beyond. However, relations to "the nation" are complex. In 2012 some local cultural elites were trying to garner support among the *tambora* cohort for rekindling Fals Borda's regionalist project and lobbying the national government to establish a new department in the river region. However, by 2014, this regionalist movement had largely fizzled out. In contrast to some other festivals in northern Colombia, ethnic identity categories do not play a clear role in San Martín. While the town of María la Baja in Montes de María explicitly presents their *bullerengue* festival as a celebration of Afrodescendent identity, for example, San Martín does not. Most people in the river region foreground African and Indigenous ancestors in their self-descriptions, but there is no non-pejorative ethnic or racial category in common parlance or official legislature that captures this narrative. The colonial term "*zambo*" is generally seen as derogatory, as it was used at various points in Colonial history to mean the "least trustworthy" "mongrel" "mix" of "blacks" and "Indians" and maintains an especially

relatively unified cultural formation, sharing a broad range of habits central to their way of being in the world and their self-perception. Now the region is much more heterogeneous, so attempts to unify people under "identity" categories tend to function through the formation of cohorts, where identification happens at the level of a reduced pool of particular shared interests and practices, in this case music making within the increasingly crystallized "genre" of *tambora*. The growth of the *tambora* cohort is important because efforts to increase its size and visibility are connected to attempts at precipitating broader social change that would reduce violence in the river region, and increase the perceived trustworthiness of its residents.

In the following two sections I describe two broad changes *tambora* has gone through with festivalization, namely its increasing association with education on the one hand and the construction of peace in parallel to the civil conflict on the other. I do so primarily through the acts and processes of identification of Martina Camargo, her family and broader social groups, that I have witnessed and come to understand with her since 2008.

Festivals and Education

In 2008 Martina Camargo was one of three judges for the festival in San Martín. However, she was also asked to perform twice during the festival, dancing on the opening day, then later singing on the public stage. Video 3 shows Martina performing an improvised couple dance in

problematic position in nationalist, racialist and ethnic discourse across Latin America (Whitten and Whitten 2011: 35). Elisabeth Cunin describes a similar resistance to identifying under racial or ethnic categories among youth involved in the Champeta music scene in Cartagena (Cunin 2004). Also, people driving the festivalization process in the river region could have chosen other practices that identify their region as the vehicle for their identity politics. Some river region festivals, like the *Encuentro de la Cultura Anfibia* (Encounter of Amphibian Culture) in Talaigua Nuevo, include things like fishing and canoe paddling as part of the contest. The fact that the emergent cohort I study formed around the musical practice of Tambora, and then made them presentational, has been a strong factor in guiding them towards a discourse of "artists" which I argue limits the impact of their social projects (see Chapter 4).

the rhythmic feel of *tambora*.²³ In the video we can notice the marked difference in ages between *cantadores* such as Ángel Villa Fañe, and the chorus and percussionists, who were drawn from various groups. The young musicians here all learned *tambora* in *semilleros* (literally seedbeds). These are voluntary groups for learning and performing *tambora*, which have been established since the rise of festivals in the 1980s. Some are lead by *cantadores* like Villa Fañe in the town of Barranco de Loba. Other leaders are non-participants (often parents of performers) such as Martina Camargo's sister-in-law Idelsa Cerpa in San Martín. They differ significantly from the first *tambora* groups to perform at festivals, which were mainly formed out of families or neighbors who already celebrated Christmas together with participatory *tambora*. Returning to the life of Martina Camargo and her extended family allows us to plot the development of *tambora* "schools," *semilleros*, or youth groups.

Martina grew up on cusp of two different ways of making and learning *tambora*. She remembers being part of street Tamboras before festivals existed, but she has also participated in many festivals and benefitted from their rise. In participatory street *tambora*, adult participants learned through observation and attempting to participate themselves. Children in San Martín would also imitate adult celebrations in spontaneous play, using tin cans or chairs made of wood and leather as makeshift drums, and limejuice mixed with salt as "rum" (Álvaro and Martina Camargo, P.C. 2014). When San Martín's festival was established in 1984, Martina was twenty and living in the city of Bucaramanga with her first husband. However, on returning home in 1987, she was keen to take part. With her father at its helm, the Camargo family organized a group for the fourth festival the following year; *Aires de San Martín* (as in English, "airs" here is

²³ Video 3: <http://youtu.be/gWa4eTfCck4> (recorded by the author at the festival de Tambora, San Martín de Loba, Bolívar, Colombia, 11.10.2008)

usefully ambiguous between its meteorological and musical senses; breezes or rhythmic feels respectively). Martina recalled:

We formed in 1988, and the same year we got up to sing [on stage at the festival]. It was one of the first organized groups in San Martín... Regina [Ardila] came before us... But you see, before that there weren't any organized groups. Whoever was going to sing, dance and play got together to play and... period. Only since the festival [was established] have people started to organize groups.

1988 is when I started to sing fully. My father was still singing, but so was I. I began singing at the festivals and accompanying the parade floats singing, now as a... [she almost says grown-up] *cantadora*. That year the song "*Las Olas de la Mar*" ("The Waves of the Sea") won [first prize in the category of best new song at the festival].

Carbó, like Martina, notes that it was through the festivals that the concept of a *tambora* group came to exist for people in the river region (Carbó 2001: 4). The first groups that formed for festivals were mainly comprised of family members and neighbors, because these were the common groupings for Christmas tambora celebrations. *Aires de San Martín* was typical in this sense, with Cayetano, Martina and some of her siblings at its core, and neighbors playing drums. Some groups, like *Dieciseis de Noviembre* even took their names from the date that their street hosts the *novena*. These groups did not represent a significant shift in practices of identification from previous celebratory *tambora* practices.

Only some of the original festival participants have maintained a close relationship with the shifting practices of tambora. Martina's sister, Cecilia, was unable to say why she stopped participating. Her brother, Alvaro, was clearer: "I could never conform myself to all the rules and regulations of the festivals." Both of these reflections are indicative of a broad change across the town, whereby many older practitioners of *tambora* dropped out of festival performance due to a lack of comfort with the competitive presentational format and new repertoire and rules for performance. One elderly female singer feels unable to keep up with the sonic changes: "*Yo no sé esos sones nuevos. Eso es cosa de pela'os!*" (I don't know those new songs/ feels. That's kids

stuff!) (Silveria María "La Blanca" Escobar P.C. 2008, 2014). Other one-time participants explicitly cite the competitive presentational nature of festivals as their reason for stopping, arguing organizers should instead hold participatory "encounters" with no competitive element (Dagoberto Deal P.C. 2008). By avoiding the stage, such musicians have stopped identifying with other *tambora* participants and are less readily identified by others as *tambora* musicians.

As older musicians died or lost interest in the staged version of *tambora*, some people saw a need to train younger people to take over, and they established youth groups. In *semilleros*, young people learn and rehearse for presentations, festivals, and similar events, learning from older musicians as well as their peers. One aim of *semillero* leaders is to expand the *tambora* cohort by increasing the opportunities for young people to identify *with* older members of the community already involved - that is increasing the time they spend together. Many *semillero* leaders reported that they encourage this, not only to increase the number of *tambora* musicians and dancers, but also in the hope that the young people involved will come to resemble people of previous generations, adopting a cluster of broader habits and dispositions of thought and action that were common to most people in the region two generations ago, rooted less in individualism and more in concern for the group and the broader social groups of which they are a part, such as their neighborhood, town, and region. In this way festival organizers hoped to teach young people to resist the defensive individualism that proliferated with the gold boom and terror of the civil conflict, as well as the influence of cultural imports through television and radio.

However, *semillero* leaders also have to balance aims of increasing the cohort and engendering a communal *ethos* with the demands imposed, and desires generated, by presentational competitions with cash prizes. They must not only make musicians, but sculpt "performing artists." On certain occasions, where the number of performers is restricted because

of the difficulties of funding journeys to events in other towns, *semillero* leaders are even forced to break with their broadly communal ideology and select only some members to perform (Idelsa Cerpa P.C. 2012). Similar shifts are documented for many presentational musical practices that develop out of participatory ones. For instance, in Lima, Peru Turino describes the tendency among regional associations to copy recordings of *siku* music rather than compose new songs collectively as is the norm in the rural practices they mimic (Turino 1993: 200, 217). The resultant social hierarchy in the urban regional groups, which contrasts with the predominance of egalitarian principles among the rural indigenous groups, is strikingly similar to that in JSM.

The way young people learn in *semilleros* also contrasts with musical learning in previous generations, which came either through unsupervised play or observing others and participating during celebrations, where maximal participation was the aim. In *semilleros* there is a degree of instruction and explicit training aimed towards the preparation of a musical product worthy of winning festivals. In order to succeed, this product must be sufficiently structured and precise, and display some degree of virtuosity. Thus *semilleros* are central to two processes of identification with opposite vectors, towards participatory, communal practices typically associated with the past on the one hand, and exclusionary or individualistic, presentational practices associated with "modernity" and "progress", but also fragmentation on the other.

In the 2008 festival, after dancing *tambora* Martina was used as a model for further educational purposes. The emcee asked her to show the young people watching how to dance *La Pava*. Video 4 shows her performing a version of a children's song-and-dance game or *ronda*, interpreted in the rhythmic feel of *berroche*.²⁴ In this particular game, *La Pava Echa'* (The Broody Turkey Hen) the dance is said to represent the mating ritual of turkeys, while the lyrics

²⁴ Video 4: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P1D-GORWQU

encourage the female dancer, or turkey hen to "zumbar." To *zumbar* can be to shake, move sensuously and vigorously, buzz, or get very close to, but also to mock. Martina describes the dance as showing some of the "sensual" aspects of human interaction through the analogy of animal courtship (P.C. 2008, 2012).



Figure 30: Martina Camargo in the outfit she was given in San Martin 2008, pictured after a show in Moroa, Sucre 2012

By placing herself on the same stage as active and well-known members the tambora cohort and dancing in a shared style (identifying with them through contiguity and resemblance), Martina showed herself to be a member of that group (allowed audience members to identify her as a *tambora* dancer-musician). However, by demonstrating *La Pava*, she was also placing herself in the role of an educator, with resemblance to *semillero* leaders and festival organizers.

The music-dance games, known as *rondas*, began to be incorporated into the repertoire of *tambora* by adult festival competitors in the late 1980s (Carbó 1993: 30). According to Carbó it was originally played by children at funerals and was first danced by adults at a festival in 1988 (Carbó 2001: 11). Martina remembers it as a game that children played in the street after dark, though not necessarily at funerals,²⁵ involving responsorial singing, clapping and movement or dance, but no percussion. Martina described the waning popularity of these games as a loss of "*diversion sana*" (healthy entertainment, or "good clean fun") (P.C. 2008, 2012). This does not necessarily imply the complete absence of violent or sexualized interaction in such games. Some *rondas* involved boys kicking each other. Rather, violent or risqué aspects are limited and mediated through imaginative play, often related to animals,²⁶ within a set of redundantly repeated, mutually understood set of interactions.

Through her connection to professional musicians in Bogotá, Martina co-authored a pedagogical book and now gives workshops on these *rondas infantiles* (Henríquez 2008). In 2013 she completed a teacher training qualification for which her thesis was on the physical and social benefits that *rondas* offer children. When she performs or teaches *rondas* she is modeling and encouraging what she sees as positive, active, imaginative childhood fun rooted in local practices of her natal home. That is to say she is educating members of the *tambora* cohort (and broader groups of people interested in "traditional music") while she identifies with them and as a preserver of local ludic practices, which she sees as contributing to peaceful coexistence.

²⁵ Juan Sebastian Rojas is currently conducting research on the revival of similar funerary games in western Bolívar, which may shed light on their historical and continued significance and what I suspect may have been a process of repression by both liberal and conservative catholic forces of burial rites associated with blackness and not officially sanctioned by the church.

²⁶ The significance of this kind of mediation through non-human animals deserves further investigation beyond my current scope, but it may be related to the "transpersonal" selfhood that Ochoa Gautier, following Sahlins and Viveiros de Castro, attributes to the *bogas* of the nineteenth century river region (Ochoa Gautier 2015: 62-66). It may be elucidated by further research on the funerary practices and animal stories recorded by List in the 1960s and recently compiled by Rojas and John Holmes McDowell (Rojas E. and Holmes McDowell 2017; List 2017).

Martina has her particular perspective in part because of her position as a professional performer and increasingly an educationist.

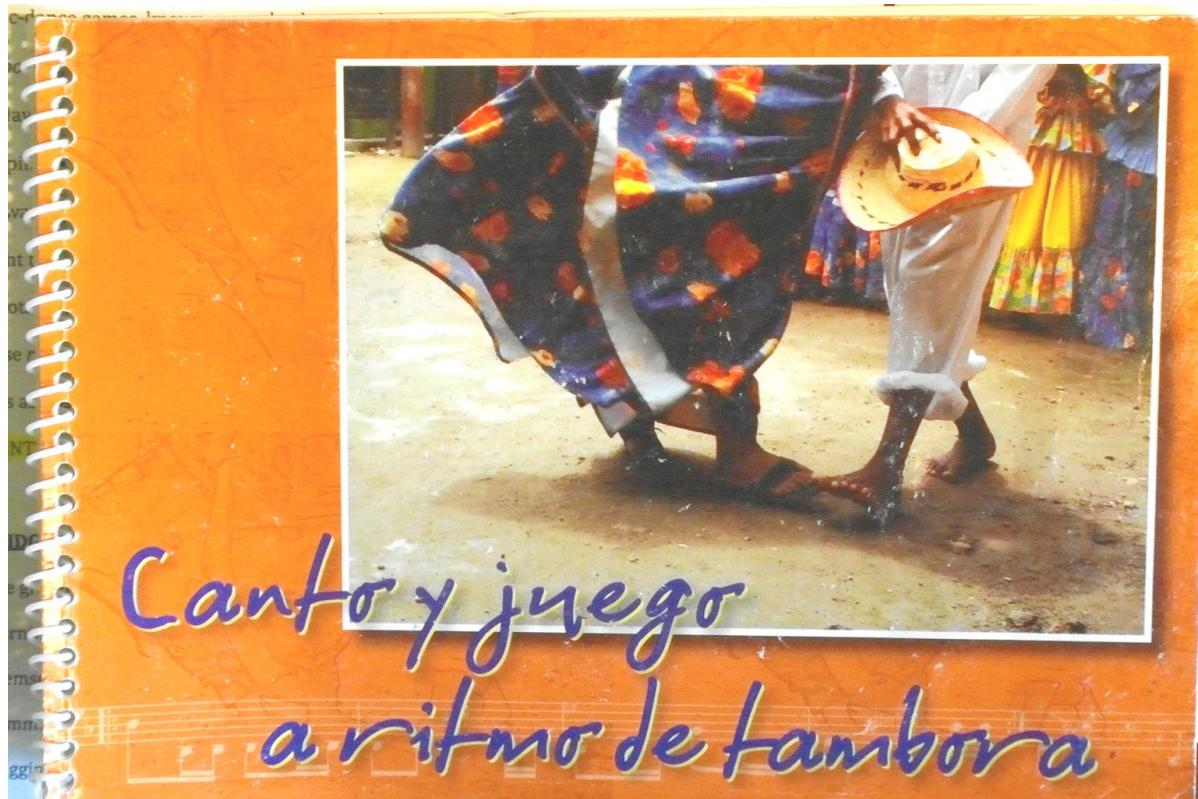


Figure 31: Martina Camargo's co-authored book of rondas and games, *Canto y juego a ritmo de tambora* (*Song and Play to the Rhythm of Tambora*).

Another group of people who often voice their belief in a strong connection between festivals, learning and peace in the river region are festival founders and organizers. In the following section I consider their agency in the formation of festivals and connecting *tambora* to discourses of peace.

Festivals and a Parallel Peace

Many adults in San Martín and across northern Colombia expressed their concern to me about social problems associated with youth. They were worried about young people drinking, taking

drugs, listening to "undesirable" music, becoming increasingly sexualized, fighting and joining gangs. These concerns may seem ubiquitous worldwide and perhaps even innocuous, but in this context they are closely connected to more worrying practices, namely joining armed guerrilla or paramilitary groups and involvement in the illicit drug trade.

Diógenes Pino, a teacher, author and scholar, founded a *tambora* festival in his hometown of Tamalameque simultaneously with, but independently from efforts in San Martín.²⁷ He aimed to combat some of these problems by encouraging young people to identify in ways that would prevent them being involved in violent groups. He told me he considers the project to have been a great success. Referring to practices from the river region in general, but *tambora* in particular, he said:

Our cultural aspect is so strong that it has prevented guerrillas and paramilitaries from prospering among the natives of our town. Maybe they come from outside, but from among the locals, no, because culture has kept us safe and pure in that respect... It makes people take on an appropriation of cultural identity and it defends them from onslaughts from outside, right? It keeps them... unscathed by the great convulsion [of violence] in Colombia at the national level. Culturally, we have remained a sacred niche of peace. (Diógenes Pino P.C. 2009, 2012)

Pino is highly aware of various forms of violence, and engaged with the intricacies of national and international politics, including the peace talks between the Colombian government and the FARC. However, when he talks of "a sacred niche of peace" here, he is not primarily concerned with these grand-scale issues. Rather, he is focused on achieving a diminution of local manifestations of real and threatened physical violence by armed groups. Pino is claiming that the tambora groups and events in his town helped achieve what Clemencia Rodriguez calls a "parallel peace" forged and maintained by citizens at the local level, despite the ongoing conflict at the national level, and its occasional incursion on their territory (Rodríguez 2011: 132).

²⁷ See Carbó 2001. Carbó does not mention the civil conflict, or violence in general.

Primarily, Diógenes was concerned to limit attacks on his community by paramilitary and guerrilla groups, and furthermore minimize the desire for local youth to join such groups by valorizing local, "traditional" practices. We might also see this as the mitigation of conflict between different generations, or internal to younger people arising out of the increasing variety of influences on them. *Semilleros* and festivals are not only meant to combat low-level social problems by keeping kids busy, but also aim to start or strengthen processes of identification among them and between them and the broader community, in such a way as to minimize violence at a local level. By rewarding the kinds of activity promoted by the festival through applause, explicit recognition, the resultant increased social capital, and cash prizes, festival organizers provide normative models of behavior for young people, based on co-operation, respect for elders, and the maintenance of local traditions.

Reflecting on San Martín's festival Javier Camargo stressed the further aim of shaping the way people view his community from the outside, especially after the attacks by guerrilla groups were reported in the media and San Martín began to gain a reputation as a *zona roja* (red zone):

We want this town to be known for its music; not for it to be violence or anything like that, but music. That is, let Colombia know that here we're peaceful people... Our reputation for being *guerrilleros* and all that has gradually dissipated, but anyway, that's what we aim to do through the festival; take away the bad image of this town. (Javier Camargo P.C. 2012)

Many people like Javier in the river region and across Colombia believe their town, region, or country has become synonymous with violence, largely through mass media coverage, which has understandably tended to foreground violence since the 1980s. Festival organizers have used the means at their disposal to increase their agency in public self-identification, by placing music and dance literally centre-stage at events they hope will receive media coverage and attention from well-connected visitors. In fact, the first festival in San Martín was a joint proposal with a local radio station, which was contracted by the town's mayor to cover the town's

patron saint celebrations, but considered *tambora* more suitable for their listeners than the recorded music, commercial groups bullfights which normally dominated celebrations (Carbó 2001: 4). Thus festival organizers' efforts were integrated to a degree with media workers connected to the networks Rodriguez documents.

Festival organizers have attempted to re-historicize their region by engaging to a degree with national media controlled by dominant groups, while simultaneously empowering their own forms of expression (Sahlins 1985). Many towns and regions in Colombia have attempted publicly to identify themselves as peaceful, whether through written statements to political representatives, media campaigns, commerce associated with a discourse of peace, or other means (Escobar 2004: 58, 67; Burnyeat 2018), in San Martín and Tamalameque festival organizers are doing it through staged *tambora* music and dance. This is especially important in a context where people coerced into acceptance of guerrilla occupation would later be branded as collaborators by paramilitaries, and vice-versa. All three sides in the conflict have used supposed collaboration to justify various forms of physical violence, such as detention, extortion, assassination, or "social cleansing" – the killing of "undesirables" (Taussig 2003) – as well as less obvious forms of violence. On a broader level, as both paramilitary groups and guerrillas have been branded nationally and internationally as terrorists becoming the targets of supposedly legitimate military operations, citizens are motivated to undo any associations with them. At various times in recent decades, people in towns such as San Martín have literally had life or death reasons to promote an image of peacefulness and non-cooperation with armed groups.

In Chapter 4 I ask how successful these attempts have been. Here I merely comment on some local assessments. In Tamalameque, while Diógenes Pino lauds the achievements of early festivals, he laments the town's inability to maintain the annual festival. He celebrates, however,

the number of young people still involved in *tambora* (P.C. 2009, 2012). In other towns, while festival organizers and group leaders are generally positive in the assessments of the social impact, I found some older musicians who feel excluded from the *tambora* cohort to some degree, because of the presentational and competitive nature of festivals, and the new practices and repertoire they now include. They tend to express a feeling of ill ease in staged settings, and unfamiliarity with new songs, melodies and practices. They haven't learned, don't agree with, or feel left out of the new and increasingly formalized rules of the new practice, they tend not to trust that other participants will not humiliate them, and thus tend not to have the self confidence to get involved.

Younger musicians tend to be more enthusiastic about these aspects and some even aspire to one day making a living through music. The festivals certainly receive some attention from the media, university students and researchers, but problems of accessibility and the relative anonymity of *tambora* have limited this for San Martín in comparison to other festivals such as the *Festival de Gaita* in Ovejas, Sucre. This latter is broadcast live on national television and attended by so many students the town brands itself *la Universidad de la Gaita* (see Chapter 3).

Tambora's Extant and Developing Associations with Peace

We may still ask why festival organizers and *semillero* leaders chose *tambora* as the vehicle for their projects as opposed to some other activity, musical or otherwise. I end this chapter by suggesting four main ways in which *tambora* has come to have significant associations with peace for many people in the river region, and why they makes it apt for the processes of identification discussed above.

First, to the extent that *tambora* remains participatory, being involved is a good way of increasing feelings of unity and trust among participants and strengthen local social relations outside musical contexts. There is a range of skill levels required from participants, from very basic chorus singing to fairly virtuosic lead singing, dancing and drumming. Its highly repetitive, interlocking rhythmic patterns, responsorial vocal forms and dense textures all facilitate maximal involvement, enjoyment and feelings of connectedness that can arise among participants in a fun, physically demanding activity, which is redundant at so many levels of periodicity. Here identifying *with* members of *tambora* ensembles and the broader cohort through contiguity and synchronicity of action (a form of resemblance) can bolster broader processes of identification among the actors outside the musical context, which, all other things being equal are antithetical to violence against the group (Turino 2008: 23-25), and do not involve the demonization of *another* against whom participants must identify.

Second, I believe that for people involved in *tambora* as performers or audience, *tambora* has a strong indexical connection with peace through its co-occurrence with their experience of peaceful times, as well as its absence during times of conflict. I was unable to clarify the extent to which participation in Christmas *Tambora* declined in recent years due to violence. However, it is clear that the festivalized practice has suffered at times of heightened violence. San Martín was unable to host a festival between 1991 and 1993, for economic reasons (Álvaro Camargo, P.C. 2012). This came directly after guerrilla groups blew up the only bank to have been established in the town (Ramon Ospina, P.C. 2012). Also, the historical decline of the participatory tradition has coincided with the rise in violence since the 1960s. Participatory Christmas *Tambora* was strongest before the violence of the 1980s, '90s and 2000s. For some people in the river region I believe there is a strong emotional connection between participatory

tambora and peaceful times. Performing *tambora* allows older people to revive and project old processes of identification. Young people are able to model their behavior on older members of their societies who grew up before the current conflict, and thereby imagine for themselves a life free from violence. Michael Taussig documents a similar though ephemeral experience dancing to recorded music in the south of Colombia (Taussig 2003, 96-7). The benefit in the case of *tambora* is its iteration in various festivals across the region most years. What I have begun to add to the picture here is a discussion of how experience of participatory traditions and processes of identification contribute to this experience of identifying, educating, imagining and peacebuilding.

Third, many people in the river region characterize *tambora* in contrast to *corralejas* (bullfights), which in San Martín and nearby towns occur at the same time as their *tambora* festivals, and are also musical events. Although bullfights have their supporters in the river region and beyond (even among members of the *tambora* cohort), many people see them as violent. They involve injury and death of bulls and humans, and sometimes fights between spectators. By contiguity the brass-band music that accompanies bullfights in Northern Colombia indexes violence for many people in San Martín. People (involved in *tambora* or not) described *corralejas* to me as male-dominated, projecting a stereotypical normative view of manliness, involving disorder, profit-oriented, related to historical colonial powers and neo-colonial cattle owners from outside the river region and abroad.

For some people the sounds of band music connotes conflict even more powerfully. Wilman Martínez, known as "Pibe" is the clarinet player in San Martín's municipal band, *Once de Noviembre*. When he was teaching me to play the *bombardino* (B♭ Euphonium) in order to play with the band, he explained that he had been taught to think of the structure of band tunes,

where alternating melodies are played primarily between clarinets and trumpets, as representing a heated argument, fistfight, or battle. He demonstrated the iconicity for me as we listened and played. For people like Pibe, then, brass band music signifies violent conflict indexically, symbolically, or both. For almost everyone who has experienced it, brass band music is indexical of the local economic elites that have historically patronized the band, purchasing their instruments and hiring them to play for bullfights or other celebrations. Poorer locals tend to see these economic elites as representatives of the symbolic, territorial, psychological and physical violence wrought against poorer sectors of society, and therefore many associate brass band music with this violence to a degree.

Some locals view *tambora* as a form of local resistance to state centralism and cultural domination by the interior. Since 2003 there has been a national scheme for *música para la convivencia* (music for peaceful living together) driven by state institutions. Their impact in rural areas like San Martín has been limited. Pibe showed me a pile of disused books he had been given when he worked at *la casa de la cultura*: "They came, gave me these, and never came back. It's useless unless they support our processes, because we don't get any support locally." The pages were filled with Eurocentric explanations of "proper" ways to sit with, tune, and play one's instrument alone and in groups. They bare little relation to extant music making practices in San Martín, even those of the band, who play standing, increase participation by generating wide tuning and generally aim to play as loud as possible for as long as possible (see chapter 1). Furthermore, this national program aims to generate a degree of national homogeneity by promoting the existence of municipal bands in every municipality. Until my time in the field at least, it had not directly supported other musical projects already in progress, such as

participatory *Tambora*, or the *tambora* festival.²⁸ As such many locals characterize the latter as underdog musical activities, forms of local resistance to neocolonial nationalist projects, generated far away in the whiter Andean capital, that would appear to aim at nullifying local particularities.

To summarize, in contrast to brass band music, *tambora* has long included critical roles for women (as singers, dancers and organizers) (Carbó 2003), and has developed into a relatively inclusive space, especially for men who do not conform to stereotypes of masculinity or norms of sexuality, with many groups being directed by gay men. However, the inclusion of homosexual men is often limited, restricting their roles to singing and dancing. It also involves less extreme drunken debauchery than many other past-times, is free to the public, connected through well-known narratives to colonial *subject* groups, rather than dominant groups, and is seen as coming from the river region itself. *Tambora*, then, is often conceptualized in direct contrast to bullfights and brass band music, and the support the latter gains from nationalist projects. That is to say it is seen as a non-violent alternative. Thus by participating in *tambora*, people are able to identify as non-violent.

Fourth, performing tambora publicly on stage functions as a substitute for the greetings and free childhood play with limited supervision that were common to small-town life before the waves of violence beginning in the 1980s, and used to be key indicators and generators of generalized trust among residents. Anthropologist John Aguilar's ethnography of trust in an Indigenous Mexican peasant community shows the importance of greetings as one of the altercasting face-work strategies through which people in small social groups with regular face-to-face contact adopted and projected social roles of minimal mutual support, thereby

²⁸ In 2015 Martina was invited to work as an instructor on a course for local music teachers and band-leaders, which included some teachers of musical practices comparable to *tambora*. This may indicate an increasing desire to work with multiple forms of music making and processes already underway on behalf of the state institutions.

constructing thin trusting relations (Aguilar 1984; Weinstein and Deutschberger 1963; Goffman 1967). Locals in San Martín also emphasized the role of free, creative childhood play in the streets with little or no adult supervision in developing these relations. These strategies became less common in San Martín during the worst times of the conflict, when people self-imposed curfews after dark through fear of paramilitary attack. Staged performance, however, continued and allowed people to achieve similar goals. Performers play together and in public, showing themselves not to be a menace to the social groups in which they live. They publicly identify as defenders of new public practices, which are in turn presented as aspects of non-violent "traditional" local ways of life. They thereby present themselves as trustworthy guardians of local amphibian cultural practices to those who accept to some degree the discourses of festival organizers.

Summary

In this chapter I have argued that even if the river region ever lived up to Fals Borda's vision as a cultural formation characterized by an amphibious life and broad networks of thin trusting relationships resisting strong hierarchies, today it struggles to say the least. While aspects of this life remain for many residents, decades of externally imposed and internally generated violence have disrupted the processes that tended to reconstruct that way of being.

Local cultural elites have worked to rescue local musical practices, which they see as representative of a relatively fixed local "identity." However, in doing so they have actually created new musical practices, and generated new processes of identification for an emergent cohort of participants in *tambora* festivals. These processes emphasize the new connection of *tambora* with education and a form of peaceful coexistence maintained in parallel to and in

resistance against the various forms of violence experienced in the river region. Tambora has been useful in this process because it already bore associations with vague notions of decency and peace in contrast to other local musics, but also because the process of festivalizing *tambora* during times of violence has brought further associations with forms of social interaction that are conducive to non-violent relations of trust among participants and the social groups they live in.

My theoretical argument is that we can only make sense of discourse on "identity" by analyzing particular acts and processes of identification. This requires an oscillation between considering on the one hand individual people and the signs they produce (intentionally or otherwise), and on the other the various groups of people with whom they interact semiotically and identify, or distinguish themselves from. Only in this way can we understand the trends of significance of particular acts and general categories as they interrelate over time.

In chapter 4 my narrative returns to San Martín to develop a case study of *Juventud Sanmartinense* to show ways in which membership affects tendencies of trusting. This requires a deeper treatment of general tendencies of trusting in San Martín and a consideration of the phenomenology of music making in Juventud Sanmartinense, which straddles rather uneasily the categories of participatory and presentational music making. I argue that the group's efforts to contribute significantly to peaceful coexistence in San Martín and beyond are partially successful, but are held back through a lack of reflection on how best to mold their musical practices to their social aims, and a tendency to reproduce in miniature the dynamics of domination that have come to characterize northern Colombia.

Before that, I turn to a different field site and a parallel but contrasting narrative of violence, displacement, festivalization and music making, namely the town of Ovejas, Sucre to the west of San Martín in the low-mountainous region of *Montes de María*, where virtuosic *gaita*

music has come to be central in the way the town represents itself as non-violent. For some musicians, like Joche Álvarez, *gaita* is a central means of maintaining deep trusting relations with a small radius of virtuosic musicians that both help and hinder their survival.

Chapter 3

El Viaje: Displacement, flow, and Re-encounter through Gaita

Ovejas: Trouble on the Gaita University Campus

On the stretch of the Pan-American Highway that winds through the hilly region of *Montes de María*, connecting Ovejas to Cartagena in the north and Medellín in the south, the sign that greets visitors declares the town to be "the university of *gaita*." Many people interested in *gaita* music, mainly young and from Colombia's interior or abroad, go there to study from masters. The town is also something of an "*alma mater*" for the many *gaiteros* from Ovejas who have left, whether by their own volition or by force. They return full of nostalgia for its annual *gaita* festival, which, like many "folk" festivals in Colombia, has become a means of indexing the town, its people and a chosen musical style to a nebulous notion of peace (Ochoa Gautier 2006; Birenbaum Quintero 2009). Precociously riffing on the seminal work by Bruno Nettl (Nettl 1995), I once called Ovejas the "rural heartlands" of *gaita*, conceptualizing the musical practice as a rurally rooted tradition (Middleton 2010), even though more people now play it across Colombia's urban centers than in rural *Montes de María* where it seems to have originated.

In the city of Cartagena in 2015 I would often speak with Joche Alvarez about his hometown of Ovejas, from which he had been displaced nearly two decades earlier. He told me that, like conservatories and universities that formed the sites of Nettl's heartland excursions, "masters" of *gaita* were building a "pantheon of deities" in the town (Nettl 1995: 11-12). However, unlike the marble busts of long-dead classical composers in University music schools, the first "deity" in Ovejas was a fiberglass replica of a still-very-much-alive *gaitero* and

instrument maker, Joche's father, José.¹ The son eagerly showed me photos of the statue, representing his father resplendent in festivalized "traditional" garb; leather *habarca* sandals on his feet, linen pants and shirt with "*liki liki*" band collar, *mochila* bag across his chest, neck scarf, *sombrero vueltia'o* (locally made fine straw hat), and *gaita hembra* held between his lips. José himself had helped fund the sculpture, claiming it would be the first of many to honor the men and women who had helped to sustain the tradition of *gaita* music in Ovejas.

The next time I visited Ovejas, after greeting José and family I walked from their house to see the statue: past the shells of abandoned tobacco packaging factories that speak to Ovejas' past as a once-thriving agro-industrial hub; past the fortified police station that more closely resembles a military bunker; on to the huge rubber tree on the corner opposite the crumbling colonial-style building which functions as the *gaita* festival's headquarters; down the hill and past the new Portuguese-owned supermarket; across the main *plaza* and around the side of the imposing catholic church dedicated to Saint Francis of Assisi.

Someone had hacked off the fiberglass hands of the statue and removed the *gaita* flute they once held, leaving José's image mutilated and mute. When I saw the handless figure I shivered. It seemed to encapsulate the violence that lies just under the surface of the region and the histories of its *gaiteros* as they have attempted to strategize means of surviving and enjoying life through music making. Both José in Ovejas and Joche in Cartagena shrugged off the vandalism: "Probably just kids messing around," but I was left wondering whether this was a way of silencing the violence I interpreted in the act. Surely there was significance in the dramatic disfiguration of the statue: A threat to José? A negation of his status as a great *gaitero*

¹ Father and son are both called "José" and both known by the familiar diminutive "Joche." However, to gain a degree of clarity I call the father José, and use "Joche" to refer only to his son.

and artisan? A general message that *gaita* and Ovejas are not yet as peaceful as some would claim?

In this chapter I focus on Joche's life, touching briefly on that of his father, as a means of recounting shifts in the practice of *gaita* from free time rural fun and religious celebration to festivalized musical practice and vocation. I show how some *gaiteros* like Joche have come to scrape a living from *gaita* through instrument making, teaching and occasional professional performance. I consider the importance of deep engagement and flow during instrument making and performance, and how this state of being relates to the constitution and interrelation of individuals and groups. I describe experiences and perceptions of guerrilla and paramilitary presence in *Montes de María*, showing some of the impacts of the violences they have inflicted, as well as local modes of narrating and silencing these violences in relation to *gaita*. I consider how making virtuosic *gaita* music together, and silencing its connections to violence helps build trust among participants, even across potential divides generated by the conflict. However, I also show that the same dynamics of intense, virtuosic musical interaction tend to generate distrust and suspicion that limit *gaiteros'* ability to form structured organizations. Finally I consider the clientelistic manner in which musicians engage with political institutions, which limits their ability to employ distrusting strategies that are successful for other people in securing benefits from nodes of these systems.

A Brief History of José Álvarez and Gaita from Fun to Festival

José Álvarez Senior was raised in the small hamlet of Almagra, part of the municipality of Ovejas. José remembers making and learning to play his first *gaitas* with his older brother Modesto in their free time after working on the family's small plot of land. Modesto taught

himself to play the lead melodic *gaita hembra* (female gaita), and José would accompany him with ostinati on the *gaita macho* (male gaita), while simultaneously marking the pulse with a maraca, as is typical. They picked up tunes as they played and listened to older *gaiteros*. José went to stay with family in Ovejas and various other towns, eventually learning the trade of photography that would take him to cities further afield and allow him to provide for his large family. After some time working in Cartagena, José returned to Ovejas where his services as a photographer were in high demand in the town itself and the surrounding countryside of the municipality. He became a well-known figure, travelling widely in the local area to ply his trade, and kept up playing the *gaita macho* as a hobby.

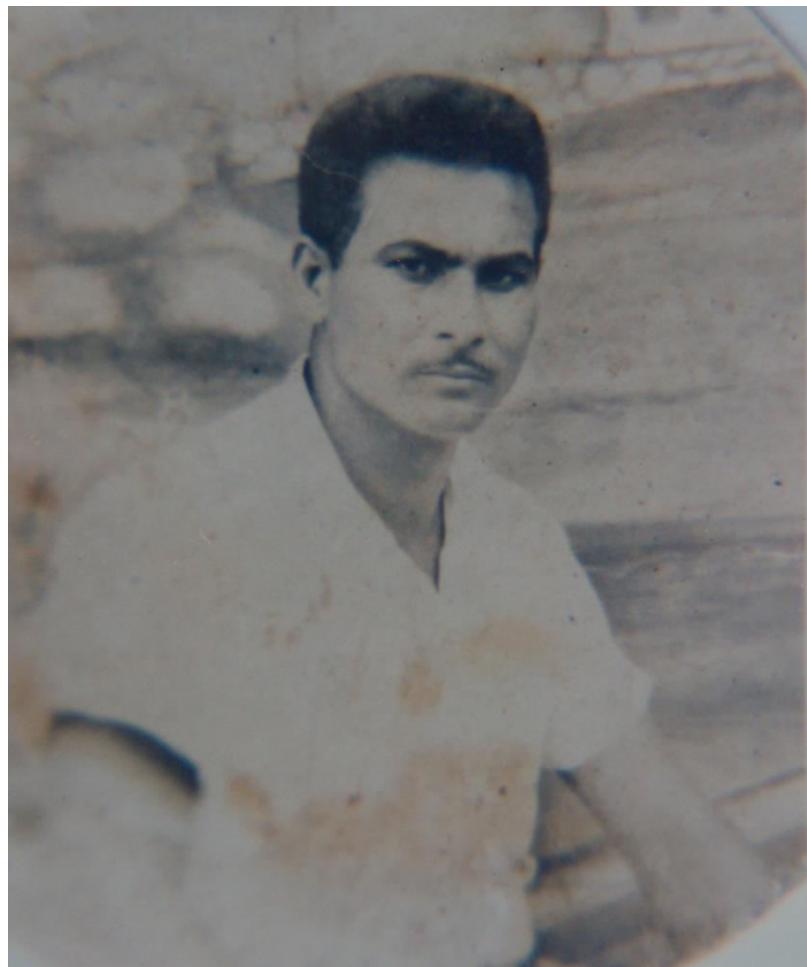


Figure 32: José Álvarez as a young man (photographer unknown, used by permission of José)

José and semi-professional gaiteros like him would occasionally be asked to play for local *parrandas* (parties) and *velaciones* (vigils, or devotional celebrations).² A *velación* was a celebration held over several days in veneration of a saint statue or other religious relic such as *el niño diós del bombacho*; a locally found stone containing an image of the baby Jesus. The relic would be taken from the church to a particular *campesino*'s home where people from the surrounding area were invited to venerate it. There they would congregate, eat, drink, dance and celebrate in honor of the religious figure in question, thanking it for recent harvests, or asking its blessings for future ones. At these celebrations, there would be no recorded music. There was no electricity in rural areas and clockwork gramophones were few and far between. *Gaita*, and sometimes accordion music, was what people danced to. So like Tambora, *gaita* was once mainly a participatory religious musical practice with a particular place in the seasonal cycle. *Velaciones* became much less common during the lifetime of the generation that followed José.³ Now some of the growing evangelical churches in the region strongly oppose the practice, making them even more rare.

Beyond celebrations, some gaiteros used to play *gaita* in order to make the rains come. Many older people in Ovejas remember the Arias brothers who would perform rituals in the main square of Ovejas, with little bottles of magical liquid and gaitas, in order to bring rain.⁴ They would ask passers by for coins in appreciation for this important agricultural task. Some

² Robin Moore describes similar *velaciones* performed in the Dominican Republic (Moore 2010: 46-9, 69-70). He describes them as "relatively 'free,' unregulated space[s] for the expression of devotion associated with folk Catholicism" (Ibid: 48), where folk Catholicism comprises a set of "less orthodox local practices" that "exist side by side" with "orthodox traditions derived from Rome" (Ibid 46). David M. Guss describes a similar phenomenon among Afro-Venezuelans in Barlovento in their all night veneration of San Juan, though he calls it a *velorio*, which in Colombia generally refers to the vigil before a funeral (Guss 2000: 32-33).

³ My interlocutors did not know why. It may be a combination of various factors such as increased urbanization, increased religious conservatism, or control of rural practices by the Church, and increased violence in rural areas. This question warrants further research, especially in light of the violence and difficulties in organizing I discuss in this chapter.

⁴ These practices are similar to, and may be historically connected to, Andean practices of playing particular flutes at particular points in the agricultural calendar in relation to dry and wet seasons (Turino 1993; Stobart 2006).

people still believe that *gaita* music has the power to bring the rains, claiming that at nearly every festival, held regularly in October, there is rain as a result of the sound of *gaita*. However, I know of nobody who performs the magic of the Arias brothers any longer.

José became somewhat of a cultural elite in his hometown and was one of the key figures in helping to establish "cultural events" in Ovejas and the surrounding area. His first effort, the avocado festival was an initial success, but it relied too much on its president. When he was killed, the festival was simply never repeated.⁵ In contrast, the *gaita* festival in Ovejas, which José helped to found, is still going today over thirty years later. To strengthen local participation in the festival Joche also established an informal "school" in his back yard, where young people could learn and form groups to compete at festivals.



Figure 33: José introducing Martina Camargo at a meeting of festival organizers, Ovejas, 2016

⁵ It remains unclear as to whether his death was directly related to the civil conflict or masked by the general malaise of impunity that it has fostered (see *The Festivals as a Place of Peace* below).

Perceptions and Impacts of Guerilla Presence

José's career change from photographer to instrument-maker and cultural "*gestor*" (fundraiser, promoter or broker) was not simply motivated by philanthropy, but also driven by factors of security and economics related to the presence of guerrilla groups in the region. José's attitude to guerrilla insurgents became apparent in one conversation we had in 2015, as he reacted to state TV news coverage about the then ongoing negotiations between the FARC and the Colombian government. In my interpretation of such conversations I take my lead from Helen Moodie in her analysis of stories of violence in "post-conflict" El Salvador. Like her, I am less concerned with the truth or otherwise of the stories my interlocutors tell than with what these narratives show about how narrators conceptualize the situations they describe and the implications of these conceptualizations:

What is important is that people imagined a common shape of their world. What is important is that the stories had patterns - that they were seen (or rather, heard) as *possible* in the postwar world. They created convictions, social facts, structures of feelings, senses of reality that had effects. They had consequences in and on the world. Consciousness cannot be false in that sense. (Moodie 2010: 14)

In Ovejas there are two broads patterns. One encapsulates extremely strong opposition to the guerrilla insurgents, and tends to associate all leftist political organization with the atrocities the guerrillas committed, foregrounding these over state or paramilitary violence. A second, less visible narrative recognizes the social struggle of the rural and semi urban working classes in the area and generally condemns the violence committed on all sides of the civil conflict. José Alvarez' narratives fall neatly into the first category.⁶

I sat with José on his front porch, looking across the road at the empty shell of a once-thriving tobacco processing factory, which had been owned by his godfather, one of the "*turcos*"

⁶ Unfortunately, I am unable to develop an analysis of the second, which I had hoped to do through the stories of *gaiteros* who engaged with peasant farmer unions. I will develop this narrative in future work.

(Lebanese and Syrian migrants to northern Colombia) who were integral to the industrialization of the local tobacco industry, as he freely associated many of the grudges he bears the guerrilla:

The guerrillas are a bunch of murderers. They used to take girls from here and rape them. There was a teacher here – evangelical – they tied him up with his sons, then they raped his wife and daughters before his eyes. As he didn't like that, they killed him.

They finished off my business. My work was in all of the hamlets and towns around here. I used to go all over taking photos for parties, baptisms, *quinceañeras* (girls' fifteen's birthday parties)... but when they [the guerrillas] established themselves here, it was all over.

Tobacco was the main business in this town. There were seven packing factories. Six thousand people worked in that industry. There were *corredores* (middle men) who would buy tobacco from the *campesinos* and bring it to sell at the factories to be packed. Now it's all over. That ended with the guerrillas in the '90s. The *campesino* associations helped them get a foothold here, so they [the guerrillas] started having meetings. More than one [local resident] was taken away like that.

José expresses a common generalized fear related to the presence of armed insurgents in and around his town. He was concerned at the time for the safety of people he cared about, given the reported sexual violence and killings committed by guerrilla forces. José also considers broad economic factors, blaming the economic downturn of Ovejas on guerrilla groups, accusing peasant farmer associations of sympathizing with the militant leftists and offering them a foothold in the town from which they could disappear rivals and break down the tobacco economy. While tobacco factory workers unions and peasant farmers associations were strong in Montes de María I have found no evidence that they were directly linked to militant groups, and the destruction of the tobacco industry per se was certainly not in their best interests. José's attitude is typical of those who follow the polarizing rhetoric that dominated the presidency of Alvaro Uribe. During the Uribe regime the civil conflict was not even recognized, and insurgents were typically portrayed by right wing politicians and media merely as terrorists to be dealt with through a "war on terror."

On a personal level, José's economic situation and family safety were directly jeopardized by guerrilla groups beyond the downturn in his business:

They tried to extort money out of me. Three - seven - twelve million pesos.⁷ Where am I going to get *that* kind of money? I'd have to steal from someone else to pay them. I didn't give them a penny.

They killed my son Modesto in '89. He's been dead 27 years. They nearly killed another one of my sons too. Modesto was hired to take photos for a party in a hamlet near here. Afterwards they told him there was another job nearby and on the way they killed him. I went to pick up the body with a friend who had a car. A night and day of rain had left the body all bloated. We found out later who'd done it. Seven of them were found over in Macayepo. They didn't last two months. The army killed them. When I found out I felt... I said to myself: "Well, they paid too." The worst thing is they [the killers] were friends. Well, acquaintances. I'd had a beer with them before. Around that time they [the guerrilla] killed lots of photographers. They didn't want photographers around because they thought they were informants for the [state] army.

I wish Uribe was still in charge. He was the one who cleared them out of here. How can the [current] government justify negotiating with a bunch of killers?

José has never been particularly rich, but in the early 1990s he had managed to buy a few heads of cattle, which made him the target of extortion, a tactic the guerrilla used to fund their insurgency (Brodzinsky and Schoeming 2012: 25). The downfall of his personal photography business was related to a general heightened risk in rural areas, but also the direct threat to photographers, which cost the life of his son and put other members of the family at risk. José's daughter Tereza explained how her brother was wrongly fingered as an informant: "Someone misinformed the guerrillas. They said he took information to the police. After he was killed my father handed in everything, even his negatives so nobody could think it was true." As José explained, his son's killing was not an isolated attack, but rather part of the guerrillas' broader targeting of photographers.

José's last comment is typical of many Uribe supporters who have bought into the ex-president's cult of the individual, trusting only him to resolve the problem of guerrilla insurgency, and supporting his claim that the only way to do so is by military means. Supporters of Uribe's military solution believe leftist insurgents should face the ultimate exclusion of

⁷ Around \$1,000; \$2,500; and \$4,000 USD at time of writing.

eradication by death. This is part of a sustained attempt by various forces on the political right, legal and illegal, sometimes united, to eliminate all leftist from political life by any means necessary (Gill 2016).

For many people in Ovejas who shared something of José's extreme distrust of guerrillas and other armed actors, they have come to take on an almost non-human quality. Many people spoke to me of the unease arising from not knowing who was and who was not a guerrilla member. In some conversations they were spoken of in close connection to magical beings such as witches and *duendes* (small, mischievous, magical creatures like gnomes or elves, semi-folklorized, but thought by many to be real).⁸ One interlocutor slid between tales of *duendes*, witches, paramilitary leaders and guerrilla members as if they were on the same metaphysical plane. The following narrative displays what Jean and John Comaroff refer to as the rise in new supernatural forces in response to modernity (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). It contains a common trope in late capitalist magic, namely a pact with the devil for economic gain or social advancement (Taussig 1980: 13-18). Its apparent blurring of the lines between realistic accounts and the magical is not, in my view, a sign of the narrator's exaggeration of real events, or a penchant for literary magical realism, but an indicator of the ubiquity of the magical within quotidian life as lived by many people in La Costa. It also reveals a differentiation in the way locals perceive guerrilla and paramilitary behavior and its relation to gaita music:

Before we had electric light here there were *duendes*. When they fell in love with someone they wouldn't let that person sleep. They'd give them love bites in the middle of the night. There are still witches here. They're not of God. Lots of people have made a pact with the devil. They get money, the good life, all their wishes, in exchange for handing over other people's souls. It's

⁸ Often these beings are heard but not seen. Joché and his wife Gina, for example, told me they have heard *La Llorona* (the spirit of a woman who wanders the countryside crying and looking for her lost child), narrated in the popular orchestrated *porro* "La Llorona Loca" by José Benito Barros. The tale and song have similar manifestations in Mexico. For many *costeños* these are powerfully magical beings, but not separate from the rest of social life or nature, which is why I do not describe them as "supernatural." Michael Birenbaum Quintero draws a similar conclusion about the spirit world of Afro-Colombian communities in the Pacific region (Birenbaum Quintero 2010).

difficult to distinguish them from normal people. They stop others from finding out. They're just like normal people during the day, but at night they do their things. My brother caught one once. He made the sign of the cross [with thumb and forefinger of one hand] as he walked past her. She couldn't walk: "Let me go!" she said, but he'd caught her. She'd been bothering him with her magic.

You know the massacre in Chengue?⁹ They say the mayor at the time knew it was going to happen, that he had a pact with [paramilitary leader] *El Gordo* García. See, the mayor had been extorted by the guerrillas, like normal, but he'd only given them half the money, so they killed the candidate he was supporting in the elections. But the candidate was a family member of *El Gordo* García. So *El Gordo* García came into town. That was a *viernes de gaita* (gaita Friday) and everyone saw him there.

I used to go to all of those hamlets around here; Chengue, Chalán... You couldn't tell who was a guerrilla fighter and who wasn't. During the day they worked like normal, but at any moment, when the order came through they'd grab their uniforms and guns. Sometimes there were uniforms everywhere. You couldn't look anyone in the eye, you just had to greet people you knew in the normal way, as if everything was normal. But guerrillas respected the festival. They came to enjoy it. We thought they were tourists. They'd swap clothes with each other to avoid being recognized.

Normal people took advantage of the situation. They printed pamphlets for extortion as if they were the guerrillas. They used to extort people for phone cards. A lot of people were killed for that. (Anonymous, P.C. 2016)

In this vision, although *duendes* seem to have disappeared with the arrival of the town's clearest sign of modernity, electric light, witches perdure. They are difficult to distinguish from "normal," godly people during daylight hours, but are committed to dark acts at night through pacts with the devil for money. The narrator does not claim that guerrilla members *are* witches, but in her account, *like* witches, they are often difficult to distinguish from "normal" people but are in a separate category; they work during the day in civilian clothes, but are always ready to don their uniform and take up arms, and this duplicity makes them more like witches than "normal" people. Their methods of extortion and violence target mainly the rich, but people like José can also become their victims. Non-guerrillas adopted the same practices to extort other locals, which heightened the confusion and sense of generalized distrust in Ovejas.

⁹ "On January 17, 2001, approximately eighty members of the Héroes de los Montes de María bloc of the paramilitaries stormed the village of Chengue, killed at least twenty-seven men with sledge hammers, and then cut off some of their victims' heads" (Brodzinsky and Schoemling 2012: 57 n.11). This massacre occurred with at least the acquiescence of military units operating in the region (Verdad Abierta 2014).

According to this popular point of view, Paramilitary leaders and politicians form pacts just like witches; approving massacres to avenge the death of a family member at the hands of guerrillas. We can never be sure whether those who were killed had links with insurgent groups or not, precisely because of the ephemeral, covert nature of guerrilla membership and the diffusion of their methods into civilian society. In contrast to guerrillas, paramilitary leaders are known individuals, who feel confident to make their presence felt, even during public events like *gaita* performances. In his *Diary of a Limpieza*, Michael Taussig describes "the brazenness" of paramilitary killings as "the exact opposite of anonymity" (Taussig 2003: 133).

Because of the danger it posed to his family, José reduced the activities of the family photography business, and turned instead to a vocation related to *gaita*. He began making instruments for sale to individuals, as well as local and national cultural institutions. Schools began requesting sets of *gaita* instruments. The ministry of culture began investing in musical projects that needed cheap instrumentation, and people like José filled the gap in the market. Through contacts in the ministry of culture, he began travelling to artisan fairs in Bogotá to display and sell his wares.

Despite the increasing armed violence in the countryside around Ovejas, José continued to provide a space for young people to learn to play *gaita*. Many of Jose's sons, daughters and other local children joined his informal "school." At that time, as in San Martín and across rural areas of *La Costa*, it was not common for musicians to instruct others how to play. José's son Joché remembers learning from campesino *gaiteros* by watching, listening and imitating. "They would never tell you how to play it. You just had to watch them and try to figure it out later. That's why my generation has such good aural skills." (P.C. 2015). In contrast, he and other

young people were encouraged to teach their peers in the informal school his father ran, and some have continued doing so throughout their adult life.

Joche also became highly involved in the emerging enterprise of making and selling instruments, both with his father and independently. Although theirs has always been a very small-scale, cottage industry, building mainly on demand, in the absence of work in photography, it became the family business, of which Joche was an active part from a young age. Joche became an accomplished performer in the festival context, leading youth groups and winning prizes, as well as teaching others. By the time he was a young adult, he considered himself a professional *gaitero* and instrument maker in his father's growing business. In chapter 4 I develop an analysis of José's *gaita* school, and Joche's work as a teacher, but first I turn to the unfortunate series of events that forced Joche to relocate to the city.

Displacement and *Gaita* as a Survival Strategy

In the late 1990s Joche was forced to leave Ovejas. There were a series of signs that he understood as threats to his life: The killing of his brother Modesto, as described above; a letter from a guerrilla group threatening his family in general; and a particularly threatening case of misidentification. The letter in question came when another of his brothers, Eduardo, known by everyone as "Ñoño," enrolled in the armed forces. José sr. explained to me:

We were waiting for the arrival of his [Ñoño's] *libreta militar* (military papers), but before they arrived we got a piece of paper from the guerrillas. It said if he went to fight, the whole family became a military objective. (P.C. 2016)

For processing paperwork the guerrilla insurgents were more efficient than the state armed forces. They knew Ñoño had enlisted and managed to deliver a threat to the family before

the state military managed to process and send his papers. Joche later received a direct verbal threat himself on being mistaken for his brother:

I was out running an errand for the old man (José sr.) on his motorbike, when I was stopped at a guerrilla checkpoint. They asked for my ID card. They didn't believe it was mine. They confused me with my brother. They wouldn't let me past. They roughed me up a little bit and sent me home. They said if they caught me again I'd be in serious trouble. That's when the old man suggested I get out of Ovejas. It just wasn't safe for me and the family any more. By that time I had Gina and the girl. It wasn't worth putting them at risk. So I went to Barranquilla and Cartagena – we were between the two for a while – until I started working with *la doctora* Carmen. (Joche Álvarez P.C. 2015)

The insurgent group who mistook Joche for Ñoño knew the latter had joined the armed forces as a *soldado campesino* (peasant farmer soldier),¹⁰ and would be posted to fight in his own region. They took this chance meeting as an opportunity to threatened his whole family again, through the intimidation of the person they took to be Ñoño. Some of the brothers still living in Ovejas dispersed to different cities in Northern Colombia for their safety.

Joche moved with his young family to Barranquilla and then Cartagena. He did not seek to associate with other emigrants from Ovejas and never looked for a "normal" job: "I considered it a couple of times when I was really desperate, but I could never give up my *gaita*." He was able to find sporadic work through contacts he had made as a musician and with his father as instrument-makers. This was mainly with non-profit foundations engaged in social work, which involved music and other creative practices. When I first met Joche in 2008 he was working two part-time jobs at two different foundations, both linked with *bienestar familiar* (the state child welfare system). One provided daycare, educational support and extra-curricular activities for one-time child workers. The other, *Fundesocial*, was more closely related to the present themes

¹⁰ An initiative to build brigades of "peasant farmers" began during Alvaro Uribe's first presidential term. The government simultaneously began building a network of informants who became popularly known as "*los encapuchados*" (the hooded ones). Together the initiatives were aimed at controlling the countryside and developing intelligence against insurgent groups. *Soldados Campesinos* were posted in their own regions in contrast the normal system of posting enlistees to cities and distant rural regions for their military service. The *soldados campesinos* units were to be legal militias with high levels of local knowledge. The project was soon dropped.

of violence and trust related to the civil conflict, and intersected with Joche's own experience of violence in ways that complexify his subject position. There he taught young people who had demobilized from armed guerrilla and paramilitary groups, known as *desmobilizados* (demobilized youth) (see chapter 4).

The foundation's director, Carmen Díaz explained how Joche came to work with her:

I already knew old José. He'd worked with me before... supplying handicrafts for events I ran in Bogotá... I wanted *him* to teach initially, but [his son] Joche was the one who was available, and I don't regret employing him. (P.C. 2016)

Thus, Joche became involved in social projects like *fundesocial* through extant connections with individuals capable of accessing government funds for their own initiatives, proposed to tackle a particular social problem. Joche's father was the connection in this case, having previously supplied instruments to Carmen. He trusted his son Joche, who he himself had trained in instrument making and gaita performance, and had seen develop into an accomplished performer, teacher, and group leader, to carry out the work Carmen required. Joche quickly proved his worth and became a loyal, dependable worker, deeply engaged in *fundesocial* and various other projects Carmen directed. "*La doctora Carmen*" as he always referred to her out of respect,¹¹ became in turn a largely dependable *patrona* to Joche, often able to secure work for him when he most needed it, valorizing his knowledge of "traditional music" and his efficacy in helping vulnerable young people through it.

Many *gaiteros* have at one time or another worked with a foundation on a social project involving music. For many of them, engaging with foundations has become a staple means of survival. Colombia provides a striking contrast with states like Venezuela, where there are huge state social projects involving music with a high degree of central control (Baker 2014).

¹¹ Many people in Colombia, especially working class, or those who do not have a high level of education, use "doctor(a)" to address or refer to someone they consider educated, or to show their own relative humility.

Successive Colombian governments have been dominated by neoliberal modus operandi. The state has never fully controlled its territory, and even where it has a strong presence, it has tended to prioritize the outsourcing of social projects to non-state initiatives rather than state-led schemes. Private and state funds are typically made available for certain kinds of project in *convocatorias* (calls for proposals) for which independent foundations must submit proposals on every new occasion. This means for any given foundation continued funding is not guaranteed. And for any given population or demographic there is no guarantee of the continued presence of an active foundation. Many interlocutors stressed the importance of registering one's own foundation. "It's the only way of getting support from the state," said one friend, a university student and part time musician and social worker, "that's why everyone has a foundation" (P.C. September 2014). The boom of foundations carrying out short-term, low-budget projects has coincided with the rise of the festivals, the vague sense that *gaita* and other local musical practices are a general social good, and a generation of young musicians able to train others in music making, many of whom have little other regular employment. This means there is sporadic work with foundations for *gaiteros* who are well connected and able to drop other responsibilities at short notice. Just among *Gaiteros de Ovejas*, five of the eight or so members have been contracted for various such projects across northern Colombia in recent years.

Joche's other strategies for survival in the city included playing as a professional musician, and making and repairing instruments. Joche played with the Cartagena-based *gaita* group *Golpe seco* (Middleton 2010), but left to lead his own group *Joche y sus gaiteros*. He also played briefly with the *bullerengue cantadora* Petrona Martínez and had an extended role as director of the group that supported the *bullerengue cantadora* Ceferina Banquez. However, shows with these groups were never regular enough to secure a significant income, and by 2014

they had dried up almost entirely for Joche. The market for local "traditional" music in northern Colombia is simply not big enough to support many musicians. Joche fared slightly better working with instruments and it is to this activity that I turn next, considering his descriptions of the process of making *gaitas* and how Joche's relation to his instruments approaches a deep trust or synergy.

Flow in Gaita Construction

On his days off from the foundation, Joche would sometimes build *gaitas*, or fix the damaged ones people brought him to repair. In this process he embodied the balance of perfectionism and fluidity that characterize him as a musician, *de facto* social worker and friend.¹² Analyzing the process of instrument making itself will help show how approaching a synergy with one's instrument is related to flow in construction and music making, which is itself fundamental to trusting other musicians. The Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi uses the term "flow" to denote optimal immersion in an activity when we find and maintain a balance between challenges and our abilities (Csikszentmihaly 2008: 75). This state is common in autotelic activities, those performed for their own sake, especially those involving repetition, but is possible across many aspects of life. Ethnomusicologists have used the concept to explain experience of highly pleasurable music making which maintains our focus, but seems to happen almost effortlessly (Turino 2008; 2014; Sugarman 1997: 279-280). Here I add a consideration of the significance of flow states in the processes of instrument making.

Shirt off, sitting in the sun on a tiled step in the small patio or balcony of a rented apartment in Cartagena, Joche would spend hour after hour building and rebuilding instruments.

¹² For more on gaita construction see (Middleton 2010). Some material here is adapted from (Middleton 2016).

His concentration was palpable as I watched him sanding down tubes of *cardón* cactus branches that form the body of the flutes; wrapping the plastic tubes of syringe caps in nylon thread to make sturdy mouthpieces that do not slip; molding the beeswax mixed with charcoal, softened in the sun, which forms the head; checking the sound of the instrument with semi-improvised tunes; and making minuscule adjustments until the *gaitas* gave him the sound he was looking for. Joche was content in the flow of searching for synergy with his instruments.



Figure 34: Joche Álvarez making gaitas in Cartagena, 2008.

The positioning of the mouthpiece and the form of the head are key to the timbre of a *gaita*. Video 5 shows Joche adjusting and explaining as I watch and record:¹³ "I'm a real precisionist with that. That's why my *gaitas* come out sounding so good." He fixes the wax with vice-like gaze, grabs an old kitchen knife with missing handle, dips the blade in water, or wets it with saliva, to avoid it sticking to the wax. He makes an incision into the cylinder of wax, opens it up to insert the plastic mouthpiece and fit the wax around the end of the cactus tube. With repeated, fluid flicks of the wrist he begins to mould the wax and compact it around the mouthpiece and cactus tube. He inserts a thin stick into the once-syringe cap, now-mouthpiece "... and I try to locate it... if I want it to sound loud and really gravelly, I move the mouthpiece out a lot... I try to find the best sound. You know the sound depends on the location of the mouthpiece."

Joche tries out the sound, playing the lowest notes and rising through the natural harmonics by blowing harder to confirm tone color and tuning. It is the former that changes most, despite the fact that *gaiteros* call this process "tuning" the gaita. He adjusts the location of the mouthpiece, pulling it out a few millimeters, altering the angle a few degrees. The wax gives. He tries out the sound again with a half-formed tune he is developing. With each repetition of the melody, it is varied: Sometimes extensively, sometimes by as small a detail as the shortening of certain notes to percussive pizzicato stabs. He pulls the mouthpiece out a little further, closes the opening a little to "apply pressure," focusing the channel of air that leaves the head through the opening. He sounds it again. He cleans the channel formed by the mouthpiece and head with the stick, removing any tiny clots of wax, sounds it again. He looks attentively down the mouthpiece

¹³ Video 5: <https://youtu.be/UwPxzw1jSYk>

to identify any obstruction, sounds it again. Sounds it again to confirm that he's getting close to the tone he wants. Another minute adjustment. Another melodic figure. Another variation.

If he is making the *gaitas* for himself, they have to end up really loud and really gravelly, but also with a wispy overtone, giving the maximal tone-color range at every pitch. This means pulling the mouthpiece out a great deal, away from the tube's edge so the force required to produce a given note is greater, and the resultant sound is louder, with a broader range of overtones and undertones, both breathier and rounder. Joche only trusts the *gaitas* he himself makes to give him exactly the sound he wants. Although he will play instruments made by other people if they are all that is available, he will often complain that they're too "suave" (soft), he has to play more quietly and with less attack to avoid accidentally shifting up the harmonic register by over-blowing.

Joche sees the process of making instruments as requiring the right kind of "magical energy:"

If I start putting the head on a gaita and I don't have the right energy, it won't come out right. I can feel it. I'll be there for hours and it won't give me the sound I want. So I'll have to take it off and start all over again. But sometimes I'll try and it'll go perfectly first time. It's a magical kind of thing (*una vaina mágica*). Nature transmits energy. Once I was putting the head on a *gaita* tube, the material was perfect and I said to myself "This one's for me." But that day I was in a bad mood, and the *gaita* wouldn't work for me. Four times I tried to do the head and, nothing! Three days later I was calmer. The first time I tried to mould the head it gave me the perfect sound: Really sweet with plenty of gravel. It's a question of energy. That was the *gaita* that won in 2011 (P.C. April 2016).

His eyes lit up at the thought of the "magical kind of thing" and the "right energy." I suggest these terms indicate optical immersion, focus, and full-body engagement, which he also achieves in successful performance. Much of the technicality of the building process happens at the level of habitual action, low in his focal awareness, but the overall task of building a *gaita* is sufficiently challenging in each new case to require his complete attention. Although Joche has been part of workshops to determine and standardize measurements for *gaitas*, and has adopted a

rhetoric of "precise measurements," the materials and conditions he works with remain unpredictable. Managing them requires attention and constant minute adjustment: The inner diameter of *cardón* tubes, which determines their pitch, is unpredictable and varies along their length; the day's temperature determines the rate at which the wax melts and hardens; finger holes may be drilled to a standard size, but are sanded out further by feel. Despite talking about "precise measurements" Joche maintains his habit of approaching every new gaita with a combination of practiced habits and readiness to improvise. The repetitive, well-practiced gestures and constant adaptation form a feedback loop with sound (mostly tone-color in this case), which produces in Joche a state of flow. This flow state is itself conducive to producing good instruments with the right physical characteristic to match with one's playing style and give the required tone color for good flow-based performance.

Many gaiteros of Joche's generation and younger do not know how to make their own instruments. Some trust Joche to produce instruments for them, valuing his highly skilled craftsmanship, and this has allowed Joche to supplement his wages building and repairing gaitas. Joche is also sometimes contracted for larger instrument making projects, supplying dozens of *juegos* (complete sets) of gaitas, drums and maracas for the Ministry of Culture, or educational institutions implementing musical projects. However, when there are not well-paid projects in the pipeline, Joche's cash flow is severely limited. Living in cramped rented accommodation on low income, he is unable to stockpile materials or finished instruments. When someone requests instruments he normally has to send for the materials from Ovejas, making it a slow process, extended further by his perfectionism. This often breaks the feedback loop of producing excellent instruments for appreciative customers, leaving all parties frustrated.

The enjoyment Joche feels when instrument building is going right is matched by his enjoyment of successful *gaita* performance. His virtuosity in playing depends partly on his virtuosity in instrument construction. He only trusts himself to make the instruments he can depend on to give the sounds he needs for satisfying performance. Flow in instrument construction is conducive to making good instruments, which is itself conducive to generating flow in performance as I show in the following section.

Flow, Interdependence, and Individual Creativity in *gaita* Performance

Like many other *gaiteros*, when he is making music and it is going well, Joche achieves an elated state of being which he describes as "*el viaje*" (the journey), or being "transported." I believe they are describing a flow state, which involves a "feeling of transporting the person into a new reality" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 74). For Joche, achieving "*el viaje*" depends on musicians developing a relation of near synergy with instruments that give the right timbre and range of tones, as well as repetition and intense variation of melodic and rhythmic patterns. Regarding tone, the gaitas, as described above, must provide a dense timbre with a broad range of under and overtones. The *llamador* must provide a solid, round bass tone as the most consistent ground in relation to which variations are developed. The maraca at the other end of the tone-color spectrum must be brilliant and crisp. The tambora and tambor alegre must be resonant provide a wide range of tones. Both instruments are tuned much higher than in participatory *tambora* performance. Achieving *el viaje* also requires understanding between musicians such that reactions to changes in section, intensity or intention can result in sympathetic reaction through somatic responses, unmediated by propositional thought. This is

partially achieved through, and provides the security for, variations on repeated phrases. Joche explains it this way:

When you *live* what you do, that allows you to achieve a lot. Living with your instrument... that gives you space to be creative. When there's understanding within a group... and you all *feel* what you're doing, well, the music can flow in another way, right?... You get transported! It's a synergy with the instrument. Nature transmits energy. But even more than that, when there's a good group, you could even say you can improvise, because you feel sure of what you're doing. You feel musical support. (P.C. 2014)

Joche makes a fairly strong distinction between "normal" playing and improvisation. For him the latter involves extended extemporization that takes the player significantly away from the melodic schema of a tune. In contrast, "normal" playing involves simply playing the pre-composed melody with adornments. When he or his father taught me a tune they would always model and have me repeat a basic outline of a melody, saying: "Now where you put the adornments is up to you." They consider adorning basic melodies an unteachable, personal mode of expression. However, for skilled *gaiteros* "adorning" the melody can involve significant variation that goes beyond the simple addition of ornaments to the basic melody. For this reason I call this kind of intense variation "micro-improvisation." For me, it is different from what Joche calls "improvisation" in scale, not kind.

Festivals are a large part of the reason *gaiteros* do not consider their variations a form of improvisation. In the competitive festivals Joche has grown up with there are rules against extensive improvisation on stage, which are thought to guard against perceived problems of plagiarism, and a lack of preparation. These latter would fly in the face of the idea generated by cultural elites, but now much more broadly accepted, that *gaita* is a serious musical art form with relatively fixed pieces that can be accredited to particular composers. There must now be a close correlation between what a group announces they will perform and what they actually play. In 2016, one group was disqualified for performing on stage a different tune from that which it

presented in the private qualifying round, the idea being that the lead *gaita* player might simply have been making it up as he went along on stage, and that would be unacceptable.

Paradoxically, the ability to improvise, under certain conditions, is highly valued by *gaita* musicians, especially outside of competitive contexts. The disqualification was controversial in part because many participants and audience members appreciated the ability of the *gaita* player to introduce new material on the spot. Joche once found himself extemporizing in competitions in a way that poses a potential challenge to these rules, and attracts plaudits of other musicians and audience members, but managed to avoid disqualification on that occasion:

There are times when I'm playing and I feel so secure that, although I've always done it [to some degree], I make things up. It comes to me to improvise, and I do it. [Once] I was on stage competing in a festival and I got excited... I started playing, playing, playing... and there came a point when I felt that the tune was asking for more. I wanted to give it more, and I started improvising on stage... Lots of people said: "Hmm! What's this guy up to?" But there's more - my glasses fell down and I was left playing with one hand while I pushed them up with the other. Lots of people who were supporting me said: "Shit, they're going to disqualify him! Oh no!" And I carried on playing. I started improvising, making up melodies, things, without leaving the musical schema of the tune. [Well,] I went outside it, but what I did was enrich it. (P.C. 2014)

The particular occasion Joche mentions was an especially deep experience of flow where what he improvised went further than the micro- level and surprised even him when he later watched a video of the performance. Such extemporization is uncommon, at the limits of what is acceptable in competition contexts, and runs the risk of provoking disqualification, but if the judges do not notice, or interpret it as close enough to the schema of the tune, or "enriching it" as Joche says, it is accepted as an audacious stretching of the rules, rather than breaking them. This is greatly appreciated by judges and knowledgeable audience members alike. So for Joche and many other *gaiteros*, improvising involves the daring in-the-moment creation of significantly new melodic phrases, which can then be incorporated into the melodic schema of a tune.

Much more commonplace, but highly significant for *gaiteros*, is intense variation in order to generate a shared flow experience. For Joche, flow is generated in the most profound way

when he engages with a tune that's sufficiently repetitive, but provides enough melodic interest and space for minuscule modification; when he is playing with musicians who know each other so well that they seem to understand each other perfectly and respond to each micro-improvisation, micro-improvising their own variations of well-known grooves; when those who are listening are attentive and respond with their dancing, shouting, clapping, with astonishment. It also requires musicians to encourage and respond to each other. Joche's brother, the *tambora* drum player Roberto Álvarez, puts it this way: "When we're playing we're in constant interaction. I'll *jalar* (pull along) the *alegre* player, then he pulls me, maybe I'll try to *animar* (encourage/ animate) the *macho* player [by shouting] '*Vamos! Sacude ese cascabel!*' (Come on! Shake that rattle!) or '*Puya el burro que te coje el guere guere*' or (Gee up the donkey, or the armadillo will catch you!)" (P.C. 2008, 2015). In other words, push things forward.

In the following section I show how this "pulling", "encouraging" and "geeing up" works with the exchange of sonic signs.¹⁴ For the best flow experiences, extemporization in the *gaita*

¹⁴ I resist describing the flow experience of *gaiteros* as a kind of "experiential secondness" a la Turino and Peirce, because experiential secondness requires the experiencer to engage with just one other thing, or engage with a multitude of signs *as* a single gestalt, or sequence of single things (Turino 2014: 206; see chapter 4). *Gaiteros* are constantly interacting *as* individuals *with* distinct individuals and the multiple signs they create. They neither meld with other performers, nor experience the musical sounds as melding to form a single other entity with which they meld. Despite this, "*el viaje*" clearly exhibits all the features of a flow state, suggesting that flow is not necessarily within experiential secondness. More work would need to be done on gestalts, sequences, and experience to tease out these points, but the concept of an irreducible "multiplicity" may be useful for investigating how *gaiteros* and similar musicians attend simultaneously and sequentially to distinct and different features of the music making of which they are a part (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Turino (2014) points to a similar distinction in the ways he and his son Matt experience playing for contradances. When things are going well, Turino Sr. mainly experiences melding, while Matt (whose experience may be no less flow-like) is more aware of dancers' experiences, and making textural and dynamic changes as he directs the band accordingly. I suspect Matt's experience is notably different to that of Turino Sr., and more like that of most *gaiteros*. A similar distinction may be made in sports such as soccer. While a player like Sergio Aguero or Lionel Messi is often completely focused on the single task of getting the ball in the goal (even if this requires focusing on different things sequential - first get around the defender, then shoot), a player like Luka Modric is more often aware of the simultaneous multiplicity of the game, thinking and acting strategically to structure and direct his team, attack the weaknesses of the opposition, and consider multiple aims like maintaining possession, avoiding overexertion, balancing attack and defense, and interpreting the opposition's strategy in order to counter it. In stark contrast to Messi (at least early in his career), players like Neymar are often strategizing in significantly different ways and at the very edge of the acceptable, attempting to force a foul from the other team, and diving to induce it. At such moments Neymar is not "keeping his eye on the ball" so much as on other players and the referee. In a very real sense such different players are playing

hembra must be matched with similar creativity from other musicians, especially on the *tambor alegre*. One of the most accomplished *alegre* players is Kevin Acevedo, with whom Joche used to play in the group *Golpe Seco*. I undertake a close analysis of their musical interaction on one particular informal occasion in Cartagena in order to show two phenomena. First, deep engagement in music making involving dense micro-improvisation can lead to shared and interdependent flow states for musicians. Second, and in turn, this can be conducive to maintaining or re-establishing thick trusting relationships. I describe the more broadly social aspects of the occasion before re-running parts of the occasion with a closer focus on sonic interaction.

Silencing Tension to Re-establish Friendship through *gaita*: a Socio-Sonic Analysis

During the many months I lived with Joche through the months of visiting him, I can only remember three times when he went out in Cartagena for a social activity that was not music making, and one of those occasions was to visit a friend from Ovejas who had once been a member of a *gaita* youth group Joche led. Like many *gaiteros* most of Joche's closest friends are *gaiteros* and spending time with friends usually means making music with them to remake the friendship through making each other happy. One occasion in August 2012 showed me how friendships can be reestablished through the interdependence and playfulness of *gaita*, even when they had been in jeopardy.

It was nearing the end of another sweltering afternoon in Cartagena. Joche had spent most of the day cleaning his second floor apartment, occasionally singing along to the *vallenato* that blared from his radio. It was a Sunday before a public holiday Monday and the whole

different games nested within the overarching game of football. Likewise musicians can be playing different "games" within a single musical activity, and certainly within the overarching family of activities that comprise music making in general.

neighborhood had the blurry feeling of an extra day of rest blended with a chance to get done what the week did not leave time for. In the afternoon a group of Joche's friends arrived,¹⁵ among them Kevin Acevedo.

Joche's reception was notably frosty at first: he had not spoken to Kevin since an altercation at a festival where he was competing and Kevin was a judge. Joche felt he had been hard-done-by at the festival, suspected the judges may have formed a *rosca* (a "circle" of conspirators),¹⁶ colluding with the winning group to split the prize money, and had even warned me against spending too much time with Kevin because of the circles he was currently moving in. The guests were first accommodated on the cramped balcony, and when they were eventually offered something to eat and drink, it was only crackers and soda, an unusually meager reception for visitors to Joche's place. A few jokes between the men lightened the mood a little, a change embodied in the occasional touching of fist to fist, or fist to palm, a gesture that often indicates a joke well-made and a friendship sustained or in construction, and general affirmation of the way things are and should be in *La Costa*: "*Así es compadre!*" (That's how it is buddy!).

One of the other musicians, Cesar, was trying to convince Joche to form a group and compete at an upcoming festival in the town of San Jacinto, where there would be cash prizes for winners. He proposed they play a little "to see how they sounded together." Joche eventually

¹⁵ Cesar Carrasquilla, the *gaita macho* player with whom Joche later formed the group *Joche y sus Gaiteros*; Owen "Chiris" Chamorro, a *gaita macho* player from Ovejas and fellow member of *Gaiteros de Ovejas* (see above); and Oscar Hernandez.

¹⁶ Taussig explains how this term for a round bread or pastry can also refer to collusion at high levels of organization, namely the deeply institutionalized groups of corrupt politicians and businessmen forming a "state within a state" (Taussig 2003:117). However, the same term is also commonly applied to any group of people who collude to cheat, and is frequently used to make accusations of competition fixing at music festivals. I believe these uses of the term may have derived in part from the acronym for self-help Rotating Savings and Credit Association, R.O.S.C.A (Geertz 1962). If I am correct this would be deeply and tragically ironic as R.O.S.C.As are designed to be equitable, voluntary, pre-co-operative organizations, allowing participants to build social and economic capital by saving money collectively. However, while those on the inside of a legitimate R.O.S.C.A (or illicit *rosca*) benefit, people on the outside of the circle do not, and in Colombia this leads them to suspect foul play. Even measures designed to build trust have fueled pervasive distrust. Fals Borda's naming of his investigative foundation and publishing house "La Rosca" may have been an ironic nod to such pervasive (suspicion of) corruption.

consented: "Go and get the *gaitas* I made you, Ian." Mine are not quite as hard as Joche likes his *gaitas*, but he had made them almost to his own standard and knew them well. He doodled on an *hembra* for a short while, then the men moved instruments down to play on the street below the apartment, and I set up to record.



Figure 35: (L to R) Chiris, César, Joche, Kevin and Mauricio playing gaita in Cartagena

A bottle of whisky I had given Joche was taken out of the refrigerator and passed around musicians before and after tunes, which were initially offered up by Cesar on *gaita hembra*. They came slowly at first, the great gaps between each tune filled with chat. Kevin had to answer his cell phone at points and I filled in playing the *tambor alegre*. While some of my playing received positive feedback, I was unable to lock comfortably into the quicker rhythmic feel of *merengue* (see figure 36), and Cesar simply cut the tune short as participants were not enjoying

the uneasy feel as much. At some points Joche seemed ill at ease playing the *llamador*. I could sense he was itching to play the *gaita*, but also perhaps unwilling to play with these musicians quite yet, unwilling to trust Kevin following their festival spat. As the sun set, Kevin returned, and Joche took over playing the *gaita hembra*. Tunes came with greater frequency, mainly instrumentals in the rhythmic feel of *gaita* (see figures 11 – introduction – and 42 – below), rather than the *merengues* (figure 36) and *porros* (figure 37) that had been played earlier.

maraca	↓		↗	↓	↗	↓	↗	↓	↗		
llamador	×		△	×	△	×	△	×	△		
tambora	×	○		□	×	□	○	□	×	□	
alegre	○	/	/	—	/		○	/	/	—	△

Figure 36: Simple percussion patterns for the feel of merengue in the gaita format (approximately 125 - 135 bpm)

maraca	↓		↗	↓	↗	↓	↗	↓	↗
alegre	△		△	△	△	△	△	△	△
llamador		△		△		△		△	
tambora	×		×	×	×	×	×	×	○

Figure 37: Simple percussion patterns for the feel of porro in the gaita format (approximately 80-110 bpm)

After playing one of Joche's tunes, a *gaita* called "La Atravesá" (see video 6),¹⁷ Kevin commented approvingly on the interlocking improvisation of the group: "*Estilo negro, viejo!*" (Black style, buddy/old-timer!).¹⁸ Joche was also becoming more enthusiastic: "*Estamos ensayando!*" ([Now] we're rehearsing!), jokingly implying that he was considering the offer of forming a group for the festival. The following tune also involved intense interactive improvisation. When it had finished Kevin looked to me. "*Estabas grabando? Móntete el disquito ahí pa' escuchar ... Quiero oír lo que hice ahí*" (were you recording that? Put the record[ing] on so we can listen... I want to hear what I did there). Joche retorted "*Ajá, te gustó, te gustó!*" (Ah, you liked that one, right?). Chiris jokingly implored me to take photos "...para la carátula del disco" (for the album cover).

In their music making here the musicians negotiated an ambiguous space in which *gaiteros* are very much at ease nowadays: At once it was neither a presentational performance, formal rehearsal of an established group, nor a recording session, nor simply friends playing for the fun of making music, yet it was also simultaneously just fun, a recording session, a rehearsal, and a show for onlookers and each other, jokingly blended together. The quips about rehearsals and album covers revealed both the autotelic nature of the encounter, the possibility of future projects, the reestablishment of friendships, and the fun of playing with what was at stake in the musical experience. Each musician came to trust the others (again) as guardians of their precious flow state. They formed a tight group of thick trusting relations based in tasks which each of

¹⁷ Video 6: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAB3BdPpSwI>

¹⁸ "Black style" is a term applied to *gaita* playing which is typically faster, with more clipped melodies and intense variation, characterized as more "aggressive" by *gaiteros*. It is contrasted with "*Estilo índio*" (Indian/ Indigenous style), which is typically slower, with more drawn out melodies and less intense variation, characterized as more "nostalgic" "laid back" or "lamenting" by *gaiteros*. Proponents of *estilo índio* include Mañe Mendoza and Toño García from San Jacinto. *Gaiteros* who play *estilo negro* tend to come from Afro-descendent populations nearer the coast, for example Paito, Jesus María Saya and Medardo Padilla (Ochoa Escobar 2013: 98). However this style is also popular in Cartagena, with people who do not normally identify as black. These racializations of style deserve more analysis than I can give them here.

them values highly; making gaita music, supporting mutual flow and identifying oneself to other gaiteros as a virtuosic gaita musician.

I now take a closer look at the sonic interplay of the musicians, beginning with how Joché varies melodic material. Medellin-born musician and musicologist Federico Ochoa Escobar provides detailed transcriptions and succinct analyses of a broad range of gaita melodies, along with other useful information about *gaita* in general (Ochoa Escobar 2013). He identifies a tendency for *gaita hembra* tunes in the rhythmic feel of gaita to be made up of three or four short melodies:

alternated and varied according to the criteria of the musician... it is characteristic... to use small motifs and repeat them in a varied and reiterative manner, such that the very same repetition becomes a point in favor of the generation of emotions, where surprises come more from the creativity of the *gaitero* in varying the motifs than from the inclusion of new material (Ibid: 95).¹⁹

Here Ochoa Escobar makes a useful contrast with improvisation styles like traditional jazz (among his other skills he is an accomplished saxophonist, versed in jazz styles), where improvisation often *does* include new melodic material, even if it is based on the tune. The aim in *gaita* music is not normally to introduce new melodic material, but repeat melodic phrases already given by the tune with small variations on each repetition. This is one kind of what I identify as the broad tendency towards micro-improvisation.

In conversation with colleague John Hollis he likened the form of improvisation to that of Tarab music from the Arab world. Like Tarab, *gaita* music "gives prominence to individuality and collectivity, two complementary dynamics that contribute to the music's ecstatic efficacy" (Racy 2003: 76). However, whereas in Tarab there are multiple melodic instruments capable of taking on the main melody and providing heterophonic texture, which is essential to generating

¹⁹ My translation. *Merengue* and *porros* tend to have "structures more common in popular songs. That is to say they have an introduction, verses, a chorus, and in some cases a bridge." (Ibid) This is largely true even for instrumental *merengues* and *porros*.

ecstasy among players and audience members (bid: 84-87), in *gaita* music there is one main melodic instrument, the *gaita hembra*.²⁰ We might think of the *hembra* player's variations as temporally displaced heterophony with himself (Hollis P.C. 2016). Every time the *hembra* player repeats a melody he does not repeat it with precise sameness, as participatory *tambora* drum players do, but varies it slightly to maintain interest, provoke other players to vary their patterns and increase the states of flow that come from playing with sameness and difference, upholding, subverting, or exceeding participants' expectations at every stage.

By showing in greater detail the way a particular *gaitero* varies the melodies of one tune during a particular interpretation, I aim to clarify how these variations relate to the interplay of other musicians in the performance, and how these particular sonic interactions, as well as the general tendency of micro-improvisation, relate to broader social interactions, the experience of flow, and tendencies of trusting, in particular the possibility of remaking a friendship.

In *La Atravesá*, each of the *gaita hembra*'s four main melodic phrases is made up of two halves, which together last the full cycle of the *tambora*'s rhythmic base (two measures on the transcription, see appendix 2).²¹ Melodies A and B share the same tale figure. The whole tune, consisting of four main melodies, is played a total of four-and-a-half-times in this performance.

²⁰ There are other important differences between *gaita* and Tarab. For instance, *gaita* is not a classical music supported by regular patronage and prestige. Neither is it clearly presentational. Most *gaita* performances blur the lines between musicians and audience by encouraging dancing, vocalization and serial participation. Lyricism is not as central to *gaita* music. Nor is there an establish tradition of larger ensembles with multiples of the same instrument. In these respects *gaita* bears a closer relationship to other heterophonic musics, such as the U.S. old time string band music Turino describes (2008, 2014).

²¹ In musicological analysis of melodic variation there is sometimes a difficulty of positing a "standard" melody from which variations deviate (Ashley 2002). I take "standard" versions of the melodic phrases of Joche's tunes to be those he taught me. He generally follows his father's technique of having students repeat a melody he models for them, or sings, without ornamentation or variation (he also tells students numbers to indicate how many holes to cover). He expects each *gaitero* to ornament the melodies differently, as he ornaments them differently in every performance. There are some stock ornamentations used as desired by most *gaiteros* (Ochoa Escobar: 84-87), but no standard way of devising more extensive variations, hence the usefulness of the following analysis.

Joche repeats each melody various times before moving on to the next, and normally plays all four in order before returning to the first.

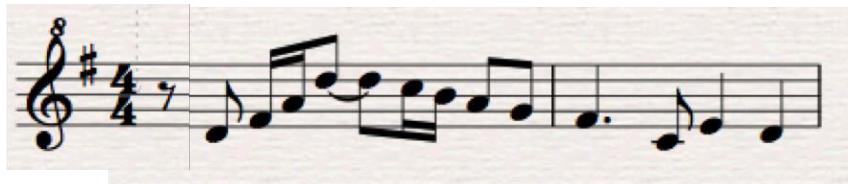


Figure 38: Melody A of La atravesá'



Figure 39: Melody B of La atravesá'



Figure 40: Melody C of La atravesá'



Figure 41: Melody D of La atravesá'

The way Joche varies these melodies can be observed most clearly from the beginning (see appendix 2 for a full transcription of the first melody cycle). A and B are the melodies he varies most. He begins by playing melody A with a small rhythmic variation in the second half of the phrase. Also, because there is as yet no percussive accompaniment, he is free to linger on the high d. Joche then plays A straight, with clearer meter. The next repetition has a tiny variation in the second half. Then, in reaction to the entrance of the drums, he rises to a *grito*

("scream" – extended high note) on a high e, nearly the top of the instrument's range (00:18). On this long high note he accentuates the vibrato generated almost constantly by gaiteros through wavering diaphragm breathing, by rapidly flapping his right hand, using his thumb as a pivot so his fingers almost cover the two lower holes, but never quite make contact.²² He then repeats the melodic contour of A with a rhythmic variation, inserting a triplet figure in the first half of the phrase. When he moves to melody B Joche begins straight (00:23). On the first repetition he adds a descending figure in the first half and simplifies the second half rhythmically. On the second repetition he keeps the variation in the first half, and applies the same figure to vary the second half. He introduces a new variation at 00:35 (measure 21), similar to the first, but with a sixteenth note figure in the first half that leaps between f and a.

Melodies C and D differ melodically and are varied far less. Melody C begins with an anacrusis, has an emphasis on the downbeat, and includes arpeggiated major triads built on d and c. The few variations Joche plays simply involve the lengthening or shortening of tones as in measures 31-32 (00:48) and 37-38 (00:55). Section D is the *bosá*, where the *hembra* player rests on a minimalistic melody. Unlike the *bozá* section in *Tambora* (see chapters 1 and 4), for gaita musicians the *bozá* does not necessarily involve halving the length of melodic phrases, and does not involve a change in rhythmic feel, but as in *Tambora* it serves as a time for the lead melodic performer (here the *hembra* player) to rest before reinitiating the cycle (Ochoa Escobar 2013: 95-6). Here the *bozá* is only varied the first and last time as Joche transitions into and out of it.

Drummers playing in a *gaita* format oscillate between providing a solid groove, varying it, and punctuating or creating moments of interest with notable contrast. As a highly experienced drummer, intensely focused on accompanying melodies and providing interest for

²² Ochoa Escobar calls this form of ornamentation "finger vibrato" in contrast to "diaphragm vibrato" and "throat vibrato" (2013: 86-7).

all musicians, Kevin rarely plays a basic rhythmic pattern on the *alegre* without variation. However, he does return to a minimalist pattern on occasion (0:52-0:56; 0:59-1:08; 1:16-1:20; 1:31-1:34). Drummers call this a *base* (literally base, an in baseball). When one of the two drummers is grooving on their base, the other is generally varying to accompany the melody, or playing a *revuelo* (fill). It is more common for the *tambora* drum to maintain a base for longer stretches of time, and that is exactly what César does in this performance.

There is a particularity about the rhythmic patterns of the *alegre* in the feel of *gaita*, which occurs at the level of microtiming. In the introduction, for the sake of simplicity, I showed all instruments playing with a duple subdivision. In fact the *alegre*'s pattern tends to be swung, approaching, or actually reaching, a triplet division, as shown in figure 42. Played against the straight duple subdivisions of the rest of the group, this provides what Keil calls "participatory discrepancy" – a minute difference between instruments, here regarding rhythmic subdivision, which contributes to the overall feel of the groove and promotes participation (Keil 1987).²³

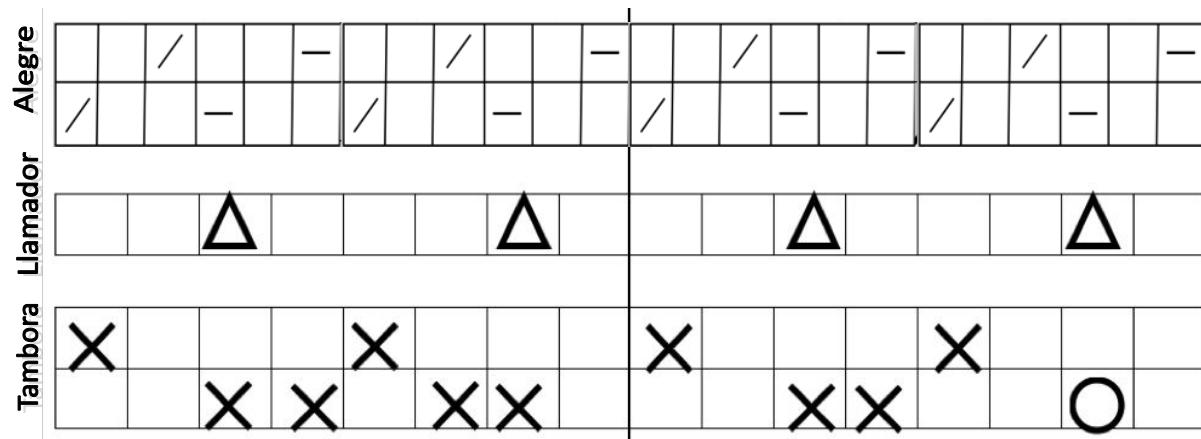


Figure 42: A gestalt groove for drums in the rhythmic feel of *gaita* (approximately 95-105 bpm).

²³ Ochoa Escobar suggests all musicians, or at least the *hembra* player, swing the feel of *gaita*. While there is some "laziness" to all musicians' subdivisions, some *gaita bases* clearly display a triplet subdivision, and other instruments are at least straighter.

Kevin sometimes builds his *revuelos* in a similar way to Joche's variation of melodies, taking a single figure and embellishing it on repetitions. For example, at 1:07, he begins a triplet open-tone phrase, ending on a slap, which he repeats six times. On the fifth and sixth repetition he adds a bass-tone flam at the beginning of the phrase and lifts the drum off of the floor to raise the pitch and increase the resonance of the bass tones. This *revuelo*, like many others comes during *hembra* melody D, the *vozá*, where the *hembra* is least active and so there is sonic space for the *alegre*. In response to this particular *revuelo* on the *alegre*, Cesar plays a stock tambora *revuelo*, its three-beat phrase cutting across the duple cycle. Joche then responds to this exchange, by returning to C for a half repetition of the tune. Kevin also uses a stock *revuelo* as at 1:22. This phrase is sometimes called *el golpe de Batata*, after the famous *alegre* player from San Basilio de Palenque, Paulino Salgado Valdez, also known as Batata III.

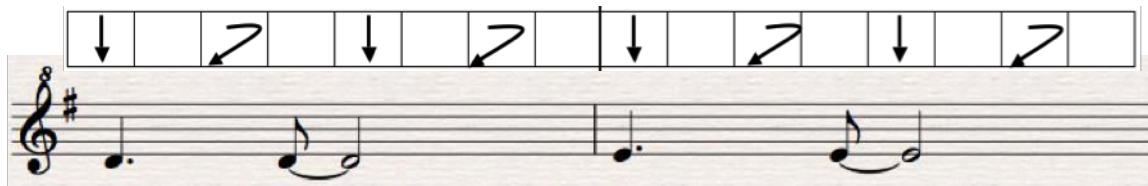


Figure 43: The most common pattern played on maraca and gaita macho during La atravesá

The *machero* must balance accompanying melodic and rhythmic responsibilities. In this performance, Chiris mostly plays the standard accompaniment with his maraca; a staccato "chick" with the pulse and an extended swirl on the offbeat, with the *llamador*. On the *gaita macho* he mostly plays a standard repeated rhythmic pattern with the second tone just before the pulse, sometimes staying on d, but mostly alternating between d and e. This can be heard most clearly at 1:00 in the first D section. He sometimes plays rhythmically straight, as at 3:50, where he also changes his melody to accompany the higher register of the C melody in the *gaita*

hembra. Chiris' *revuelos* on the maraca come at times of particularly heightened interactional interest for the whole group as in the following exchange.

At 1:28, Joche enters the D section, the *bozá* and begins to rest. Kevin and César on drums are also both resting momentarily on their rhythmic bases. This only lasts a couple of seconds, before the musicians start a chain of mutually enhancing variations. Chiris begins a *revuelo* on the maraca and César begins a complex *revuelo* on the tambora. Kevin responds with a dry, slapped, triplet *revuelo*, cutting through the mix. Joche responds to this by returning to the A-section and revitalizing the group. Kevin and César both play *revuelos* at this point, energized by the return of the first melody and its higher register. Like the audiences of the urban blues music Charles Keil studied in 1960s USA, *gaita* drummers often make their densest sonic contributions "at the beginnings of things" (Keil 1966: 159). Keil interprets audience applause "at the beginnings of things" as showing they are not merely responding appreciatively to the performance, but are committed to the "ritual" of the event (*ibid*). Similarly, when *gaita* drummers play *revuelos* at the beginnings of new musical ideas they are not simply taking advantage of sonic space for personal expression, but are showing a commitment to the shared goal of improving and sustaining the euphoria of *el viaje* for all participants.

It is in this next round of the melody that some of the most interesting interaction occurs. At 1:55 Joche introduces a new melodic idea, B*.²⁴ The *macho* occasionally rises to follow the *hembra's* higher register melodies (e.g. 1:55). At 2:02 the *alegre* and *tambora* coincide with a three beat phrase that cuts across the duple meter. Then Chiris plays a stock variation on the

²⁴ I consider B* or B+ variants of B because Joche did not teach me them as parts of the tune. Nonetheless, they come to play structural roles in this performance, with B+ replacing melody A in the final melodic cycle (4:11). However, I believe these "variations" have since become part of the tune for Joche as young players he taught the tune to later have learned them as relatively stable parts of the tune. We might see this as an example of "comprovisation" – composition at the scale of repeated performances of the tune through micro-improvisation at the level of periodic repetition of the tune during individual performances (Solis 2014).

maraca which coincides with the three beat pattern, and Joche finds a variation of the second half of melody B* on the *hembra*, which also coincides. At 2:06 Joche introduces a second new melodic idea, B+. In appreciation of the new phrase, or the preceding percussive-melodic interchange, César shouts "*Güepajé!*" (2:09); a positive exclamatory phrase indicating and eliciting joy, common in *Costeño* music and the Caribbean more broadly.²⁵ *El viaje* is intense at this point. This shout incites more variations and overlapping *revuelos* from Kevin and César.²⁶

On the next tune, "*El son de Lucy*," César played *macho* (video 7).²⁷ The tune has a more minimalistic melodic structure, and the interplay between *hembra* and *macho* was more dynamic. I want to draw attention to one mode of interaction in particular between the *gaitas*, which *gaiteros* call *los gritos* (the screams) (heard at 01:19-01:34; 02:09-02:25; and especially 03:58-04:14). These are perhaps the most intense moments of togetherness and difference for *gaita* players, where *hembra* and *macho* repeat overlapping tones at the peak of their register. At this range the tuning of the *gaitas* is at its widest, and their tone color is most piercing and breathy. Their overlapping tones merge to a degree, making it difficult from the outside to distinguish one from the other. Maintaining the high-pitched, high-energy gestalt requires each player to keep on screaming in the gaps the other one leaves. However, the discrepancies between the players in terms of rhythmic interlocking, tuning, and the tiny ornaments and breathy note endings that they add, contribute to a sense of difference within this merging. Both the intense sameness and intensely felt discrepancies contribute to the sense of *el viaje* (Keil 1987; 1994; Solis 2014), and motivate percussionists to participate by adding creative *revuelos* (listen to Kevin on *alegre*, especially at 02:17-02:26 and 04:01-04:14). That is why Kevin wanted to listen back to the

²⁵ In Puerto Rico it is typically written "Wepa hey!"

²⁶ Kevin Dawe shows how similar "extra-musical sounds" (in his case gunshots) celebrate and stimulate successful musical performance in Cretan lire playing (Dawe 2007: 69-70).

²⁷ Video 7: <https://youtu.be/YfKKp9zEKIs>

recording, not only to hear how the *group* sounded *as a whole*, but also to hear what *he* had contributed at certain points *as an individual*.

When the whisky ran out, so did the musical momentum, and the visitors moved on looking for more drink, more music making, or both. Joche did not follow the party because he had to be up early in the morning for work. Unlike most people, he did not have the day off as the young people at *Fundesocial* always needed supervision. The group was never formed for the upcoming festival. However, when Joche later formed a group and recorded an album with them (Joche y sus Gaiteros 2013), César took the role of *machero*, and he and Joche became much closer friends. Perhaps more impressively, Joche's relationship with Kevin was notably improved after the session. Joche continued to make positive comments about Kevin's playing in the following days, and stopped implying that he might be a bad influence. In fact he never brought up their previous dispute again. He even invited Kevin to record *alegre* parts on several tracks of the aforementioned album.

There was no apology from Kevin, musical or otherwise, in contrast to the episode Monson describes between jazz musicians (1996: 181), because he never recognized that he had done anything wrong. However, making music together was enough to resolve the tension that existed between them. The music making session had been a process of silencing and forgetting Joche's narrative of Kevin as generally untrustworthy by trusting each other within the restricted activity of building and sustaining each other's state of flow, and feeling that their own flow and sense of euphoria depended on each person present as a creative individual and as constituted by the other individuals present, the *gaiteros* from whom they learned the *gaita* cohort, and the broader social groups they are part of in Cartagena and Northern Colombia as a whole.

As in all intense participatory music making, the musicians here required "special awareness of other participants as realized through their sounds" (Turino 2008: 43). However, while Turino focuses on the ways in which, "differences between participants melt away as attention is focused on the seamlessness of sound and motion" (ibid). I have focused on how, at least in *gaita* performances like this one, musicians' feelings of individual difference can actually be heightened. Jose and the others did not experience "melding." They did not come to feel undifferentiated or identical as they played. Rather, intense micro-improvisation of repeated phrases made them acutely aware of both sameness *and difference*. However, difference is not necessarily detrimental to trust. Indeed Joche in particular came to trust Kevin again through the play of sameness and difference and by feeling Kevin's commitment to supporting his flow state and ability to generate it in others. I believe this led Joche to feel Kevin was committed to his well being in general and hence to forget the distrust he previously felt towards him regarding the festival.

In that encounter they were both powerfully constituted as complex, interacting, interdependent and agential people with intentions, desires, abilities, weaknesses, a sense of fun, and the option to accept or reject the suggestions of the other for certain forms of physical, spatial, material and sonic interaction by acting creatively. They felt it intensely on that occasion, as have I while playing with them and dancing in San Martín (chapter 1), but I believe this is a central feature of what it is to be human, both from the point of view of the musicians I work with and the scholars I agree with. This takes us beyond the Bourdieuan view I introduced in Chapter 1 as a heuristic to explain different individual levels of social capital.

The British anthropologist and scholar of dance and American Indian Studies Brenda Farnell argues for a conception of humans that locates their agency not in a Bourdieuan

"habitus," but in a biological and interpersonal, socially engaged person herself. Arguing in accordance with Varela and Harré, against Bourdieu, Farnell suggests a new paradigm of "dynamic embodiment" (Farnell 2000). This paradigm accepts a conception of substance that echoes Joche's view of the "magical kind of thing" though which "nature transmits energy."

According to post-mechanistic physics:

various forms of matter are derived from moving forces of attraction and repulsion that become structured into diversified natural kinds of substances with unique powers and capacities. The natural world is thus constituted by the distribution and stratification of numerous natural kinds of powerful particulars... Causation, then, is the activity of such powerful particulars at work. (Farnell 2002: 404-5)

In this conception, a human being is "a unique structure of powers and capacities. The natural powers for agency grounded in the structure of our biological beings make possible our personal powers, themselves grounded in and afforded by social life" (Ibid 405, Varela 1995b: 369). Thus human agency is located in natural, biological powers *and* those acquired by social activity:

Although self-mobilization is individual, it is effected through the dynamics of inter-personal consideration. Directing oneself to act requires that a given 'self' consider how a given 'other' will react. The process of the enactment of human agency is thus a social act. (Ibid)

This involves, in Varela and Harré's words: "a mutual process of consideration whereby persons consider how [other persons] will, can or could act in response to their own act in order to direct themselves to act in such a way that a joint or social act is accomplished (Varela & Harré 1996: 323). It was through a profoundly pleasurable mutual process of consideration in which Joche, Kevin and the other musicians micro-improvised the interpretation of *gaita* tunes that they came to trust one another again. This is one of the most powerful features of music making, which is particularly present among *gaiteros*; it offers participants an intensely felt experience of themselves and other participants as different individuals capable of mutual consideration of each other's aims, actions, reactions and experiences, and also constituted as social human agents

through such acts of mutual consideration. In such moments we feel ourselves and the other people engaged in the shared activity as deeply human.

Gaiteros tend to prefer the kind of playful, small-group socializing typified by making *gaita* music together. Its repetition leads to thick and deep relationships of trust with particular individuals, comprising small pools of the total *gaita* cohort. The vast majority of Joche's friends for instance are musicians. Most of them are *gaiteros*, and especially *gaiteros* he plays with frequently. The same is true of true of most of my *gaitero* interlocutors. When I asked them about genuine friendships, they were surprised to reflect that they had formed the majority of them through making *gaita* music together and the socializing that surrounds it. Developing trust at a broader level, the kind required to sustain strong, broad networks (see chapter 1), is impeded to some extent by the very tendencies of interaction conducive to good *gaita* music making, as well as broader structural difficulties making economic survival difficult. Each *gaitero* tends to trust a small radius of musicians with the important task of maintaining his flow state, and as a result, plays mostly with people within that radius, thereby thickening the trusting relationship, but reducing the likelihood of forming relations outside that reduced radius. Joche's individualism and distrust of other strong individuals has lost him several jobs with good groups in which he felt he should play a more central leading role. *Gaiteros* from one town or city tend to be unsupportive of the success of groups from elsewhere. Younger *gaiteros* from the city of Barranquilla for instance tend to be criticized by *gaiteros* from elsewhere for being too presentational in their approach. In Cartagena I bore witness to the frustrations of attempts to unify *gaiteros* in an official organization conceived to work for the benefit of all members.

***Gaiteros* Attempt to Organize**

In January 2015 drummer Kevin Acevedo and singer José Luís Borré invited me along to two meetings to "organize the *gaiteros*" of Cartagena.²⁸ This was the first example I had seen of musicians from various groups attempting to group together of their own volition for a common cause. What I saw there highlighted some of the obstacles to structuring the loose gaita cohort into an effective movement. Arturo Ecobar (2008) and Kiran Asher (2009) show how explicitly political movements have grown in Colombia's Pacific, mentioning that local music has been central to the processes. Here I show how attempts to organize around musical activities for the welfare of musicians, though not broader explicitly political aims, is hindered by the tendencies of (dis)trust that a particular kind of music making helps to generate.

Escobar considers the question of how complex wholes or "assemblages" emerge from interactions between their parts and adopts an approach that bypasses the positing of "the micro" and "the macro", and also goes beyond simple nesting of entities different scales. It aims instead:

to show, through bottom-up analysis, how, at each scale, the properties of the whole emerge from the interactions between parts, bearing in mind that the more simple entities are themselves [complex] assemblages of sorts (Escobar 2008: 287).

For Escobar, following Deleuze, Guattari and de Landa, an assemblage is any entity:

... whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts[...]; interpersonal networks, cities, markets, nation-states etc. This view conveys a sense of the irreducible social complexity of the world. (Ibid; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; de Landa 1997)

Farnell's conception of humans outlined in the previous section allows us to understand individuals as complex, interdependent and mutually constructing beings. In a complementary manner, the concept of an assemblage allows us to analyze the groups formed by a combination of various individual humans. Assemblages can also be other complex wholes, including humans

²⁸ It was held at *El Portalito*, the cultural center in the neighborhood of Socorro that hosts a yearly *gaita* festival. The center's director Ariel Ramos has been an active participant in the *gaita* scene since beginning of the student boom of the 1970s and '80s (Middleton 2010).

and non-human things such as their ecosystems. Using this single concept we can apply the same bottom-up observation of interaction to show how the behavior, and even prolonged existence, of any assemblage depends on the interaction of its parts.

In this section I take the emergent cohort of *gaiteros*, and in particular those who live in the city of Cartagena as my object of analysis, considering them as just such an assemblage-in-becoming, and showing how the dynamic interactions of the (complex) individuals that make it up facilitate or frustrate the construction and maintenance of a whole at this level of scale.

Analyzing in this fashion allows me to resolve an apparent paradox that while making gaita music allows individuals like Kevin and Joche to (re-)build trusting relationships, the same musical activities work against the formation of broad-based organizations. I argue that the social interaction involved in the virtuosic form of *gaita* music promoted through festivals and now normalized for a generation of *gaiteros* is suitable for forming, maintaining, or reestablishing some close friendships, but not broad-based organizations.

The first meeting had been called by Henry González, a tourist guide who also teaches a youth gaita group. He had notified everyone he could via the cell phone application *whatsapp*, and acted as chairperson during proceedings. However, he insisted "Here there's no leader, and there never will be." A dozen men, representatives of various groups based in Cartagena, mostly imposing figures, squeezed themselves into plastic chairs scraped into a rough circle. More accustomed to competing against each other best from More accustomed to competing against one another at festivals, they were slightly uneasy as they began to discuss the problems they saw facing them as a whole and the possibility of unifying in some way to resolve those issues. Acevedo and Borré were deferred to as authorities throughout the night, because of their sonic prowess. Javier Arias, a young man whose hipster glasses and button down shirt which made

him stand out visually from the rest, also took a vocal lead. He makes a living from *gestión* (cultural promotion, fundraising and brokering) and was able to contribute suggestions for how everyone might benefit economically from adopting strategies of musical professionalism.

The first theme and stumbling block was the kind of organization to be formed. The title "*sindicato*" (union) was immediately rejected: "The idea isn't to start a Marxist revolution!" laughed Henry, fist in air, mocking leftist revolutionaries. The mainstream media and political right's demonization of the left, as well as the frequency with which union leaders are murdered, makes this move understandable. The *gaiteros* wanted to distance themselves from any label that might sound political, and particularly left wing. Consider José Alvarez' attitudes towards peasant farmers' associations and the way he equates them with armed insurgent leftists. However, the idea *was* to work together, to *gestionar* ((self-)promote, propose projects, fundraise, get gigs) and lobby to improve their lives and working conditions as some sort of collective. Perhaps the more neutral titles of *gremio* (guild, brotherhood, fraternity), or *asociación* (association) would be more fitting.

No decision was reached, however, because most people were more concerned with more immediately pressing economic matters. The younger *gaiteros* who gig regularly wanted to stop other groups undercutting them. They suggested setting a minimum price for a typical gig in order to prevent the undercutting. However, this issue was also left unresolved because some voices raised the question of the conditions for competitors at festivals.

The first thing they decided to do as a group was to write a collective letter to the organizers of an upcoming festival in Cartagena demanding better conditions for groups who compete. Henry started writing on a small laptop. "Dear organizers of the *cumbia* festival, we the association of *gaiteros*... We'll put 'association' for now..." At the behest of Javier, the *gestor*

cultural, they included demands for a green room and amplification in accordance to a technical rider. The *gaiteros* were attempting to frame themselves not as competitors, being given the opportunity to display their music and compete for a prizes, but as potential providers of an entertainment service, with the right to demand the conditions under which they agree to perform. The themes of the collective letter meandered on to refreshments and prizes. One *gaitero* insisted: "It shouldn't just be a little cookie. It needs to be a solid meal!" Javier argued for groups to have bottled water on stage for "hydration." One *gaitero* stated forcefully that cash prizes must be increased and paid in full on the day they are awarded. This suggestion received great support: "They treat us like *campesinos* (peasant farmers). We're all at least *bachilleres* (high school graduates). There aren't many of us *gaiteros* who aren't *profesionales* (university graduates with vocational degrees). And we're at the center of what the festivals are. Without us they're nothing." The letter was vaguely sketched out before contributors started drifting away. By that time it was late and most people were thinking about work early the next day.

Two weeks later a second meeting was held. There were only four of us there from the previous meeting, and a couple of new faces, including Joche Álvarez and a young singer called Tibisay. She was the only woman present and diligently took notes on the meeting in a way nobody had the week before. She also lectured people briefly on digital citizenship, specifically how *not* to use whatsapp: "Some people use it to express their opinions late at night. No! It should only be to inform us all of the meetings." The festival had not replied to the letter formulated at the last meeting. Some people suggested a boycott in response, but opinions were divided. "We should go, but not play." "If we go, and drink, we're going to want to play." "We should go, but play at the bar 'round the corner." "We should form our own mini-festival at the same time somewhere else." "We should carry out some form of direct action." "If we don't play

they'll just get some groups from Ovejas or Barranquilla." I wondered whether the attendees of the first meeting who did not return were going to take part in the festival, and under what conditions.

At one point Joche diverted the conversation to musicians' treatment at festivals in general. People avoided interrupting him, or telling him that they have already spoken about this theme, out of respect for him as a musician.

I made more money the year I set up a beer stall than I've ever earned by competing on stage. But as musicians we're the protagonists of the event. We create the spectacle. We're the raw material. The patrimony is *us*. I live from *gaita*. If I don't play, I don't eat. And look at how *gaiteros* live. They die in abject poverty. We have to establish a minimum tariff for performances. We're the ones who have to place value on our work.

People generally ignored the apparent tension in Joche's comments and agreed with his second point, one *gaitero* vocally so: "The cultural market supposedly supports the tradition [of *gaita* music] but it doesn't: The conditions are terrible." I had worked with bands at various "cultural marketplaces" in Colombia, and found them to be the epitome of cutthroat, money-driven, superficial, neoliberalism, where bands attempt to sell themselves to largely disinterested promoters in front of make-believe audiences. The ideas that the *gaiteros* were nurturing – of a paternalistic cultural market – was far removed from the faceless, uncaring mêlée I had experienced. However, I did not feel it was my place to interject.

Borré summed up one side of the situation succinctly: "Who wouldn't like to make a living off of music? But it's not possible. That's why I've dedicated myself to my work, and I have *gaita* there as a hobby." Neither in rural towns like Ovejas, nor cities like Cartagena, is it possible for *gaiteros* to make a living as professional performing musicians. Most find it impossible to survive even combining performance with teaching and instrument making. Nearly all have non-musical full-time jobs, or combine part-time jobs to make a living and have *gaita* as an occasional leisure-time autotelic activity. Borré used the English "hobby," a recent import. It

is as if *gaita* has come full circle as it has been urbanized, from a free-time, unpaid activity for *campesinos*, through the myth of a possible profession pursuit, to a free-time, largely unpaid activity for working- and middle-class urbanites. The significant changes, however, are the virtuosity and professionalism of the musicians and the possibility of them organizing. Also, there are some people for whom having *gaita* merely as a hobby has never really been an option. The young *gaiteros* at the meeting who gig frequently for working-class parties, and "*hora loca*" (crazy hour) at bars, clubs or hotels, need the irregular income to support their young families, studies, and drinking habits. Gaiteros like Joche in Cartagena and Henry Ortiz in Ovejas, who make their living through *gaita*-related work, are in the minority.

One of the new faces the second week was a lawyer. He reminded the group of the importance of defining their official status as an organization. Deciding to be an association, or perhaps a foundation, for profit or not, would have legal implications. One attendee remembered there was already a statute in existence that had been drawn up years ago by enthusiastic young university *gaiteros* for a foundation that never got off the ground. "It'll need some corrections, but it's there." I remembered my interlocutor's comment many years earlier: "Everyone has a *fundación*... It's the only way of getting money out of the state" (see chapters 2 and 4). Another letter was composed by committee, according to a hierarchy of volume. Those who spoke the loudest got their points included. People began to drift out.

Wandering home with some of that week's attendees there were murmurs of decent. Some were skeptical about Henry's loud declaration of not wanting to be a leader. Others thought the approach being taken was divisive, that every *gaita* musician should be included in order to have an impact. I wondered how such an organization could ever occur given the precarious economic situation of many musicians, their mutual distrust of *gaiteros* from other locations, of

competing groups, and of people like Henry who take initiatives. *Gaiteros* in Cartagena tend to imagine pro-active *gestores* are really motivated by the personal gain that can come from co-opting an organization with the power to elicit funds, and engaging in clientelistic corruption (see chapter 4). That year most of the gaiteros at the meeting avoided the *cumbia* festival, but those who did participate did not see a marked improvement in their conditions. The broad-based "association" of *gaiteros* never came into being. Rather, Henry and a few groups formed a small foundation, which they hope to continue growing in future years.

A lack of trust is clearly impeding the organization of *gaiteros* and thereby limiting their ability to mobilize social capital and petition employers or cultural brokers for better conditions. I argue this impediment to organization is augmented by the musical practices most gaiteros commonly engage in, with two vectors. First, the kind of virtuosic interaction described above, which facilitates the formation of thick trusting relationships between a tight radius of players, also diminishes the likelihood of them forming broad networks of thin trusting relationships which would ease organic processes of unifying under common goals (Escobar 2008). Second, gaita groups have become more stable since they were first formed for festivals, leading to out-group distrust and competition at the level of the ensemble. As festival prizes have grown and become worth competing for, many gaiteros have focused more on the competitive aspect of festivals than the chance to meet, catch up with, and play with a wide variety of *gaiteros*. As a result they have become more comfortable playing with the specific individuals in their group and are even less predisposed to play with other musicians and thereby develop trust in them. They have mostly not had the opportunity to build or rebuild trust through playing together, like Kevin and Joche did, as most are members of relatively stable groups that do not exchange members frequently, and that compete for paid gigs or festivals prizes.

However, it is not a lack of trust at the level of direct musical interaction alone. The competing priorities of stakeholders is also a factor, and the fact that they are often directly competing against each other in highly unregulated contexts for festival prizes and jobs. Furthermore, they imagine a paternalistic state-led cultural sector committed to maintaining local musical traditions, which in my experience simply does not exist. Those *gaiteros* trying to make a living from music therefore have little trust in each other or any sort of loose, informal system within which they believe themselves to be operating. Without structural change, a rise in trust among the *gaita* cohort, even in Cartagena, might not be possible, and even if it were, it might make little difference to the material situation of its members, because doing so would require a shift in the way festival organizers conceptualize them – to identify them as professional performers rather than competitors – and formalization of the commercial markets in which they gig.

The next section delves into some of the more structural generators of distrust by returning to the theme of violence in *Montes de María* and considering how it is narrated in relation to the *gaita* festivals in the region. However, a close consideration of *gaiteros*'s narratives shows loops that both silence violence and permit some trusting relationships to flourish, even across the apparent divide of the civil conflict, simultaneously maintaining a nebulous association of *gaita* festivals with peace.

The Festival as a Place of Peace?

In 2015 I returned to Ovejas with Joche for the yearly *gaita* festival. However, like the festival in Cartagena, none of my close interlocutors competed that year. Their attention was far less focused on the staged competition than the interaction going on around it. *Gaiteros de Ovejas*

played a short paid set for an informal family gathering, and only one of them took the opportunity of playing with *gaiteros* from other groups in the gazebos pitched around the main square where the festival is held.²⁹ I frequently found myself reflecting with my closest interlocutors on festivals in general and how *gaita* festivals have come to be seen as places of peace, despite the complex histories of violence with which they are inextricably entwined. The ways in which they narrated these histories revealed mechanisms of silencing violence that help maintain some trusting relationships despite divisions based in opposing experiences of the civil conflict.

Many festivals have sprung up since the 1980s in *Montes de María*, some dedicated to a particular locally produced foodstuff, most involving music, such as *gaita*, *bullerengue*, *pito atravesao* or brass bands. Like the *tambora* festivals in the river region and other "folk" festivals in Colombia, they have become associated with nebulous discourse of peacebuilding through "culture" (Ochoa Gautier 2006; Birenbaum Quintero 2009). In *Montes de María* this has become particularly important to *gaiteros* for both broad and specific reasons. As with the river region, high profile guerrilla and paramilitary presence in the area gave the region a reputation as a "zona roja." Roberto Álvarez explained to me that he found employment nearly impossible to come by as a result: "When they saw my ID and found out I was from Ovejas they said 'guerrillero' and never called me back" (P.C. 2012, 2015). There was also a common indexical connection between *gaita* music and a particularly brutal paramilitary massacre in 2000, which received national media attention. During the massacre in the town of El Salado, the killers celebrated their acts of violence with local instruments, which according to some reports

²⁹ Juan Sebastian Rojas describes a similar disillusionment with festivals for his central *bullerengue* interlocutor Emilsen Pacheco (Rojas E. 2013).

included *gaita* flutes and drums from the *gaita* format (Ruiz 2008; Brodzinsky and Schoeming 2012: 38).³⁰

While some festivals in the region have ceased precisely because of widespread violence, Ovejas' *gaita* festival has continued. One interlocutor explained how various festivals ended because of a dependence on a particular individual. Such individuals could become targets of one or other of the armed groups active in the civil conflict, for reasons related to the festival or not. In some cases their murder was apparently not directly related to the civil conflict, but masked by the pervasive impunity with which murderers operated at its height:³¹

The festivals have generated a dependence on specific people. In San Rafael they used to have the sesame festival. They stopped putting it on - the president was killed. Just like the avocado festival. The *paracos* (paramilitaries) surrounded his house. They say he didn't even try to escape. He just knelt down to pray in front of a saint he had there - the virgin of *el Carmen*.³²

The president of the avocado festival was different. They say he was killed by *los profesionales* (white-collar workers with a professional degree). He was an empirical doctor. He learned from a qualified doctor - he was his assistant - and he became famous locally. Everyone from the hamlets around where he lived went to see him rather than go to the hospital. The doctors tried to report him, but it didn't work.

The festival in Guacamayal was brilliant. The guy who managed the finances there was great. Always paid up on time. He played the *tambora* drum and directed a group there. This one time he's on a journey with his group, right, when they [we do not know who, but from the

³⁰ My interlocutors were keen to emphasize that the killers were not musicians and did not *really* play *gaita* music. "They just made noise" (Anonymous. P.C. 2015, 2016).

³¹ The question of why festival organizers would be targets for armed groups is a complex one. I can see four main explanations: 1. Ultra-right paramilitaries may have seen some festival organizers as potential threats to their dominance in a particular region because a) they see festivals as promoting "traditional" lifeways and increasing resistance against "modernist" agro-industry projects they seek to push through, b) there is a broad belief that promoting "cultural" events is a way of promoting leftist projects indirectly (though in fact some festival organizers are considerably conservative), c) festivals promote mobility in the region which paramilitaries (and to some degree state forces and leftist insurgents) sought to limit through curfews and terror, d) the peace discourse of festivals directly opposes the right's belief in a military solution to the conflict; 2. Similarly, leftist insurgents may have seen festival organizers as non-militant leftists, splitting the efforts of resisting the right, or attempting to derail the insurgency by calling for peace, or as conservatives promoting non-revolutionary lifeways; 3. Opportunistic people from any armed group may have known about the vast sums of money festival organizers sometimes have access to during festivals. 4. Killing anyone, especially prominent figures, helped augment confusion, fear, and indiscriminate distrust, which at times all parties in the conflict sought as part of what Taussig calls the "art of confusion" (Taussig 2003:125).

³² *La virgen del Carmen* is the patron saint of transport workers, the police and the armed forces. In *La Costa* (as well as other parts of Colombia and the Spanish-speaking world) she is widely believed to help those in immediate danger.

conversation I presume paramilitaries] stop the bus and tell everyone to get off.³³ They send everyone back on the bus apart from him, and they kill him. The festival was finished right there and then. Recently some folks have tried to revive it, but it's not the same. (Anonymous, P.C. 2016)

According to my interlocutors, in contrast to many other festivals in the region, that of Ovejas has not suffered attacks against its organizers. Furthermore when guerrilla activity in the area was at its height, the festival was allowed to go ahead without restrictions or interference from armed groups. Many interlocutors claimed that guerrilla fighters came to enjoy the festival as members of the public, dressed in civilian clothing. Many *gaiteros* and locals speak of the festival in Ovejas in almost sacred terms as creating a space of temporary cessation of hostilities, one weekend a year of guaranteed peace amid years of violence. Some friends eventually revealed that the festival was never quite able to guarantee the absence of violent death. However, their forms of narration distance the violence, and by indexical association the festival and *gaita* music, from the civil conflict by attributing the killings to apparently unrelated problems. In my interpretation of such conversations I take my lead once again from Helen Moodie's analysis of narratives of violence in "post-conflict" El Salvador, focusing on what people's narratives show us about their ways of experiencing events, rather than attempting to corroborate any truth claims they may make (Moodie 2010).

The following conversation with *gaiteros* Tiberio and Jota,³⁴ two *gaiteros* from *Montes de María* of Joche's generation, who grew up playing *gaita* together, reveals a mode of historicizing violence within the festival that distances both the festival and the particular

³³ "...paran la buseta y bajan todo el grupo. Suben los demás y lo matan." This way of talking about killings in the active voice, but without an explicit subject in the sentence, is exceedingly common in Colombia in both informal and formal contexts. It could be translated in the passive voice "The bus was stopped..." However, there is a passive voice in Spanish, which people choose not to use for this kind of event "La buseta fue detenida..." People rather use the active voice, hinting that listeners know what the missing subject of the verbs is, that is to say, who the assailants were. To ask who did the actions is not the done thing.

³⁴ Not their real names.

incidents of violence from the civil conflict. I quote verbatim and at length, with occasional comments, to convey the style of narration and interjection, the occasionally tense feel of the conversations and the silences they contain, both sonic and historical.

Ian: I've been told that the guerrilla always respected the festival and let it be.

Jota: Yeah - who ever got in the way of the festival? They've never caused trouble for the organizers or anything.

I: But someone told me that there was once a killing.

Tiberio: No no, but that was... here there have been... there was one...

J: But those are...

T: The festivals are... You know there was one killing. A cousin of mine was killed in one of the gazebos [around the central square where the festival is held]. They shot him there, but that's... isolated... family problems. It was a problem that one family had with another. And he was... there. There had already been a killing... My cousin had killed someone. So he arrived, with two bodyguards, and they were in the tents. There was a guy who was the uncle of the one he'd killed... years ago. And what with all the drinks and stuff, they remembered the old dispute and they started a fight. So the other guy's bodyguard saw that my cousin was coming at him, he shot him and killed him. But those are... isolated things.

J: What cousin are you talking about?

T: [In an uncharacteristically low voice] XXXX

J: [Something indistinguishable about "family"]

T: Yeah! The one that was killed [years before] was one of Jota's family! [laughs]

J: Yeah, exactly! [Half-laughs]

T: Yeah.

I: Wow.

J: But those are things... *culebras viejas* (literally "old snakes" – problems from a long time ago).

T: What's the name of the guy who... because I know he was one of your family.

J: YYYY

I: But see how it [the dispute] doesn't penetrate the whole of each family.

T: No, it's their problem.

J: No, I... I... with me, there's never been any of that... I don't care about that sort of thing.

T: In another festival there was a kid here who sold drugs.

[Silence]

J: Well, maybe I'd get involved if... maybe if I happened to be there when the fight broke out... if I... you know... saw it all... but no...

[Silence]

T: There was a kid who, they say, sold drugs. And on the morning of the *alborada* (the dawn-light procession which begins the festival) he was found dead by the front door of his house, he was just going in, but they were waiting for him... and... Pa! [They shot him] But nobody paid attention to that killing.

I: Because he was "*deshechable*"? (literally "disposable" a word used by paramilitaries to describe people they consider "undesirables")

T: No, he wasn't "*deshechable*." He was a good kid, but he had his *culebras* (problems) because of... But people didn't pay attention to his killing. With the other one they paraded his body through the streets. It was a Sunday and the festival was in full flow, with people on stage. They walked the body through the central plaza - ahhh! ta ta ta [crying] - and everything... But no, things with the guerrillas, no.

Tiberio characterizes his cousin's killing in terms of a minor scuffle that arose out of "isolated... family problems" or "*culebras viejas*" (old problems), and became unfortunately serious because both men involved were accompanied by armed bodyguards. Neither of the conversants explicitly consider that by contracting bodyguards to protect themselves the uncle and the cousin were engaging in a distrusting strategy, showing they did not have basic trust towards the unknown people present. Furthermore, the cousin's previous actions gave others reason to distrust him and led particular people (his victim's uncle in this case) to bear him a grudge, as he had killed with impunity.

The killing of the cousin interrupted the festival as mourners paraded the body through the crowd, bringing a temporary halt to events on stage. In contrast, the death of a local boy who dealt drugs was not brought to the attention of festival-goers, though he was not, as I assumed, considered "*deshechable*." The term is applied by paramilitaries to people they consider "disposable" – a nuisance, undesirable or morally wrong, and hence legitimate targets of social cleansing (Taussig 2003). Such people include petty thieves, drug dealers, prostitutes, and non-heterosexuals. Paramilitaries consider them unwanted, expendable, deviant, or somehow non-human, and hence disposable. I was wrong to assume residents thought of the young local drug dealer this way. In fact he was "a good kid." Whoever killed him had personal reasons, according to Tiberio, and these "*culebras*" were sufficient to stop people bringing his death to the attention of festival-goers. Doing so would risk bursting the bubble of apparent peace that surrounds the festival.

In her ethnography of Tango in Buenos Aires, Julie Taylor notes a similar tendency among Argentineans narrating the fate of victims of state terror during the military junta:

Algo habrá hecho. They must have done something. They must have been mixed up in something. These have become the dreaded or welcome phrases, deadly words, that Argentines

know have been used to disappear disappearances. What did they do, what have they done, to merit such a fate? The questions give logic to the sudden arbitrary absence of a neighbor or workmate or relative, to then dismiss that absence and to render the absence itself invisible. (Taylor 1998: 94 (my italics))

By blaming victims in this way narrators superstitiously protect themselves: If all victims have some "*culebras viejas*", if they did something to cause their own killing, and one has done nothing to warrant one's own death, then one logically cannot become a victim. That is to say by (mis)identifying victims as untrustworthy or in some sense deserving of their fate people can maintain the shaky belief that there is a system of logic to the killings, and by identifying oneself as different they can reduce their anxiety that they may themselves become a victim.

Returning to the first killing narrated, it appears to have little bearing on the current relationship between Tiberio and Jota, even though family members were involved on opposing sides. Both insist that it is not a problem that concerns them directly. However, the pauses in conversation were pregnant, and Jota's returning to the subject shows it is more significant to him than he initially let on, and he may have reacted differently had he seen events first hand. But the relationship between Jota and Tiberio is rooted in musical interaction and the time spent together through years of friendship, which together outweigh family loyalty in this case. The power of this trusting relationship is even more remarkable given what was revealed as the conversation developed.

Tiberio: The theory is that 90% of all families in Ovejas have some family connection with guerrilla groups. One of their family members has some link with them. You get me?

Jota: My family has a ton!

Ian: Really?

T: In my family there were some. Three cousins. Their heads were chopped off. One girl and two boys from a hamlet outside the town. They had their heads chopped off, but I didn't have anything to do with them.

I: And why did they...

T: Because they had links with guerrillas. Later, the paramilitaries arrived and they caught them and shot them, but they caught a ton of them. And they [the paramilitaries] chopped their heads off. That's why. They brought their heads into town in a bag, and their bodies in a hammock. The three bodies in a hammock. The doctor on duty fainted. He threw up and fainted when he saw the heads.

I: And in your family, Jota?

J: Yeah, [there were] people [in my family] who were into that. There was a group called *La Corriente de Renovación Socialista* (CRS the Current of Socialist Renovation),³⁵ but they handed in their arms. There were members of my family in that group, but they handed in... [their weapons]. Others, I don't know if they're still in, or were in that kind of thing. But we have a tendency towards that kind of thing... the kind of guerrilla thinking.

T: His family had, at one time, a tendency towards the guerrillas. My closer family had a tendency towards the... the... *paracos* (paramilitaries). But *his* (Jota's) family are completely guerrilla-influenced. More than that, they say the first guerrillas in Ovejas were the Jota family! [Everyone laughs]

At this point they broke from their normal *costeño* male tendency of speaking loudly and openly and instead began to talk in hushed voices about family members, various guerrilla movements, and paramilitary groups. Most of what they say was indistinguishable to me. They mentioned the *Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores* (the Revolutionary Workers' Party, PRT), the *EPL* (Popular Liberation Army). Then, pointedly, Jota changed the subject by asking me how much longer I was staying and turning himself into the interviewer.

The contrasting family histories of Jota and Tiberio reframe the first story Tiberio told.

Given the strong connection of Jota's family to guerrilla movements and Tiberio's to paramilitary groups, it is unlikely that the killings had nothing to do with the broader civil conflict.

Dismissing these divisions as "*culebras viejas*" and isolated family problems, then, partakes in the broader tendency of individuals, the media and the Colombian state to present many of the killings wrapped up in the civil conflict as *apolitical* and *unconnected* to (counter-)insurgency. Right wing politicians commonly portray guerrilla groups as mere terrorists, with no ideals, and paramilitary groups are commonly depicted as mere organized crime gangs, with no connection to the right wing political elite or landowners. Similarly, on the local level of face-to-face conversations, killings like the ones described here are narrated as the unfortunate outcomes of

³⁵ The CRS was a guerrilla group that demobilized between 1993 and 1994 in Flor del Monte, a village in the municipality of Ovejas. They were a nationwide insurgent group, but chose to demobilize in Ovejas because they claimed to have a strong connections with local community leaders there (Verdad Abierta 2016).

personal problems between individuals, isolated from the broader political conflict (Moodie 2010; Gill 2016). As such, in their narration of violence Colombian civilians like Jota and Tiberio partake in the depoliticization of violent death during the process of looking forward to a "postconflict" Colombia.

Narrating the deaths in this manner is also a way of protecting the *gaita* festival from contagion by the civil conflict. It guards against the formation of a potential indexical cluster that would otherwise bind together the civil conflict, local death, the *gaita* festival and by extension *gaita* music in general. In part this is to maintain the rhetoric whereby Ovejas' festival is represented as a space of "peace." Any incursion of violence into this space is typically erased from local histories. While it may be true that neither guerrillas nor paramilitaries ever launched an attack on the town of Ovejas during the time of the festival, and it was never banned, threatened or halted by the killing of its organizers like other festivals were, it was never fully immune from the violence of the civil conflict. However, any violent events that occurred during the festival are historicized as unconnected to the broader conflict, and rather the result of small-scale family feuds, even when there is some evidence to the contrary. The killings were, if not examples of direct subversive and paramilitary action, then at least symptoms of the widespread tangles of distrust generated by the conflict, and possibly a result of the individuals' connections to opposing groups in the dirty war. However, as Tiberio and Jota remember the killing, talk of paramilitary and guerrilla groups is figuratively and literally hushed in an uncharacteristic manner, and violent deaths are instead remembered as the reemergence of "*culebras viejas*", mysterious old problems. This serves supporters of the festival who want to maintain a pristine image of *gaita*, encourage visitors from outside to boost the diffusion of *gaita* music, Ovejas'

reputation, and local commerce. Distancing violent events from the festival also helps maintain the identification of *gaiteros* as neither victims nor perpetrators of violence; immune.

For Taylor, considering tango in 1990s Buenos Aires, the pleasures and power relationships engendered through tango dancing and listening do not erase the fear and prolonging of exclusions generated by state terror (Taylor 1998). However they provide spaces for exploring new ways of (somatically) knowing other people, and reflection on personal and public difficulties. Making *gaita* music and narrating its relations to violence allows *gaiteros* to come to know and trust each other on an individual basis, even across family divisions, but tends to involve the exclusion of vital parts of personal and public stories in order to create positive feedback loops.

My reflections here are informed by Sherry Ortner's concept of "serious games" because the forms of narration, as well as musical activities of my interlocutors, have rule-based, game-like forms. Despite an apparent binary between individuals and structures, which Escobar seeks to avoid, Ortner goes beyond early practice theory to capture neatly the limited, but real agency of people within particular forms of social life and local relations of power (Ortner 1996: 12; 2006: 145), showing how these "games" necessarily overlap, nest and conflict. She also recognizes that we as analysts are engaged in "games" of our own in trying to represent social life (Ibid 20). However, I have not found a satisfactory expansion of the concept of "serious games" that gets beyond a central ambiguity as to whether the term is being applied literally or figuratively. While the Euro-American mountaineers Ortner discusses who *choose* to climb the Himalayas *are* playing games, albeit incredibly risky ones, the sherpas who accompany them are not playing. That is to say, the mountaineers rule-based actions fit perfectly Bernard Suits' classic definition of a (challenge) game: "a voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary

obstacles" (Suits 1978), for the sherpas, the attempt is not fully voluntary, and the obstacles are necessarily part of their working life. Distinguishing such activities as "*serious games*" does little to help. In Ortner's model, either the term "game" refers to all human action and thereby becomes useless for describing the world because it does not exclude anything, or "*serious games*" are not really games at all, so the explanatory power of her model is limited to showing how human interaction is *analogous* to the playing of games. Nonetheless, I follow Ortner's lead in considering power-laden human interaction within overlapping, nesting and conflicting activities based in rules that are assumed, sometimes made explicit, occasionally bent, disregarded or reshaped, but generally reproduced as people interact in relation to them.

When my interlocutors make gaita music they are mostly playing. *Gaita* provides them a way of combining three of the experiences that characterize Roger Caillois' four classes of games (Caillois 1958; Csikszentmihaly 2008: 72-3): it is *agonistic* insofar as they stretch their skills to match or better those of fellow participants; it involves *mimicry* of other gaiteros - those present in performance and those who have informed one's style; finally and perhaps most importantly it allows them to *alter their experience* (and, I would add, that of other participants) by achieving highly pleasurable flow states in *el viaje*.³⁶ The element of play is reduced significantly when they compete for prizes or make music for money, because the principle aim of those activities is not mutual enjoyment. When *gaiteros* discuss gaita, festivals, violence, local history, there is sometimes an element of play, and there is also a high degree of iconicity between their rule-based (and rule-stretching) interaction here and when they make music. However, in their narrations they convey information *about* their local history, which is rarely their primary focus when playing gaita, and their interaction is serious to the point of not being autotelic. They are

³⁶ Gaita is no longer aleatory (Caillois' other category). While some gaiteros used to make gaita music to control future weather, nobody I know of continues this practice. Also, while aleatory practices may involve an element of play, if the participants genuinely believe in their efficaciousness, they are not games in my sense.

not primarily playing. Both making *gaita* music and narrating its relation to violence are semiotic activities, but the aims are different.

I suggest that it is in part the silencing and the purification of the festival in the imagination, recollection, and narration of participants that allows people like Jota and Tiberio to play *gaita* together unperturbed by disputes that could otherwise flare up. In turn, just like I showed with Joche and Kevin above, it is their long term playing together that has allowed them to forge and constantly reinforce a strong relationship of trust, which allows them to rise above potential disputes and live together peacefully. This personal connection fuels the belief in the immunity of *gaita* music to the violence of the civil conflict, completing the mutually reinforcing cycle. Violent events that threaten the cycle (circle? *rosca*?) are narrated in such a way as to downplay any connections to the conflict, or broader implications for *gaiteros* and locals. These are the implicit rules of the serious rule-based activity of narrating violence at the festival. They can work to the extent that the cycle is not severely threatened. Just as Joche and other accomplished *gaiteros* stretch the rules of *gaita* performance when they are at their most creative, experienced participants can also play with the rules of narration. Jota and Tiberio whisper their improvisations that hint at the fictive nature of their louder narratives. However, revealing these fictions loudly in public might threaten the act of narration, the games of making music together, and the broader, more serious social activity within which they are nested, that of building and sustaining trust against a backdrop of pervasive distrust, and avoiding or reducing violence, by narrating violent and musical histories and playing music together.

That year's festival went ahead without any major acts of violence, though there were moments of apprehension when attendees of the festival were spotted wearing colors that identified them as supporters of particular political parties. My *gaitero* friends were somewhat

concerned that tension between politically opposed revelers might spill over. Elections were soon to take place across the country for municipal mayors and regional governors. In Ovejas political opposition brought a feeling of static to the air. Many of my interlocutors were expectant and nervous, because changes in regional and local government positions bring new opportunities for work, which is otherwise scarce. In the following section I follow Joche's engagement with this process, revealing some local forms of trust and distrust in politicians and the (non)systems within which they operate, especially as they relate to the emergent "cultural" sector with which *gaiteros* engage.

Precarious Political Allegiances for Musical Projects

Joche was back in Ovejas for the elections. As a "cultural" worker, his strategies for surviving had always involved a level of dependence on institutional patrons; local mayors, individuals working for regional cultural bodies, or the ministry of culture, and foundation directors. This year brought elections for local officials all over the country. Mayors and members of regional governing bodies were campaigning nationwide. Huge amounts of money were pumped into campaigns and even more was at stake for the winners. Ovejas, and many other sleepy, underemployed towns in *La Costa* were uncharacteristically busy and organized.

It was a time for choosing sides and displaying one's loyalty publicly. In Ovejas home-made flags went up: Green for the conservatives, red for the liberals. I thought back to the hands cut off the statue of José sr. and wondered whether it was a political message. José wouldn't allow any flags at his house, his children were divided in support of different candidates, but he did have two huge banners supporting a friend who was running for departmental governor.

Some of my interlocutors cringed at the flags and banners, reminded of the violent polarization and fractured nature of the countryside during the times of *La Violencia*. Others were too busy supporting a particular campaign to reflect. Many took advantage of the rare opportunity to work by "collecting votes." This involved visiting family members, friends, or acquaintances, and asking them to support a particular candidate. Their identification number would be noted down, along with that of any family members they could speak for, or persuade to vote a certain way. Arrangements would be made for them to be paid in cash, goods, or construction projects, according to the number of votes pledged to the candidate. Small-scale construction boomed at this time as a result: Concrete floors were poured, cinder block walls went up, galvanized steel roofing panels were laid. I was astounded at the level of organization and bare-faced pragmatism of this corruption, but for my friends, it was normal. Some were busy making deals with the campaign organizers as to what would happen after the election. Many people were promised roles in the new administration in return for their support. People's public identification as part of the growing assemblages backing one political party or another depended far less on political ideology or voting habits than it did on the ability of the vote collectors to convince individuals their candidate would fulfill particular promises to them. Vote collectors would target people with high social capital, such as heads of large families, who could "guarantee" a precise number of votes for a candidate. Thus the assemblages forming around particular candidates involved both centralized and non-centralized hierarchical organization, as well as self-organization around a wide variety of highly personalized goals (Escobar 2008: 274).



Figure 44: A child plays with a red flag of the liberal party. Behind him, dotted up the hill can be seen both red and green flags. The facade of the Álvarez house (center), shows two white banners in support of a candidate for governor.

The soundscape of Ovejas was thick with the noises of construction, but also sonic signs of political allegiances and propaganda. Mass-produced campaign songs blared from speakers in bars and homes, and on the back of motorbikes whose riders were paid to do laps of the town. These songs sampled the latest champeta hits, popular across northern Colombia, inserting a particular candidate's name into the earworm chorus. I heard them in San Martín and Cartagena as well as Ovejas. They made the campaign slogans of candidates impossible to avoid. The very public display of campaigning masked to a degree the actual work of cajoling individuals' support by corrupt means.

Joche had thrown in his lot with two candidates: his old employer, Carmen Díaz, who was running for mayor of a small town just outside Cartagena, and a candidate in Ovejas, who was

being backed by an old friend, Gerson Vanegas. Vanegas had been involved with *gaita* music for many years, mainly composing songs. One explicitly argues in its lyrics that the *gaiteros* of *Montes de María* are not members of insurgent groups:

I don't know if it's a sin to be a child of this land,
But everyone's stigmatizing people who say they're from Ovejas
They defame us, slander us, call us guerrilla insurgents,
And for all that we do to reject the lie, as far as they're concerned we're just violent people
No sir! It's not like that!
And that's why this song exists;
To make it clear that the people of my town don't behave that way,
That if there are some discontented men hiding in these mountains,
I swear *compadre* they're not from 'round here
Because a man from Ovejas is *sano* (decent/ sane/ healthy) from birth
And if they say he carries a shotgun, it's surely a *gaita* with five holes
(Vanegas 2014)³⁷

He has also provided economic support for Joche's recording projects. Joche sees him as more than a mere *patrón*, or "*amigo político*," (political ally primarily friendly for personal gain), but also recognizes he is a relatively rich and powerful man locally, and his support has proved useful in the past. On this occasion he had promised Joche that if his candidate won, Joche would become director of the *casa de la cultura* (cultural center), a stable job for the mayor's four-year term, which would allow Joche to move back to Ovejas, and work doing what he knows and loves; teaching *gaita* and other traditional musics, organizing events and making instruments. He even planned to bring me in as an advisor and link to broader cultural networks, initiatives and trends across the country. In some conversations we had, I was to be his right hand man, move to Ovejas and help develop the *casa de la cultura* into a creative force for social change in the

³⁷ This song won first prize in the category of Best New Song at Ovejas in 2001. Spanish Lyrics;
Yo no se si eso es pecado, ser hijo de esta tierra,
Pero todo el mundo vive señalando al que diga que es de Ovejas,
Nos difaman, nos apodian y nos tildan como hombres guerrilleros
y por mucho que rechasa esa mentira para ellos somos unos violentos
No señor! Eso no es así!
Y por eso este canto es pa' aclararle que la gente de mi pueblo no se porta así
que si en esas montañas ya se esconden unos hombres descontentos se lo juro a usted compadre que no son de aquí
Porque el ovejero es sano de nacimiento
Y si dicen que carga un fusil seguro es una gaita con cinco hueco'

town. I was excited by the possibility of carrying out exactly the kind of applied fieldwork I had planned, but skeptical about the likelihood of it coming to fruition. It was a tense time for Joche and others who had placed their future livelihoods in the balance of the election. If their candidate did not win, their rival would never consider employing someone who had so publicly supported the other candidate. There was no question of meritocratic appointments to local government positions. The very public nature of corruption at every level made cronyism a practical necessity.

However, not everyone in Ovejas was being as trusting as Joche. In fact, many employed strategies to minimize the risk that their political candidate would fail to come through on a promise. Sociologist Carol A. Heimer (2001) discusses different strategies one can employ when faced with situations of vulnerability and uncertainty. One can reduce uncertainty by increasing the information one has about potential trustees and choosing those most likely to complete the task at hand and not betray ones trust. Alternatively one can reduce vulnerability by such methods as taking out insurance, or signing contracts. These latter she calls "distrusting strategies." Drummer Johatan Matte explained the distrusting strategies locals in Ovejas employed with political candidates:

Nobody trusts anybody. Politicians go round to people's houses asking what people need, but *el pueblo* (people/ the people/ the masses/ working-class people) don't trust in their word. People get the politicians to sign, or do what they promise first. In the *barrios* (outlying newer neighborhoods) people will sell their vote for a bathroom, but they make the politician construct it first! Other people make the politicians sign *una letra en blanco* (a blank check/document). It's legally binding, so if the politicians don't uphold their end of the bargain the voter reports them to the police. (P.C. 2016)

With these distrusting strategies that straddle the legalistic and the illicit people aim to hold politicians to account for their highly illegal, but highly normalized practice of garnering support in exchange for money, services (normally construction) and the promise of employment. Yet Joche had not employed distrusting strategies, and remained instead highly vulnerable to the

vicissitudes of his candidates' campaigns and subsequent willingness and ability to implement promises.

Carmen Díaz lost the election. According to Joche, she was not willing to engage in the corruption necessary to defeat her opponents. Joche's candidate in Ovejas was successful, but Vanegas did not come through on his promise. After all the effort of supporting two campaigns, Joche was once again without work and without prospects of the situation changing. A common friend told me Joche had been foolish to trust Vanegas:

That's what happens when you speak to the clown and not the ringmaster. Gerson [Vanegas] is looking out for his own interests too. Now he's saying he can't give anything to Joche because he hasn't been given anything either. Everyone's corrupt, but there are some people who deliver on their promises. (P.C. 2016)

The implication here is that Joche should not have trusted his friend, Vanegas, but rather made a deal directly with the mayoral candidate. By taking Vanegas on his word he thereby *dió papaya* (literally "gave papaya" – set himself up for a fall through naïveté). However, Joche had avoided employing distrusting strategies in part because of an extant friendship with Vanegas, based in making *gaita* music together. Although Heimer argues that distrusting strategies like insisting on contracts do not necessarily preclude trusting, and can even be the beginning of trusting relationships (2001: 78), Joche felt the relationship he had already established with Vanegas would have been compromised by going over his head – an act Vargas would likely interpret as Joche questioning his trustworthiness.

Joche remained hopeful for some time that Vanegas might come good on his promise, but eventually started looking for any job that could sustain his family. In the game-like, but highly serious activity of political strategizing in which nearly everyone is constantly stretching or breaking the rules and promises, he had misplaced his trust. His dreams of moving back to his hometown and working in the activities he loves and does best became a distant memory, one to

be numbed by nights in watching television, or ameliorated only slightly by occasional musical visits and *viajes* with *gaitero* friends, and the very occasional gig like the carnival show detailed at the beginning of this chapter, where Joche made sure to mention the patronage of Vanegas, despite his continued inability or unwillingness to employ Joche in the full time position he had promised. My own hopes of carrying out extended applied fieldwork in Ovejas were also dashed, and when I checked months later with friends in Ovejas, nobody had yet been appointed to work at *la casa de la cultura*. What really annoyed me was that the young people who could have benefitted from our work were left without any musical projects as a direct result of political corruption. Adults breaking serious rules for personal gain left them without the chance to benefit from the serious and not-so-serious play of deeply humanizing music making.

During one such period unemployment Joche told me: "I have faith they'll call me to work" (P.C. 2015). This faith in an unspecific "they" chimed with the non-specific "they" used to refer to perpetrators of violence: someone beyond our knowledge, but it also reminded me of the apparently throw-away epithet so many of my interlocutors habitually add to statements about future work: "*Si diós quiere*" (God willing/ if God wishes). For most of them it is not simply a phrase used to talk about the future, but reflects a genuine belief that human plans only come to fruition if God wills them. One cultural *gestor* who has worked for many years as a manager of professional *cantadoras* mused: "I often think it might be better to have less faith in God's will and more confidence in our own ability to make things happen" (Anonymous: P.C. 2008).

Summary

I do not see Joche's flow states in gaita making, improvisation and friendships as simply iconic across different areas of life. Nor are the forms of narrating violence merely iconic of

improvisation in music making. Rather, they are all part of the same approach to life. Joche and many people like him have a broad habit base dominated by a drive towards experiencing flow. Turino describes his own drive to experience flow in musical performance: "The desire for this experience feels like an addiction" (Turino 2014: 207). Some people, like the "professionals" who have *gaita* as a hobby, are able to integrate such a strong, quasi-addictive desire into a functional life. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) argues that making flow a significant feature of one's life is fundamental to happiness in the Aristotelian sense of the "good life." However, for Joche it is difficult to find a balance that works within the situations in which he has found himself. Seeking out that way of being in every aspect of life and being generally reluctant or unable to engage with the world in other ways has made life difficult.

Joche has been able to survive in part through the activities that provide him most intense flow. Making good *gaitas* requires heightened attention and control of deeply engrained habits of movement, observation, sounding and micro-improvising in response to the unpredictable reaction of wax and other materials to the environment, one's tools, each other. Making good *gaita* music requires similar, but instead of materials, one's heightened attention must be directed towards the actions, reactions and sounds of other people as they micro-improvise together. This is Joche's favorite way of being and primary mode of making and sustaining friends. As shown in the case of Kevin Acevedo, it can serve to silence tensions and reestablish friendships. This mode of being and friendship network helped Joche improvise his way through the disorienting process of his displacement. However, it has been difficult for him to make a living and support his family through flow activities alone, and he has not developed a comprehensive skill set for making successful informed judgments about who to trust, or how to employ distrusting strategies successfully. His deep reliance on particular individuals has limited his own agency

and meant that many of his musical, social and life projects have remained mere possibilities. Deep involvement in *gaita* can limit people in two ways; the thick trusting relations it tends to generate can preclude broad trusting, and a focus on flow in commitment to friendships can limit ones ability to use distrusting strategies effectively.

Against a backdrop of pervasive distrust of violent armed actors, sometimes seen as quasi-supernatural figures, trust among *gaiteros* tends to remain at the level of deep trusting relationships with a particular small group of individuals with whom one plays most. In making gaita music a *gaitero* comes to identify with other participants to some degree, but also constantly distances himself from them through the marked sonic differences of variation and particularity of style. It is the processes of playing with sameness and difference that creates the flow state of *el viaje* which *gaiteros* value so much. Each *gaitero* powerfully constitutes other participants as complex, agential humans, and displays a commitment to sustaining the in-the-moment flow states and flow-based ways of being they value so highly. Part of their trust in others is based in this felt commitment to sustain each other's flow states, which is especially powerful when day to day life can be so hard and depressing.

Narrating violence indexically linked to *gaita* events involves a process of silencing its connections to the social conflict and finding "reasons" for the targeting of particular individuals. This form of narration helps sustain the idea that *gaita* is immune to the violence that has engulfed the region and distance oneself and friends from its implications. This is a form of symbolic violence in misremembering events and imposing their misremembered version as the only account. However, somewhat paradoxically, it helps *gaiteros* keep playing together, sustaining genuine friendships across potential divides, and adding to the discourse that connects *gaita* to peace in part by reducing potential conflicts.

While *gaiteros* from across northern Colombia and beyond have become aware of each other through festivals and might now be considered a cultural cohort, there remains a high degree of distrust among them. Attempts to organize have generally been frustrated by pervasive distrust involving the belief that pro-active *gestores* are secretly on the make. However, in reality *gaiteros* hoping to work in cultural industries or social education projects are often forced to form corrupt and unreliable relations of patronage and are frequently unable to mobilize social capital to improve their material situation because of the vulnerability that these patron-client relations perpetuate. As an assemblage (or set of overlapping, nested and parallel assemblages), then, *gaiteros* have generally been unable to organize and act as a whole in a way that would improve their material conditions or power in relation to mêlée of festivals, informal markets, politicians, and government or non-government social institutions with which they engage. Attempts at organization are generally short-lived, and *gaiteros* revert to acting in small groups of close trusted friends, or as individuals.

In the following chapter I deepen the discussion of clientelistic relations, and the possibilities and frustrations of building trust, through three case studies. I compare one youth group in San Martín to the *gaita* school run by José Álvarez in Ovejas, and a *gaita* group led by Joche at the foundation *Fundasem* in Cartagena, made up of ex-combatants from both sides of the civil conflict.

Chapter 4

Trusting in the Next Generation

A Gaitero remembers becoming a gaitero to diffuse a fight

In conversation with Joche Álvarez in his father's back yard in 2015, he told me that he first became a member of his father's *gaita* "school," formed right there over thirty years before, to avoid a fight:

That day I'm at school, right, and I get into a scuffle with a classmate. He had a little gang of friends that were going to do me in. They were waiting for me at the school gate. So when they catch me. I say: "Buddy, no... My dad's got a *gaita* school. Lets go and get involved. It doesn't cost a thing... Don't worry... Let's learn... Let's form a group..." Well, because of that the kids didn't do anything to me. And that's when I started to be part of it. "*El viejo*" ["Old" José] got me playing the *llamador* drum. I got into music and I started learning, dedicating myself to it... I formed a group with the kids who were going to beat the crap out of me. From that point on we were good friends.

While I suspect this narrative is highly rose-tinted, the fact that Joche tells it this way speaks to his self-perception and his conceptualization of *gaita* as a musical practice. Through years of work as a music-instructor-cum-social-worker and semi-professional musician, he has come to see himself as vocationally dedicated to conflict transformation through music making. He believes in the power of making *gaita* music in particular to develop habits for peaceful coexistence between participants, and historicizes his father's informal *gaita* "school" in Ovejas as the source of these mutually reinforcing processes.

Chronicle of an exclusion foretold

"If he doesn't bring me the money by tomorrow, he's out of the group!" I was in San Martín soon after the 2015 *tambora* festival and Idelsa was talking about one of the young men in the youth

tambora group she directs, *Juventud Sanmartinense* (JSM). Federico, as I'll call him,¹ had apparently absconded to Bogotá with prize money the group had been awarded at the festival. "I knew he was bad!" continued Idelsa.

Her reaction worried me a little. The promotional material she wrote for the group boasts that they contribute to the reduction of violence and the promotion of peaceful coexistence in the troubled town of San Martín, as well as the broader river region of northern Colombia. One of the ways youth music groups like JSM are seen to be useful is in keeping young people out of gangs and armed groups active in the civil conflict by engaging them in musical activities. I had got to know Federico quite well over the years and, while I agreed his actions were unacceptable, he struck me as exactly the kind of young man who needed that kind of engagement.

A (re-)encounter with a reinsertado

Joche agreed to take me to meet a one-time member of his group at *Fundesocial*, the charitable foundation for *desvinculados* (ex-members of illicit armed groups). On the way to Simón's place in a dusty neighborhood near Cartagena's chaotic bus terminal Joche explained that he had already left the group by the time I had first visited the foundation. His process had been successful and he was now living as a *reinsertado* (ex-combatant "reinserted" into civilian life). I asked Joche what he knew about Simón's past:

He had a really tough childhood. I think he was a guerrilla fighter. It's funny how it was guerrilla fighters that displaced me from Ovejas, but I ended up helping out one of them. When Simón left Fundesocial he was still studying and he needed a place to stay. Well, he came to live with us. Simón became part of the family. He lived with us for a long time. Then when he moved out, it was to a house just around the corner. You'll know him when you see him.

I was confused by Joche's last comment. I did not recall a neighbor who had been part of the reintegration program of *Fundesocial*, but when we arrived at Simón's house I recognized

¹ I give pseudonyms to various people in this chapter.

him instantly. He was the owner of a small internet business where I would always go to check my emails and print paperwork whenever I was in Cartagena. It was less than a block away from Joché and Gina's place and I used to go there at their insistence. They had never told me at the time that Simón had been through *Fundesocial*. They had not felt comfortable revealing his past as a one-time illicit combatant in the armed conflict, identifying Simón to me as a *reinsertado* with all the stigma and distrust that label tends to bring. As we sat in the bare cinder-block front room of his house, I listened to Simón and Joché reminisce about making music together and catch up on the whereabouts of the many members of the group. Simón's three young children and the din of the neighborhood masked and occasionally interrupted our conversation.

*

The points raised in this chapter come partly in response to questions left unanswered by chapters 2 and 3: Musicians and cultural brokers involved with tambora and gaita have come to see much of what they do, especially their work with young people, as part of peacebuilding efforts. But what have the impacts of their work with young people actually been?² Specifically, what tendencies of trusting does membership catalyze? In this chapter I focus on the experiences of young people learning *gaita* and *tambora* music as a voluntary activity running alongside formal schooling. I intertwine narratives of three groups in order to compare and contrast the cases; the informal *gaita* "school" in Ovejas; the youth group JSM in San Martín; and the *gaita* and *bailes cantados* group of the foundation *Fundesocial* in Cartagena. I offer a brief history of the *gaita* "school" in Ovejas, arguing the activities helped promote a "parallel peace" for the young people involved through the mingling of loud local musical sounds, intense concentration and open-ended play. I consider how the youth group JSM was founded, but focus on the music

² A question akin to this was raised by an audience member after a presentation I gave at SEM in 2011 on which parts of chapter 2 are based.

making and dynamics of trust among its members from 2014-16, also developing y analysis of the tendencies of trusting most prevalent in San Martín. I contrast JSM with the work of Jochen Álvarez Jr. at the foundation *Fundesocial* in Cartagena, teaching *gaita*, and *bailes cantados* to young people who had demobilized from illicit armed groups on both sides of the conflict. That is to say one time left-wing insurgents *and* right-wing counter-insurgents.³

The theoretical core of the chapter is a consideration of how the application and formal interpretation of rules (for music making and broader behavior in the group) relate to musical experience for members of JSM, showing the impact of membership of the group with regard to local tendencies of trusting. I draw comparisons and contrasts with *Fundesocial* members, especially concerning the kind of relationship young people tend to develop with adult group leaders. I develop considerations of Anthony Giddens' view of trust as a phenomenon lying between faith and confidence, as well as Marshal Sahlins' concepts of forms of reciprocity. I also consider to what extent local forms of trusting can involve coercion, concluding by showing the difficulty of avoiding the replication of patron-client relations. I analyze musical interaction in JSM, showing how transitioning and stopping the groove relates to their values and broader discourses of tradition and art that characterize the festivalization of tambora (Keil 1987; Keil and Feld 1991; Monson 1996; Turino 2008).⁴ I show how tendencies of trusting on micro and

³ Unfortunately, I was unable to carry out extended fieldwork at *Fundesocial* to observe the interaction of such apparently disparate young people. The project was cancelled by the time I began full time fieldwork in 2014. The reasons are unclear. The director claims the government wanted greater control over rehabilitation schemes at a national level and so did away with many such outsourced projects. On other reports the cancellation was due to repeated incidents of fighting between young people, though it is not clear whether this was between one-time members of opposing groups. In my experience the young people generally got on well and now remember each other fondly, irrespective of previous affiliations. As illicit foot soldiers in the conflict they generally found they had a great deal in common. They were all poor youth with little option but to fight, and most of them were victims as well as perpetrators of violence.

⁴ In Contrast to Charles Keil (1987), I use "groove" not only to refer to the characteristic micro-participant discrepancies of a music, but also the more meso-characteristic gestalt formed by the interrelation of particular cyclic patterns. The sameness generated by how different musicians' contributions come together as well as the minute differences in how they come slightly apart. See Solis (2014).

macro scales are related to membership of groups like JSM. I argue that their musical activities are more than mere palliative distractions from violence (Ochoa Gautier 2003), but the group could do more to achieve their stated social goals, by encouraging modes of being that challenge symbolic violence (Araújo and Grupo Musicultura 2010). In parallel I consider how best to analyze these phenomena, with reference to the Peircean phenomenology championed by Thomas Turino (Turino 2014, 2008).

José's *gaita* "school" had long since closed by the time I first arrived in Ovejas, so I formed an incomplete history of the group by interviewing José himself, family members and other locals who had been involved in its running or as members. In Ovejas I also worked with Henry Ortíz who is employed by the festival committee to run a *gaita* school. In San Martín I carried out extensive ethnographic fieldwork. I worked with JSM and another *tambora* youth group founded by the then director of the *casa de la cultura* (cultural center) called *Herencia de mi Tierra* (Heritage of my Land). With these groups I took part in and recorded rehearsals, stage performances and participatory music making events such as Christmas parades. Intelocutor-lead applied aspects of my work here involved knowledge exchange, obtaining instruments, sharing research findings, co-writing songs and producing promotional videos and audio recordings for the groups. My access to *Fundesocial* in Cartagena was understandably limited given the delicate nature of its work. Also, by the time I began full-time fieldwork in 2014 the project had collapsed. My analysis is mostly based on interviews with Joche, the foundation's director Carmen and four young men who went through the program.

Forming Youth Groups, to what end?

The histories of many youth groups across Colombia are integrally linked to rise of festivals. The stories offered about how the *gaita* festival began in Ovejas display close parallels with those of San Martín. José Alvarez was part of a group of locals in Ovejas interested in music and other creative practices who established the town's yearly *gaita* festival in 1985. They felt that Ovejas' patron saint day was becoming too rowdy, dominated by bullfights, non-local recorded music blaring from bars, drinking and fights among celebrants. The locals formed a committee that proposed the creation of a festival to accompany the celebrations of St. Francis of Assisi. According to some accounts it could have been a festival of accordion music, but the slightly larger number of *gaiteros* in the region led the committee to decide on a *gaita* festival.

José took it upon himself to organize local adult *gaiteros* into groups to compete at the festival. He recalls travelling to the hamlets around Ovejas to pull together four or five men who could form a *gaita* ensemble: One *gaita hembra* player, one *gaita macho*, one *tambor alegre*, and one *llamador*, sometimes with an additional singer. At that time it was not normal to include the *tambora* drum in a *gaita* ensemble.⁵ It was a new experience for *gaiteros* to form groups: at *velaciones* they had always simply played with whoever turned up, alternating musical roles as required. José also organized the food for participants, asking local farmers to donate staples for communal meals.

⁵ It seems to have been included first during the 1950s and '60s when folklorist and choreographer Delia Zapata Olivella formed a folkloric dance troupe, *Conjunto Folklórico de Delia Zapata Olivella*. For accompaniment she and her brother Manuel contracted various musicians from northern Colombia including *gaiteros* from San Jacinto, and singer and *tambora* drum player Catalino Parra from Soplaviento. Parra remained part of the resultant musical group *Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto*, appearing on several recordings the group made in the 1960s and '70s. The new sound, with *tambora* drum, fed back into participatory and presentational *gaita* practices (Ochoa Escobar, Federico, 2013: 44), though it was resisted by some traditionalists like those in Ovejas. Another possible route of entry is through popular big-bands such as those of Lucho Bermúdez and Pacho Galán, whose repertoire included orchestrated "gaita" tunes and whose format often included timbales or *tambora* drum, or both.

As the festivals continued year after year, and some of the older *gaiteros* died, José saw the need to form a generation who would, as he puts it, "continue the tradition." As with Tambora *semilleros*, the focus was a new tradition of competing at festivals, rather than playing in participatory settings like *velaciones* or *parandas*. However, it was conceptualized as a continuation of the older tradition by most involved. José formed an informal "school" where he taught children the basics of *gaita* music and organized them into groups to compete in the annual festival by 1988.

This "school" at times comprised around fifty children, who would rehearse in the back yard of Joche's house under the palm-thatch of the open sided *quiosco* structure he built for the purpose. Unlike *tambora semilleros*, José's *gaita* school, like many of those that have followed, did not aim to produce a single large group, but rather various groups with the same small format typical of *gaita* performances, and concretized in the rules of the festival. This difference is in part because the chorus of tambora groups in participatory and presentational sections alike is potentially ever-expanding, but also because of the emphasis on dense, complex sonic interaction between musicians in a *gaita* ensemble, and a relative lack of emphasis on dance within *gaita* schools. Each group in José's school required a full set of instruments, and José took it upon himself to provide them. He also began organizing events for the children to perform at in the run up to the yearly festival, called *viernes de gaita* (*gaita* Fridays). With time he incorporated his own children into the running of the school as musicians, co-teachers and administrators. All activities were free for the young participants, and any funding required came out of José's own pocket, or whatever he could persuade the mayor to donate on an ad hoc basis.

This improvised "school" was where many young people from Ovejas were introduced to playing *gaita* music. José reeled off a list of ten or more men who started with him and are still

practicing gaita. Some of them now teach gaita in projects funded by local, regional or state government, or non-profit foundations. Many of the *gaiteros* I got to know in Ovejas recognized the importance of the school for generating interest among local youth. However, one drummer also stressed that the teaching received there was, in his case, minimal:

José's not really a *gaita hembra* player. He more or less plays a few tunes, but he mainly just played *macho*. Either way he's definitely not a drummer, so I had to learn through videos. At the "school" he just used to let us play. But he did organize us into groups and get us performing. I owe him a lot in that sense, and I always say so. I thank him personally and tell everyone that that's where I started, but for the actual playing... I was on my own (Anonymous P.C. 2015).

This hands-off style is similar to current practices in JSM insofar as José obliged children to develop much of their musical skill independently but contrasts with JSM insofar as he encouraged them to play more freely.

JSM was founded in 1999 at the initiative of a young *tambora* participant, Olga Cerpa, Martina Camargo's niece. As a young girl she performed with *Aires de San Martín*, but after the death of their leader Cayetano and Martina's decision to move to Cartagena, Olga had no group to perform with. Still a sixteen year old schoolgirl at the time, she convinced her parents (Idelsa Cerpa and Javier Camargo) to let her form her own group. She made leaflets for a *convocatoria* (call for participation) of children from both of the town's schools, and held auditions (P.C. 2014). The resultant participant-led youth group, *Juventud Sanmartinense*, was a novelty at festivals and proved very successful as a result. Olga maintained clear rules for group members including good academic performance at school, so that the extra curricular activity would not distract from members' education. If a fellow member was failing, she would tutor them (and, she confessed sometimes do their homework for them) in order that they would be allowed to continue in the group. Her teacher father approved of such measures.

When Olga moved away from San Martín to attend university, the group continued with her mother Idelsa as leader. Idelsa had supported the group throughout as seamstress, and

fundraiser, but had never been a participant in participatory or presentational *tambora*. Nonetheless she took on the leadership role with enthusiasm, learning as she directed. Idelsa's job as the regional coordinator of state childcare services increasingly takes her away from San Martin. She was also struggling with the poor health and eventual death of her elderly father in 2015 when I spent most time with JSM. This combination of factors made her largely an absentee director that year. She delegated organizational and rehearsal responsibilities to older members mainly the male drummers, calling occasional meetings to reassert her authority. As a result of the increasing violence in rural Colombia in the 1990s and 2000s, many groups like JSM have come to see themselves not only as guardians of local music traditions, but also a force for social good, keeping young people out of illicit groups and engaged in activities that contribute to peaceful coexistence. However, they have generally come to adopt these goals as secondary to their primary aim of maintaining local musical traditions. In this sense, JSM is typical, but the group at *Fundesocial* was not.

Carmen Díaz was the director of *Fundesocial* throughout the nine years it functioned in collaboration with the state to reintegrate *desvinculados* into civil society. The foundation was initially established simply to house *desvinculados* and assist them in accessing education and training. However, over time it developed a diverse program of activities for the young *desvinculados*. Carmen explained:

We had them studying. That was the first step. And it was going OK, but we realized they had lots of free time and they were getting boisterous when they didn't have anything to do. We tried anything and everything we could. Lots of sports.⁶ The music came about because I knew old José. I wanted him to give workshops. He wasn't available, but he told me his son [Joche] could do *gaita* and drumming with them. The drumming is great because it allows the young men especially to get all their rage out. There's something about the physicality of it that helps them de-stress. Remember these are kids who have spent large chunks of their life fighting and in

⁶ Carmen said that Ultimate Frisbee in particular had been successful. Future research would benefit from a comparative study of the impact of different sporting and musical activities. I hope to be part of this as a member of a network of scholars collaborating on the project *Fostering Social Cohesion in Cities through Culture*, headed by Dr Julian Céspedes (ICESI University, Colombia) and Professor Nicola Dibben (University of Sheffield, UK).

terrible conditions. Lots of them also came from abusive homes before that. Now they're studying and that's new for them, it's stressful. The music Joche does with them helps them get all of that out of their system. Also, it's our heritage, you know? It's from the coast, it's part of our ancestral make-up, so it's connecting them with that too. (P.C. 2015)

So *gaita* and *bailes cantados* were introduced to the young *desvinculados* because Carmen had happened to work with José Álvarez at artisan events and believed the physicality and local significance of the music might have a positive influence on the young people she supervised. When his son Joche came to work at the foundation in José's place, he largely adopted his father's teaching style of forming various *gaita* format groups capable of performing at "cultural events" including festivals.

Playing a Parallel Peace by Sounding Seclusion

As guerrilla insurgency increased in Ovejas in the 1980s and 1990s, José Álvarez's family became a target of extortion, threats and killings (see chapter 3). Because of the risk of venturing outside the urban center of Ovejas, José largely gave up his work as an itinerant photographer, limiting himself to jobs with people he knew well in the town. Simultaneously he took up making instruments to sell, and dedicated himself to teaching local music making practices as an unpaid vocation. Despite the increasing armed violence in the countryside surrounding the urban hub of Ovejas, José continued to provide a space for young people to learn to play *gaita*.

The *gaita* school continued, though. Sometimes you could hear the *enfrentamientos* (confrontations between the guerrillas and state military) from here. The helicopter would come, dropping bombs nearby. Just there on the hill. Sometimes we'd go out into the street and watch. Once they killed a soldier near here. People went out to see it, but I told the kids: "We're not interested in that. We'll stay here practicing." (P.C. 2015)

The informal "school" in José's back yard became a space where children from the town could be sonically sheltered from the noise of war and distracted from the gruesome results of violence. José's daughter Tereza, who became a *llamador* player and informal secretary to the school,

remembers watching her fellow members play while army helicopters flew overhead and bombs and bullets sounded in the hills around the town: "They were so focused on the music, and making so much noise, that they didn't even notice. We sometimes had to wait till it was all over, before we delivered them home safely" (P.C. 2015).

In *Listening to War*, J. Martin Daughtry analyses the sounds of conflict as "the belliphonic," situating musical sound within and against it (Daughtry 2015). With José's gaita school in Ovejas we have a case of the loud sounds and engaging activities of gaita providing a sonic and phenomenological counter to the noise and schadenfreude of war, sufficient at times to distract young people from the violence around them. Combining this insight with that of Rodriguez (2011), I suggest the "parallel peace" José and his helpers tried to create in Ovejas was in part a sonic space in which young people were impervious to the belliphony that penetrated the town during the extended insurgency in the surrounding hills.⁷ Importantly, the gaita music making they engaged in was able to trump the sounds of armed conflict by being louder, at close proximity, than the distant guns. Here the hierarchy of volume mentioned in my account of Christmas in San Martín (Chapter 1) worked in favor of the young musicians. Their focal engagement with the activity of making music also helped to combat the belliphony. Not noticing the gunshot and shelling required both "making so much noise" and being "so focused on the music." The young musicians were beginning to experience the intense concentration that is partially constituent of the flow states Joche now describes as *el viaje*, temporarily feeling "transported" elsewhere (Chapter 3). I suggest these two features of the music making in in the

⁷ In contrast, the insurgency in San Martín involved brief occupation of the town, with loud bombs planted at strategic points within it. People remember the loud "boom" of the explosion that destroyed the bank, as they heard it from the floors of their houses. However, there were not extended confrontations with insurgents around the town as in Ovejas (see chapters 2 and 3). As such, musical activities were not, to my knowledge, used directly to block out the sounds of conflict.

"school" were central to young members' formation of trusting relationships, some of which perdure to this day as close friendships.

Playing a Parallel Peace *by the Rules*

When I asked members of JSM about who they trusted most to play music with, and for broader social tasks, I received rather mixed responses about Federico, the young man threatened with exclusion from the group. The reflections of Tori, who plays the *tambora* drum, showed the greatest ambivalence:

[The drummers] I trust [are] Federico and Diego, because they do the endings well... There's one I don't really feel confident with. He starts embellishing and embellishing, and he gets lost. He normally gets back into the groove, but sometimes he gets so lost he doesn't do the endings well. With [trustworthy drummers] I remind them before a song "Mate, watch out for the end" and they're like "Yeah, on the third one." They know already.

and later in the same interview:

No, I won't trust that kid [Federico] again. I'm not gonna give him anything ever again! Because if I did people would start to distrust me...
(P.C. November 2015)

I had watched JSM perform many times over the years of visiting the town of San Martín, and in recent months I had worked more closely with its members, even competing with them in the 2015 festival in San Martín.⁸ However, asking them directly about their tendencies of trust helped me realize the significance of endings, attention and rules (both for music making and broader behavior) for the young musicians in their tendencies of trust for musical tasks. Furthermore, it reinforced my observations that their tendencies of trusting for broader social tasks were intimately connected to their musical interaction.

⁸ We came second in the category of *canción inédita* (best new song) with a composition of mine, developed with JSM, *La culebra bruja* (The Witch Snake). The lyrics of the song recount the experiences of Álvaro Camargo as a youth cutting palm fronds on his family *finca*, when he happened upon a huge snake that then mysteriously disappeared, leaving him wondering whether it was really a (malignant) magical being. It has since been recorded by Martina Camargo as track 7 on *Paisajes en Tambora* (Camargo 2017).

In the music they make, JSM members maintain elements of the groove central to participatory forms of *tambora*, as can be appreciated in video 8.⁹ However, they are also influenced by the pressures of festival performances in which winning groups must be highly coordinated and end songs within strict time limits.¹⁰ Musicians have developed strategies to succeed in this context and now value tight, two-minute songs. They depend on each other to make transitions and endings go smoothly.



Figure 45: A youth group performs on stage as part of the 2014 festival.

⁹ Video 8: <https://youtu.be/tOKgOj3EW6s>. I made this video for JSM at the suggestion of Federico and the request of Idelsa.

¹⁰ These time limits have been imposed gradually over the years as the unplanned result of prioritizing the competitive aspects of the festival, with an increased numbers of groups, a diverse range of categories, as well as the comfort of the judges over that of the performers (see Carbó 2003b for more on the history of categories). In 2008 emcees made dramatic scissor signals at cantadores to make them to stop, but many groups resisted, lengthening songs as much as they could. Now most groups have internalized the expectation of short songs and do not need to be cut off. The change struck me as analogous to the effect of 45rpm records and the burgeoning pop market on 1950s and '60s soul and rhythm 'n' blues. I heard festival tambora songs as akin to the 2:30 pop hits of 1960s Stax and Motown.



Figure 46: (Right) judges sat at their table directly in front of the stage observe and qualify the performing group (out of shot, right). Competitors and public mingle to watch and record the performance, 2014.

Most presentational songs end with a short double-time section known as *la bozá* (also known by JSM members as the *abozá*, *goza*, or *goce*). This is an adaptation of the section common in participatory *Tambora* (Carbó 2003a, 2003b) (see chapter 1). Importantly, and in contrast to the reinvigorating function of the *bozá* in participatory settings, for musicians who regularly compete in festivals it has come to signify the end of a song. When the singer has no more verses to sing or feels the group's time is up she triggers the transition, most often by singing the first half of the chorus. On hearing this, the chorus singers respond with the remainder, thereby halving their cycle of interaction. The effect is to split the song's chorus

between the lead singer and chorus singers and repeat it without intermittent verses.¹¹ If the song was in the rhythmic feel of *tambora*, drummers also change to a double-time feel sonically identical to the groove for *berroche*, and dancers shorten their expansive three-step pattern to the two-step shuffle of *berroche*. After a short exploration of this new groove, all the musicians stop, bringing the song to an end.

Tori explained further how JSM's members are taught to stop:

When [the lead singer] starts to *gozar* (transition to the *bozá*) ... and when she's on the third one, heads up! Trustworthy drummers know that's where the ending is. Whenever I get up on stage I'm always watching out for the ending. (P.C. November 2015)

This clear rule of three cycles is typical of the way JSM's non-participant adult director, Idelsa Cerpa, instructs young members. Below I argue that her modus operandi of imposing strict and somewhat arbitrary rules for making *tambora music* (typical among adult directors of groups like JSM) has helped generate trust among members, but also limits the potential benefits of membership. Though well intentioned, as the group's main source of authority and funding, Idelsa's relationship with young members tends to resemble patron-client relations, with their complex dynamics of affection, power and the rather arbitrary imposition of a single mode of interaction.

Getting Deeper into Trusting in San Martín

A central task of this dissertation is to present an ethnographic account of local forms of trusting in my field sites. In this section I deepen my consideration of the theme by considering my relationships with two main interlocutors in San Martín, and using those experiences to make broader generalizations in relation to sociological and anthropological literature on trust. In the

¹¹ Some *bozás* introduce new material not contained in the chorus, but the double-time interaction is standard.

next section I consider the effects on tendencies of trusting of being a member of a youth music group like JSM.

In a seminal work on modernity, sociologist Anthony Giddens draws useful distinctions between trust and related phenomena of faith, confidence and knowledge (Giddens 1990). He posits a spectrum at the extremes of which are completely blind faith and highly informed confidence, with trust between, or somehow linking, the two (Ibid 29:34). Most of my interlocutors' tendencies of trusting lie closer to faith in others based on essentializations, rather than confidence based on information about their previous behavior. There is pervasive distrust towards most outsiders and many locals. People tend to trust a small radius of individuals, rather than broad networks or systems. In part this is understandable and sensible, because many systems display endemic failure, often related to ludicrous levels of corruption. In San Martín, for example, water is unpredictably pumped to some houses on some days. When it goes off people tend to assume malicious intent of service providers as opposed to a systemic failure or lack of capacity: "Why do they have to turn the water off every day? They like to watch us suffer!" Systems of Education, health and justice fare little better. Many of the young men in JSM and their peers outside the group feel they have been let down by the education system. One drummer put it neatly: "I only studied until ninth grade. Since I started working I gave all that up, because I see people who study and they just end up stuck here with nothing more than a motorcycle taxi, or a machete [to work the land]." Residents often find that particularist interaction with individuals working within a given system is the only way to get things done. Maintaining good relationships with these "nodes" of the system is vital.

The ubiquity of patron-client relations at every level of Colombian society (Rodríguez 2011: 13, 99, 157), especially in places like San Martín where the state and other institutions are

weak, is one of the reasons many people there see trust as compatible with coercion. Beyond immediate family, they tend to place most trust in either their patrons who exert some control over them, but are also bound by expectations of care, or those they feel they can themselves control. Many scholars suggest trusting is a logical impossibility in situations where the would-be trustee's behavior is determined, especially when the would-be truster is in control. Political scientist Russell Hardin offers an extreme example where it seems illogical to talk of trust, especially from a western, liberal standpoint: "I am confident that you will do what I want only because a gun is pointed at your head" (Hardin 2001:4). However, no human coercion can ever be completely deterministic, and all human relationships involve some power dynamics.

Emic analyses of culturally different concepts of trust show that some social groups are willing to include high degrees of coercion and threats of violence within acts or relationships they count as trusting (Ianni 1974; Ensminger 2001). In Frances Ianni's contentious popular-anthropological work documenting the shifting demographics of organized crime in New York (1974), Mafia bosses stressed their need to be able to trust the people who work for them. However, this trust is tangled up with extreme power-relations and coercion including real violence. Italian American mafia leaders tended not to trust African American gang members, because they felt they could not coerce them sufficiently through threats of punishment (Bacharach and Gambetta 2001: 154), the implication being that non-African-Americans were (all else being equal) more trustworthy to mafia bosses because they were more susceptible to threats and violence. In another case, anthropologist Jean Ensminger shows how Orma cattle owners in North East Kenya trust their sons-in-law with important cattle supervision because kinship norms afford father-in-laws certain powers of coercion (Ensminger 2001). In this

context: "one trusts those whom one can control, and one controls those who have the greatest interest in doing what you wish them to do" (Ensminger 2001: 193).

Many people in San Martín similarly see no contradiction between coercion and trust. One young musician from *Herencia de mi Tierra* showed this starkly when reflecting on my attendance of the group's rehearsals. He said: "You can be trusted, because you always do what you're told and come to rehearse when we tell you to." I wasn't trustworthy in his eyes because I had good intentions of helping out the group whenever I could, but rather because I followed orders.

As I got to know people in San Martín better I came to see a spectrum of attitudes towards trusting relationships from a valorization of the virtuous to a cult of the cunning, which I believe is pervasive across much of Colombia, and correlates with a universalizing model proposed by Marshal Sahlins to understand reciprocity (Sahlins 1972). According to Sahlins' model there are three broad kinds of reciprocal relationships along a continuum (Ensminger 2001). In the middle, "balanced reciprocity" involves one party freely giving aid, but doing so with the expectation of timely equivalent reciprocity by the other, sometimes keeping close score. Sahlins and Ensminger suggest friendships typically exhibit such reciprocity, though this is not my experience, nor that of most of my interlocutors and friends in Colombia. At one end of the spectrum, which Sahlins says is typified by parental love, "generalized reciprocity" can involve the prolonged one-way flow of aid, and is notable for the fact that no careful count is kept of reciprocation. At the other end, "negative reciprocity" involves interaction in which "the goal is to get something for nothing and reciprocate as little as possible" (Ibid: 188). I came to understand these different tendencies of interaction most clearly as I became close friends with

Álvaro Camargo, as his trust in me grew and shifted, and he explained at length his attitudes towards trust and friendship.

Álvaro believes that some people are out to get what they can, others are good acquaintances that can be relied upon for certain tasks, but genuine friendship is "disinterested," which is to say free of all ulterior motives of personal gain: "There are people you have a good relationship with, but friendship is another level. When you're a real friend, it's disinterested" (P.C. 2015). Friendships are developed through spirals of affect, shared experiences, mutual aid and reflection. These spirals can shift a relationship from balanced reciprocity towards generalized reciprocity, where neither party is keeping a close score of who has helped whom for what. So it was with our friendship as Álvaro gave me the key to his house to stay whenever I like "Turn up whenever you like. Come without warning us so you can see we treat people the same whether we're prepared or not." He frequently repeated that I should enter *con confianza* (with confidence in our relationship/ confident that you will not offend me by doing so). He also insisted I stop buying food for the family to "pay my way", not think about reciprocity, or delay it until moments of genuine need, such as helping to find books that his son needed for university, without considering one "payment" for the other. So while Sahlins and Ensminger suggests friendships tend to exhibit balanced reciprocity (Ensminger 2001:188), in Álvaro's view such "score keeping" would show the absence of genuine friendship, which is built more on *generalized reciprocity*, helping the other out of love or simply because one desires them to have a good life, and a refusal to "keep score."

Like many people with his outlook, Álvaro maintains a small circle of "disinterested" friends and a loose network of acquaintances with whom he engages in more balanced reciprocity, and avoids those people he suspects of negative reciprocity: "What good to me is a

ratón?" *Ratón* literally means mouse, but here refers to a thief, trickster, or untrustworthy person. These "*ratones*" typically interact through negative reciprocity. Álvaro and others use a cluster of terms to refer to people who mainly engage in negative reciprocity: *malo* (bad), *mañoso* (bad habited/ crafty/ trickster), *pícaro* (crafty/rascal), *bandido* (bandit), *ratero* (petty thief, lowlife, or chancer, from a term for a low-flying bird of prey), *perverso* (perverse/ perverted), and sometimes *muy avisado* and *muy vivo* (very sharp/ smart/ sly, from "wasp" and "alive" respectively). These last two terms are sometimes used to refer to people with "good" levels of cunning, but qualifying them with "*muy*" or "*demasiado*" gives them negative connotations of being *too* smart or sharp. Some people in San Martín see Álvaro as strange because he typically avoids self-serving actions and the securing of patrons: "People look at me funny because I think differently. I'm not always looking for a patron to look after me, but rather independence and a better future for my children."

I came to understand and adopt Álvaro's approach to trusting others, seeing increasingly clearly how it aligned closely with the tendencies John Aguilar notes among Indigenous peasants in a Mexican village (1984). Aguilar shows how his interlocutors used altercating strategies to make some acts and relationships of trusting rational against a backdrop of pervasive distrust. He usefully points to nine "mechanisms" of generating trust, all of which were also in play in my field: kinship (both biological and social); *compadrazgo* (co-parenting); close male friendship; gossiping; gift giving; inviting others to *fiestas*; unsolicited aid; self disclosure; and greeting others in public. I was especially aware of how the latter often worked in San Martín (see introduction). Walking past a group of people sitting outside their home one typically chants "Adiós-o-os" and waits for the rhythmically unified response of "Adiós-o-os" from the seated "chorus." The iconicity with the responsorial singing of *tambora* was palpable and it can

generate a similar, if brief, feeling of elation and reassurance in one's place within a social group.

Álvaro commented: "I really do feel content when I greet a group of people and they give me a strong greeting back. Greetings are important, Ian." I came to see staged *tambora* as a surrogate for salutation, which was made difficult or impossible during times of occupation and control by guerrillas or paramilitaries, as stated by Martina in the introduction.

As Álvaro was no longer deeply involved in *tambora* I had to look for other interlocutors to advance the musical lines of my research. Federico initially seemed like a good candidate for three reasons: He is a great drummer with some progressive ideas about how to maintain traditions: "Dance competitions at festivals should be genuinely improvised, and women should pick their partners just like in street *Tambora*." He cultivates a love of play: dominos, pool, music making and joking. He also displayed a desire to exchange knowledge and engage in mutual learning. I initially warmed to him very quickly. However, as I spent more time with him Álvaro and other friends warned me to be careful. They suggested he was only befriending me because he wanted to trick me, that he was sly. Some people simply essentialized him as "bad" a "ratero," that he wasn't originally from San Martín, so he must be untrustworthy. Other people had anecdotes that suggested he favored negative reciprocity. However, I wanted to give him the benefit of the doubt, partly because I needed him for my research.

Three events showed me that his predominant tendencies of interaction tended towards the negative end of Sahlins' spectrum of reciprocity, that trusting him as a central interlocutor could jeopardize my research, and that groups like JSM have a great deal of work left to do. First, he invited me to a patron saint celebration in town just downriver. He convinced me to go with him by saying a drummer friend would also come and we might play *tambora*. Álvaro cautioned me about Federico and the town we were heading to, but I promised to be extra

cautious and left. We drank beer and waited by the port for the drummer friend for hours, but he never turned up. Instead we were joined by another young man who was running as a candidate for a local council position and had promised Federico a job at the cultural center if he got in. Splitting the bill between us, we hired the services of a less-than-sober boatman to transport us there and back. I began to smell a rat when we arrived at the town and Federico and the boatman began to argue. The latter did not want to leave his boat unattended: "Who's going to *celarlo* (be jealous of it, keep an eye on it for me)?" Eventually he took the gasoline tank with him and slunk off to the nearest cantina, while we headed towards the lights and loud music.

The celebration was typical of what I had seen elsewhere: a stage with a painfully loud PA playing commercial recorded *vallenato* (accordion-based commercial music produced and consumed mainly in *La Costa*, see chapter 1); the occasional *vallenato* band, and one *champeta* singer performing over a backing track; audience members sat where they could on plastic chairs put out for them by beer sellers (no beer, no sitting); onlookers standing and weaving through the throng; set back from the stage the ubiquitous rifle-shooting game and fried food stands lit by bare bulbs swarming with bugs. I was quickly bored and did not even get into the beer my companions were fast getting through, large bottles of watery *Águila Light* poured into plastic cups, the empty bottles kept on the sandy ground by our feet for counting later.

When it came time to leave, the politician friend was nowhere to be seen and Federico explained he only had a couple of thousand pesos left. I had to foot the bill. Federico would make sure the candidate paid me back tomorrow. When we got back to where we had left the boatman, he was gone; gasoline, boat and all. I started to worry. After a brief argument we managed to haggle a motorcycle taxi driver down to what little was left in our pockets and set off in the direction of San Martín, three grown men on a motorbike, bottoming out over the dips and

bumps in the road. We were still left with the task of crossing the river, however, and the *embalse* (canoe ferry) would not cross until the morning. Federico managed to persuade the ferryman to let us snooze in his hut. Tired, annoyed and anxious about our safety, I sat in silence, eyes open, until the dawn. Neither Federico nor the candidate mentioned the money again. I didn't mind on an economic level, after all, the funding for my research allowed some room for entertaining others and enjoying musical events as part of the local experience, and my travel companions currently had no steady employment. However I came to suspect that it had been a set up from the start. I, the moneyed gringo, was their ticket to a cheep night out. Federico was out to enjoy himself as much as possible and extract as much beer out of me as he could while reciprocating as little as possible.

The second event was a night soon after Christmas. I was with my wife and a couple of young researchers from Bogotá who were staying in San Martín for *la novena*. It was their last night and they were hoping for some participatory *Tambora*. However, Federico was drinking in a cantina and wanted us to join him. We went in for a look: It was nearly empty and the atmosphere was heavy. Federico introduced us to a fat, pale-skinned man who forcefully offered *aguardiente* and bad vibes. My wife and I exchanged loaded looks and left, thanking the fat man profusely. Federico followed us outside. "E-e-e-enter!" he insisted. He had clearly been drinking for a while and was intent on continuing: "Come here! You see there are people with money and people without. I want you to meet this guy because you said you wanted to learn how to drive a motorboat." I *had* mentioned that to him, but now seemed neither the time nor the place. "If you're ever in *El Banco* (the nearest city) and you need money... it's useful to know this guy... e-e-e-enter! Let's have a beer. Rela-a-a-ax!" I did anything but. I remembered that Álvaro's would-be assassin worked on the motorboats and may have had connections to paramilitary groups. The

fat pale man with money to burn could be anyone, but all the signs of *paraco* (paramilitary) were there, perhaps he was even connected to the attempted murder of Álvaro. More furtive looks with my wife. I gave an excuse about holding out hopes for some *Tambora* and when Federico went in for another shot of *aguardiente* we left.

The third time was the anecdote with which I began this chapter. It was soon after the *Tambora* festival and people were tired. Idelsa was looking for Federico. She claimed he had the prize money from one of the categories JSM had won. "If he doesn't give it to me I'll kick him out of the group!" she threatened "His problem is he's..." she made a pick-pocketing gesture without saying the word. I found Federico at his home (Idelsa had obviously not looked very hard), putting a new skin on a drum and discarding the one emblazoned with the *Juventud Sanmartinense* logo that marked it as Idelsa's property. I thought little of it at the time, but he seemed to be rushing the job. It was his birthday soon and he couldn't decide whether to stay and celebrate or take up a friend on the offer of some drumming work in Bogotá. We discussed the festival and I mentioned Idelsa's concern about the money. He claimed he had given half to her already and the other half to the drummer who had come to rejoin JSM for the festival from Bogotá, where he now lives. On the subject of money, Federico asked to borrow some. I refused without carefully considering the situation. It felt uncomfortable, but I was unsure why. The next day it became clear that Federico had left for the capital with all the prize money and Idelsa's drum: "That's it! He's out of the group!" I thought back to the lie about the prize money, the request for a loan, the hasty change of drum skin. I had been right not to trust Federico with a loan, but I wished I had done more to process the signs of his flight more consciously and intervene in some way.

When they feel let down by another, people in San Martín generally prefer to cut all ties, and declare so publicly like Idelsa did. However, small town life often necessitates reinstating contact and negotiating ongoing relationships. I am not sure what happened when Federico eventually went back to San Martín. Would she give him the chance to change? Might she simply forget the event in order to secure a strong drummer? Trusting in San Martín often combines a rhetoric of absolutes with a reality of accommodation and improvisation, as people struggle to rat out *rateros*, find genuine friends or good acquaintances, secure patrons, coerce clients, outsmart the naïve, or combine various tendencies and strategies while managing the resultant cognitive dissonance with loud assertions of their principles or the correctness of their actions at various points along Sahlin's spectrum of reciprocity: "Real friendship is..." "What good to me is a *ratón*?" "There are people with money and people without." "That's it, he's out of the group!" In the following sections I argue that membership of a group like JSM can bring some benefits in developing more nuanced and successful tendencies of trusting. It clearly does not convert all members into trustworthy trustees and successful trusters and some of its festival-related activities provide people like Federico to maintain negative reciprocity. However, expelling such people cannot be the answer as extended membership can help build more positive tendencies of reciprocity and trusting.

Trusting in JSM: Learning and Doing

Given the weak tendencies of trust and powerful practices of distrust in San Martín, what can a voluntary group like *Juventud Sanmartinense* do to build trust among its members and their broader social groups? I argue that JSM and groups like it are indeed helping young people build trust within and beyond these tendencies through intensely musical skills and broader social

skills, which I consider first. The social psychologists Alan Fine and Lori Holyfield show how the activities of voluntary groups can eventually become of background concern for members whose focus shifts to the genuine friendships formed with other members over time (Fine and Holyfield 1996).¹² JSM is similar insofar as the group comes to serve as an arena in which members may initially be focused on musical tasks, but are increasingly offered the opportunity to try out trusting others with a broader range of tasks, build relationships of trust, and develop more discerning tendencies of trusting.



Figure 47: JSM in one of many matching stage outfits during the recording of the promotional video we made together, December 2015.

¹² They studied a mushroom collecting society in 1990s Minnesota, where members cook, eat and share fungi they themselves have identified and collected. Their ethnographic analysis shows how the object of new members' trust shifts from the system of the society to individual members over time as their own expertise and knowledge of other members grow. JSM is far less systematic than the mycological societies of Minnesota and people in San Martín are predisposed to distrust systems, so the process for new members is less predictable. Nonetheless a similar pattern of developing individual friendships and greater capacity for successful trusting in people occurs.

Young people who join JSM as complete novices are thrown into a situation where they rely on more advanced members to teach them and guide their performances. Group leader Idelsa is not herself a performer and does very little modeling. She "corrects" new and experienced members alike forcefully, laying down rules for how to perform, behave on stage, and even what members should be aiming for in life. The former include vague instructions such as "Give it the *feel* of tambora!"¹³ Such commands do not help learners unless they have already generated a sense of what tambora's *feel* includes, but may be useful reminders to stick within the sonic style and boundaries of the festival. Rules for stage performance tend to foreground visual presentation. In 2014, while coming off the stage after a round of competition, lead singer Maye realized she had been wearing shoes during the performance: "If Idelsa caught me singing like this, she'd kill me!" she exclaimed, "*tambora* is performed in bare feet!"

Idelsa's broader expectations for the young people in her group are largely based in the experiences of her own children, now both adults with young families. She encourages JSM members to respect each other and value education, urging them work hard at school so they can go away to university. Ideally, she would like them to come back to San Martín to benefit the town. Idelsa also tends to reinforce conservative local norms of gender and sexuality. She is especially keen to warn girls of the dangers of over familiarity: "Here, with members of the group it's alright to sit on *his* lap, or joke around with *him*, but with people who don't know you so well... lots of people think that just because you dance, or you're into music, you're easy, and they'll take advantage of you." She tended not to warn young men in the same way, a firm

¹³ This was Idelsa's only instruction to me as lead singer when rehearsing a new song with JSM for the 2015 festival.

believer in the common half-joke that: "Men are entitled to one woman for every day of the week, and a *marica*!"¹⁴

Most members report a significant rise in self-confidence as they realize they can achieve the relatively simple tasks of singing choruses or playing the *guache* shaker, especially when they receive positive feedback from audiences. This is significant because self-confidence is, according to many psychological accounts, a fundamental building block of trust in others (Erikson 1963). As their experience increases, some members are trusted with more demanding musical roles such as singing lead parts and playing drums, which involve more complex interdependence (see chapter 1).

Young people in JSM also trust each other with less directly musical tasks, such as being responsible for instruments, getting the group together for rehearsals, and looking out for each other on journeys to festivals or events out of town. All instruments belong to Idelsa, but she trusts drummers to take drums home, look after them and bring them to rehearsals and performances. This is important during Christmas and other celebrations as young drummers are able to earn cash for performing if they have access to instruments. Members also lend each other clothes, phones, motorbikes, money as they get to know each other better. Trips away for festivals or performances usually require members to share sleeping quarters and take care of each other's possessions and wellbeing.

One of the most socially empowering aspects of members' development is that they are given the opportunity to expand the radius of people they trust. Because San Martín is a small

¹⁴ "Marica" is commonly used as an insult for men who are identified as homosexual through attraction to other men, engaging in gay sex, and behavior considered "effeminate." It is relatively common for some men to engage in homosexual sex acts while identifying as heterosexual. As long as they are the "active," penetrating sexual partner they are generally not considered "*maricas*" (Streicker 1993, 1995). The term "*marica*" has been adopted as non-pejorative to some degree by men self-identifying as gay. It is also used by young people in some parts of Colombia to address friends, a little like "mate" in British English. However, in this case it carries homophobic connotations of reducing gay men to the playthings of serially unfaithful heterosexual men.

town, most new members have at least one family member, schoolmate or neighbor already in the group, whom they already know and trust to some degree. However, all members I interviewed reported that they had made new acquaintances in JSM and many had surprised themselves as they came to trust other members much more with time. Their radius of trustees grows not only within the group, but also among the emergent network of tambora groups and folk musicians developed through festivals across the river region and beyond, within the ever expanding *tambora* cohort. Once identified as musicians they are often contracted for processions and "cultural" events such as school performances and town celebrations, entering into trusting relationships with organizers and the publics at the events. Invitations to play at such events show the musicians are trusted by others outside the group, but they also provide members with opportunities to trust others in novel situations. They trust event organizers to uphold agreements and pay them or otherwise recognize their time, and get them home safely if the event involves traveling. One musician typically organizes the others for the exhausting early morning parades that begin before dawn. He trusts others to show up and provide a successful event for the paying community members.

Expanding radii of trust are particularly notable among JSM members who travel more outside the river region. One member commented that he had been offered construction jobs in the city of Bucaramanga on the basis of friendships developed in the *tambora* cohort. On occasions, then, the interactions of *tambora* cohort members help to combat what sociologist Sandra Susan Smith calls "defensive individualism" (Smith 2010). Smith shows how unemployment among African Americans in the USA is perpetuated in part by socially imposed motives of self-preservation. Many African Americans' working conditions are precarious and they run the risk of being fired themselves if someone they recommend for another job at the

same company later fails. Many have internalized the desire to minimize the possibility of personal harm that can come with the failure of other employees with whom they are associated. The result is that even friends and family members typically refuse to recommend each other for jobs for the fear that they themselves will lose theirs. Similar habits of distrust and disassociation are present to some degree in *La Costa*. They are mitigated to some extent by membership of a group like JSM and the *tambora* cohort. However, there is no indication that these benefits are widespread or systematic. In the *tambora* cohort, strong rivalries and suspicion are not as prevalent as in the *gaita* cohort, but neither has it become a mutual aid association.

The few members of JSM who have travelled abroad reported a marked rise in their generalized trust of others (Putnam 1993, Smith 2010). Lead singer Maye was selected to be part of a departmental youth group to perform in folk festivals in Taiwan. She was amazed by the speed at which her previous anxieties and prejudices evaporated as she developed generalized trust in the strangers and foreigners around her: "Those Chinese were so respectful! I got on with everyone really well. I was so surprised to have made friends there!" (P.C 2015).



Figure 48: Some members of JSM with other celebrants (including the author) accompany a parade float during novena Christmas celebrations, 2015. Photo by Joaquín Salcedo.

Over time a member of JSM tends to form thick relationships of trust with specific individuals in the group (Fine and Holyfield 1996), repeatedly trusting them with a wide range of important tasks (Hardin 2001: 12-16), thereby gaining more information about how they are likely to behave in future. This is especially true of boys and young men who tend to spend more time in the group playing drums together. Some have been members for years and have become drinking buddies and confidents. The girls in JSM tended to have close friends outside of the group, and counted fewer fellow members as confidents. However, the radius of close friendships formed through *tambora* tends not to be as tight as those of *gaiteros* whose musical groups are smaller and for whom competition is more intense, with higher stakes of economic reward and pride.

Importantly, no current or past members of JSM have become involved in illicit armed groups. While this correlation obviously does not show that involvement in semilleros prevents young people from enlisting in illicit armed groups, I believe there is reason to believe membership has some impact. Recruitment of young people for paramilitary groups occurred in San Martín in recent years. Some JSM members, as well as several of their peers outside the group, explained that many young men their age were recruited. Diego, a JSM drummer, even considered joining himself:

Lots of people were killed at that time. Friends, neighbors... in the stuff with the police, the guerrilla groups... There were lots of kids who fell in that war. The *Aguilas Negras* (the "Black Eagles" neo-paramilitaries) were around here, looking for young kids. One day, one of them offered me a million and a half a month for me to get involved in that stuff.¹⁵ I was going to join (P.C. 2015).

He changed, his mind, in part because he realized the increased risk of being involved, in part because he saw better options elsewhere, and in part out of concern for his mother.

When one of the leaders was killed, loads of kids got out of it. Me too. I tried to join the [state] army but they wouldn't have me. [I decided not to become a paramilitary] for my mom. If you get killed [as a paramilitary] you're just left for dead. But if you're a [state] soldier and you're killed, the state carries on making payments to your mom.

The way Diego flattened differences between armed groups was typical of one attitude he bears towards violence and death in general. Soon after this comment, apropos of nothing, he shifted the topic to deaths resulting from motorcycle accidents. For Diego and many like him, being killed in a road accident is on a level plane with being killed in armed conflict, regardless of what side one is on. Furthermore, from his point of view, motivations for active involvement in the conflict on one side or another are typically purely financial: "People go for money. Like everyone says '*por la plata baila el perro*' (you can make even a dog dance for cash)."¹⁶ Diego

¹⁵ Approximately \$500 USD.

¹⁶ This phrase is the title and refrain of a song by Los Duranes in the genre of *Carranga*, a string-band music associated with Colombia's rural interior. The phrase is a variation of "*por la plata baila el mono*" (the monkey

insisted that many young people in his region would "do whatever it takes" to get the money they need to survive.

However, Diego also revealed a reason for avoiding involvement in violence: "Say a friend of a friend offers you cash to kill someone. If you don't have some sort of dignity you'll do that shit for the money. Some people do it for the money." His decision not to get involved with the paramilitaries suggests that he does have "some sort of dignity." With "dignity" here, I believe Diego captures something of the increased self-confidence and trust in others that I describe above. There is no way to know if his involvement in JSM has been a direct contributory factor in his avoidance of direct involvement in Colombia's civil conflict. However he clearly associates dignity with the will to reject the money that murder could bring. Dignity is something he and other JSM members experience powerfully in the group, through its validation of their musical skills, and friendships with other members whom they generally respect and take care of. These factors combined are a central motivation for his commitment to remaining an active member of JSM: "This group's cool. I'll never leave."

Two male JSM members denied any knowledge that paramilitary groups had recruited members in San Martín. Both were old enough to have been aware of the paramilitary presence, and one of them was Federico, whose close connections to "people with money" like the fat, pale drinker, makes me suspect he may have lied to me on this topic. However these two members were perhaps the most heavily involved in music making with JSM and elsewhere. It is possible that they were literally too busy making music to be targeted for recruitment. This is plausible given that Federico reports he was so involved in music making that his schooling suffered at various times. If it is true that making music kept them unaware of the possibility of joining a

dances for cash), which probably makes reference to organ grinders. The lyrics of the song are about being willing to engage in activities one would not normally consider when one is in need of the money they can bring.

paramilitary group, then JSM was a great success at that basic level. Even more than José Alvarez's *gaita* "school" JSM helped provide a parallel peace for some young members by keeping them unaware of the possibility of involvement in the conflict. However, this would make Federico's exclusion from the group even more concerning.

Some of the thick trusting relationships among the young men in JSM are close to absolute faith (sometimes misplaced in demonstrably untrustworthy individuals), but others show more discerning tendencies, distinguishing who can be trusted with what kind of task. After Federico's disappearance with the group's winnings, one male member professed an unerring trust in him: "He's my friend. If he comes back of course I'll trust in him for whatever, just like before." Others were more ambivalent, or nuanced like Tori, recognizing there are some tasks it would be unwise to trust Federico with in future, given his track record. None of the young members were as extreme as Idelsa, when she reacted to the news ("I knew he was bad!"). They were less willing to essentialize Federico as plain "bad," an indication that they are less quick to essentialize potential trustees in general than are older generations. I suggest this more nuanced approach comes in part from membership of JSM facilitating the development of skills in successful trusting.

Developing Trust among One-Time Combatants

After some time with Simón and Joche talking about music and friends I tentatively asked Simón about his life before joining *Fundesocial*. It turned out that he had not been a member of a guerrilla organization as Joche said. He had, in fact, unwittingly become a child member of paramilitary group. I quote Simón at length in order to consider his narration as well as his process of involvement in and demobilization from the conflict:

My story is a little long and extensive... I left home when I was eight or nine to start work. I used to go to the market every day to wash potatoes and onions, lug sacks around, that sort of thing. I always liked money... I wanted to be earning.

During that time I met people and they started to *endulzarme la oreja* (sweet-talk me). So before I knew it I was connected with *gente que no debía* (the wrong kind of people, a bad crowd). So I... what is it? [When I was eleven or twelve] I committed myself to a job, no? We were going to go to a *finca* (farm or estate) in such and such a place. They were going to pay me well, ta ta ta. Well, I let myself get swept along, and I went.

On the journey I realized we were travelling, travelling, travelling, travelling. We spent, like, thirty hours travelling. Uh! - really far. I was with three other guys but they were adults. I was the only minor. But since I've always been well built I looked older. They asked me if I was eighteen. They didn't believe me when I said how old I was [laughs].

When we got there, they put us in training. [I realized] we were going into the paramilitaries. They gave us arms training, all sorts of training for... for... war. Then they chucked me in to confront the guerrillas! [He snorts a laugh – at the absurdity of a child fighting against guerrillas?]

I had the good fortune that the people I was with, like, you know, they weren't, like, so involved in massacres, and stuff like that. No. We were in *el monte* (the forest, isolated rural areas) looking after *fincas*. And it was always like that. I didn't have to get involved in those cruel things. But I did have to see a lot. I saw... saw people, companions that fell down dead beside me. There were a lot of people, and I couldn't do a thing, because if you drop your guard they'll get you too.

Doing that kind of thing a lot gets boring. So people started to flee, flee, flee. That was when I took the decision and took advantage of an opportunity to get out. There were initially thirty of us. One morning when we got up there were only fourteen or fifteen. The other half had fled. We all looked each other in the face and took the decision, and we left. We were near a town, so we went there and went into the church. We got the priest to negotiate with the army to tell them we were going to demobilize, because sometimes they catch you and Pun! [They shoot you dead]. The community supported us, so the military let their guard down. They did the whole process to make the thing legal. Then they started asking everyone for their *cédula* (national ID for Colombian adults) and I said "Cédula? It'll have to be *tarjeta de identidad* (ID card for minors)!" I was only fifteen. I'd been in *el monte* for three, nearly four years. They didn't believe me.

They sent me to Bogotá and that's where *bienestar familiar* (the national child welfare agency) picked me up. They sent me to Medellín. I was there for four months. Then from there I was sent here [to Cartagena]. I was in the foundation for, like... eight years.

The timings do not quite work out for Simon's last sentence to be correct. If he demobilized at about the age of fifteen and left *Fundesocial* at eighteen, he only spent three or four years at the foundation. However, I believe the fact that Simón misremembers here is significant. He would rather remember his teenage years not as time spent *en el monte* with the paramilitary group, but at the foundation. The fact that Joche misremembered the kind of group Simón once belonged to is certainly significant. The details of Simón's past did not matter in his

relationship with Joche as much as the moments they had shared at *Fundesocial* and playing in the music group. Joche was willing to believe that Simón was a member of the guerrilla insurgency, which had displaced him, killed his brother, threatened and tried to extort his family, and for whom his father still had such contempt, yet still be willing to invest so much of himself working with Simón, put him up in his house, and treat him as a member of the family. Their relationship of mutual respect and deep trust had been formed since Simón's desertion of the paramilitaries, and importantly through musical interaction.

Furthermore, either Simón's case is atypical or he missed out an important aspect of his reasons for leaving home and joining a paramilitary group. Contrary to popular belief (Brodzinsky and Schoening 2012), Carmen insisted that: "None of those young people joined a[n illicit] group out of poverty. Money might entice some, but many of them suffered abuse by members of their own family, physical abuse, sexual abuse. They left through fear" (P.C. 2015). In Carmen's experience the young people felt less able to trust members of their own family than armed insurgents or counterinsurgents. They were not entering violent contexts by joining armed groups, but escaping one kind of violence for another in which they felt they had at least some control.

According to Simón, when he first arrived at the foundation there had been few leisure activities: "It was study, study, study" apart from the occasional evening when the young people would be allowed to put on popular music and dance.

It was TV and studying all day, every day - so boring being shut up there. Once in a while they'd let you go to the beach, then back to being locked up. Lots of the kids went a bit crazy. Lots of them were doing drugs and that kind of thing. That's when they brought in the music. Lots of the kids got out of drugs and into the music.

Simón also found that music helped in his relationships with other *desvinculados*.

Music helped me a lot so I didn't discharge my anger, my rancor towards other people. Instead, I looked for a source of concentration where I could discharge all my, my, my negativity. Yeah? I

didn't take my anger out on other people like I used to. Before, when someone said something to me, I'd respond in a bad way. Music helped me with that... in my growth and development, because, thanks to the music, I met lots of people. The relationships among members of the group were always good, thanks be to God. We always worked with respect for each other, and for authority, which was *Pluma Blanca* (Joche)! [Laughs]¹⁷

They [the foundation staff] put together some dance troupes too [from among the young *desvinculados*], but they never bore much fruit... because... people were always entering and leaving, entering and leaving. So, the groups always fell apart. But the music group was more solid. We were always the same people. And when someone new entered we tried to incorporate them into the group. If someone who was good at a particular instrument left, then we had a replacement to fill the hole.

Simón feels that by playing and rehearsing together the music group developed a deeper friendship. To some degree this was centered on the strict authority of Joche. He inculcates in his students a great respect for the tradition of gaita music and the expectations he has for them as musicians. However, the playful acts of practicing and making music also contributed.

A Phenomenological Analysis of Practicing, Grooving and Stopping

In JSM, Tori insists that there is a clear rule of three cycles and that following such rules is a prerequisite for trusting other drummers. After his experience in *Fundesocial* Simon is convinced that music making helped him through his transition into civilian life. These claims can be understood more clearly through a consideration of the experience of the people involved.

In this analysis I return to Thomas Turino's phenomenology, based on the work of Charles Sanders Peirce (Peirce 1931, 1955), which provides a conceptually unified set of analytic tools for understanding music as social life (Turino 2008). For Turino, following Peirce, we experience the world through signs; anything in the world noticed by a perceiver on some level of focal awareness that bears a significant relation to something else and has an effect on the

¹⁷ "Pluma Blanca" (White Feather) implies a generic indigenous "chief" (Simón and co. were probably unaware of the particular Hopi leader with that name). However, it may also make reference to vallenato singer Diomedes Díaz and his network of high profile friends linked to drug trafficking. Díaz was known as *el cacique de la Junta* (the "chief" of his home town in La Guajira) and had a hit with "*Paloma de Pluma Blanca*." In a telenovela based on his life two friends of the singer later tried on drug trafficking charges were fictionalized as a single character called "Pluma Blanca."

perceiver because of that significant relation (Turino 2014: 188). Furthermore, Turino uses

Peirce's three ontological categories to explain what he sees as the three different modes of

human experience: Experiential "firstness", "secondness" and "thirdness."¹⁸

According to Turino, experiential "firstness" is a kind of "no-mind" state during which one is temporarily disengaged from semiosis in any way. "[A]ll thought and perception have ceased", and yet "the self – that is consciousness – is, for the moment, separate from the world and is in-and-of itself" (Ibid; 206). We might call this disengagement from the rest of the world, where a person is only conscious of being. Experiential secondness includes "cause and effect, and habitual behavior when reflection is not brought to bear on that behavior" (Ibid; 206, 216). We might call this brute engagement with the world, where the experiencer reacts (and acts?) but does not have a mental meta-commentary about what is going on. Thus if their actions involve intentionality ("aboutness") during secondness (Short 2007: 174), they are not aware of it at the time. Experiential thirdness involves "reflect[ing] about what is taking place" (Turino 2014; 205). In experiential thirdness, one's engagement with the world is mediated by reflection using signs, including general signs, generalizations and arguments. Ingrid Monson argues that we should not characterize experiential secondness as "unmediated" (Monson 2008: 50). All experience is highly mediated through bodily habit formation. However, with Turino's model we

¹⁸ For Peirce, and Turino, all semiosis requires at least a triadic relation of (sign, object and interpretant) and is therefore a case of ontological thirdness. However, both attempt to capture different ways in which humans can experience the world by applying another trichotomy of experiential or phenomenological firstness, secondness and thirdness (Turino 2015: 190-192). At times, Peirce runs together ontological, metaphysical, phenomenological and epistemic claims. I try to parse them out to some degree here, but like him maintain a focus on human experience. Genuine ontological firstness would involve qualities without any relation to anything. In contrast to Kant's *noumena*, or "things in themselves" (Kant 1890), Peirce posits the first mode of being as phenomena such as "red[ness] bitter[ness] tedious[ness]..." (Peirce 1955 [1940]: 77). He seems to categorize this way of being as possible, rather than actual, because any actualization, or knowledge, of such qualities requires relations (Ibid 76). Ontological secondness involves relations of cause and effect with no perception, or no "reason" (Ibid). Peirce posits laws in the world that make it predictable. To the extent that events in the world are governed by laws they partake of ontological thirdness (Ibid 76-77). Furthermore, any semiosis requires not only cause and effect, but also significance, and hence a triadic relation or thirdness (Ibid 91, Short 2007: 85).

can retort that to act using symbols can involve all of the mediation Monson describes (because symbols depend on iconicity and indexicality), yet symbols, unlike icons and indices, partake of a further layer of mediation not present in semiotic secondness or firstness.

Peirce most frequently describes this layer of mediation in terms of "laws" (Peirce 1955 [1940]: 77). It is unclear how Peirce believed the "laws" involved in experiential and semiotic thirdness to operate, except that they involve generality (Ibid: 102), but it is likely he took them to function in much the same way that the "laws" of nature were thought to operate according to Newtonian physics. I believe it is clearer to see experiential and semiotic thirdness as depending on *rules* that are made, enforced, implied, abstracted, and followed, or not, by humans.¹⁹

I briefly consider experiential secondness before turning to experiential thirdness in JSM performance. Turino describes experiential secondness in music making as:

A... common and sustainable mode of musical experience in performance... during which heightened concentration enhances the melding of the self with a Second [thing] (one's instrument, or the sound, or one's partners) such that all other thoughts, distractions, and entities in the world disappear [from the performer's perception] (Turino 2014; 206).

We might describe this as total engagement with a single activity, sign, or set of signs experienced *as* a single gestalt.²⁰ Although my interlocutors do not typically report a sense of "melding" as Turino describes, I would suggest that at least approaching this ideal type of experience is mutually constitutive with maintaining a good groove in tambora music. In highly repetitive groove music like street *tambora* the kind of secondness involved is a flow state wherein the challenges faced are optimally balanced with one's skills (Csikszentmihaly 2008). It typically generates elation among people who achieve it, like the *gaiteros* who talk about being

¹⁹ Peirce sometimes uses "rule" more or less interchangeably with "law," especially when discussing symbols and semiotic thirdness (Peirce 1955 [1940]: 112). However, at other points he considers "directions for what to do" as part of the indexical connections of semiotic secondness (Ibid 111).

²⁰ It may be a complex sign, but importantly it must be experienced *as* a singular thing in order for engagement with it to count as secondness. To explain this further, which is outside my current scope, I believe gestalt theory may be useful.

"transported" and maintaining "*el viaje*" (see chapter 3). Lead singer of JSM Maye describes the feeling as follows: "You know when I'm singing I feel myself [to be] in the clouds... flying... I feel... I feel different. That fills me completely" (P.C. 2015). Interestingly, she says that while she can achieve it in street *tambora*, she is most conscious of this feeling when performing on stage.²¹ This is likely because the rigors of competition provide extra challenges that balance her skills.

Learning with Joche in *Fundesocial*, Simón was able to generate a similar state of flow by practicing alone. He found it helped him cope with the anxiety of returning to studies and living in close quarters with other *desvinculados* in restricted conditions.

For me, music was a source of dispersion [of thoughts, worries, trauma?]... to get out a little from the real world, you know, from the experiences I'd had. It helped me physically and spiritually, to relieve me of all the negative loads I had on my shoulders. I always liked the *alegre*, so I'd grab it and go to the very end of the patio to play – pra pra pra – practice everything *el profe* (the teacher, Joche) had taught me. I sat there alone and started – pra pra pra – to practice. I practiced the patterns I'd learnt. I'd work out *repiques* (fills) and things. And that helped me a lot to... what is it?... de-stress... to get rid of that stress I always carried. I took my anger out on the drum! With the drum, yeah! [laughs]

Simón's searching for the words to describe the use of drumming suggests he may be regurgitating the official discourse of Carmen and Joche to a degree. However, his dedication to continued *gaita* playing and achievement of his academic and professional goals suggest there is at least some truth in it.

Interestingly, Simón would typically achieve this state without any accompaniment, or listening to (high fidelity or live) recordings of *gaita* music on headphones. This is different from the interaction between musicians that is the focus of Turino, Solis and chapter 3 of this

²¹ My interlocutors experience a kind of secondness in both participatory and presentational settings. This parallels the achievement of possession states (firstness? or very deep secondness?) by Afro-Cuban dancers in both religious rituals and stage performances (Hagedorn 2001), even though the latter are intended to function mainly as demonstrations of religious rituals, rather than rituals themselves.

dissertation.²² Simón's playing and sense of escaping the "real world" depended on the signs generated by the musicians on the recording and their relationship with the signs he produced. However, the flow state of the musicians on the recording obviously did not depend on Simón's sonic signs, separated as they were in time and space and not privy to Simón's playing along. This is why I describe Simón's activity as practicing, rather than music making.²³ It is a common start point for *gaita* drummers developing the kind of virtuosity displayed by Kevin Acevedo or Johatan Matte (see chapter 3). When they reach a high level of proficiency, *gaita* drummers tend to give up practicing this way, preferring the challenge of live interaction with micro-improvising others who respond to their signs.²⁴ Nonetheless Simón's practice was a state of flow that "provided a sense of discovery, a creative feeling of transporting the person into a new reality" (Csikszentmihaly 2008: 74). It helped him to disperse thoughts and feelings of stress, anger associated with his concurrent studies and living conditions as well as past paramilitary action.

In contrast to experiential secondness, experiential thirdness involves thinking with symbols. For Peirce, symbols are signs connected to what they signify and the effects they cause in the perceiver through laws or rules (Short 2007: 220-221). However, his explanations of how these laws function is unclear. Turino offers a development of this idea, defining "Peircean symbols as signs connected to what they stand for by linguistic definition" (Turino 2014: 197).

²² Although Turino does consider secondness between a player and their instrument, and in intent listening, which can both happen alone (Turino 2014).

²³ Reversing the analogy of Laurent de Wild quoted by Solis, we might say this is an act of "masturbation" rather than an "act of love [...] between at least two people" (De Wild 1997: 34 in Solis 2014: 9). Practicing alone, along to recordings, is far more common among drummers in more urban locales, where finding others to play with is harder and there is often a stronger discourse of professionalism. The only member of JSM who reported practicing this way was Edwin, who now lives in Bogotá and works sporadically as a professional drummer for private parties and folkloric dance troupe shows.

²⁴ Indeed, many *gaiteros* disparagingly refer to people whose learning has depended too much on recordings (especially *gaita hembra* players) as "*gaiteros de casét*" (cassette tape *gaiteros*). Their playing tends to lack the intricate variation and responsiveness to the variations of others that characterize effective *gaita* playing, because they have primarily learned to replicate the particular (sometimes composite) interpretation of a recorded tune.

He also clarifies that symbols are general signs that "stand for general classes and conceptions of phenomena, these objects themselves being symbols, rather than specific entities in the world" (Turino 2014 198), and that there must be agreement between users of symbols as to what the definition is (Ibid). However, in his writing he does not offer a developed description of what definitions are or how they function.

Thus the question remains: What do we do when we give a definition in spoken or written communication? I think we give or remind people of a rule for the use of the sign.²⁵ My thinking here is informed by the later Wittgenstein (Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]), who rejected his earlier arguments that communication must have some underlying grammar (Wittgenstein 1981 [1922]), and sought instead to show how people make rules for the use of signs in genuine social interaction. With *this* interpretation, experiential thirdness involves experiencing and acting through rule-following behavior. Importantly, these rules are humanly made, contested, broken and remade in genuine social interaction. They are not the rules supposed by structuralists to underlie reality, or linguistic interaction, but are generated and sustained as part of genuine social interaction between people as we define signs (by saying or writing what they mean), teach people how to use signs through games and game-like activities with clear rules that demonstrate how signs should be used in broader discourse, reinforce how to use signs by modeling, correct people's usage of signs, and debate the best ways to use signs. As Turino states: "signs [are] connected to what they stand for by linguistic definition, but equally important, people must

²⁵ For me a rule is one of two things: 1. a particular normative declaration about how people should act, think etc. in a given set of situations, or 2. an abstraction from such a declaration or less explicitly normative interaction, through which one grasps, or imagines, how people should act in a given set of situations. When we correct someone's thinking, behavior, or use of a sign, we are making or expressing, or attempting to enforce a rule. Definitions are a subcategory of rules. When we explicitly give a definition we are giving a rule for the use of that term in a given set of situations.

agree on that definition of the sign within a given context if it is to function as a symbol [for those using it] (Turino 2014: 197).

Returning to my case study, rehearsals in semilleros involve guidance, discussion, playful interaction and repetition of particular ideas about how music should be made and how young people should behave. Some of this interaction involves rules about the significance of musical sounds. For instance, ending songs cleanly is often difficult for the young musicians. In *Herencia de mi Tierra*, when the lead singer wanted to end a song he would make eye contact with the drummers and sometimes gesture for us to stop, but doing so was mainly left to our discretion. However, in JSM, Idelsa and her young musicians repeatedly restated the rule of three cycles mentioned by Tori above. If the *bozá* section went on for more than three cycles and the musicians noticed, or the ending was ragged on uncertain, drummers would often complain: "No-o-o-o! It's three times!" If Idelsa were present and noticed, she would restate the rule forcefully, in a manner reminiscent of a baseball umpire: "*Deja de mairquiar!* It's three times and out!"²⁶ In these exclamations, Idelsa and her young musicians were restating a rule for the significance of the *bozá* within the frame of their performances for competitive staged *tambora*.

Some musicians have played Idelsa's way so much that they have developed the habit of playing only three cycles of the *bozá* then ending automatically without having to think about it. However, to the extent that the rule of three actually guides the actions of musicians as they play, they are in experiential thirdness, operating with tokens of general signs. They experience the three cycles of the *bozá* as a symbol, the object of which is another symbol, the end of a song,

²⁶ The phrase "*Deja de mairquiar*" can be interpreted as "Stop messing around!" or "Stop being gay!" imply being gay. Thus there may be a sense in which Idelsa's corrections aligned messing around, failing to follow the rules, or doing things incorrectly, with homosexuality, which she considers deviant. *Marica* and *mairquiar* are used with such frequency regarding people and acts not explicitly thought of as gay that this sense of the terms may not register at high levels of focal awareness for listeners, but the implications for exclusionary attitudes towards homosexuality are important.

and the interpretant, or effect, is to stop playing.²⁷ Here we can see how some musical sounds can function as symbols, standing for other musical sounds. However, they do not form some web of significance detached from the practices of actual music making. They are necessarily integrated into real effects on people, real uses, and the processual establishment (learning, readjustment, flaunting etc.) of rules by real people.

We can now make more sense of Tori's comment on trust. He claims to trust most fully those drummers who are able to transition out of experiential secondness, into thirdness, follow the rule of three cycles and finish the song. In actual fact, he also trusts more experienced drummers in the group who now end on the third cycle at the level of habit. For them, the signs of the *bozá* and the end are not functioning as symbols, but as indices that follow each other without the need for symbolic thought. They cannot be said to be *following* the rule in the same way as those who think about it. Their actions are merely in accordance with the rule. There is, therefore, a degree of false faith in Tori's comment. However, he admires the discourse of clear rules and repeats them, not only to me, the analyst, who he might assume also values them, but also to his fellow drummers, even if they "know already." Bringing this explicit rule to drummers' attention repeatedly assures that at least some drummers, some of the time, are in experiential thirdness, with the signs functioning as symbols for them.

Every time musicians successfully end a song by following or in accordance with the explicit rules, they thicken their relationship of trust centered on this task, and increase the likelihood of trusting each other in future. More broadly, the interaction of young members and their own analyses indicate that the more they feel other members' behavior is governed by the

²⁷ More fully, the singer's switch to the *bozá* initiates a chain of semiosis. The initial change acts as an instance of the symbol, the object of which is the beginning of the *bozá* in the drums, and the interpretant is the switch in rhythmic feel. This in turn initiates counting or feeling the third cycle, which itself acts as an instance of the symbol for the end, effects a drum call (/-/-^ ^ ^ -), which acts as a sign for others to stop on the following pulse1.

same habits and rules of music making, stage etiquette, and broader social interaction, the more likely they are to trust them with a broad range of tasks. Many members of JSM commented that they appreciated the way in which Idelsa imposes rules and corrects people's behavior strictly (P.C. 2015). This is very similar to the dynamics of trust that social anthropologist Dan Rabinowitz shows between a Jewish Israeli basketball team and their Palestinian Arab coach. Team members were able to trust the coach within the context of the game, with its clear rules, and to the extent that they felt able to explain his behavior by ascribing him a rationality and worldview aligned with their own (Rabinowitz 1992).

Relationships with Leaders: Formality and Informality

Youth group leaders typically provide and enforce relatively clear rules for young musicians to follow. In interviews nearly all members of JSM reported that they appreciate Idelsa's strictness. They feel it benefits the group to have a strong leader. They like the fact that she stops them from messing around when it's time to rehearse. One drummer even contrasted her close formal adherence to rules with the highly informal and precarious nature of his previous job as a gold miner. Juche too is famed among the young people he teaches and his coworkers for his strictness. For both leaders, this characteristic is in part driven by a desire to maintain a tradition for which they have a great deal of respect, but also a belief that learning is maximized with a disciplined approach and in turn that the discipline developed through learning a musical practice is a useful transferable life skill.

Perhaps surprisingly given this, the young musicians also value the times when they go beyond the formal application of rules. One of the things JSM members most enjoy is *la recocha* (joking around). Boys especially remembered with glee the practical jokes they played on each

other and girls in the group for fun. This joking around seems to be largely reciprocated and even entered into on occasions by Idelsa herself. One JSM member put it this way:

When we're in those schoolrooms [in another town],²⁸ and Idelsa's not there, that's when the disorder starts. Or when the girls fall asleep on the bus we stay awake to play tricks on them. But the group's cool, because they follow our lead, they play tricks on us too. Sometimes Federico ties Idelsa's sandals together, but because we're joking around she plays along with the game.

Partaking in these practical jokes allows members to test each other's good humor and trust and discover each other's limits of tolerance. Many young members were keen to stress this happens within a shared sense of the limits of decency, where no member lacks respect for another or takes advantage of them.

In *Fundesocial* the young members and Joche were able to engage in even more play with formality and informality, in part due to Joche's status as a participant in music making, and joking around, as well as his tolerance of some degree of illicit behavior. Carmen Díaz put it this way: "The kids found someone they could relate to in him. They look up to him, but he's also able to joke with them, like he's one of them." (P.C. 2015). This generated confidentiality and a sense of shared group secrets. However, Simón and Joche explained they were keen not to become exclusive of potential participants:

S: The friendship between everyone in the group strengthened. We would schedule presentations and prepare ourselves for them. And sometimes we would just play together late... and maybe we'd smoke some weed [he laughs sharply]

J: They weren't allowed to, but...

S: And everyone would keep their mouth shut, *ajá* (you know). They wouldn't say anything. That was between the group. So we always had that custom of... when we were going to make music like *that* it was just the group... and we kept other people on the margins of what happened. But we also tried to bring new people in - get others [at the foundation] to be interested in the music. Some people were like "Nah! What am I going to do with those sticks?!"... But I taught them.

Fine and Holyfield stress the power of secret-sharing in the formation and maintenance of trusting relationships. Secrecy does not simply involve keeping information from others, but importantly, sharing valued knowledge with specific valued others (Fine and Holyfield 1996:

²⁸ Accommodation for competitors at festivals is commonly in vacant school classrooms.

30). In the case of Simón and his fellow *gaita*-playing *reinsertados*, engaging in the mildly illicit activity of recreational cannabis smoking, and keeping it secret from other *reinsertados* and members of staff, helped cement their relationship of trust. Importantly, this activity was indexically linked to music making. Group members also shared secrets about how to produce musical sound with apparently useless "sticks" (*gaitas*), how to maintain musical grooves that can relieve stress and build friendships, and how to maintain the sticks and skins that make all of that possible.

Simón developed a particularly close relationship with Joche, which in turn allowed him to develop certain transferable skills that he already possessed, but was not exercising until then at the foundation:

S: When *el profe* arrived I was always the first person out there. I'd organize the *agenda* (diary-cum-notebook-cum-lesson-plan) and get the instruments out. He'd teach us alone first, then as a group. He taught me to do maintenance on the instruments too. *El profe* really taught us a lot. I was the drummer and the second in command. First was Joche, but I was second. I'd say to the group "We're going to practice today" and we'd get the instruments out and practice what he'd taught us.

I: Did the others follow your orders?

S: Of course! Everyone knew what they had to do, so we started, and we practiced, and we did things right.

I: Did you already have those leadership skills?

S: Yes. I already had them. Everyone did what I said perfectly. And of course they followed the orders of *Pluma Blanca* (Joche)! [laughs]

An informal hierarchy developed whereby Simón became Joche's unofficial second in command. The way the two explain it, this seems to have been accepted by the other musicians as a simple corollary of Simon's relative ability and deep engagement with music making. Joche trusted Simón to take on responsibilities when he himself was not there:

J: Of course! He was so into *gaita* music that it was him who would replace me when I couldn't be there. He handled everything. The organization of the uniforms, he was responsible for the music, everything, the instruments... He did maintenance on the instruments too. He learned a lot.

Joche trusted Simón with these tasks because of his proven abilities in music making. This broadening of the range of tasks with which he was trusted began a positive feedback loop whereby Simón's self-confidence increased as others began to trust him. He trusted others enough to share his knowledge and lead them in potentially embarrassing public performances, the success of which could generate more opportunities for future presentations. Playing music as part of the group was a way of leaving the compound where the young people were housed, bringing temporary freedom from its restrictions, and the possibility of playing together in the sense of making music, but also joking around and stretching the rules.

Through individual and group lessons with Joche, practicing alone, the extra responsibilities Simón took on in Joche's absence, open ended participatory music making with the group, and presentational performances, Simón was able to channel his anger by focusing on drumming, which in turn allowed him to interact with others in ways that promoted, rather than hindered, non-violent coexistence. He was also able to put in practice the leadership skills which he already had, and apply them to activities that reinforced a cycle of improving as a musician, improving relationships within the group of *desvinculados* and improving his broader social skills. The group were able to become confidants, engaging in mildly illicit activities together and keeping secrets. However, they did so with the constant possibility of introducing new members into the group and appreciation of the musical activities it involved. This was all framed against the background of respect towards Joche as an expert and participant-leader, and understanding, flexible representative of authority, the institution and civil society. The development of Simón's individual abilities and leadership of a solid group, coupled with Joche's feeling and acts of trusting Simón to carry out musical and organizational tasks, allowed the

initial relationship of student-teacher to develop into a close friendship based on mutual trust, which formed a bridge into Simón's life outside the foundation.

In JSM especially there is a strong discourse of limiting time for joking around. This sometimes to avoid situations Idelsa and the members' parents would find unacceptable, such as sexual interaction between the members, but it also often involves isolating play from music making. One ex-member perceived a change in the sexualization of young members over the years:

We used to go to the towns [around here]. We slept men and women mixed together, everyone there. Nobody lacked respect. But now they're really horny, really really *tremendo* (excessive/badly behaved). It's difficult. Now they're... there are lots of bad... lots of mischief.

In reaction to this perceived change, Idelsa now usually makes sleeping arrangements for the group that divide members up by gender. Members play with this rule to an extent, but do not abuse the sense of decency Idelsa tries to impart through it. According to a current member:

We're really *recocheros* (people who like to joke around) but this is true: we respect each other. That's [a rule] we have; joking around is joking around, but to lack respect (take advantage of people) would be something else entirely. When we're staying somewhere else we split up [by gender], but that doesn't count because we go into their room and they come into ours to joke around because they're bored. When it's time to go to sleep, everyone goes their separate ways, with respect.

By his last remark he implied there is no sex between members.

More broadly Idelsa inculcates in members the idea that they are engaged in making art, that being an artist requires discipline, and as such, rehearsal and performance time should be free of joking around. One member put it explained: "When it's time to joke around, it's time to joke around, but when it's time to work, the games stop." This suggests that music making is increasingly presented to young members of JSM in *contrast* to play. It is an activity in which joking around and stretching the rules should not take place. This is in sharp contrast to *gaita* music, where the sense of play is constantly present for experienced performers like Joche (see

chapter 3) and learners like his students at *Fundesocial* alike. *Gaiteros* are quick to add that any stretching of the rules should be done with the utmost respect for the tradition of *gaita*, and requires mastery of the format, but nonetheless they value creative rule-stretching within musical interaction.

A clear example of this difference in attitudes towards strict application of rules is in song lyrics. In 2012 I observed as Joche taught the song "*El ratón*" (The Mouse) to his students from *Fundesocial*. He was concerned that they learn "the correct" lyrics and so called a singer friend called Juan de Dios Narvaez. He had recorded a version of the song with *Gaiteros de Ovejas* in 2008. By chance I had been at the recording sessions for the self-released EP of which it was a part: *Nobleza y Riqueza del Folclor* (2008). I remember being struck by the playful way in which various members of the group half remembered, half invented the lyrics for the song before Juan de Diós came into the studio to record.²⁹ The song has a known author, Sebastián Mendoza, but he had died many years before the recording and had not left a written or audio record of his song. They *Gaiteros de Ovejas* members giggled like schoolboys as they wrote down verses about a mouse, searched for rhymes that fit the general theme of being kept awake by its nibbling: "Put down '*correa del pantalón*' (belt of his pants), that sounds good!" The lyrics Juan de Diós recorded were slightly different from those José Álvarez taught me around the same time, and different still from those that Sebastián Mendoza's brother Alejandro sang when José, Joche and I visited him in 2016 (see appendix 3 and video 9).³⁰

There is nothing uncommon about this kind of negotiation of lyrics in musical practices principally outside of written traditions. What is interesting is that many *gaiteros* attempt to superimpose a discourse of formality on practices of informality. Joche called Juan de Diós for

²⁹ See Middleton 2010.

³⁰ Video 9: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ka1EUYgXK9g>. Compare the *Gaiteros de Ovejas Version*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkIaNu5GXO0>

the "correct" lyrics and had one of his students write them down line for line because Juan de Diós is a knowledgeable, respected representative of the tradition. However Joche is well aware, and I believe transmits to many of his students in an unspoken wink-like manner by his forceful yet playful approach, that the kind of playful remember-inventing that *Gaiteros de Ovejas* engaged in is itself part of the tradition of *gaita*. As such, the version of the lyrics he remembers can be challenged and played with, but perhaps only by people with sufficient cultural capital in the *gaita* cohort and force of character to assert that their version of the lyrics is "correct:" "Así es!"

In contrast, JSM's repertoire is mostly made up of songs recorded by Martina Camargo, or composed for the group by Javier Camargo, Idelsa's husband, or more recently by Adrian Peñaranda, Olga Cerpa's husband, a professional musician who normally writes commercial ballads and *bachatas*. Idelsa keeps a thick notebook at her house where all JSM's song lyrics are written in the hands of the various young members who have copied them down from recordings over the years. When singers are in doubt, they refer to the notebook.

In their performance practice JSM members do in fact bend Idelsa's rules at the micro-level. For instance, video 10 shows how, on finishing the third cycle of the *bozá*, the group does not end the song as the rule of three cycles dictates, but instead enters a moment where there is no single clear rule for ending (Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]).³¹ What follows is a very quick autotelic activity within the broader performance, mainly for the lead singer and drummers. At the end of the third cycle the *alegre* drummer and lead singer make eye contact, but the group continues. A questioning nod from the drummer is eventually answered with a smiling tilt of the head from Maye, the lead singer. The drummer nods again and plays the rhythmic phrase that

³¹ Video 10: <https://youtu.be/cKwqq6FUg1Q>

signals the group to stop at the end of that chorus. Finishing cleanly in this case requires musicians' heightened attention to each other's signs, and clarity in the signs they themselves produce, in order to interpret one another's intentions and find a resolution, keeping in mind the shared aim of a tight performance.³²

Like with good *gaita* performance (see chapter 3) "special awareness of other participants is required" to achieve the musical goal here (Turino 2008: 43). However, whereas the immediate aim of *gaiteros* is to maintain each other's flow states by maintaining the groove and interactive micro-improvisation, here in this game-like musical activity nested within the presentational *tambora* performance there are two immediate aims in tension. One is to stop the groove with a clean ending and avoid any performers becoming lost in their own flow states. The other is to stretch out the song a little, enjoying its groove for slightly longer, and simultaneously enjoying the act of surreptitiously breaking one of Idelsa's rules. The young musicians negotiate these aims playfully in the act of finishing the song.

The look shared between the singer and the drummer here potentially functions not only as a chance for each to interpret the intentions of the other regarding stopping the groove, but also as a sign of being trustworthy as a result of being considerate. Every case of semiosis between at least two people in this way is also potentially an opportunity for them each to identify the other as trustworthy or not at some level of focal awareness.³³ On noticing that the drummer is actively engaged in the interpretations of her intentions, the singer Maye trusts him to continue the groove beyond established rules for finishing, and finish cleanly when she is

³² This is similar to the moments of mistake resolution Ingrid Monson describes in jazz rhythm sections (Monson 1996: 154-176). The difference here is that the musicians are working to avoid a potential mistake rather than resolving one that has already happened.

³³ This feature of trusting interaction is developed by scholars of costly signaling theory (Densley 2012). However they typically fail fully to take into account the spectrum of intentional to unintentional signs that we notice at varying levels of focal awareness when we come to trust others or not.

ready to do so. JSM members finish songs this way about half the time. Every time they do so, they strengthen a different form of trusting, beyond the boundaries of the established rules that Idelsa and Tori emphasize, and in a way it is not clear the Peircean model can fully explicate.

Importantly, this mode of interaction requires participants to conceptualize each other as intentioned beings, capable of adapting, compromising and choosing a particular route of action for a reason, as it relates to shared goals of the group. In short, here the young members of JSM interact as full human agents as described by Varela and Harré, and Farnell (Varela & Harré 1996: 323; Farnell 2002; 405, see chapter 3). The skills required for and developed through this kind of interaction are central to trusting in non-coercive relationships beyond what Samuel Araújo identifies as the symbolic violence of imposing particular categories of thought and action (Araújo 2010), which in the case of JSM and similar youth groups is inflicted by the practicalities of festival formats, non-participant leaders like Idelsa, and the combined drive towards success in competitions.³⁴

Many members of *Fundesocial* developed a close trusting relationship with Joche in large part due to his ability to interact with them in a manner that transgresses established ways of working, in order to achieve shared aims. In Simón's case, this friendship went further into extended support beyond the bounds of the foundation. Simón explained: "I went to live with Joche because it was with him that I had the best relationship, like... out of all the educators there

³⁴ Turino would argue this way of interacting can be achieved in experiential secondness or thirdness (2014). I am not so convinced it can be so easily explained within the Peircean framework. It involves engaging with other people, sounds and movement as complex things, and so there is no single "second" with which one is engaged in secondness. Similarly it involves going beyond established rules for the use of signs, and choosing one possible use over others, so one is not clearly in experiential thirdness. More research is required to develop this argument, but I believe the Peircean framework may need augmenting to accommodate this way of being in the world. I believe this is the mode of being Julie Taylor identifies in good tango dancing, when one is beyond wrote-learnt steps, able to reflect beyond the present moment, and challenge various "violences of exclusions" (Taylor 1998: 11, 70, 107). It involves acting in a way that recognizes that others are potentially interpreting one's signs, potentially beyond established rules for the use of those signs, as well as noticing the signs of others as those of people potentially acting in just the same way.

[at the foundation], he was the one I was closest to." Simón moved in with Joche and Gina when he turned eighteen and left *Fundesocial*. They adopted him as a member of the family; something between a son and a younger brother. They gave him the vital necessities of bed, board, and stability while he finished his high school diploma and began technical training as a chef. When he moved out of Joche's place it was to a nearby apartment with his pregnant girlfriend where they set up the internet business I would later frequent. Importantly, this process with Joche was not part of a mentor system planned by the foundation or proposed by the government institution funding the reintegration of the *desvinculados*. Rather, it occurred because Simón felt close to Joche and Joche felt he could trust Simón in his home and that their friendship warranted helping Simón as much as he could. As far as I know this kind of transition into civilian life was never replicated for other young people of *Fundesocial*.

Joche explained the strength of their friendship as partly due to Simón's attitude to and success in learning *gaita*:

Of all the students I've ever had, Simón is among those who have stood out and achieved most. The kind of kid who is *necio*, always there, wanting to learn, he's the one that's going to learn. I value that a great deal.

"*Necio*" is a difficult term to translate here. It normally means "foolish" or "troublemaker." Children and pets are often scolded for being "*necio*" for their lack of seriousness, for being in the way or fidgety, for bothering others, or messing around and not doing what is expected of them. But here it is exactly that attitude of engaged playfulness that Joche admires in students and which helps them learn. Students who go beyond the minimum expected of them, who ask questions, who cannot keep still, who are prepared to be playful, are those who learn best in Joche's view.

Those who engage deeply in learning and playing within the making of *gaita* music are most apt to learn the more serious skills it has to teach them, psychological, social, and creative.

They can develop concentration; the management of different states of being and their usefulness in engaging with difficulties of life like dealing with psychological trauma or studying; conflict resolution and the promotion of peaceful coexistence with their cohabiters; the organization of things and other people, planning future events; keeping secrets; integrating new people into a group; respecting traditions; and taking creative chances. It was by taking a serious, leading, respectful, yet playful approach to these activities, and repeating his success within them, that Simón became so close to Joche. The close trusting, fictive kin relationship of mutual generalized reciprocity that they developed, and the further relationships it allowed Simon to develop with Joche's friendship network, were instrumental in Simon's successful integration into civilian life.

Many members of JSM report fictive kin-type relationships with Idelsa. However, in these reflections, she is not typically cast as a peer, but "something like a second mother" (P.C. 2015). Furthermore, their affection for her tends to be focused on her willingness to support the group financially, and provide members with drinks, food and money when they require it. That is to say, she has become something of a *patróna* (patron, boss, provider) to them. Her relationship with the young people sometimes involves generalized reciprocity – she sometimes dedicates impressive amounts of time, effort and personal funds to the group – but also commonly involves balanced reciprocity, with her gifts to the group conceptualized as rewards for participating, and even negative reciprocal attitudes and acts like those of Federico.

Beyond the micro-level described above, JSM members rarely question their habitual or rule-based ways of doing things as a group. Idelsa does not typically encourage members to generate a playful approach to learning or playing *tambora*. In fact she actively discourages this kind of interaction, frequently insisting that the young members "stop messing around" and

follow the rules she lays down. Festival organizers also tend to discourage young performers from thinking critically about their musical, or broader social practices, by foregrounding instead the opinions of older performers, and educators, presented as guardians of a fixed tradition, and cultural elites from outside the tradition, presented as representatives of academia or "the art world."³⁵

One ex-member, Fauner Salas, argues that the group's commitment to tambora as "traditional art", within the rules of the festivalized practice, puts them in a double bind: discouraged both from experimenting sonically and choreographically (for fear of straying from Idelsa's idea of "tradition"), but also from using tambora for explicitly social ends beyond stage performance (P.C. December 2015). Fauner, who *is now* engaged in social projects (see chapter 5), said that he found JSM helpful for developing musical abilities, but restrictive, and isolating, increasingly focused on winning festivals rather than generating fraternity, or helping build communities and assist them in find solutions to their problems. The focus on music making as art and competition means singers are encouraged to save their voice and avoid the participatory *tamboras* that form off stage before and after festival hours. Older members of JSM lamented the fact that musicians from different groups play together far less nowadays than in past years, thereby missing out on the opportunity to develop friendships outside their own group. Fauner pointed out how JSM fails to target young residents who might benefit most from involvement in *tambora*, especially the many displaced people who have moved to San Martín in recent years and the *desvinculados* who live there. Both of these demographics tend to be isolated and lack the social capital they need to improve their psychological, material and social situation.

³⁵ For example, Federico's suggestion mentioned above for dance at festivals to be improvised was never heard by festival organizers. During forums held at festivals, young people tend to sit impassively, become bored and disengage, while older cultural elites, many of whom are not *tambora* participants, pontificate on the best ways to maintain the tradition.



Figure 49: JSM's promotional pendant showing director Idelsa Cerpa (top left) and some of the young members (centre and bottom).

Other members past and present noted that some of Idelsa's dispositions, attitudes and rules are exclusionary, especially with regard to gender and sexuality. Some female members were frustrated at not being allowed to learn to play instruments, even when they repeatedly expressed an explicit interest in doing so. She generally prohibits boys and young men from singing. Sometimes she explains this in terms of an aesthetic preference for the sound of female voices, but other times she expresses concern that young men might "turn gay" if they are

allowed to sing. While not all youth group leaders express such homophobic views, and many of those in the tambora cohort actually self-identify as gay men, the bullish imposition of rules without consideration of the ways in which they might be exclusionary is quite typical.

In sum, Idelsa finds it more difficult than Joche to avoid replicating in miniature deeply entrenched regional power dynamics of patron-client relations. In this respect I believe JSM members typically stand to benefit less than Joche's students with regard to developing social skills that will permit them to flourish with regard to trust building and the promotion non-violence. Joche and Idelsa are equally immersed in festival discourses and tambora or gaita as "traditional art," and both care deeply about the young people they work with. So what is it that hinders Idelsa? I believe there are six main factors. She is more distant from JSM members with regard to age; the distance is also greater with regard to socio-economic status (Idelsa has more capacity to provide, and so is expected to); her gender may also play a part insofar as men are encouraged to be *necio* much more than women, are more often granted the privilege of fostering playful attitudes towards life; JSM is unfunded; Neither is it a structured foundation or project with the primary aim of reducing violence, this emerged as secondary to members' desire to maintain the (festivalized) tradition of tambora; and perhaps most importantly Joche's participant status allows him to be seen as a member of the group, and ameliorate through playful musical interaction any tension arising from hierarchical relations. As a non-participant, Idelsa's playfulness is limited to *recocha* outside of music making, which must be limited if the music making is to be achieved. Participant leaders have the benefit of being able to play (with expectations) while they play (music).

Frustrated Projects: Suspicion of *Gestores*

When I last visited Martina Camargo in Cartagena, she told me she was bored of being there, working on other people's projects, on their terms (she had recently been working with the ministry of culture), or waiting to be contracted for performances that rarely materialized. She reminded me of her desire to return to San Martín. She wanted to carry out a prolonged project of music education there, teaching young people *tambora* and *rondas*. Perhaps her husband could be involved, teaching the kids how to make and operate puppets, how to paint. They could put on a big show at the end showing everything they had learned. This kind of project would support the efforts of locals like Idelsa to increase social cohesion and develop young people's training in creative practices.

I was to help write the project, find funding, and teach percussion.³⁶ It would form a central part of my applied fieldwork and would turn us both into *gestores culturales* (roughly cultural promoters, see chapter 3). This is a relatively new category that has emerged in Colombia as it has become possible to make a living, or supplement one's income, by proposing and producing "cultural" events and projects. "Cultural" events and pedagogical projects typically lack a sufficient paying market to make them commercially viable. They must be free to the public, so production costs must be covered by a patron, whether individual or institutional. The person with the idea for a project usually works to secure funds from a public or private institution and will normally take a cut of the funds in payment for their work. However, many *gestores* do it for love and even end up investing their own money in projects they believe to be valuable. Often, those with the initial idea, like Martina, seek help from others better versed in writing proposals and developing projects. Some friends in Cartagena and Cali

³⁶ See appendix 4 for the project proposal.

have reached the stage where they can live from government "cultural" grants, or declare themselves professional *gestores culturales*. They make a living from developing proposals, seeking funding from established sources, promoting the idea and lobbying for support from elsewhere, managing the project once underway, in short doing everything necessary to make it a reality

The next time I was back in San Martín I went to speak to a friend of Martina's family who knew about such things to start the process of *gestionar* Martina's project. In our meeting at his house, and extended interaction in attempting to secure funding for the project, I learned a great deal about the workings of local government and people's tendencies of trust in this context. I therefore quote at length to show how his initial reaction exposed my naïveté:

You haven't done this before, have you? You don't even have a foundation?! Everyone has a foundation these days. Everything has to be proposed in the name of a foundation. Don't worry, my brother has one we can use. There's an official format for these kinds of things, the MGA [*metodología general ajustada* (adjusted general methodology)]. I have a friend who can put it in that format, but he charges. We'll take it to the mayor here first though. He has to sign it off before it can be sent to the ministry of culture anyway. There are two ways of doing it: co-financed – between the municipality and central government – or fully funded by the government. That works for big projects. Mayors like it when someone comes to them with a big project, because they can go to central government and *gestionar* (lobby for) the money. Then everyone gets a big cut. But you want to keep it small for now? OK, so the best way is to get it written into the *plan de desarrollo municipal* (plan for municipal development). That way the mayor's pretty much obliged to do it, and find funding from somewhere.

18 million pesos [\$6,000 US dollars approximately] is the top limit for small projects - *mínima cuantía*. Make the project cost that much. But you're actually going to work with 7.5 million. From the 18 you start off with, the government takes about three in taxes straight off the bat. So you're left with 15. That gets split between the project and the people who brought in the money; in this case that's the mayor and you and Martina. The mayor takes half of the 7.5 and you all take your half... [He paused at this point as he noticed my wide-eyed astonishment]. That's how it usually works. Sometimes the mayor will accept less. [Slightly bemused by my protestation at taking a cut, he went on]. Well, if you don't want your half, that's up to you, but that's how it works around here. Just so you know, so you don't get into any problems here.

Our meeting had already been interrupted various times, but at this point we took a long break for my advisor to deal with a woman who needed help with some paperwork. He explained three times how to fill in the form, where to go, how to find the right person to help her write a *cuenta*

de cobro (official invoice), how to get them to meet her if she could leave her children alone. I half reflected on the woman's need for clear instructions, and half mulled-over Martina's proposal. She was reluctant to seek funding through the mayor, partly because she thinks he is corrupt (rightly it would seem), but also because she and her family did not support him in his last election campaign, so she thinks he would never help fund a project she is involved in. For now, though, the mayor was our only option for funding, so I resolved to hear out my advisor.

Eventually he returned to me:

The mayor needs his half for other things. At the moment, for example, he really needs projects so he can *legalizar* ("legalize") all the money he's having to spend on the celebrations. He has no official way of bringing in *vallenato* bands for the celebrations, but if he doesn't do it, *el pueblo* (the townspeople) will lynch him. So he has to divert funds from elsewhere to keep people happy. The money can be found; borrowed, whatever, but the mayors office has to "legalize" it. If you can get this project written by tomorrow, it'll be great for the mayor, because I know he needs to *legalizar* money right now.

I had been looking for official ways of funding our proposed project, and had instead stumbled upon a method that would be highly illegal, but established and largely accepted, whereby everyone involved takes their cut of funds designated by central government to local "cultural" projects, and the mayor would be able to divert funds, providing a legalistic facade for a popular music event he had already funded illegally with public money. The journalist, lawyer and ethnographer David Lara argues in his writing and in conversations that a rule of "*miti miti*" (half-and-half) applies at every link in the chain of funding for local projects in Northern Colombia, and locals at the end of the chain suffer as a result (Lara Ramos 2016; P.C. 2015). Lara writes of a "delinquent government" that needs to be stopped before any benefit can be brought to civilians. Any funds brought in supposedly for social projects are typically be divided up between so many people – half for the mayor and the project director, half of what's left for the people who helped them write the project, half to the friends and family employed on the

project through nepotism rather than merit, half here, half there... – that the amount finally left for the actual project was so small as to make its impact both laughable and deeply upsetting.

The situation was understandable, if indefensible, given some of the difficulties faced by those involved. A general lack of education and specific training in bureaucratic methodologies among locals mean that experts must be paid to format the project correctly, and to hide the illicit diversion of funds effectively. The mayor feels obliged to provide free *vallenato* concerts during the town's patron saint celebrations. All other towns are doing it. He would likely be deposed if he refused. But as there is no way to justify such spending officially, he feels obliged to divert funds from elsewhere. Perhaps in the end he is not embezzling to his own advantage at all as people suspect, but reinvesting all the funds he diverts into legally unjustifiable, but pragmatically necessary events, or to the economic and social elites who funded his election campaign (probably illegally) in the first place. Then there is the *gestor*. Like Martina, this may be a well-intentioned person, genuinely concerned for those who will become the project's beneficiaries. They may expect to be paid for their work, but fairly. However, if, as in our case, they are unwilling to accept a bung, the mayor is unlikely to trust them to keep quiet about his own cut. A *gestor* not driven by negative reciprocity will, paradoxically, not be considered as trustworthy.

We never received funding for our project, despite the mayor's dire needs, I suspect because we were not willing to play our part in the dirty "game" of embezzlement or redirection of funds. It may also be that Martina was right and the mayor bore a grudge against her and her family for not having supported him in his election campaign. She was not "with" him, so she would not receive his favor while he was in power. We were not dealing with an institution that has procedures for judging what proposals deserve funding, but an individual who gives out

money and positions to those who supported him in the past, to those he feels he can trust with the dirty business of low-level corruption, and to the extent that it benefits him both as an individual and a local political figure.

People in general across *La Costa* know or suspect that receiving funding from local government necessitates negotiating this messy business. They therefore tend to suspect all *gestores culturales* of being on the make. They reject any talk of wanting to help children and marginalized groups as "all lies" because they believe the only way to get funding for such projects is to be in on the game of fraud. After my initial visits to *la casa de la cultura* in San Martín many people warned me of the then director: "He's a bad type. Don't believe a word he says. It's all lies." If Martina and I had received funding, even if we had managed to maintain some sort of transparency, I feel sure we would have been represented in the same light. To that extent we were fortunate never to receive funding and retain a degree of trustworthiness among people who shun corruption or project it onto all *gestores*.

This prompts a reconsideration of JSM, its leader Idelsa, and others like her. I should not be overly critical of people who fail to secure external funding for their groups. Idelsa is not simply unwilling to engage with the legal framework required, but also unwilling to get involved in the illicit activity around it. She eschews those kinds of funding opportunities partly to avoid the pressure to embezzle, but also to avoid the distrust of others that the opportunities may bring, whether she actually embezzles or not. The culture of corruption that permeates all levels of political life in Northern Colombia contributes to her attitude of independence, the sense that she alone needs to support and lead JSM to avoid its contamination. In short it contributes to her felt need to be the only *patrona* of JSM.

This is one reason many cultural elites give for retreating from the arena of "cultural" promotion. Many people who were once involved in festivals or other "cultural" projects told me they had given up active engagement because some colleague had wanted to "involve politics," that is to seek direct support from local officials. Doing so risks turning the political figure into the coercive *patrón* of the would-be "cultural" promoter and the formation of a *rosca* where money is dissipated and general public distrust is generated. If the cultural realm was once a relatively safe haven for leftists unable to express their political views explicitly and unwilling to join insurgencies, it has become permeated by the kind of clientelism that many of them sought to oppose from the outset.

In Ovejas Joche was kept from developing projects at the *casa de cultura* despite having supported the right campaign. As a result I was unable to collaborate with him there. However, I worked briefly with Henry Ortiz who is paid by the *gaita* festival organization to lead a *gaita* "school." In sharp contrast to José's situation so many years before, and Idelsa's in San Martín, this is a salaried position. The festival is guaranteed a small amount of state funding every year, a small percentage of which must be spent on the formation of young musicians. Festival organizers have worked hard to establish transparency of funding by forming large committees and holding regular meetings where such information is divulged aurally for anybody interested. This does not put a complete stop to rumors that there is a *rosca*, but it does seem to ensure no funds are actually diverted. Henry is pleased to have the work, but complains that he is only ever contracted for a couple of months before the festival: "It's not good for the kids' progress. They get so far and then there's no support for them to continue. I sometimes give them free classes, but I have to work, so I can't give them all my time" (P.C. 2016). His approach to teaching is remarkably similar to Joche's, but he is more humble in acknowledging a desire to broaden the

range of content and skills he can teach the young musicians, as well as his own pedagogical skill set. "I don't have formation in teaching or music theory. Those sorts of things might be useful." I worked with him leading some workshops for his young students on *tambora* and other *bailes cantados*, attempting to model for him the forms of teaching I have developed over the years, but our time together was limited.

I suggested he take advantage of a new kind of workshop that was being offered by the ministry of culture for the development of music teachers. Martina Camargo had been contracted for these workshops as an instructor, to offer training for local music teachers of various levels of formality on teaching methods. She enjoyed the process and felt she was able to offer some useful guidance on ludic modes of teaching. However, a combination of well-intentioned multiculturalism and die-hard neoliberalism meant the ministry of culture left instructors to develop their own curricula almost entirely from scratch, with very little support. The new instructors came from a range of backgrounds, and only some had formal training in education. There was no preconceived syllabus for them to teach. This was to arise out of workshops in which horizontal power relations were encouraged, such that traditional artists like Martina could contribute equally alongside professional urbanite instructors with years of experience. This was an admirable application of current pedagogical theory. However, absolutely no training was provided to instructors and the outcome of the workshops was so vague that each instructor was left to their own devices to generate specific learning aims, materials, approaches and lesson plans.

I was one of the friends Martina turned to for help in hastily improvising her course, along with musician friends from Bogotá and family members with no formation in music or education. The result was a great deal of stress and work for Martina. Although the teachers who

attended her workshops seemed to appreciate her approach, she felt that she been thrown in at the deep end and also cut adrift from any support system. After she had completed the course, when Martina was asked to fill in an online feedback form on the almost absent training process her answers were much less critical than she had been only minutes before in conversation with me. She seemed not to understand that through the official form the institution was attempting to access her own critical opinion as an individual. She selected 4 out of 5 for almost everything, so as "not to make anything look too bad." The Ministry of Culture would not know quite how lost and abandoned Martina (and reportedly many other instructors) had felt because she did not want nodes of the institution to distrust her as an overly critical employee. She did not trust in the supposed anonymity of the online feedback system.

Summary

My three case studies in this chapter show that young people in northern Colombia have benefitted to a degree from long-term grassroots responses to violence in the form of musical projects. In Ovejas, while battles boomed in the surrounding hills, young would-be gaiteros were given the opportunity to construct for themselves a sonically secluded space by making loud, engaging gaita music. I suggest this was a way to create an experiential state of peace that ran parallel to the conflict. Joche remembers this time as the beginning of his dedication to conflict transformation though music and the development of skills that would serve him to survive displacement later in life. He was able to avoid schoolboy scuffles, establish friendships, and develop skills for leading gaita groups, training gaiteros and making instruments.

In JSM young people have the opportunity to build friendships and skills for trusting others effectively within a framework of relatively clear rules, both within music making and

their broader social interaction as a group. These clear rules have provided a solid arena within which trusting is practiced and members develop habits that are generally conducive to non-violence towards the group, their families, neighbors, people in the region, country and beyond. However, the arbitrariness of many of those rules, and the active discouragement of critical thinking, coupled with some exclusionary tendencies of the group leader, limit the potential benefits of membership. Because the leader is a non-participant adult with significantly more economic capital than the members, it is difficult for her to avoid replicating in miniature some of the clientelistic power dynamics that are at the root of many forms of violence in Colombia. Members of JSM have stayed away from armed groups active in the region, but there is no clear indication that membership was the primary reason for them doing so. Reducing violence remains at best a secondary aim of groups like JSM, behind maintaining a musical practice that has come to be seen as a traditional art. These discourses of tradition and art tend to block the kind of critical thinking and action that could help combat exclusion and arbitrariness. Members benefit somewhat from the rare opportunities they take to bend and stretch the rules, generating moments of intense concentration and interpretation of each other's intentions, though such benefits are limited by the discouragement of this behavior.

In the musical activities of Fundesocial, participants partook of the kinds benefits offered by JSM and more. The musical activities were explicitly conceived as a means of reducing tension among the ex-combatants and helping them complete a broader process of reintegration into civilian life through education. Intense solo practice and mildly illicit group activities helped participants bond, even across the apparent divides of the armed conflict. Importantly, their musical activities also helped them relieve stress and anxiety in order to return to their studies refreshed. As a participant leader, Juche was able to the limit hierarchical aspects of the

assemblage to musical ability within the *gaita* and *bailes cantados* styles, generating a sense that in many ways he was simply another group member. Dedication, virtuosity and playfulness within musical interaction allowed some members, notably Simon, to develop a thick trusting relationship with Joche, which was the basis for kin-like support when Simon left the foundation. This bridge to life outside the institution was integral to Simon's ability to reintegrate into civilian life, but was never replicated for other *desvinculados*.³⁷ However, while he considered trying to make a living through music making, it fell out of his repertoire of activities as he began his professional life, and he is probably in a more stable position than Joche as a result.

Widespread clientelistic corruption at all levels of societal institutions leaves group leaders and *gestores* in a dilemma. One either engages and runs the risk of losing other people's trust, or remains an isolated patron. Project proposals are often left rotting on the horns of this dilemma, because of a one's political allegiance, or because one fails to utilize shrewd distrustful strategies. My interlocutors' engagement with state institutions has provided some support for their musical and social projects, as well as their professional development as educators, social workers and *gestores*. However, even if someone like Henry is able to access a course like the one Martina taught, there is very little guarantee it will be of any use. Instructors of such courses are almost entirely left to their own devices in developing ways to teach young people music like *gaita* and *tambora*, and even in developing ways to train those who do the teaching. While people like José, Joche, Martina, Idelsa and Henry have all come to incorporate a sense that music making can be a social good in reducing violence, it is understandable that they do not as yet have clear, tested, resilient methods for putting music to this end. In the following chapter I turn to an organization that I believe does, namely the *Legión del Afecto*.

³⁷ Any plans to develop Simon's experience into a replicable part of the program were scuppered by the cancellation of *Fundesocial*'s funding and responsibilities.

Chapter 5

A Radically Imbricated Peace

The short time I spent with the *Legión del afecto* while it was active in 2015 was among the most rewarding and exhausting of my fieldwork days. Even more than the other projects I have considered so far, the *Legión* works to build peace. However, the peace their members work to construct does not run *parallel* to the various forms of violence that characterize and spill out of Colombia's civil conflict. Rather, it is deeply *imbricated* with these layers of conflict, rubbing up against them at every turn. Members of the *Legión* work to generate *convivencia* (peaceful living together) between as many sectors of society as possible, including radically opposed factors, while grappling with some of the root causes of violent conflict in Colombia.

In this chapter I focus on three young people; Fauner Salas, who I had originally met in San Martín (see chapters 1 and 4), a friend and colleague of his who I call Jhonny, and a woman from Montes de María called Yuranis Arrieta. I initially recount a single event led by Fauner, discussing it in detail and in relation to the project of which it was a part, allowing a picture of the *Legión*'s structure and ethos to emerge out of this concrete example of their methodology. I then zoom out to consider the impact of the project on Jhonny's broader life, and the trajectory and possible futures of the *Legión* in Montes de María and across northern Colombia, through the experiences of other *Legión* members there.

I present the *Legión* as a fast-growing and ever changing assemblage whose members work to maximize horizontal power relations among themselves, which in turn help to generate critical reflection on the *Legión*'s work and foster improvement at every stage in service of the communities it works within and helps to build. Between 2003 and 2016 it also engaged

ambivalently with the state,¹ achieving yearly funding that allowed it to provide a social wage for established members, following the model of Jeremy Rifkin for a "third industrial revolution" through the voluntary sector (Rifkin 1995). Such engagement has required a degree of hierarchical structuring, but the *legión* consistently works against this in the intense interaction of its members, promoting horizontal power relationships between them. It strives to generate radical empathy through living together, performance that bridges presentational and participatory modes, and participant-lead multi-media ethnography. It is radically inclusive and assimilative, attempting to build a membership that includes young people from all points along the rural-urban spectrum, many of whom are avoided or excluded by other social projects, including one-time members of illicit armed groups.² Many people who become involved have transformative experiences and come to adopt central elements of the organization's ethos, strengthening their skills for pro-active, creative community service and the building of both thin and thick trusting relations and tendencies. I show how extended participation in the *Legión* helps some participants resignify musical practices they once associated with violence, and how a variety of musical practices helps them come to value the promotion of nonviolent conflict transformation.

Preparations

Fauner Salas was working as the main coordinator of a *Legión* project in Villanueva, Cesar, and there was an event planned in a small *vereda* (hamlet) outside the city. At its center was to be an *ágape* for the seven families who lived there: an act of love or giving,³ involving a communal

¹ In 2016 its funding was cut, apparently due to delays in filing accounts. Its current status is unclear.

² To help preserve the anonymity of some such *legionarios* I do not include any audiovisual material in this chapter.

³ Christopher Hitchens argues that the translation of *ágape* into English made popular by the King James Bible, namely "charity," is woefully insufficient, and that "love" is perhaps the closest rendering (Hitchens 2011).

meal and celebration prepared by the young members of the *Legión*. With Fauner, his three fellow coordinators, and a gaggle of kids from the various margins (geographical and social) of Villanueva, I spent a day rehearsing and an evening preparing our costumes. The entertainment was to include a variety of long-prepared theatrical pieces, and more recently put together music, as well as karaoke and social dancing. A *legionario volante* (established *Legión* member who travels to observe and assist with the events of ongoing projects across the country) visiting from Barancabermeja introduced himself as "Dhirty" (from the English "dirty") - an ironic nod to what people commonly thought of his dreadlocks, bare feet, and flesh-tunneled earlobes. His musical skills and mine allowed the group to expand its repertoire by including a *tambora* song, and a *cumbia* that Fauner would lead on the trombone he had bought with his first paycheck.

It was coming up to Christmas, so part of the week's budget had been spent on Santa hats, as well as colored card and glitter to decorate them. I formed a flexible production line with a young girl Sandra and her father, Sergio. From a rural area near Villanueva, they had been living in the city a few years and had become *legionarios* (*Legión* members) only three months ago when the Villanueva project began. We chatted as we cut out butterfly shapes from yellow card, then decorated them and stuck them to the hats, shifting roles whenever one of us got bored. The butterfly, which makes reference to Gabriel García Márquez's *Hundred Years of Solitude* (García

Interestingly, in a cursory 1893 essay on "Evolutionary Love" Peirce uses the term "agapastic evolution" to describe the process by which ideas, individual people, groups or historical eras achieve progress or growth through "cherishing-love" (a form of "thirdness" for Peirce) (Peirce 1955: 361-374). He equates this form of progress-through-love with his Christian God, and contrasts it with progress through "fortuitous variation" (firstness) and "mechanical necessity" (secondness), which he locates as the mechanisms of change in Darwinian evolutionary theory and the "gospel of greed" of late nineteenth century capitalist economics (Ibid: 364-365). I have not found any evidence that the *Legión*'s work is directly informed by Peirce's work. What is more likely is that they share common influences of Christian philosophy of change and progress, with resonances of the religious feasts held by early Christians, which were referred to as *agapes*. The *Legión* also seems more deeply informed by ancient Greek senses of *agape* (which spanned benevolence, saving power and sexual love) (Griffiths 1985), as well as those of twentieth century European and American political theorists such as Hannah Arendt (Arendt 1998; Chiba 1995).

Márquez 1967), is part of the *Legión*'s logo, the two wings superimposed with the profiles of two faces looking each other directly in the eye.



Figure 50: The logo and motto of the Legión (See, Hear, Feel)⁴

Viaje a pié: Journey on Foot

Those of us staying in the house that the coordinators currently called home slept only a few hours on thin mattresses spread on the floor before the truck arrived. Rickety and loud, it struggled through the first trip, piled high with chairs and the *legionarios* in charge of food. The second load of passengers was too heavy for its underinflated tires and the men got off at the point where the paved road became a dirt track. We were happy to do so and our journey became more properly a *viaje a pié* (journey on foot), which is part of the *Legión*'s philosophy for

⁴ From the organization's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/Legion-del-afecto-199110126778399/>

successful community engagement through performance. Dhirty explained the importance of the *viaje a pie* as a means of getting to know the land and showing solidarity with the people who call it home. His somatic knowledge of the many parts of Colombia he travelled to with the *Legión* was only heightened by his decision to go barefoot whenever possible: "It really gives you a sense of where you are. You get to know the difference between scorching concrete and cool, sandy earth" (p.c. December 2015).⁵

He and I walked with the rest of the men, mostly teenagers living in Villanueva. Some had grown up there. Others had been displaced from elsewhere and only recently housed in *las casitas* (the government houses on the outskirts of town provided for vulnerable families, especially displaced people). None complained about walking in the searing heat. They were excited about the that day's event, and abstained from their usual habit of hunting the huge iguanas that lounged across the branches above, because they knew free food was already being prepared. Levels of poverty in *las casitas* were critical and many families struggled to put more than one meal a day on the table, so today's meal was a welcome treat for them as much as the people we were visiting. Although this was part of their motivation, the *legionarios* were more excited about performing for the residents of the hamlet.

When we eventually met the returning truck, we jumped on and sped past the increasingly parched landscape. Scrub and brush became more and more scorched, and dominated by cactus, the reddish-brown soil, mostly exposed. Crops were rare, and the sporadic cows and goats were skinny. The few ponds were notably low. As we approached the hamlet we crossed a river bed that had clearly been dry for months, if not years. The department of *La Guajira* is famed for its arid landscape, but this year the drought had been particularly severe,

⁵ I discuss the broader significance of somatic knowledge (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017), and journeys on foot below (González Ochoa 1967).

especially for small hamlets like the one we were visiting. The dogs that greeted us off the truck bore the signs of hardship; ribs visible and tails tucked permanently between their legs.

Ágape: Making a Community (Meal)

Water was already on the boil over a fire in a hole dug in the ground. Earlier arrivers were marinating chicken and chopping vegetables under the direction of Mayra, one of the full time *Legión* coordinators stationed in Villanueva. The rest of us set about *limpiar* the ground where the performances and lunch were to take place (literally "cleaning," but in this context weeding with machetes and clearing away stones and rubble). The *Legion's* banner and balloons were strung up between trees that shaded the clearing, and the sound system was hooked up to a distant electricity source by a daisy chain of extension cables. Round tables were set in a long line, topped with table cloths, and surrounded by the ubiquitous white plastic chairs, which in sufficient number index "party."

Residents of the hamlet began arriving. Eleven houses were home to seven large families, though many members had moved away to Villanueva or further afield. Between locals and *legionarios*, we eventually numbered about fifty or sixty people of all ages. Some *legionarios* painted the faces of local children and other members, or politely invited older locals to sit and pass the time chatting. The idea had initially been to bring the residents of this hamlet together with people from another nearby hamlet, but they were busy with an event run by the state institution initiative *familias en su tierra* (Families on their Land), part of the government's efforts of land restitution for people displaced by the civil conflict.

Among our group the only signs of institutionality were the bright turquoise cap and vest worn by a "community leader" from Villanueva, emblazoned with a government crest. He

worked for the national *Departamento de Prosperidad Social* (DPS, Department of Social Prosperity), a government agency charged with the assistance and reparation of victims of violence, which oversees *familias en su tierra*. Dirthy and Fauner had debated with the representative forcefully the previous day when he asked to come along and put up a DPS pendant alongside that of the *Legión*. They were happy for him to be involved, but worried the pendant was an attempt to hijack the event, which they had worked to coordinate without direct assistance from the DPS. Fauner later explained to me:

In the *Legión* we're community working for community, that's why we don't wear institutional vests or anything. That kind of thing makes people wary of you because government institutions often come and do an event, take their pictures to prove they were there, and leave without really generating an impact for the community. (P.C. December 2015)

The DPS representative had come on the truck (and had, incidentally, not got off to walk with us), but had left the official pendant behind.

As we began to take our seats and serve each other food, people from the hamlet intermingled with those from Villanueva and places further afield. It was difficult to tell the *legionarios* from the hamlet residents. I have long been a skeptic of the overuse of the term "community" both in academia and third sector discourse.⁶ Nevertheless, I came to feel that at least during this event Fauner was right in one sense. It was not the case that the *legionarios* were members of an already constituted community, and were working for its benefit. Rather, everyone present was engaged in the process of making community a felt reality for everyone present, including themselves. The iconicity between *legionarios* and locals in their clothes,

⁶ Waylen et al. (2013), following Agrawal and Gibson (1999), argue that use of the term "community" in ecology makes three overly simplistic assumptions: "Firstly, that communities correspond with small spatial units; secondly, that they form a homogenous social structure; and thirdly, that community members share norms" (Waylen et al. 2013: 575). I believe these, or very similar assumptions underlie the overuse of the term by many NGO workers in Colombia in such ubiquitous phrases as: "We work with communities" "We go to communities" "We held a meeting with the community" "The community wants..."

painted faces, gestures, forms of address, and the mingling mealtime roles they took up, made it difficult to make or feel any distinctions.



Figure 51: Hamlet residents and legionarios sit to eat as some children play with instruments (back left).

Lenguajes Alternativos: Alternative "Languages"

After the meal – mounds of rice with noodles topped with chicken and potatoes in a thick tomato sauce – we cleared the tables out of the way and re-arranged the chairs in a large rough semicircle so that everyone had a "front row" seat for the upcoming entertainment. A senior *Legionario* called César, who was also visiting to monitor the progress of this project, began explaining the work of the *Legión*. But Dirthy interrupted him in brightly colored shoes, pipe-cleaner glasses, and cape for a solo clown act. There would be time for more serious reflection

later. Dirthy mocked the relative stiffness of Cesar before asking the audience for "*un aplauso*" (applause or claps). When they responded with raucous applause, he interrupted them: "*No! Dije un aplauso!*" (No! I said *one* clap!). The act continued in much the same vein, with variations on the request for claps, some practiced, some micro-improvised: "Now a watermelon clap - I just made that one up!" There was far more preamble than 'content,' and Dirthy took every opportunity to incorporate audience participation. He improvised with the string of balloons wilting in the sun, getting audience members to stand by the balloon that most closely resembled their belly. He even got the DPS man up for one section, dissolving his formality and giving him a big hug to show there were no hard feelings.

After a short pause, while faces were hurriedly painted behind a tree, the second act began. Over a looped stereotypically 'French clowning' backing track, eight *Legionarios* mimed a difficult bus journey. The driver was initially impatient as each successive passenger brought a different potential annoyance for him and his passengers. One was old and slow; a second had overpowering body odor; the third passenger, played by coordinator Jhonny, was transgender and bothered other passengers with outrageous flirting; another passenger was suffering with gas and let rip huge farts to the consternation of other passengers, and ripples of laughter from the crowd. However, the people on the bus helped each other, tolerated differences and potential annoyances and the bus driver made it to his destination without a major incident. Fauner offered an amplified voice-over explaining the moral of the story. "Even if people have differences or defects, we can learn to live with them." The piece ended with the actors grabbing kids from the audience, intercalating them in the line that had become "*el bus de la convivencia*" (the bus of peaceful-living-together) as it made an accelerated lap of the clearing-cum-stage, encircling the remaining seated audience members with movement and laughter.

The third section of entertainment was the 'folk music' set. Dirthy set up the *tambora* drum and I took a seat next to him to play the *tambor alegre*. The first song we played was a *tambora* made famous among 'folklore' aficionados by Martina Camargo, and originally written for a festival by her father Cayetano, called "*Las olas de la mar*" (The Waves of the Sea).⁷ Mayra sang, nervously at first, but after the first *bozá* section, she began getting into it, adding in lots of extra stock verses to stretch out the song. Later she explained that she had added the extra verses because she was enjoying the performance so much: "It took me back to my land." Mayra is from a small town near San Martín, on the opposite bank of the River Magdalena, and found it difficult being so far away from home for so long, especially because she had had to leave her two children with their grandmother.

We then played "*El pilón vallenato*," which exists in many recorded and aural versions and makes reference to the nearby city of Valledupar and its festival of *vallenato* accordion music. *Vallenato* is very popular in Villanueva, and a yearly festival is also hosted there, so the song was well chosen for local tastes. However, our version did not include accordion or a *vallenato* feel, but was rather led by Fauner on trombone, with Dirthy and I providing a *cumbia* groove.⁸ After two verses, following a visual cue to stop and short anacrusis from Fauner, we

⁷ The atypical length of the song's verse melody is indicative of its composition as a new song for a festival, and Cayetano Camargo's particular style of composition. The second melodic phrase lasts three-and-a-half cycles of the percussion's rhythmic pattern, rather than two or four, making each verse shift in relation to the groove. Furthermore, each verse has only three melodic lines rather than a standard four. However, the verses are syllabically regular, allowing for the substitution of stock octosyllabic quatrains. Listen to track 15 on *Tambora II - Música Tradicional Momposina* (Carbó 2005). In the version Martina recorded with the Bogotá-based jazz fusion group Alé Kumá, percussionists added an extra half-cycle to every fifth cycle of the eleven cycle sequence to make it align with the vocals in the same way for each verse. Listen to track 6 of *Cantaoras* (Alé Kumá 2002). The percussion enters with a full cycle part way through a verse at 00:23, then immediately plays the modified cycle beginning with two added beats. Groups with a more presentational focus tend to preserve this quirk of the Alé Kumá recording. In the performance with the *Legión* we did not.

⁸ It has become relatively common to interpret some commercial accordion and big band music this way. One of singer Totó la Momposina's most famous songs is a "roots cumbia" version of "*El (alegre) pescador*" (The (Happy) Fisherman). Originally composed by José Barros for big band, and later popularized in accordion versions, the song was interpreted by Totó in a format much like that of the festival tambora discussed in chapters 2 and 4, with only vocals and percussion, and minimal arrangement. Track three on *La Candela Viva* (Totó la Momposina 1993).

switched to the fast, six-beat feel of *mapalé* (see figure 27), to shouts of encouragement from the rest of the group. We returned to the *cumbia* groove for more verses sung alternately by Fauner and Mayra.

At this point an elderly gentleman from the audience stood up to sing a semi-improvised verse. His friends and family in the audience responded with applause. In contrast to the uncommon metric and rhyme scheme of "*Las olas de la mar*", the familiar rhythmic framework and melodic contour of "*El pilón vallenato*," so similar to many other *vallenatos* and *cumbias* (notably "*La cumbia cieneguera*"), allowed the man to accommodate his octosyllabic quatrain, repeating the first line before introducing the rhyming compliment, which we all repeated. His gestures were mildly dramatic, and typical of "folk" singers in both presentational and participatory settings – a sweeping hand movement accented key words and drew some attention to him as lead singer – but he mainly faced the other musicians, rather than the seated audience. His intentions were participatory, and we all understood them as such. Some more of the seated locals got up to dance, forming tightly embraced, mixed-sex couples, lazily swaying a side-to-side two-step, the way most people dance *vallenato*, *cumbia*, and *salsa* in *La Costa*. Even the DPS man joined in, getting up to contribute a verse, smiling at the older gentleman as he sang, turquoise cap in hand.

Fauner had a quick change into a flowing white shirt before the final musical number. He calls such pieces "*coreografías*" (choreographies), but I would describe them as silent acted scenes set to music, in this case a slow-building US pop-rock ballad. Mayra played the role of a young woman in a rural idyll. Fauner was a semi-divine servant figure bringing her fruit and everything she could need for survival and comfort. Then came other men to tempt her away from him and her Eden with dancing, alcohol and drugs. Fauner watched on, pleading for her to

stop, but she was too wrapped up in the temptations to notice him, The last man, played by Jhonny, threatened her, physically abused her, encouraged her to self-harm, and put a gun in her hand. She was clearly at the point of suicide. As the rousing chorus began, Fauner threw Mayra a rope and tried to pull her towards him. The others formed a barrier between them. Mayra ran at the wall of people, hurling herself towards Fauner, but she was pushed back by the human wall every time, until with an act of superhuman strength, Fauner forced them to the floor and Mayra was able to run to his embrace.

At moments I had found the music clichéd and the Christian overtones clear almost to the point of trite, but as I looked around the impassive audience I noticed the piece had been affectively effective. My eyes watered with the emotive power of the acting and its close combination with the recorded music, and I was not the only one. There was not a dry eye in the house. There was no voice-over, no imposition of a particular interpretation; the audience were invited to interpret for themselves. This was an artwork inspired by Mayra's own struggles with depression, Fauner's observation of despondency and hope in San Martín and the places he had worked with the *Legión*, as well as online Christian Rock videos.

A Time for Breaking Silences

Now came chances for *legionarios* and residents to reflect together. We all stood and held hands to form a circle. César continued his explanation of the origins and work of the *Legión* that had been interrupted earlier. He thanked everyone who had been involved in the event and invited comments. This was to be a moment of quiet reflection and explicit expression of thanks. After a short silence he initiated things with a prayer to his patron saint. He explained that our contributions need not be religious, but that it was important to him as an individual. People from

the hamlet followed his lead, some giving thanks to their God, others directly to the young people who had organized the day's event. Many members of the *Legión* also spoke, thanking the residents for accepting their presence and for helping to make possible such moments of peaceful fun and living together, loaded with acts of sharing and powerful emotion.

Sergio, the oldest *Legionario* present, took the opportunity to thank the *Legión* as a whole and encourage everyone present to remain dedicated to its philosophy. In the final act, he had played the part of a drunk, and I had found his contribution particularly moving. Now he explained that he had never considered getting involved in a project like this one; the idea of acting had initially struck him as alien to the point of ludicrous. He had lived most of his life as a *campesino*. His calloused hands, sparse collection of teeth, and skills with a machete attested to this. He had been forced to move to the city and found it difficult to pick up work, but was intent on giving his daughter the best possible life there. The social wage of the *Legión* was a start. He also felt his skills and opinions were valued in his broader work with the organization. He enjoyed dedicating his time to people in need around him. All the while he was strengthening his relationship with his daughter and involving her in a voluntary organization he had come to value highly for these artistic endeavors and the broader socially-focused activities they realized.

I reflected that through the drama he was able, if only briefly, to represent a possible life through affectively powerful non-linguistic communication, and through the reflection afterwards show that while the life of a drunkard is a possibility for him, he works for an alternative. Through ongoing participation in the *Legión* he was modeling for his daughter, and helping her experience, a life of using one's skills for a positive social impact. The repetition of

the *Legión*'s cycle of preparation, performance and reflection had helped him build self-confidence in his ability to be such a positive model.⁹

The circle-time ended with hugs, applause and more tears wiped from cheeks. Fauner put some music on the P.A. system and the drained actors formed a tight circle for a group hug full of smiles. Some of the young people went to play football, others danced to the *champeta* that was now blasting over the P.A., or sang the interspersed karaoke songs. I joined César, two coordinators and some of the older residents to sit and talk in the shade of a palm-thatched lean-to a little distance away. This was not idle chitchat, however. The *legionarios* were taking notes as the locals talked. The lunch and performances had to some extent been a protracted icebreaker for one of the key tenets of the *Legión*'s work. They were carrying out ethnographic research and detailed interviews with community leaders.

This section of the day was what the *Legión* calls the *piel a piel* (literally skin-to-skin). The phrase implies genuine human contact without institutional barriers, made possible only after repeatedly wearing away institutional pretences and the distrust of locals through prior visits and the playful, somewhat participatory nature of the performances. Perhaps the DPS worker had begun the process of breaking down such barriers by participating in the singing and removing his hat, but the *Legión* is designed to prevent them from forming in the first place. During a *piel a piel* session, *legionarios* spend time with locals, using all their senses, to pay close attention to them, eliciting their concerns, difficulties and fears. At these moments they are most concerned to apply their motto of "see, hear, feel." Our interlocutor on this occasion was a strong-willed Indigenous lady who is seen as an informal leader among residents of the hamlet.

⁹ The feature film *Mateo*, directed by María Gamboa (2014), narrates a story of the transformative potential of drama for young people in northern Colombia. The protagonist's transformation resonates with Sergio's experience, but bears even closer resemblance to that of Jhonny (below).

Sitting by and occasionally adding to her comments were her quiet husband, some of their children, and grandchildren.

We listened intently and César asked pertinent questions about the difficulties locals were currently facing. It was at this point we uncovered more information about the demographics of the hamlet, their forms of subsistence, and the reason the river now ran dry, according to the local elders. About eight years ago, cattle ranchers upstream had channels dug to divert the water to their land for irrigation. Since then, even in the wet seasons, when the river would historically burst its banks, it had run dry. Beyond issues of water scarcity, older people were concerned about younger generations, most of whom had moved to Villanueva or cities further afield. Residents who had stayed also felt exposed to the waves of armed groups that passed through the area. They were perhaps most worried about the ever-increasing amounts of land nearby planted with uniform rows of African palm for palm oil production. They were acutely aware that the monocultures leach nutrients out of the soil, and the pesticides used on them harm the ecology of the surrounding area. They knew too that palm developments thrive in areas where the paramilitaries have established a foothold, and were worried about encroachments on their own land, and the likely violent repercussions. As Arturo Escobar writes: "the spread of the oil palm is effected by force through violence and displacement; indeed, along with coca cultivation, the oil palm has become the primary motivation for displacement in many parts of the Pacific [coastal region of Colombia]" (Escobar 2008: 72). Furthermore, across the country, palm oil companies "increased the pace of land appropriation after 1999, with the help of paramilitaries and the resources of the largely U.S.-funded Plan Colombia" (Ibid: 80). Locals knew increased oil palm production in their region would likely result in physical and structural violence, by way

of imposed changes to their lifeways (Asher 2009: 23), as well as intimidation, land appropriation, displacement and death.

This was a social space for unsilencing. Importantly it happened in a manner that was detached from official government schemes, such as *Grupos de Memoria Histórica* (Groups of Historical Memory).¹⁰ This conversation echoed to some degree the one I had with the *gaiteros* Jota and Tiberio (see chapter 3). However, on this occasion there were no hushed voices. The people present were disclosing close personal information, and thereby thickening the trust they had already built (Aguilar 1984, Fine and Holyfield 1996), but were doing so without feeling the need to present the information as secret, or apparently to hush any details. The *legionarios* did not need me there to carry out this applied ethnography, but welcomed the few questions I asked. This paralleled the way they welcomed my musical input to the event, but would have realized a performance in some form without me.

When our conversations came to a natural close, and football players and dancers were too tired to carry on, we loaded the chairs, tables and as many people as possible onto the truck. I walked with the second group again. It was dark by the time we reached the halfway point, and there was no sign of our truck. We managed to hitch a ride with a group of evangelical Christians who had been to a nearby hamlet on a missionary trip. They gave us all bibles and told us about the benefits of a life dedicated to Jesus. They were less interested to ask what we had been doing, or the struggles of the people we had visited.

¹⁰ Regional work groups formed by the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* (National Center of Historical Memory). The CNMH is a state institution operating under the auspices of the DPS, to collect and publish testimonies of victims of the conflict.

Reflecting on the event

César and Dirthy were leaving the next morning, so critical reflections with them had to be carried out the same night. Most of the *legionarios* had gone home, so only the coordinators and a couple of clingers-on were left at the house. Some of us made dinner listening in as César began the reflection session with Fauner. The Villanueva project was his first as lead-coordinator, and César was complementary, but insisted there was much he could improve upon: Residents of the hamlet clearly enjoyed and appreciated the event. Fauner and the other coordinators had done a good job of integrating local young people into the group, though some of them had been slacking off during the early stages of the day. Did they fully understand the importance of active participation? The performances were fun, apt, and moving. Spaces for talking, reflecting and the *piel a piel* had been worthwhile. Face painting could be done much earlier. Not only would it avoid the gaps in the show that broke its flow, but it would also help reinforce some key principles of the *Legión*'s work. Remember, face-paints, costume, music making, and fun were the group's *blindaje* (literally bulletproofing). When going into a new, potentially resistant or dangerous area, arriving already made-up and performing helps dissolve distrust towards the newcomers. It had even got César and other *legionarios* through some serious scrapes with illicit armed groups in the past. Clowns are unthreatening, so they can pass through checkpoints and barriers of distrust to allow *legionarios* to access isolated communities.

The *viaje a pie* is important to undertake as a group when possible. It arose as a *Legión* method out of the work of philosopher Fernando Gonzalez, who wrote about traveling on foot as a form of knowing a country through engagement with its topography, beauty, people and other living things (González Ochoa 1967 [1929]). It helps undercut the threat that a group on a truck might signify to isolated communities, much like face paints and musical performance. It also

helps *legionarios* get to know the lives of the people they are working for by walking the paths they walk. However, if it's not logically sensible, Fauner should make arrangements for reliable transport. The budget can always be expanded if necessary. What other events did they have organized for the week? *Aerorumba* (aerobics framed as a party, rather than exercise, a little like *zumba*) and community trash collecting sounded like a good start, but the young people needed more to keep them occupied. Coordinators shouldn't forget to have them reflect on today's event and produce *relaterías* (accounts in any format – a written text, a poem, a song, a drawing, photos etc. – including reflections on their personal experience of the event). Fauner was responsible for collecting these and sending a selection with his report to head office in Bogotá.¹¹

Going forward, some elements from today's performance could be integrated into the group's show for the upcoming national seminar. Every active project across the country was sending a delegation to attend the talks and perform. Did Fauner and his team have a concept for their performance? Had they decided which members from Villanueva would be attending? The logistics needed to be finalized soon. How much reading was the group doing? They were clearly rehearsing a lot and doing well on the organization of events, but it was important to be informed and actively engaged on a conceptual level. A weekly reading group would be a good start. César could send them some material to begin with. He turned to me as he recommended the U.S. social theorist Jeremy Rifkin and Colombian polymath Fernando González. They were fundamental to the structure, aims and ethos of the *Legión*. For Fauner and co., however, more

¹¹ Yuranis Arrieta (see below) explained this aspect of *legionarios*' activities: "It's a great opportunity to record the events from the participants' perspective. Not everyone likes to write, which is why they can do it in any format, but some people love writing and hardly ever have the opportunity." (p.c. February 2016). This is not a case of illiterate peasants engaging with the "lettered city" (Ochoa Gautier 2014) from their common position of disadvantage. It is people mainly from more urban zones making the effort to understand people mainly from more rural zones through the latter's means of expression.

important than learning the basis of the organization, was to be actively debating how best to serve the communities they were working with.

The Growth, Structure, and Funding of the *Legión*

That night, César was only able to explain to me briefly the origins, development and current structure and ethos of the *Legión*, but interviews and research since has helped fill out the picture I present here. In one especially insightful article Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya track the *Legión's* growth, identifying an attitudinal ambivalence whereby members are caught between being "do-gooders," or saviors of the communities they work in, and "parces," buddies or comrades accompanying fellow community members in a shared struggle (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017). I bring to bear Arturo Escobar's discussion of social movements in Colombia to present core *legionarios* as attempting to negotiate and balance organization along two distinct lines; as a self-organizing meshwork and a hierarchy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; de Landa 1997; Escobar 2008). I also show the centrality of the analysis of Jeremy Rifkin to their projects, and how music making helps them achieve their aims.

The *Legión* began in and around the city of Medellín in the early 2000s.¹² The 1990s had been a time of extreme violence for the region (Brodzinsky and Schoening 2012: 109-10). In response, a loose coalition arose between a peasant farmers association and a solidarity movement involving urban ex-gang-members. *Campesinos* were being displaced from rural zones and arriving in the city with nothing and no support network. The ex-gang-members wanted to find a way of forging a life outside the illicit groups that controlled the poor neighborhoods of the city. From its beginnings, then, the *Legión's* central aims included bridging

¹² Haynes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya date its beginnings to 2003 (2017: 1, footnote 1).

apparent and real divides between rural and urban areas by highlighting shared histories of marginalization, and generating active solidarity. The *Legión* grew out of this coalition into a nation-wide network with an administrative center in Bogotá. Each year they begin new projects in strategic points across the country where violence has hit hard.

According to a press release from the DPS, the *Legión* seeks to:

[g]enerate spaces for social inclusion and reconciliation of vulnerable populations, and victims of violence, at risk, and marginalized, through the implementation of communal methods of mass social accompaniment that contribute towards making visible and promoting leadership skills and civic participation, reconstructing life projects and social fabric, the design of dignified legal opportunities adjusted to contexts of living, the improvement of peaceful living together, the construction of trust, and the delegitimization of alternatives in these populations and communities at high risk, namely violence and illegality (Triana 2007).

The ethos, methodology and structuring of the *Legión* is tangibly influenced by the writings of Jeremy Rifkin. In his monograph *The End of Work* Rifkin argues that in the near future, great swathes of the human population will be rendered obsolete in the market economy, due to increased automation of blue- and white-collar jobs in both rural and urban sectors (Rifkin 1995). He forecasts two alternative outcomes: a violent chaos in which those with access to the benefits of increased productivity barricade themselves away in an attempt to protect themselves from a huge disenfranchised underclass; or a humanist utopia with more equitable sharing of the benefits of increased production and the employment of the masses in the social sector, for the benefit of their communities. Although Rifkin's main focus is the USA, leaders of the *Legión* see elements of the former scenario already playing out in Colombia and are attempting to induce a paradigm shift towards the latter.

For Rifkin and *legionarios*, third sector work in service of one's community is "a revolutionary alternative to traditional forms of labor", based in voluntary helping or accompanying of others, stemming from a "deep understanding of the interconnectedness of all things" and "a personal sense of indebtedness" (Ibid: 242). It is a social exchange, though often

with mutual benefit for benefactor and beneficiary. It benefits one's community, but also helps develop a sense of self, and provides an emancipatory alternative to materialist consumption (Ibid: 244-5). Thus it provides an alternative notion of value to that which is typically foregrounded in capitalist cultural formations. Rifkin borrows from French social scientists of the 1980s, who wrote of a possible "social economy" where one's value is not linked to potential productivity as labor, but to the capacity to improve the lives of others (Jeantet 1986). Within this alternative value system, changes considered "improvements" are in the quality of life of citizens, such as the degree of inter-generational solidarity in a neighborhood. These may bring indirect economic gains, but, argue Jeantet, Rifkin and *legionarios*, far more important is the direct benefit to people's lives.

For Rifkin, extended work within third or independent sector organizations can forge new bonds of trust between worker and community and a commitment to the welfare of others (Rifkin 1995: 258). From this position, voluntary groups can carry out a broad range of direct functions from health to the arts (Ibid: 240), but also foster integration and civil participation, spiritual or therapeutic relief from everyday life, as well as play and relaxation (Ibid: 245). Visionaries like those leading the *Legión* take a holistic view of humanity and the earth, acting for the benefit of the whole against market visions (Ibid: 247). People deeply engaged in this third sector work would be motivated primarily by a kind of reciprocity that goes beyond or combines Sahlins' three ideal types (see chapter 4). One's motivation and desires, and those of the people one works for, would ideally interact and come to converge such that self gain is not distinct from the selfless giving of unsolicited aid. This is observable in the description above in the way young *legionarios* from Villanueva wanted to perform and cook for the residents of the hamlet, thereby benefitting from the selfless effort of putting on the *ágape*. Importantly, this

merging of desires is comprehended somatically through what Hayes-Conroy and Saenz call bodily resonance, a kind of group corporeal judgment of positivity (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017: 9). *Legionarios* experience and inscribe these desires and the fun of their work in their mobilized bodies; from their smiling painted faces, through their aching dancing muscles, to their perceptive persevering feet, and their multiple senses, applied attentively in ethnographic engagement.

Although *legionarios* explicitly describe their work as anti-capitalist, they realize they are operating within a broader society that is highly permeated by a virulent form of late capitalism, and they engage with successive governments that have worked hard to promote such capitalism. Rifkin argues that empowering the third sector to generate the "third industrial revolution" requires government intervention. He suggests governments pay third-sector workers a social wage (Ibid: 258-262), but that they leave management to independent organizations, whose members are better equipped to tailor services to the needs of the local communities and social groups they serve (Ibid: 265). The discourse of *legionarios* suggests this is exactly the relationship that the *Legión* has managed to negotiate with the Colombian government. The *Legión* received funding from the state through the DPS (the very same institution that employed the turquoise-vested man) but central government institutions have never set its agenda. Rather, *legionarios* themselves direct projects and organize for consistent participants to be paid a social wage (hence Fauner's new trombone). *Legionarios* typically strive to demonstrate independence from government institutions, their representatives, and many of their policies and ideals, offering local coordinators a high degree of autonomy to manage their projects, recruiting new members, and adapting their aims and methods to the requirements of specific sites.

The DPS, in contrast, claims more agency in the *Legión*'s projects. In one press release, it describes the *Legión* as "under the responsibility of the DPS" (Triana 2007). Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya argue that in an apparent paradox, the *Legión* had greater autonomy under the more extremist Uribe administration than the more recent Santos government, which, at least with regard to the civil conflict, maintained a more conciliatory agenda (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017). The Santos administration took greater control of peacebuilding programs and required more legibility and accountability of the *Legión*. Unfortunately for the *Legión*, this may restrict its capacity to work against government policies that threaten the people they work with. For example, it is likely less able to overtly empower communities to resist the economic violences the Santos administration wishes to impose on Colombian citizens through the economic models requiring the expansion of industrial agriculture such as palm oil production.

According to Manuel de Landa's model of network types, the *Legión* negotiates two distinct forms of organization (de Landa 1997; 2003; Escobar 2008: 274). One is strategically hierarchical: The *Legión* now has a core administrative team and headquarters in Bogotá for ease of engagement with central government and the organization of projects across the country. Members are promoted to positions of increasing responsibility as they gain more experience, becoming coordinators like Fauner Salas, *legionarios volantes* like Dhirty, or national coordinators like César. However, *legionarios* also strive to maintain as horizontal a power-structure as possible within the organization. Fauner recounted an anecdote of the time he made friends with a person he thought was "just another *legionario*" only to find out later that day that he was the organization's national director. Fauner was perplexed by his mode of interacting with and listening to the other young *legionarios* because it contrasted so strongly with the leadership styles that he had experienced before (see chapter 4). To the degree that this form of organization

undercuts the experience of hierarchy for participants, the *Legión* is a self-organizing meshwork, or rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), comprising "networks of heterogeneous elements that grow in unplanned directions, following the real-life situations they encounter" (Escobar 2008: 274). This structural characteristic, combined with and generated out of the *Legión*'s methodology, contributes to its effectiveness in responding to local needs in the locales where it works.

The musical practices the *Legión* realized in Villanueva are a clear reflection of this structure. We rehearsed pieces of music following the lead of Fauner and the other coordinators in preparation for a presentational performance at the *ágape*, but when a resident joined in, we switched to a participatory mode, all attentive to the needs of all participants as the event grew in unplanned directions. Such musical practices do not simply reflect, but also help to promote both forms of organization. Young people typically first become involved as spontaneous participants, becoming more integral to planning and the hierarchy of the organization if they continue actively participating and displaying the desired commitment to its aims. I argue below that participatory musical frames help coordinators avoid imposing particular forms of action and work to maintain horizontal power relationships that nurture creative approaches and increase participation in initiatives for social transformation.

Continued Work and Relaxation: Responding to Local and National(ist) Forces

The morning after the *ágape* we arose at dawn for a community trash pick and weeding session along the road that traces the perimeter of *las casitas*. This was at the request of residents who were frustrated at the local government's inability or refusal to maintain the area clean. All the *legionarios* from the previous day were there, plus a few of their friends and more volunteers

from *las casitas*. Kids remembered yesterday's performances and meal as they filled refuse bags with discarded plastic bottles and other waste thrown on the overgrown verge. Those skilled with a machete cut back weeds and chipped grass out of the cracks in the sidewalk. There was more of an effort to weed and cut back than pick up trash, which was not Fauner's initial intention, because most of the people involved have a rural background, where "*limpiar*" (clean) means to cut back weeds in preparation for planting, rather than clear away trash. The *legionarios* were negotiating the tensions of a life between rural and urban paradigms, not always unproblematically.

In the afternoon we relaxed and listened to music, including the album-length CD produced by the *Legión*, which gave me a preview of how the upcoming national seminar might sound. The album is a compilation of recordings by groups from around the country and its variety is audible. *Bullerengues* and vallenatos about violence and land redistribution sound alongside the harp-driven *música llanera* from the eastern plains, Pacific coast *marimba* tunes, and highland *bambucos* on *tiple* and *bandola*. The influence of festivalized "traditional" music is evident, but many of the tracks go beyond the restrictions of festival formats. *Chirimía* procession band music from the northern Chocó region of the Pacific coast is fused with rap; there are various straightforward hip hop tracks with socially conscious lyrics rapped over midi loops; and various guitar-based pop ballads. The overall effect was a blend of politically critical messages about the current state of the nation with a multiculturalist utopian soundscape of what the nation could be; the regional folklorized particulars creatively indexed within a cosmopolitan high-fidelity frame.

The CD ends with its most explicitly conservative nationalist track, a version of the national anthem interpreted on Colombian *tiple*. This twelve-stringed lute is typically used to

play the *bambucos* and *pasillos* that were projected as the national music from the highland interior of the country in the early twentieth century before "tropical" styles of big band cumbia and porro largely came to supersede them in nationalist discourses (Wade 2000: 50-52). One of the *legionarios* always skipped this track, jumping back to the beginning of the album: a tropical pop song sounding much like the output of Carlos Vives in the 1990s (Ibid: 216-218). This track combines champeta-influenced arpeggiated guitar lines and drum beats with strummed acoustic guitar, occasional organ, first-person, rapped verses about rejecting gang life, and a catchy sung chorus: "*Somos Legión del afecto brindandote amor, somos Legión del afecto abre tu corazón*" (We're the Legion of Affection offering you love, we're the Legion of Affection open up your heart).¹³

Through a combination of musicology's complex historical intertwining with nationalist projects of research, composition and folklore (Nettl 2010: 3-21), ethnomusicology's deep commitment to understanding culturally-relative significance, and the power of music in processes of group identification, ethnomusicologists have been uniquely positioned to analyze nationalism. Many of their contributions to understanding how nationalism works have been outstanding (see for example Austerlitz 1997; Turino 2000; Askew 2002; Meintjes 2003; Turino 2003; Hellier-Tinoco 2011). Much of the more effective recent literature on music and peacebuilding still focuses within this realm of nationalism and nation-building (Cooper 2010; Miller 2012; McDonald 2014). On the face of it, the *Legión* CD might seem to provide nothing new to analyze. However there are two reasons we should take note here. Firstly, as Kevin C. Miller's work in Fiji shows, there are often striking differences between nationalist musical projects for peace imposed from above and grassroots outcomes of genuine peaceful living together bubbling up from below (Miller 2012). The *Legión*'s CD sonically includes elements of

¹³ Listen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xpm94D1gnig>

both. Also, as Lise Waxer shows, in the age of mechanical (or digital) reproduction of music, the ways people listen to recordings can have greater impact on their ways of being than what is on the recording (Waxer 2002). By consistently skipping over the more explicitly nationalist track, *legionarios* diminished its impact on them, rejecting its conservative associations with the country's historically powerful interior, and focused on the power of people more like them, making sounds more like their own, to forge a non-violent utopia in the country's territory.

Listening to and making music with messages of love, fun, social justice and civic participation is a central way in which *legionarios* learn the organization's ethos and methodology. In the following two sections I elucidate this process of learning, adoption and application through the cases of Fauner Salas, to that of Jhonny and the other Villanueva coordinators, before zooming out further to consider the work of the *Legión* across the region.

Integration into the *Legión*: Ethos and Methodology

Fauner Salas' assimilation into the *Legión* is quite typical of members at his depth of involvement. It shows that the *Legión* offers opportunities for young people with creative and leadership skills to become increasingly active in their work. Fauner first became aware of the organization when there was a project active in and around his hometown of San Martín de Loba.

So I'm walking down the street and I see a group of friends. Some from here, some from the neighboring town, Barranco. They're playing drums, and they're headed towards some of the most vulnerable neighborhoods here. I ask them what they were doing and they explain it's a project using the arts to *resocializar* (literally re-socialize)¹⁴ those young people that are stigmatized by society, excluded. (P.C. 2015)

¹⁴ The term "*resocializar*" can simply mean allowing a person to socialize again (i.e. return to spending time with friends). However, it can also imply the re-adaptation of that person to the norms of their social group or the adaptation of the social group to accept the person. Applied to other objects, it can connote nationalization, as in the de-privatization of an industry or company, such as a bank. Finally, it can mean to make available to the masses something that is generally available only to a minority of people (e.g. to *socializar* an art exhibition is to publicize it widely so the general public attend). In this case, to *socializar* the young people who are generally stigmatized

Because Fauner had an interest in reaching out to vulnerable residents of San Martín, and also the willingness and capacity to participate in the musical practice the young people were engaged in, he went with the group. He later attended other such events in and around San Martín, participating in the music making. As he became more engaged, it became clear that the person leading the project in San Martín was either unable or unwilling to fulfill her role properly. It was then that other members of the *Legión* began involving Fauner more in the leadership of their activities, and helping him understand their methodology and terminology. They had noticed the signs of his trustworthiness with these tasks and increasingly trusted him to take them on:

My friends [who were already more involved] came to me once and told me I had the qualities they looked for and that I already had lots of *lenguajes alternativos* (alternative "languages"). At that point I didn't know what they meant by that phrase - maybe the ability to speak well. Little by little I became more aware of what the *Legión* is, and its methodology. I realized that *lenguajes alternativos* are our bulletproofing, or our weapon, to get close to communities. While some people pick up rifles, machine guns, and mortars, we pick up a musical instrument. That's our weapon to get through to people who really need it. (Ibid)

The resonance of Fauner's last statement with David McDonald's work on music as a weapon, is palpable (McDonald 2014). However, whereas McDonald is principally concerned with music about and as a form of direct resistance against oppressive regimes, Fauner here considers music as a form of bulletproofing, and musical instruments as the necessary weapons to gain access to people caught in the crossfire between state and non-state aggressors.

involves offering them the opportunity to identify themselves to others as non-threatening and trustworthy by contiguity and iconicity. The *Legión* allowed them to spend time with others in a relaxed public environment, to make the social groups of which they are a part (local and national) more aware of their existence, perhaps to have them adapt their behavior closer to the norms of those social groups, and in some sense to bring them under the domain of the state. Some activists and scholars would argue this last sense is problematic because making people and the places they occupy legible to the nation increases the potential for the state to exercise power over them (Asher 2009). Conversely, if such people are ever to demand of the state the rights theoretically guaranteed to them, they must first be legible to the state and participate in civic life. Furthermore, some of the young people the *Legión* targets for "resocialization" are theoretically already highly legible to the state as registered displaced people or demobilized ex-armed combatants, but are at constant risk of falling out of the state's perceptual field as it fails fully to carry out its responsibilities to them.

Within the lexicon of the *Legión* the phrase "*lenguajes alternativos*" (alternative languages) denotes various creative performance practices that can be staged or performed in more participatory settings like processions. They include mime, clowning, and other forms of drama, music making, including dance, fire-breathing, juggling and magic tricks. According to my analysis these are not languages, but games or game-like activities (some more serious than others, some more musical than others, all highly embodied). However, I respect the lexis of the *Legión* as the term "alternative languages" captures a central feature of these activities, which is their ability to communicate, and to circumvent the prejudice that poor youth are highly illiterate. The *Legión* gives them the opportunity to engage in communicative activities in which they already display high levels of communicative skill, or can quickly develop.

Fauner was a skilled practitioner of various *lenguajes alternativos* prior to his involvement in the *Legión*. He was a member of the festival tambora group *16 de Diciembre* (see chapter 1), as well as *Juventud Sanmartinense* (see chapter 4). However, he came to find festivalized tambora creatively restrictive and socially unfulfilling. In the *Legión* he was able to combine the abilities he developed for playing and dancing tambora with two further skill sets; on the one hand the broader skills he had previously kept separate, and on the other those involved in committed community service. As a child he learned to play various band instruments when the *casa de la cultura* employed a band leader to teach young people. He further developed these skills by playing with the municipal band *Once de Noviembre* for religious processions, bullfights and celebrations. He taught himself to play the *pito atravesao* (idioglotal cane clarinet) (figures 3 and 24). He also formed a youth dance group and enjoyed choreographing dances to popular recorded music for "cultural events" like school graduations and *las novenas*. He sang in the church choir for a time, and later formed a small pop-ballad

group in which he was the lead vocalist. All of the skills he developed through these diverse musical activities were useful in the *Legión*.

Fauner participated in successive *Legión* projects that were increasingly challenging, took him further from his hometown, and gave him the opportunity to meet a greater variety of people. He found the new challenges balanced well with his increasing skills and he enjoyed his involvement in the *Legión* immensely for its own sake as a long-term flow activity (Csikszentmihaly 2008), as well as a worthwhile pursuit. He eventually began attending the yearly national seminars that allowed him to learn more about the philosophy of the *Legión* and its articulation with the intersecting currents of conflict in the country. In 2014 he was invited to go to the nearby city of El Banco, Magdalena, where he had an encounter that tested, but eventually reaffirmed and strengthened his dedication to the project:

We went to do what we call a "*lectura de territorio*" ("territorial reading"), which is where you get to populations and start to *visibilizar*.¹⁵ That's one of the things the *Legión* is; seeing the invisible. We see what the state ignores through fear of going to those isolated places. We have a motto: "see, hear and feel." That's what the *Legión* is about, seeing, listening to, and getting a feel for the communities [we work with]. We stayed there two weeks. El Banco is a small place, but it suffers a lot with invisible barriers. Lots of people who live there can't go from one neighborhood to the next. There are a lot of muggings.¹⁶

One thing we do in the *Legión* is to get the things we need through people. We call it "*transversalidad*" ("transversality" or resting across various supports – depending on multiple people to reduce the relative load on each individual). It involves exchange – I give you this, you give me that. If a community helps us with some things we need, we go there to help them. I remember someone had lent me a mattress and a person next to me had nowhere to sleep. I said: "Come and rest next to me." The next day we were all introducing ourselves and the guy who had shared my mattress explained that he was an ex-paramilitary. When he demobilized the people who had been part of that group carried on committing crime and they called on him to be part of all that – not as the AUC any more, but as the *Águilas Negras* (Black Eagles, a neo-paramilitary and organized crime group (see chapter 4)). When he found out about the *Legión* he got out of it all. He still received offers to participate, but he said "no."

To tell you the truth I felt pretty uncomfortable. The next night when we went to sleep I couldn't believe I was lying next to someone who'd probably killed people. Even my grandfather was

¹⁵ Legionarios use this term to mean noticing, and making visible to others, those young people who are often ignored, marginalized, or silenced in society, for instance demobilized ex-insurgents, or ex-counter-insurgents, gang members, the very poor, or people who do not identify with strict local norms of sexuality, gender etc.

¹⁶ On invisible barriers or borders in urban settings and the ambivalence of gang power, see Taussig 2003 and González Bolaños 2011.

killed by the paramilitaries. He was an old-timer in his 70s and they killed him in such a vile manner. So I couldn't help thinking, "What if the guy next to me is an assassin?"

But he showed signs of the change he talked about. One of the seminars we went to was all about the River Magdalena: The myths and legends, its influence as a means of transport, and even – it's hard to talk about, but it's the truth – as a cemetery. The largest cemetery in Colombia is called "the River Magdalena" unfortunately. So we went to Magangué. I made a friend there who was from Sucre. She told us about how she had left her hometown because of the massacres. In one of them, fifteen people were killed. The girl, with all that sentiment, cried as she told her story. At one point the ex-paramilitary left us. I found him a little way away and asked him what had happened. He said: "I was part of that occupation." That was... I remember so clearly how he went up to the girl and told her. It was incredible. That's one of the toughest things I've ever seen. The girl said she forgave him. He said he hadn't wanted to do it, that he'd received orders, that if he didn't do it, he would have been killed. They hugged, both of them crying. That was incredible.

Powerful moments like the one Fauner describes of sharing stories – especially secrets – admitting culpability, and forgiving are not necessarily involved in every project the *Legión* carries out, and are not its principle aim. It is not a truth commission charged with the specific objective of eliciting testimony or promoting direct reconciliation of victimizer and their victims, and if it were, such individual acts of apology and forgiveness would clearly be insufficient to its objectives. Rather, the spaces of participation its activities provide and the inclusive nature of its recruitment process facilitates this kind of spontaneous interaction among willing participants, which contribute to one of its central aims of building trust among highly distrusting populations. The multiple communicative games and game-like activities they undertake (less or more serious) offer participants the opportunity to break silences without fear of (potentially violent) reprisals. The iterative nature of participation, through which *legionarios* are called back for future projects and yearly seminars, allows for reencounters and the thickening of trusting relationships both on the individual level, with increasingly close friends, and at the general level of trust in the systems of the organization. However, the practice of transversality also helps them develop skills for and habits of forming thin trusting relationships with a broad radius of people whom they may meet only once. With regards to tendencies of trusting, *legionarios* seem

to get the best of both worlds: thick relationships with a growing group of close friends and the ability to form thin trusting relationships across broad radii quickly.

As shown by Fauner's experience, the *Legión* is an open, inclusive group in which extant members actively seek to involve new members in events and projects. Interestingly, the kinds of people they target are often those who are excluded from groups like JSM (see chapter 4). Fauner explained the kind of person they look for and the ways in which they try to incorporate them into the *Legión*:

We arrive somewhere and put on a show, and visualize those young people who could be leaders among their group. What we do is grab them and through those young people, reach other young people too. We don't guarantee a financial incentive at first. We don't mention the topic. What we do is get them to fall in love with the project in itself. Lots of people get involved without realizing there's an economic incentive. When you see that someone is there through their own volition, then you can talk to them about the money. Yeah, the idea is that members are involved more for love of their own people than economic motives.

With me it was like that. I got involved in some performances and went to a meeting because I wanted to help. Then they asked me for my I.D. and explained they would offer me an economic incentive to lead some parts of the project. Anyway, it's not really a sufficient *wage* as such, because the work we do is very important. We even put our lives at risk sometimes. But it helps.

Participating in *Legión* activities may be fun, but extended participation also requires significant commitment to improve the welfare of others, so anyone not thus motivated simply drops out before they reach the stage of remuneration. César explained there is tension in the managerial ranks of the *Legión* about how to frame the money members are offered for their work. Some call it a "social wage" *a la* Rifkin (1995). Others like Fauner prefer "financial incentive," arguing that it does not constitute sufficient remuneration to be called a "wage." In either case, the money participants receive helps them dedicate their time to the projects of the *Legión* without having to think about "doing whatever it takes" to make enough money to survive (see chapter 4). Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya argue: "While the social wage itself was small, its impact was enormous because it was enough to give youth an economic alternative to violence - an economic choice for affection" (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017: 3). A

social wage also makes those projects more sustainable than they would otherwise be. However, it is not the initial motivation for participation and is only introduced when extant *legionarios* feel a new member is committed to the ethos and projects of the *Legión*.

The "possible leaders" Fauner mentions are often referred to as "hidden leaders" by other *legionarios*. They are young people with creative skills and high social capital within their peer groups, but not broader society. Many are what the *Legión* calls *Jóvenes K*: young people who live to survive, largely anonymously, and have mostly at one time been involved in illicit groups like gangs, paramilitary or guerrilla groups. In a systematization of their work with *Familias en su tierra*, the *Legión* describes *jóvenez K* as: "those situated on the verge of transgression and crime; displaced through violence; unemployed; outside the education system; and almost always victims of violations of their own rights and opportunities" (Legión del Afecto 2014).¹⁷

The *Legión* includes young people like this in part precisely because they already command respect, know how to motivate others, and often fulfill roles of community protection (González Bolaños 2011). But also because they are wrapped up in cycles of illicit activity and violent death, and are generally distrusted beyond their direct circle of friends or gang members. Offering them the option to work in service of their communities, participate in fun creative performance, and receive financial compensation within the bounds of the law can be powerfully motivating in incentivizing non-violence and civic participation (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). When this motivation is coupled with experiences of deep affective connection and historicizing, as in the case of the ex-paramilitary above, *Jóvenes K* can become hooked into the projects and ethos of the *Legión* and can become its most vociferous ambassadors. Carrying out voluntary, public community service can make them more trustworthy than before in the eyes of

¹⁷ See also (Manrique Reyes n.d.)

their neighbors. Perhaps most importantly, the deeper they get into the organization of the *Legión* the more skills they build for effectively trusting others and coexisting peacefully.

In the following section I trace the experiences of one such *joven K*, Jhonny, as a detailed case study showing a transformation from gang life to active community work, studded with shifting significance of champeta dancing, tambora performance and acting. I then go on to compare his experiences and those of his fellow Villanueva coordinators with *legionarios* in *los Montes de María*, before considering the possible future of the organization and its members as a whole. I argue that involvement in voluntary groups for "traditional music" like JSM and the one Joché formed at *Fundesocial* (see chapter 4) can provide gateway activities towards engagement with a more socially focused organization like the *Legión*. The latter can provide young people with habit-altering experiences that develop skills, dispositions and relationships of effective trusting, and generate a continued motivation to work, through creative performance practice, to improve the lives of the social groups to which they increasingly belong and which they help to construct.

Jhonny's Transformations

The Villanueva project was a little out of the ordinary for the *Legión*. Normally, they begin a new project by quickly recruiting leaders from within the community where they are working and making them coordinators of the project, which develops slowly over the year. In 2015 funds had been slow coming through and the project was set to last only three months, so the decision was made to use experienced *legionarios* as the project's coordinators. Fauner was selected and tasked with forming a team that would set up a *Legión* project quickly in Villanueva. This was how it came to be that four young people from the river region around San Martín were living in

La Guajira. Fauner selected Mayra, Jhonny and Stevan to accompany him as they had cemented their friendships and commitment to the *Legión* when it was first active in the river region some years previously.

Jhonny's integration into the *Legión* was fraught with tension that reflects his attitudes towards others, his tendencies of distrust, and the significance of Champeta dancing for him at the time. He remembers it as follows:

When the *Legión* arrived in my town, I was one of those tough guys, right? The guy who was there with the project dancing *champeta*... I threatened him... said we'd see who danced better – him or me. What was he doing in my town, you know? I was gonna *dale gatillo* (pull the trigger on him), coz, you know, he was in my town. I was with my boys and the whole gang thing. That was how I used to waste my time back then.

But then they told me about the project. I reconsidered it all really quickly because they explained what the *Legión* was all about. The next day I didn't want to be involved, because they asked for my phone number. But then the third day they took me to San Martín de Loba to dance in a show.

I worked with them for three months without earning a cent. I just worked. It was painful because some friends who were also working with them showed off the new things they bought with the money they were earning – cell phones, new clothes – but not me. I didn't say anything because I was just starting out.

[After three months it came to a head when] a coordinator started to tell me what to do. I said: "Man, you know what? I'm out." He asked where I'd go, and I was like: "To my gang. To my gang..." He caught up with me and gave me \$40,000 [\$20 USD]. I didn't want to accept it because... no one talks to me like that - not even my dad. People like me who are from towns like mine, who've lived through a lot of heavy experiences, the conflict, stuff like that, you have to know how to treat us. The *Legión* did well with me to get me on side. And I must have already been changing, because... If it had been three months earlier, I would've killed that guy, 'coz I would never accept anyone offending me.

After that I asked Fauner why some people were being paid and I wasn't. He had a word with the right people and I got paid. I only got one incentive of \$150,000 [\$75]. And that was that until the *Legión* started up again. But I missed it. (P.C. 2015)

Before joining the *Legión* Jhonny was a gang member who frequently robbed at gunpoint and was involved in armed threats and shootings. When I interviewed him in Villanueva he spoke, with the detached air of a professional selecting his tools, about the benefits of a .38 revolver over other hand guns: "A semi-automatic will sometimes jam, but the .38 doesn't. It's reliable. It always fires straight away." His Smith and Wesson .38 had been a trustworthy tool in

his gang life, never jamming, and had functioned as a sign of his potential for violence towards others who knew about such things. This was one factor that made Jhonny a trustworthy gang member (Densley 2012). However, he narrated much of his illicit activity as driven not by a commitment to his gang, but by the basic necessities to put food on the table for his family:

I used to steal because my family... hmm it's tough because sometimes we'd only have one meal a day. And I'd steal a chicken so they'd have something to eat. We were in real need at times - because when it's not [a good time of year for] fishing, it's really tough - and my mum was trying to look after my two little brothers; 12 months and 2 years old. With what I used to do... I'd steal a cell phone and sell it for 50, 70 (\$25-\$35 USD) so I could take some groceries home. (P.C. 2015)

Jhonny recognized that he was part of a criminal gang that broke the law and committed acts that he now regrets on social and moral levels. However, he also drew attention to the ambiguous legal and moral situation in which he and his gang used to operate. In contrast to many gangs in Colombia, Jhonny's did not operate within a discourse of neighborhood protection (Taussig 2003; González Bolaños 2011). They were out for individual and family survival, and self-gain. However, because they operated in a context where no single group or institution had a clear monopoly on legitimized violence (Webber 1946 [1919]; Taussig 2003: 158), the means employed to combat their illicit activities were not always legal or morally defensible in Jhonny's view. Taussig describes the normalization of such extrajudicial violence, and confusion around legality and defensibility, in southwest Colombia: "the crucial thing is that justice in the form of clandestine assassination had become the norm" (Taussig 2003: 33). Some leaders of Jhonny's gang were arrested by state police, but others, including Jhonny, were hunted down by more powerful, rival illicit groups:

They [unspecified armed men] came looking for me once, but not to arrest me, to put a bullet in me, right? One day I was at my cousin's house. I was just sat there and three guys burst in, like: "Where does Jhonny live?" I managed to throw them off the scent and eventually they left. If they'd realized it was me they would have killed me then and there. They were assassins hired for social cleansing. I said to myself, if the death is not for me, they'll leave, or they'll try to shoot me, but the gun will jam. I went straight home and grabbed my revolver, 'coz I knew they were looking for me, to kill me. I hid out in an old water tank for some time. I hardly left after that until I came here. (P.C. 2015)

As well as being a perpetrator of violent crime then, Jhonny became a vulnerable target of an illicit armed group. At this point, he clearly had no recourse to authorities and could only rely on his own quick wits or fate to save him. The assassins he mentions, "hired for social cleansing" were likely members of a paramilitary death squad. As a petty criminal, or a "delinquent," Jhonny made their list of "undesirable" residents during this wave of social cleansing in his town (Taussig 2003: 65). I return to themes Jhonny raises here of fatalism and a lack of trust in others later, but first I consider Jhonny's previous involvement in musical and dramatic practices.

Jhonny has for a long time loved dancing to the commercial, cosmopolitan West-African guitar music, known locally as *champeta africana* (Bilby 2000, 280-83; White 2002). Before his involvement in the *Legión*, *champeta africana* was indexed to gambling, drinking, and threatened or real physical violence for him:

Champeta africana is what I dance. I've bet a lot on *champeta africana* in my town. We say: "Hey, let's bet the next crate of beer on who dances best." Once, some guy threatened to shoot me because I won a bet on a dance. It started with an argument with some kid. I challenged him to dance, but I didn't have any money. Then some other guy came out of nowhere - I'd never seen him before - and said: "Right - if you think you're all that, dance against the kid. I'll stake the two crates of beer for you. But this is for real." The guy who put the bet on was carrying a .38.

So they put on some *champeta* – in fact it was *El Satanás*,¹⁸ the song I dance best – and we start. So the kid starts doing his thing and taunting me. Then he starts doing *quiebras* (body popping). And I say "Buddy! No! You don't dance this kind of song with *quiebras*. This is pure footwork, with one hand in your pocket."

Then I start to dance. And I've got him beat. There's a crowd of people gathered round us in the *cantina* and I'm winning. I win the two crates of beer.

Then the kid pulls out a gun and says "I'm not gonna pay." I'm like: "Son, for a few beers are you really gonna take my life? Don't be stupid. Get serious, because, I don't take shit like kids pulling guns on me... no."

¹⁸ The recording known in Colombia as "*El satanás*" (Satan) is a soukous song first released as "Tantina" by the Congolese singer Zitany Neil on the album *Marcori Gasoil* (1988). It was later re-released by the Paris-based, African super-group Soukous Stars, featuring Zitany Neil. However, the song had already arrived in Colombia, probably as a white label (<http://rhythmconnection.blogspot.com/2011/04/zitany-neil-marcory-gasoil-1988.html>). The title "*El satanás*" was likely derived from the sound of a chanted chorus line that appears at 3:50: "Zikila sakana". Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mdVZcJBNA>.

Then the guy who placed the bet said to the kid: "If you kill him, I'll kill you." the kid calmed down, straight away. (P.C. 2015)

For Jhonny then, dancing champeta was often an activity that included drunkenness, competition, gambling, and potential outbreaks of armed violence. In impromptu competitions he insisted on clear norms for dancing that distinguish champeta *africana* from champeta *criolla*; Colombian-made champeta originally made from looping African samples, then locally composed and recorded, and now highly influenced by styles like dembow, dance hall and reggaetón. For Jhonny and *costeños* other aficionados, the latter can include body popping, while the former is restricted to footwork, with the torso still and one hand in the pocket. This may be an allusion to the name of the musical style. "Champeta" is also the name for a kitchen knife, which young *costeños* were rumored to carry at street parties playing music imported from Africa (Streicker 1995). Jhonny's near brushes with death while dancing champeta, however, involved handguns.

Jhonny's life experiences as a gang member informed not only his experience with dance, but also with drama in la *Legión*. In the sketches described above, in which he played a violent lover and transvestite bus rider, he channeled not only his close relationship with gun violence, but also an experience with cross-dressing. He once disguised himself as a woman on a necessary trip to a nearby town, in order to avoid detection by the hired death squad who were still present in his hometown. For Jhonny, like countless other young people on the edges of licit society in Colombia, the *Legión* allowed him to integrate some of his previous experiences and creative practices into an alternative life-project, based in service to a community in construction and the rejection of violence as a means to resolving conflict (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017). It allowed him to indulge in the dressing up, acting and dancing he enjoyed, while disassociating them from the specter of death previously indexed to such activities.

The *Legión* also allowed Jhonny to rekindle a passion for tambora. This was first sparked through a close relationship between his now deceased brother, and the adult leader of a local tambora youth group. Jhonny occasionally sang in the chorus, while his brother shared lead singing responsibilities with the group leader. Jhonny's relationship with the leader was similar to the affectionate clientelistic relationship many members of JSM have with Idelsa (chapter 4). In Jhonny's case it helped him out of trouble on some occasions, such as when the leader posted his bail. However, it did not provide an alternative life option for him beyond that of continued involvement in gang life and occasional reliance on his caring *patrón*. Again, I do not mean to criticize the efforts of tambora group leaders, especially in this case where the leader in question is deeply caring and committed to inclusion, but rather to show that, as individuals habitually immersed within clientelistic frames, with severely limited time, funds and training, their power to change the lives of people like Jhonny, is minimal.

The repeated performance of expressive drama, dance and music in the *Legión* allowed Jhonny to re-signify these activities, and reconsider his relationship with armed violence. He told me he no longer felt the need to carry his gun. The anxiety he had initially experienced on leaving it at home had gradually dissipated as he increasingly came to trust the people around him, and the methods of the *Legión*. Dancing *champeta* was no longer something he did for money, alcohol, or in relation to violent conflict, but was simply a fun activity to be enjoyed with friends at celebrations. At the *ágape* described above, Jhonny danced *champeta* alone, in jesting "competition" with other solo male dancers (with nothing wagered), and in close embrace with female partners. Cross-dressing was no longer a necessity to avoid detection by people who sought to kill him, but a creative act that made him feel "like a TV star" and allowed him to

entertain others and contribute to a message of tolerance of diversity. Our tambora performance did not involve clientelistic relationships, but more horizontal relations of peer friendship.

Jhonny's time with the *Legión* in Villanueva was not all plain sailing. People in his hometown warned him of real or imagined risks in going to there. When the young coordinators arrived, many locals initially distrusted them, and they were caught up in threats of paramilitary violence. Jhonny's fatalistic approach to possible death (mentioned above) actually became a positive factor in the process of establishing a foothold in the community:

When I was about to leave my town, people said: "They're going to kill you with a machete there. Not a pistol, but a machete." I was like: "Well, if I have to die here, I'll die, and if I have to die there, I'll die." When we arrived in Villanueva, Mayra and the others were scared. Scared. Not me. Not my friend [Stevan] either, because he was a gang member too. He was like: "Ah! Buddy, you know what we're like!" That's why we haven't believed all the hype here.

When we first got here, there was a leafleting campaign saying there was going to be social cleansing. We were in bed by six at night. We didn't sleep a wink. We didn't even dare to open a window in case they threw in a bomb, because we were new here.

You *do* risk your life in this job. (P.C. 2015)

Non-locals can often become targets of social cleansing campaigns by paramilitary groups. They are framed as "*gente rara*" (strange people). This was exacerbated in the case of the coordinators in Villanueva by their age and appearance. Fauner explained locals' reaction on their arrival:

When we first arrived here, people accused us of being guerrilla fighters, even organ traffickers! There were all sorts of rumors. Of course, it must be strange for them [to see] a bunch of young people arriving with backpacks, and especially because we're all tattooed and like to dress differently.¹⁹ They distrusted us a lot at the beginning. It took us time to convince people that we are young people working for young people, community [members] working for [the] community. But since then they've opened their homes to us. (P.C. 2015)

Going through potentially life-threatening ordeals with his fellow coordinators helped thicken the trusting relationship they already had, but Jhonny's work with the *Legión* also helped him develop a broader radius of people with whom he has a thin trusting relationship for minimally demanding tasks. I was not present to witness the distrust with which the coordinators were

¹⁹ At this time Fauner and his friends favored colorful, highly patterned clothes and accessories, often but not necessarily with large brand names and logos, tokens of alternative, urban, metrosexual fashion.

received in Villanueva, but I *did* observe the affection with which they were greeted later by many locals, especially those living in *las casitas*. When we visited after a day's work, we would be invited to sit with residents, just like Álvaro Camargo welcoming me into his home (see chapter 4): "*Estás en tu casa. Sientate con confianza!*" (Make yourself at home/ You are in your home. Sit down with confidence [in our relationship/ trustingly]!" This thin trust across a broad network of people had been hard won through the organization of events like the ones I witnessed, and community projects like the construction of a soccer pitch on the waste ground by the *casitas*, as well as accompanying residents in everyday life and traumatic experiences like the threats of the leafleting campaign.

Through this hard work Jhonny came to be trusted more by others, and developed his skills for trusting others, both thickly and thinly, avoiding conflict, and reassessing his own doxa about the nature of life and other people. To demonstrate this, and how he believes he can develop more positive relationships with his family and neighbors, I quote at length from his reflections. Dedication to *Legión* projects helped Jhonny develop less self-destructive habits:

It's been a really important experience. So important! They're experiences that are unforgettable. You know, things you live here that you never... I'd never experienced before. It makes you forget a lot of your previous life. The *Legión* has something special. They use it as a strategy to attract young people, so they entertain themselves with... So that if someone was going to get involved in something bad, because you're busy with this, you forget about that bad thing. I've felt that. Sometimes I had an urge to be smoking weed, but because I'm here, in a meeting or rehearsing, [that urge] passes me by. Now I don't want to do all those bad things. And if the *Legión* finishes, it's not that I'm going to go back to my bad ways, no. Because now I know that... you can earn money working [hard] with sweat, and that life is beautiful, right? I know. The *Legión me marcó* (changed me/ marked me). Lots of things I won't forget till the day I die.

It was largely working *for* other people that effected his felt transformation:

The most important change for me is that, this experience got me out of the hole I was in. I feel like I was born again here, because I'm leaving with a different mind from the one I had before. Now, my mind is another. It's about working for my community and doing good for other people. And people who are involved in conflict, talking to them about the fact that life is really important, that we're all equal.

Jhonny has come to challenge the flat axiology he previously held,²⁰ on which life held more or less comparable value to death.

When I first arrived here I came with an attitude of "If we get out of this alive, fine, but if not, that's fine too." I didn't care. But now I do. Now I've reacted, I've recaptured an idea of what life is, and that it's beautiful, even if you don't have much to eat. Now I'm aware of what's going on. Now my mind has reacted in a different way. It's been marked by good things, by peace. Now, for me, war no longer exists. It doesn't exist.

These factors now shape his attitude towards the future, which, although uncertain, he feels empowered to improve:

When I go back to my town, I'll be afraid. I had an affair with someone else's girl back there and the guy said he'd kill anyone who had been with her. So I'm going back with a different mindset, but I've still got problems back there... Before it would have been a question of either he kills me first, or I kill him. But now I'm thinking about how to avoid that... I'm not going to let myself get killed, just like that. I've realized that we only get one life, and we have to know how to live it. That's a beautiful experience.

The thought of returning home was a foreboding prospect for Jhonny. Nonetheless, when we talked he felt equipped to deal with the complex situation that confronted him and attributed this readiness partly to the *Legión*:

The people in my town who don't like me, because of how I harmed them in the past, when I get back, I'm going to go to their homes and apologize to them. I'll give them a hug to ask them to forgive me for them things I did... out of hunger, because of my circumstances. [I'll] ask those people to forgive me...

I haven't told anyone that – not Fauner, not Mayra, only you – but yeah, that's what I'm thinking, to ask everyone I hurt for forgiveness. And I know they're going to forgive me.

I: Is that something the *Legión* taught you? Or is it a decision you came to on your own?

J: In part it's because of the *Legión*: lots of words they said that traumatized me – about what it is to live – but the other side is that I reflected too, on my own, about my life... about all the bad things I'd done.

Jhonny now sees a possible non-violent end to his personal conflicts: "For me, war no longer exists," and plans to implement strategies for conflict transformation through apologizing. He also sees himself as part of a community, or various communities, and wants to work towards helping other members come to value life and avoid or resolve conflict non-violently. He will be

²⁰ Compare Diego's attitude to life, death by accident, and death in combat (chapter 4).

risking a great deal by making an apology, but he has the self-confidence to try, and trusts in his judgment that the people he has hurt will likely forgive him.

In his hometown, many residents currently distrust Jhonny, and he recognizes that many of them have good reason, although he insists he "never did any harm" to family members. He was hurt by the way some of his family members rejected him due to his gangster reputation. As he spoke about this chapter in his life he fiddled with my pen, and absent-mindedly punctuated acutely painful memories by snapping bits of it against the concrete step where we sat. An aunt who once trusted him deeply (*"La confianza de ella era yo"*) later warned her daughter to avoid Jhonny [snap]. His father once stated publicly that he was ashamed of Jhonny [snap]. A girl he fell in love with came to despise him because of his reputation [snap, snap]. The social wage earned working with the *Legión* has enabled Jhonny to repair some of the damage to his reputation such that many of his family members no longer identify him as a danger, or as all bad: "Lots of them say [to my parents] now: 'That boy of yours has changed' because I've sent things home. I've paid for some bricks for the house." However, unlike in Villanueva, he has not had the chance to work within his own hometown in order to repair more fully the harm he did.

If carried out, his apologies will be an important step in this process of reconciliation. Danielle Celermajer (2009) offers a conceptualization of apologizing that is highly compatible with the view of identification I develop in chapter 2 and useful for understanding Jhonny's case. Her focus is at the level of countries apologizing for atrocities, but her basic view is equally applicable to individuals and groups. Apologizing is a potentially transformative speech act in which one identifies with one's past self, the agent who committed particular acts, and states that one's future self will not act similarly because one's present self feels the past self was wrong to act the way it did (Celermajer 2009, 58-59). Jhonny intends his apologies this way. If interpreted

as such, they will show that he both identifies with his past self, to the extent that he recognizes he was the agent of the actions he now sees as wrong, but he also identifies as a "different person" in the sense that he is committed to avoiding such behavior in future. However, without the opportunity to work for his own community, simply apologizing may not be enough to regain their trust.

Jhonny's decision to apologize to his family and neighbors was not the direct result of a rule laid down by the *Legión*. Rather, it came out of a process of self-reflection based on his experiences of learning their ethos and methodology. He may see part of that process as symbolic violence: "lots of words they said that traumatized me" but this symbolic violence helped him reduce the symbolic, psychological and physical violence he was already engaged in against himself and others. Like Samuel Araújo and *Grupo Musicultura* (2010), Jhonny recognizes that such symbolic violence was necessary to disrupt the reproduction of his previous dispositions of thought and action. *Grupo Musicultura* argue that: "a certain degree of violence, even if only symbolic, must always be felt in order to assure that the old social order is being replaced by a new one" (Araújo and Grupo Musicultura 2010: 228). Like Celermajer *Grupo Musicultura*'s argument is mainly at the level of societal change here. However, Jhonny's case illuminates its applicability to the individual level of learning and developing new habits.

There is no program for apologizing as part of the *Legión*'s work. However, as Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya write, "since the *Legion* acts within a sphere of emotion and visceral sensation, *Legion* spaces are sites of 'priming' whereby experiential aspects of life become easier to talk about and share." (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017, 2). Jhonny felt comfortable talking about his plans to me in part because we had been actively sharing *Legión* spaces and engaging in *Legión* activities together. Sometimes "talk about" becomes transformative speech

acts, whereby young people involved in atrocities ask victims for forgiveness, as in the event Fauner described above show. Jhonny's planned apologies show this can carry over beyond *Legión* spaces.

The *Legión* has also engaged with grander scale apologies, for instance, the FARC's apology to the residents of Bojayá for the explosion at a church there that killed seventy-nine civilians. While local adult community leaders, victims and their family members took part in the ceremony with the FARC, a delegation of the *Legión* made up of 150 young people, some of whom were from Bojayá itself, took part in a parallel performance for the children of the adults involved in the main ceremony (Orijuela Villanueva 2016).

Jhonny's tendencies of trusting also changed with regard to people with whom he has not built a trusting relationship.²¹ Before working in Villanueva he had a high degree of suspicion that strangers, or other people in general were likely to behave violently towards him. In Villanueva, although he reported an increased concern for preserving his own life, because he valued it more, his generalized distrust of others also diminished, such that he was less anxious that he might be attacked or killed by strangers. He felt able to approach strangers, to trust them with collaboration in *Legión* activities, even with taking control of tasks related to the project.

Importantly, Jhonny also came to trust the system of the *Legión*, though it is not clear how far this constitutes greater trust in systems in general (Giddens 1990). He took on board

²¹ Sociologists working on trust are particularly interested in quantifying what they call "generalized trust" (Smith 2007; Stolle 2001), or "general trust" (Fukuyama 1996; Harriss 2003). This is roughly the degree to which people trust strangers for minimally demanding tasks such as not harming them. I agree with Russel Hardin that the survey methodologies typically used to quantify generalized trust often yield vacuous or misleading results, and that the very concept is often vague (Hardin 2001). However, scholars like Robert Putnam (1993) and Francis Fukuyama (1996) have argued coherently that in a democratic country, higher generalized trust among strangers, tends to raise civic engagement, which increases the likelihood of the democracy functioning peacefully (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993). John Harriss (2003) applies a similar view to potentially transnational and cross-cultural business situations. The arguments of Fukuyama and Harriss are problematically geared towards increasing business transactions in "free" markets, which actually entails neoliberal transferral of risk to increasingly isolated individuals, but I believe their central point about radii of general trust holds water.

elements of the *Legión*'s ethos and worked within its methodology, understanding to some degree the reasons behind its strategies. This is not blind faith in a new system, but rather trust based on partial conceptual understanding and powerful affective and somatic experiences with specific nodes of the system (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017); both the authority figures that challenged his doxa ("things they said that traumatized me"), and the peers and community members with whom he developed deep trusting relationships. Importantly, he engaged with these nodes of the system through participatory and presentational performance of musical and dramatic practices that had deep significance in his life, but were also resignified to a degree, reducing their indexical connection to violence.

So Jhonny's trust in the system of the *Legión* and his ability to implement it effectively depended upon both his previous experience with violence and creative practices and the growing relationships of trust with his nodes of contact with the system, primarily his fellow coordinators. This relationship in turn depended upon the experiences of those people in the process of working together. In the next brief section I consider these experiences and the importance of parallel past involvement in youth music groups to their ability to adopt effective modes of collaboration with each other and the residents of Villanueva.

The Coordinators: Youth Groups as Gateway Activities

Hayes-Conroy and Saenz argue the *Legión* vacillates between two approaches to social intervention, and has historically veered towards the less effective of the two (2017: 9-11). A "do-gooder" frame sees participants as bringing social benefits to beneficiaries within the target population of a project,²² whereas a "parces" frame ("parce" is a colloquial term for "friend")

²² For Hayes-Conroy and Saenz, following Benford and Snow (2000), a frame is an action oriented set of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate social movements (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017: 9).

characterizes all participants in a project as *compañeros* (companions or comrades) in the shared struggle for peace (Koopman 2008). Hayes-Conroy and Saenz argue the do-gooder frame is more closely linked to paternalistic neoliberal multiculturalist projects. They say it is less effective, because emphasis is often placed on the functional value of work (the social wage), which often becomes bureaucratic, and fails to resonate with the desire of many participants to struggle together against the neoliberal state (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017:10-11). I believe the Villanueva case shows that a shared background in youth music groups can help facilitate working within the *parces* frame.

Of the four Villanueva coordinators, only Stevan shared with Jhonny a history of direct involvement in illicit armed groups and champeta dancing. However, all had suffered the death of close family members or similar violence at the hands of armed groups. The other experience that unites their histories is that all coordinators had at one time been members of tambora groups like JSM described in chapter 4. They had not become close friends through membership of the tambora cohort. Rather their friendship was mainly built through involvement in the *Legión*. However, this shared history demands attention.

I suggest the coordinators were able to take advantage to a degree of the benefits of tambora youth groups listed in chapter four: The opportunity to develop skills for making friends and trusting others within an arena of clear rules for music making and group membership; learning and public performance that builds self confidence; the management of phenomenological states of being to consistently achieve clear aims like finishing songs cleanly; the stretching of rules that requires intense awareness of others as intentioned human beings with shared aims; and a vague commitment to peaceful, along with less individualistic forms of living with various members of one's community and region.

They were also willing and able to go beyond the nebulous and slightly hollow discourse of peace connected to festivalized tambora in order to dedicate themselves to a difficult intervention project with more profound social impact. Importantly, in doing so they strove to avoid hierarchy, maintain horizontal power relations, and use a variety of creative practices to achieve their aims of entertaining, integrating, educating and assimilating potential legionarios and allies from all sectors of the social groups they were sent to work in. At the *ágape* I took part in they used their shared know-how of tambora, but also included styles that were more effective at eliciting participation from residents. It was not the sonic features of tambora that most helped dissolve barriers, because the song they chose was in a presentational festival style, and tambora is not well known to locals. Rather, the benefits and frustrations of having been members of tambora groups helped them engage in various performance modes that eased tension and eventually led to participation, which is itself catalytic to maintaining the *parces* frame. In this frame established and potential *Legión* members and local residents are at least temporarily constituted as comrades in a shared struggle, which is experienced as a mutually beneficial and motivating way of resisting late capitalist violence, thus maintaining interest (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017: 10-11). That is to say, being a member of a tambora group can be a gateway activity towards active participation in more socially transformative and mutually rewarding projects like the *Legión*.

To what extent this shared struggle within the system of the *Legión* translates into a broader tendency to trust in systems for Jhonny and the other coordinators will depend to a large extent on the extent to which they can continue performing in non-violent ways and contexts, and the degree to which the other systems they encounter resemble that of the *Legión* and its ability to challenge violence in various forms, including the economic violences of late

capitalism (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya 2017: 2, 12). Colombia has a great deal to live up to.

In the following sections I go beyond the case study of the Villanueva project, detailing my interactions with *Legionarios* across *La Costa*. I show the role of *gaita* music in the activities of *legionarios* working in Montes de María. I also contrast involvement in the *Legión* with national service. I conclude by considering the possible future(s) of the organization, or the people who have worked as *legionarios* in the region.

The *Legión* across *La Costa*

Everywhere I went to meet *legionarios* the stories were similar to those of Fauner, Jhonny, Mayra and Stevan. I was greeted with hugs, enormous smiles and outpourings of affection for the organization and its members. The affective power of working with the *Legión* clearly does not stop when projects come to an end. By carrying out interviews with more *legionarios* I aimed to build a broader, more nuanced picture of its impact across *La Costa*. However, I do not offer a developed statistical survey. The nature of fieldwork and the *parces*-framed, rhizomic organizational structure of the *Legión*, led me instead to develop a more engaged ethnographic account of personal histories of and developing projects.

I carried out interviews with a total of twelve people in six towns or cities of Northern Colombia who had been involved in *Legión* projects at varying levels of depth. Ten out of the twelve had previously been members of "folkloric" music or dance groups. Nine reported that their time with the *Legión* had been a transformative experience and eleven expressed sadness or anger that the *Legión* was not currently active.²³ For three of my interlocutors, their experience

²³ At that time we were all waiting expectantly to find out whether the *Legión* would receive funding for 2016 and restart operations. Unfortunately it did not (see below).

with the *Legión* had been short-lived, but most had been repeatedly involved in multiple events and projects over months or years. The three with the least experience were still involved in musical group whose explicitly social work was limited. One *legionario* in Cartagena had formed a group of young musicians intent on "rescatar" (rescuing, or reviving) *champeta criolla* performance traditions among marginalized working-class youth of the city. One in Villanueva reported that his local evangelical church was continuing activities modeled on those of the *Legión*. Two were working on artistic social projects modeled very closely on the ethos, methodology and creative practices of the *Legión*. These new projects were being, or to be, funded by the local mayor's office.

Of the *legionarios* I met, the two most proactively engaged with social projects were Fauner Salas and a young woman called Yuranis Arrieta. Fauner returned to San Martín with the aim of continuing to integrate marginalized young people in artistic projects. He lobbied the municipal mayor directly for funding and was successful with some of his proposals. He collaborated with Juventud Sanmartinense for some performances and formed a registered foundation with other young people interested in creative practices at the service of their community. Through this foundation he would be able to apply for funding directly from local or central government and transnational funding bodies.

Yuranis Arrieta is from the rapidly growing, city of Sincelejo, near Ovejas, in *Montes de María*. She first joined the *Legión* when it was active there in 2009 and later coordinated projects in the towns of San Jacinto, María la Baja and Ovejas. As all of these projects were in *Montes de María*, she had integrated *gaita* music into a lot of her work. She was not, however, an active *gaitera* before her membership of the *Legión*. Her prior musical formation was as a dancer in *comparsas* (procession groups) for carnival and other parades. She later trained in dance and

choreography at the fine arts department of the local university. Over the times I visited her family home, which she shared with her mother, brothers and boyfriend, and which also served as the latter's tattoo parlor, Yuranis explained and showed how much she had appropriated the ethos and methodology of the *Legión*. She was highly proactive in involving her family, friends and marginalized youth everywhere she worked. She believes deeply in the distinctive "community driven" nature of the projects the *Legión* carries out:

We don't arrive like lots of foundations or projects with their colored vest and cap to take a list of people and promise help that often never arrives. We arrive to do the "*piel a piel*," to really get to know members of the community, to ask what they need, what they used to do, or what they'd like to change. From there, initiatives are generated and we support them.

If they want young people not to be so highly stigmatized then we organize a march with that as the message. If before the violence they used to have *sancochos comunitarios* (communal meals/ "stone soup"), well then we organize one. If the old folks used to walk between the hamlets, but now they're too scared, well, we organize a walk, but we accompany them so they're not on their own. If they used to play music and dance, well we get the *paranda* (party) going again so they can play and dance.

During Yuranis' time in Ovejas in particular, the *Legión* events she coordinated involved visiting and involving rural hamlets. She argued that the group she coordinated managed to avoid some of the problems of distrust that Fauner and his group faced in Villanueva by using artistic practices that were recognized by residents as highly local and "traditional," and therefore unthreatening:

We didn't have so many problems like that because we always arrived playing gaita. We always arrived playing and dancing and with the *gaitero* (lead gaita player) out in front, opening the way for us.

This resonates with comments of José Álvarez (see chapter 3) and other older *gaiteros* in Montes de María. Discussing his mobility between Ovejas and his rural hamlet birthplace during the height of the conflict locally, José told me being known as someone involved in *gaita* made life safer for him:

On the road to Almagra *amanecían un poco 'e muertos* (loads of people were found dead in the mornings). One time they found five bodies. Another time, two. There was a time when anyone who went along that path just didn't come return. The guerrilla fighters distrusted everyone.

I would sometimes go to cut *pitahaya* (cactus for gaita tubes) in the countryside. Once I was cutting some and a load of guerrillas surrounded me: "What are you doing here?" And I said: "No... cutting cactus for instruments" and they didn't bother me.

Ian: Do you think the fact that it was for *gaitas* protected you?

José: Yes... you see they knew me. In those groups there were people from here and they knew me. They said: "He doesn't bother anyone, let him be." (P.C. 2014)

In this case, it is unclear whether José's ease of movement was due to the materials being related to gaita flutes, or him being well known as a *gaitero* or photographer. However, another older *gaitero*, known as El Lobo, also told me that with his gaita slung over one shoulder he was able to travel between isolated rural areas controlled by illicit armed groups, even during the most intense times of conflict, because he was known to be "doing something for culture" by teaching *gaita* to local youth (P.C.2016).

In Yuranis' work with the *Legion*, participants principally identified themselves as *gaiteros* not by reputation or by carrying instruments, but by actually playing and dancing gaita as they arrived in a new hamlet. That is to say, they successfully used sonic and visual signs of local musical practices to identify themselves as trustworthy, to disarm locals' predominant tendency to distrust strangers. They also recruited particular individuals already known locally as musicians, including El Lobo, as well as young *gaiteros* from across the municipality of Ovejas, including the village of San Rafael. It is worth recounting one of my trips to visit legionarios there because of the way in which it brought together various narrative strands from this dissertation, and also helped my interlocutors and me reflect on possible futures of the *Legión*.

I visited San Rafael with José's son Eduardo "Ñoño" Álvarez, whose military service as a *soldado campesino* (peasant soldier) posted locally in the region of *los montes de María* had been the cause of the family's threats and his brother Joche's displacement (see chapter 3). As

Ñoño and I rode along the highway and unpaved track from the urban center of Ovejas town to the village near the southern edge of the municipality, Ñoño explained to me how the land around us had mostly been sold by local *campesinos* at ludicrously cheap rates. They were pressured into doing so; threatened or killed by paramilitaries. Others were threatened or killed by leftist FARC rebels, who identified them as supposed collaborators with the paramilitaries (Verdad Abierta 2016). Ñoño insisted things were calm here now, but many people had yet to recuperate their land, and I could sense a lack of ease beneath his cool exterior, just like when Joché passed the site where he had been interrogated by guerrillas (see introduction).

The first person to greet us was Elkin. His smile beamed as we arrived, deepening the pronounced crow's feet around his eyes, and assuaging our anxiety. He offered us coffee in the cool barn at the back of his house used for storing tobacco and maize. Yuranis had put me in touch with him by phone, and he was delighted with the opportunity to reminisce about his involvement in the *Legión*. For many years before becoming a *legionario* he had been a dancer in "folkloric" groups, but said he had always lacked self-confidence. He felt his more recent involvement in the *Legión* gave him the chance to change in this respect. The achievable tasks and frequent public performances, as well as spoken reflection sessions, helped him build his self-confidence such that he no longer felt nervous in public (Erikson 1963). It had been tough during the village's most violent times, he confessed, almost ashamed at his previously nervous self. Performance with the *Legión* had not simply reduced stage fright but helped Elkin manage a deep existential anxiety generated by the violences of the civil war.

Elkin walked me and Ñoño around the town and introduced us to a younger friend who had also been active with the *Legión*. Beimer was cagey at first, his eyes full of suspicion at the unknown *ovejero* and *cachaco* (non-*costeño*) who had turned up unannounced at his doorstep.

However, when the conversation turned to the *Legión*, the suspicion in his gaze turned to warmth. He had first become involved when a group coordinated by Yuranis' team arrived in San Rafael playing and dancing *gaita*:

B: I was there and I noticed that a jeep arrived full of people, and they unloaded drums, some of them arrived with wigs too! We were like, "Damn! What are these people doing here?" But they started explaining that they were doing something folkloric, but social too... And without many words, they started playing *gaitas*, playing drums, and dancing. So that brought the crowds in. And I got involved straight away. I said, "Damn! I like this stuff!" I worked my way in without them asking, because I like that kind of thing. They did a carousel; *un carousel de la alegría* (a carousel of happiness). We didn't know what it was at the time...

E: That's what we call colloquially *una caminata* (a procession, walk, trek, hike).

B: Exactly, a *caminata*, just like we'd done in other [folkloric/ festival] events. We ended up walking around the whole of the village, inviting people to an event in the main square. That's where they did breakdancing, they played *gaita*, some folkloric couple dances, and the community got involved too. So people liked it. [They asked:] "When are you coming back?" All the kids, me too! I was excited. It was something that opened our minds, straight away. You could feel it was something different. We all wished that kind of thing could be done more often. (P.C. 2016)

Beimer eventually came to work with Yuranis' team in Ovejas and was sent on various excursions with the *Legión*, including to a marginalized neighborhood in Bogotá, where he had a memorable shared experience of companionship with a displaced woman:

I remember one time we were doing an *ágape*, making some food, and I was helping. The women *me cogieron confianza* (warmed to me/ came to trust me). So one of them hugged me: "Well, when are you going to come back?" They're people who have suffered in the conflict. They were displaced. It's all social housing, so most people there are victims of the armed conflict. But they're people who, with that happiness, with that satisfaction, they hugged me and asked me to come back. (P.C. 2016)

Ñoño was notably heartened by the pair's stories of their deepening involvement in the *Legión* (which was much like that of Fauner described above). He expressed at length his wish to have had the opportunity to be involved in such projects. When we arrived back in Ovejas he drew a sharp contrast between what Elkin and Beimer had told us about their time with the *Legión* and his experience of military service:

When I did military service it was very cruel, humiliating, brutal. It hurts when they're calling you a son of a bitch all the time. They use that rhetoric of the family, country and death a lot. They're

training you to kill. They give you a rifle and say: "This is your family, look after it." But the whole time they're humiliating you, beating you. The dirty water from the showers was the same water used in the kitchen for juice. The food was a fucking disgrace. Lots of people become *viciosa* (heavy users of psychotropic drugs) because they need something to transport them out of all that. Lots of them can't deal with reality when they get out. (P.C. 2016)

And I lost companions in battle. After all the training we wanted to be out on missions, but my division lost men in clashes with guerrilla groups. And I was put at risk, because I was sent to this region. It put my whole family at risk because the guerrillas knew I was involved in the military.

Lots of people couldn't take it. They needed to escape. And someone like that with a gun, they can become psychotic. I made it through because of the support of my family. Because I had the baby around that time I knew I needed to...

But no, the military doesn't make people. I think the musical route definitely helps people, because you enter for fun, but you end up thinking about music. You need a certain discipline to keep going, and look at the good you can do if you link it to social work like Elkin.

The contrast was striking. Whereas the *legionarios* remembered their experience as deeply humanizing, Ñoño felt military training was designed to break people, to turn them into unthinking killing machines, replacing their family loyalty and affection with brute, unquestioning nationalism, generating mental health issues and substance dependencies. During our afternoon discussion with Beimer and Elkin, Ñoño argued forcefully that I should dedicate myself to lobbying for more people to have the kinds of experience that involvement in the *Legión* can provide: "That's what you should implement, Ian. Sometimes projects are just about a moment of happiness, but they don't develop the depth of experience that they [Elkin and Beimer] had... in that system" (P.C. 2016).

The *Legión* itself has already been lobbying the government for much broader implementation of their projects. One of the *Legión*'s proposals is that the options for obligatory national service should include not just the current ones of military or police service, but also community service led by their organization.²⁴ It is an ambitious proposal, which would

²⁴ They may be having some success, at least with programs for the reintegration of demobilized illicit combatants. The Colombian government institution charged with the reintegration of ex-combatants demobilized from illicit armed groups, the ARN (Agency for Reintegration and Normalization), now requires participants in the scheme to undertake eighty hours of obligatory community service as part of the "citizenship dimension" of their "route of reintegration." This can include "artistic and cultural activities" (see <http://www.reintegracion.gov.co/es/la->

potentially threaten the current administration's highly neoliberal agenda, because of the *Legión's* capacity for fostering organization that challenges the violences of late capitalism through which neoliberals seek to annihilate community and resistance to "free" market mentalities. Integrating community service in the *Legión* within the national scheme of military service would, however, require the *Legión* to work much more closely with state bodies, limiting the organization's agency in operations and its capacity to present itself as independent. Would *legionarios* still be able to identify as "community working for community" if community members were aware it was part of the state apparatus? Or would the "doo-gooder" frame come to dominate entirely? To what extent would the *Legión* be able to maintain its methodology, drive towards horizontal power relationships and radical inclusivity if it were more closely linked to the state, and in particular a government whose policies tend to exacerbate social inequality?

Around the time of my fieldwork with the *Legión*, accounting issues placed in doubt the organization's continued funding under existing conditions, let alone an increase in its national presence. In the final section of this chapter I consider ways in which the benefits of the *Legión* might continue in independent projects driven by dispersed splinter groups of *legionarios*, working independently of the organization's central logistical structure.

The future(s) of the *Legión*

It is nearing the end of my fieldwork and, after various trips to visit *legionarios*, I am back in Sincelejo with Yuranis. She invites me to a meeting she has organized. The rumors are that the *Legión* will not receive funding for 2016 due to delays in settling the accounts of the previous

reintegracion/Paginas/faqs-ciudadana.aspx). This looks to be based quite closely on the model of the *Legión*, though more research would be required to establish whether there was direct influence, or the hand of a *legionario* in developing this scheme. As yet no such option is extended to non-combatant civilians as an alternative to military service.

year's projects.²⁵ So with encouragement from César in Bogotá, Yuranis, her quiet boyfriend, and a small group of friends have pledged to be the first *legionarios* to gain funding for independent *Legión*-style projects at the local level. Yuranis has already submitted a proposal to the mayor's office for a three-year project and is waiting for a reply. She has experience managing transparent budgets with the *Legión*, but I wonder whether she will be able to get beyond the corrupt clientelistic relations I fell prey to in Ovejas and San Martín. In the meantime, we meet with the group in a public park; a dusty space with a couple of trees, concrete bench and swings for kids. We crowd on and around the bench to plan an event that will mark the recent death of a friend and fellow *legionario*. He was recently shot in gang-related violence. As we discuss the event, Yuranis is mostly quiet, allowing the young men to opine and explain their frustrations.

A tall, rotund, dark-skinned young man with a Mohawk explains how the police officers in the *CAI* (rapid-response command station) on the opposite corner of the park often bother them:

They say we shouldn't be here, but it's a public park! They claim we're smoking weed, or doing some kind of damage, but ... we're not. Sometimes they warn us first, other times they just kick us out. They sometimes just throw a canister of teargas without warning.

We all look towards the four or five officers crammed into the small shelter with suspicion and a pinch of pity (they are mostly conscripts after all). The group's distrust of state representatives has not waned, but if the story of tear gas is true, they have good reason to be distrusting of the police. Mohawk goes on to explain the group's past and how he shed his initial distrust of the *Legión* (colored by his previous experience of charity workers who were uninterested in learning from locals) as he realized their commitment was long term, and their participatory events were

²⁵ I have not been able to establish official reasons for the *Legión* not receiving funding, though some *legionario* friends say some projects were not quick enough to file reports and budgets. This may not have been so much of a problem in previous years, especially under the Uribe administration, which was more concerned with military "solutions" to the conflict than paying attention to peacebuilding efforts. However, it seems a combination of the increased accountability of the Santos regime mentioned above, and lax record keeping of some *Legión* projects, has put an end to the *Legión*'s activities, at least as funded by the Colombian government.

radically inclusive. He still distrusts the immediate representatives of the state with whom he has sporadic and hostile contact, but is committed to a pro-active form of non-violent citizenship through *Legión* style activities.

The second young man's story of initial integration into the *Legión* is similar. His features suggest an indigenous or campesino background, but they have been chiseled and beefed-up through weightlifting. "I was part of the *Legión* for two years, but..." His eyes start to water and his throat closes up as he continues "... when they killed my brother I left. They stabbed him in the back." Next to him, a lean trainee barber hikes up his baggy sleeveless shirt to show me the kind of injury he means. (Some of his scars evidence entry and exit wounds, and I wonder how he has survived.) Like the Palestinian youth that David McDonald writes about (McDonald 2010), these young men present their scars, physical and psychological, as signs of resistance. However, in this case, the resistance is not (primarily) against direct state terror, but the messy power struggles between rival gangs. The weight lifter goes on:

Yeah, like that, but his was up and in a bit. They took him to the police and they gave him first aid, but they couldn't save him. After that I had a lot of rage. I thought "It's best if I go, because if I stay I might do something. If I see the one who killed him either I'll kill him or he'll kill me." So I went to Medellín, but there at the metro station the army caught me and took me away. I've just got back from two years of military service. The training was brutal. Sometimes you don't have enough to eat; just your rifle, which is your mom, your life. It's really difficult for someone who's used to having their whole family around. And they're training you to kill. But, anyway, I survived.

Now I'm back I don't feel so much rage. It still hurts, because it's my brother, of course, it's a big loss, but I don't feel so much hate towards those people. And they've calmed down a bit too. Now, with the *Legión* we want to do a lot of work to improve that situation.

His time in the army echoes that of Ñoño, a dehumanizing experience that he barely managed to survive without serious damage to his mental health. He is very positive about continuing the work of the *Legión*, even working in service of the gang members responsible for his brother's death.

The fourth young man is a rapper. He tells me about tracks he has already recorded before getting involved with the *Legión* to "rap and do other stuff." He has also just finished military service: "Two years too" he explains, "that's for normal recruits. It's one and a half for *bachilleres*." So neither he, nor the weightlifter have finished high school, but they have both spent two years in the military. He plays me one of his tracks on his cheap cell phone. I catch positive lyrics over a typical midi loop, very much like some of the tracks on the *Legión* CD. He is excited about the prospect of getting more young people into rap and record production, and is happy to contribute to the upcoming event in whatever way he can. We talk about combining his music with Yuranis' "folkloric" dance.

As the meeting progresses the idea of an homage to the murdered friend comes up again, but is challenged by the wounded trainee barber. It is his first meeting with the others, but he is vocal and emotive in his opposition to the idea: "An homage to one dead person excludes everyone else who has lost someone important to them." Yuranis becomes pensive: "That's a really valuable insight. I think you're right, we were being too shortsighted. The event needs to give people the chance to remember everyone who's been lost." (Indeed they would go on to plan an event with a more general message opposing gang violence.) As the meeting dissolves, and people go their separate ways, Yuranis explains to me: "That's the benefit of a situation where everyone can voice their opinion without fear."

In this one meeting, the more experienced *legionarios* managed to nurture horizontal power relationships such that even the newest member felt able to express an opinion that helped the whole group improve their proposed idea. To that extent the group of young people were functioning as a self-organizing rhizomic meshwork, taking on unpredictable shapes in response to the situation they found themselves in, without a strongly hierarchical organizational structure

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987; de Landa 1997; Escobar 2008: 274). They also went beyond any established habits, strategies, or rules for action, developing a creative response to the complex situation they faced through critical thinking (see chapter 4).

This group of young people meeting to devise strategies to diminish the gang violence in their city are continuing the ethos and methodology of the *Legión* beyond its institutional remit. If they achieve funding for the projects they are planning, they may have an impact at the local level comparable to that of the *Legión's* various localized projects over the years. In fact, their impact may be greater if the mayor agrees to the three-year uninterrupted project in Yuranis' proposal. The small group claiming the right to meet on the park bench and sometimes resisting police aggression remind me of how Clemencia Rodriguez describes the beginnings of the Communications Collective of Montes de María:

The collective was formed in 1994 by a small group of young intellectuals from El Carmen de Bolívar who made it their habit to spend their evenings in the park talking politics and poetry or just shooting the breeze (Rodriguez 2011: 93)

That collective went on to be an important force in training young people and other residents of los Montes de María in radio and television communications, and promoting local storytelling through these media, thereby, according to Rodriguez, helping generate a parallel peace for participants and their local communities during times of heightened conflict. In chapters 2, 3 and 4 I show how similar intellectuals or cultural elites from rural towns like José Alvarez, Javier Camargo and Diógenes Pino have been central to the festivalization of *tambora* and *gaita*, and its increasing association with discourses of peace, education, and "traditional art."

Yuranis and her group partake of some of these processes, but they would certainly not consider themselves intellectuals. Two of them have not finished high school, and only Yuranis has been to University. Many of them were previously active to some degree in the very same gang disputes they now want to pacify. They are economically poor young people empowered by

their experiences with the *Legión* to generate a change in their community from the inside using all of the creative skills they have. These include music making that bridges presentational and participatory fields (and potentially studio recording), and combines popular and "traditional" forms. They trust each other, and the system of the *Legión* to have a positive impact because of their previous experiences working together in Sincelejo and elsewhere in Colombia. If their project gets off the ground, it will include trusting newly integrated members with serious, but somewhat playful and achievable tasks of planning, performing, managing fun creative events and their budgets, and carrying out reflexive ethnographic research on the problems faced by locals, feeding this learning back into the development of future events and new projects.

We might ask whether they are likely to fare better than individuals like Martina, Idelsa, Joché and Carmen in their attempts to carry out musical social projects in their hometowns, or the various *gaiteros* in Cartagena who attempted to organize for better conditions. Certainly many *legionarios* are better equipped in some ways. They have experience with budgeting and logistics which most of the aforementioned musicians lack. They are more used to a high degree of flexibility in the design and implementation of social projects based on the needs of highly localized populations. They also have an effective methodology for gaining access to isolated, marginalized and distrusting groups of people to find out what their needs are. They have practical experience of building trust through radically inclusive creative activities that straddle a broad range of styles, both presentational and participatory. Their practice of transversality also makes them less dependent on single sources of funding, more able to rely on a wide radius of people more thinly for basic needs, and so less likely to enter into clientelistic relationships. However, if they are to continue offering a social wage to participants, they will need to secure a significant source of funding. This will only be possible to the extent that they are able to engage

productively with funding bodies, public or private, local, regional, national or international, and the extent to which together can resist the widespread disposition towards clientelistic corruption.

Engaging in projects like this puts Yuranis and her friends at risk. As I write, even after the signing of the peace treaty between the Colombian government and the FARC, every week brings news of more murders of unionists, human rights defenders, and community leaders at the hands of neo-paramilitaries and the gangs subcontracted by them, or killing independently. I can only hope that the *legionarios*' "bulletproofing" of sonic, kinesic and visual creativity keeps them safer than their friend, whose death was part of their inspiration for reinitiating the work of the *Legión* in their city.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented the *Legión del Afecto* as a radically inclusive social organization, which works to integrate marginalized youth and isolated social groups from all areas of the urban-rural spectrum. The most deeply involved members literally live and work together in order to promote peaceful living together in key sites of violence across Colombia. The *Legión* has a detailed, flexible and ever-evolving methodology for building strong emotional bonds between these people and the places they inhabit, through somatic knowledge and dense indices felt as "visceral" motivations for continued dedication to the organization's activities. Importantly, following Rifkin's vision of a third industrial revolution, extended participation brings a social wage, which allows members to continue carrying out the organization's work, rather than resort to activities that may contribute to the various forms of violence it seeks to reduce.

Music making, acting and other creative practices play a key role in the *Legión*'s activities. They are conceptualized as "bulletproofing" that permits members safer entry to areas where pervasive distrust and the presence of armed groups might otherwise put their lives in danger. The creative practices also help *legionarios* entertain and build thin trusting relationships across the social groups they work among, encourage participation and recruit new members. Trusting relationships thicken between *legionarios* who work together closely and repeatedly, especially among those who live together in dangerous situations and have the opportunity to develop the close attention to others that the *Legión*'s methodology teaches. Importantly, the creative practices they undertake make use the extant creative resources of members, who share and learn from each other as they go. This results in a wide variety in performance practice from clowning and mime, through figurative dance, to multiple styles of "traditional" and commercial music and dance in presentational, participatory and recorded forms. The assumption on the part of coordinators is that new local *legionarios* already have some of the creative resources necessary to improve social relations in their community; they simply need a sustained opportunity to use them to that end. Thus the musical and creative styles of the *Legión* include whatever will work, and whatever is at hand, or can be learned quickly from other members, to achieve its aims. This pragmatic attitude, putting music at the service of community-building, contrasts with the nostalgic attitude of festival organizers described in chapter 2, and youth groups in chapter 4, for whom a particular musical style is selected for revival, and considerations of social impact are secondary. However, those youth groups can provide gateway activities to more socially engaged entities like the *Legión*. The *Legión* also provides a space for resignifying extant musical practices of members as positive social interaction, as in the case of Jhonny's changing relationship with champeta.

The impact of the *Legión* is not limited to the integration of members to perform and create "moments of happiness." Rather, such moments are part of broader and more serious processes of breaking silences through group reflections, multimedia testimony, ethnography, and personal revelations or apologies. These processes also inform the planning of future activities and help *legionarios* develop their skills of perception, expression, and conflict transformation. *Legionarios* are encouraged to be critical thinkers, engaging with literature related to the multiple violences of Colombia, in order to break the silences enforced through doxic attitudes towards topics such as the role of the state, and virulent late capitalism. Musical interaction is central to transformative processes whereby young people (including some who are deeply involved in criminal violence) increase their trustworthiness and build tendencies of trusting others, within both thin and thick relationships, that increase their social capital and bring them to value peaceful living together over violent death. Such transformations involve some symbolic violence through the questioning of doxa, but are principally self-motivated.

Structurally the *Legión* negotiates two ideal types of organization, which correspond to and arise from two forms of methodology. To some degree, the *Legión* exists as a rhizomic self-organizing meshwork in which members strive to maintain horizontal relations of power, and hence non-coercive, non-corrupt trusting relations, seeing themselves as friends and companions in shared struggles. I argue this structure and mode of operation is greatly facilitated by musical practices that rely on shared bases of know-how and promote participatory forms of performance. However, these modes of music making are context-dependent, so for instance while *gaita* may work well in Montes de María, commercial *vallenato* songs will be more likely to provoke participation among people living in La Guajira than *tambora* repertoire.

In order to secure a social wage for members, the *Legión* has engaged ambivalently with the state, and maintains a degree of hierarchical organization. This often corresponds with a less effective, paternalistic "do-gooder" mentality of a helping others, which can be promoted by more presentational performances for passive audiences that foster attitudes of negative reciprocity. The social wage may be a necessary evil given the *Legión* is an alternative organization working within a broader context of extreme late capitalism. However when this wage becomes the primary motivation for involvement it threatens the aims and methodology the *Legión* strives for. Most members I met seemed motivated by genuine affection for the people they worked with and the goals of the *Legión*, and as such worked to undermine hierarchy whenever possible. This is often achieved through creative (and often comedic) performance and participatory music making, as in the clowning and cumbia that put the turquoise cap in the hand of the DPS man.

The future of the *Legión* is unclear. It is not currently active as a government-funded organization. However, it may regain funding, grow and become more integrated with the state. The proposals for social service on the *Legión* model to be an alternative to the compulsory military service many young Colombians currently face would be welcomed by many people who have witnessed the dehumanizing drive of the military and the humanizing power of the *Legión*. However, the *Legión* as a whole may remain unfunded. In which case, it is possible that splinter groups will arise, like the one in Sincelejo. This would continue the rhizomic self-organizing meshwork mode of operation, where parts of the assemblage would regroup to continue working in loose association, though smaller hierarchical structures would likely arise to engage with local government institutions. The engagement of such splinter groups with institutions will likely continue to be ambivalent as their critical approach means they are likely

to trust institutions only to the extent that they meet the *Legión*'s exacting standards of affective humanizing engagement, radical inclusion, and active opposition to multiple forms of violence.

Conclusion

Grasping at Fish

In this dissertation I have attempted to show the dynamic relations between musical projects aimed at reducing violence in northern Colombia and the acts, processes, relationships and shifting tendencies of trusting among participants, and in the social groups to which they belong. I have also sought to contribute to phenomenological and semiotic models for understanding music and the rest of social life, nourish understandings of trust through ethnography, and develop more fine grained distinctions with Turino's four fields of music making. Doing so has involved recounting the narratives and experiences of my interlocutors, and myself with them. The narratives are necessarily partial, stylized, and geared towards my central purpose of illuminating music and trust. My task has also required the definition and use of central terms like "violence," "trust," and "music." Using such terms to represent reality is necessarily a slippery process a little like wading into the very same River Magdalena Martina Camargo describes as her confident – or is it a Heraclitean changeling river? – and trying to catch fish with one's bare hands. Grasp too tight and they slip between the fingers. Some aspects of the lived experience I tried to capture are more like the river itself, and attempting to describe them feels as futile as trying to keep the liquid in one's cupped hands. However, immersion, grasping, and watching liquid trickle through one's fingers are themselves parts of the lived experience – the fish, if you will – that we as writer and reader are trying to grasp, and it is in the shared effort of trying that we communicate – or not – about and within life.

In this conclusion I briefly consider what I believe to be the main shortcomings of my work – the moments the fish slipped – before reviewing the catch, and considering the ways in

which it can nourish the social and academic streams in which we wade and flow. There are nine points in which I consider my account to be lacking: race and ethnicity; gender, sex and sexuality (and the intersection between these first two); rurality and nature; dynamics of the organized and insurgent left; the peace process; musical projects for peace directed by the state and private corporations; the professional exploits of "folk stars"; musical formats other than *tambora* and *gaita*; and the ubiquity of the potential for violence among all humans. In the following section I consider them in order.

The Ones that Got Away

In the development of my research, prior to full time extended fieldwork I shifted considerations of race and ethnicity out of the foreground of my focus. Dynamics of racialization, ethnization and their relations with trust had been of primary concern for me, and I still believe they are of central importance to my interlocutors' lived experience. However, a dissertation can do only so much, I decided to direct my focus to trust and (non)violence, limiting the explicit consideration of these complex discourses and embodied ways of living. Any future work that aims at more completeness than this dissertation would benefit from integrating a consideration of race and ethnicity into its analysis of music and trust from the outset. Most of the people I work with find it difficult to trust and be trusted in part because of the ways in which they have historically been racialized and ethnized as other, inferior, and essentially untrustworthy. Yet by the same token there is currently no clear racial or ethnic category within which they can identify, or be identified by others, and as such they remain illegible (Asher 2009), and less able to act as a unified group in relation to the state (Escobar 2008). Many of them may choose "zambo" had it not been historically stigmatized and if it now existed as a category within common discourse

and the legal framework of demographics. On an individual level distrust is internalized and part of everyday interaction in part because of the doxic power and historical weight of these broader discourses (Whitten and Torres 1998).

Any attempt to grasp these dynamics, however, must be delicate. For instance Martina resists the attempts of young "folk music" aficionados and researchers from the interior to characterize her as Afro-Colombian and *tambora* as an Afro-Colombian musical practice, in part because: "I have always felt more 'Indian.' I don't know why... maybe it's because I have straight hair." Joche Álvarez foregrounds the "black" style of his *gaita* playing in Cartagena. However, he also enjoyed playing in an "indigenous" style when we went to visit Alejandro Mendoza in the hamlet where his father grew up. And on some paperwork, he identifies as Indigenous, and does so with legal backing through a cousin who is the leader of an indigenous *cabildo* (regional governing body). For many of my interlocutors, massive shifts in identification can occur through adjustments of a hair's breadth, or the thickness of a piece of paper.

More could be done to integrate fully issues of gender, sex and sexuality into my account. While I mention the dynamics of sexualization and gendering in dance and youth group teaching, more could be done to show how these relate to trust among participants. For reasons of space I cut a whole section on fidelity between romantic partners and *gaita* composition. I mention that the folk scene is notable for its inclusion of people who do not conform to dominant discourses of sexuality and gender, but that this inclusion is generally limited to roles of singing and dancing. However I stop short of fully explaining local categories of gender and sexuality, and how these influence trust and violence. Understanding these dynamics would be hugely beneficial for a more complete analysis of trust, especially given the increasing awareness of how central sexual violence has been to the armed conflict in Colombia (Centro Nacional de

Memoria Histórica 2017), and the bilious (nearly bellicose) reaction from the country's right and center when attempts were made in public schools to work against discrimination based in gender and sexual identification.¹

The intersections of race, gender, sex and sexuality also warrant further attention. Peter Wade shows how any ideology of race is necessarily also in part an ideology of controlling sexual preference and reproduction (Wade 2009). Although my model of identification is compatible with an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991), my focus on region, cultural capital, and the festivalization of practices like *Tambora* is obviously partial. Much more could be done to show how the intersections of marginalized forms of identification relate to trust and music making in northern Colombia.

On the recommendation of trusted, but perhaps overly-protective interlocutors I minimized my time in areas particularly isolated from towns that they thought more secure, thereby under representing *la vereda* in my work. As discussed in chapter 5, people living in small isolated hamlets are some of the most vulnerable to paramilitary, state, and insurgent violence, and have least recourse to systems that should secure their wellbeing. Considering in more detail the lives of people in such contexts, more keenly integrated into particular ecosystems, would also allow a deeper exploration of assemblages that include human and non-human natural parts (Escobar 2008), further integrating humans' connections to nature into a discussion of trust and music making.

¹ Minister of education Gina Parody attempted to implement anti-discrimination measures in schools, but was vilified as a promoter of an "ideology of gender" that would "corrupt" Colombian youth and "promote" non-heteronormative sexualities. She was eventually forced to resign, and the supposed "ideology of gender" was linked to the campaign for a "yes" vote on the plebiscite for the first peace deal with the FARC, such that many people who voted "no" believed, incorrectly, they were voting to preserve conservative values on sexuality and gender (Anon. 2016a).

Voices of the organized and insurgent left are notably underrepresented in this dissertation. In Ovejas, friendships made early on in my fieldwork with families who turned out to side mainly with the political right made it difficult to research and depict the centrality of gaita and accordion music to the struggles of campesino organizations in Montes de María. Chance encounters and the vicissitudes of snowball sampling, as well as the heightened vulnerability of leftist armed activists, also meant that my consideration of the reintegration process focused on the experiences of an ex-paramilitary and ex-gang member, rather than ex-guerrillas.

The peace agreement between the FARC and the Colombian government occurred while I was writing, and after I had returned from the field, so I decided to leave it out of my text. The musical aspects of the process deserve their own study. Voting in the plebiscite on the initial peace agreement revealed the extreme polarization of the country, largely along rural-urban, or center-margin lines. People in rural areas away from the interior most directly affected by the conflict voted overwhelmingly for the accord, but they were marginally outweighed by "no" vote majorities in the urban interior, which has least direct experience of the conflict. The campaign also revealed the extent of many voters' myopic faith in religious leaders and politicians who (knowingly or otherwise) misinformed them on the dangers of voting "yes" (Anon. 2016b), and the persistent incapacity of the state to divulge accurate information, or garner trust from the population.

In this dissertation I do not consider musical projects for peace initiated and run by the state or by the private sector. I purposefully avoided direct ethnographic engagement with state-run initiatives in order to represent Colombia more from the margins than the center, and to avoid association with state apparatus that could have jeopardized my interlocutors trust in me,

despite the fact that some of my interlocutors have been employed sporadically in state projects. During my fieldwork I did devote time to researching a private sector initiative, a corporate social responsibility project of the Cali-based company SIDOC, called *Tambores de Siloé* (Siloé Drums). For reasons of space and coherence I left this out of my text, and limited myself geographically to the north of the country. This limitation is rather artificial, as people and musical projects sometimes bridged the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, circumventing the country's interior. In future work I seek to remedy these lacunae.

One such coast-bridging project that remains on the cutting room floor was related to independent professional studio recording and presentation. I helped foster a collaboration between Martina Camargo and the Cali-based band *Mama Julia*, which is riddled with colleagues and interlocutors central to my research, for their self-released 2014 album *el rebusque*.² Limiting my focus to northern Colombia and projects not centered in professional music making forced me to under represent the extent to which people like Martina Camargo have become "folk stars." The always-budding alternative music scene in Colombia has embraced rural music traditions in their presentational and recorded "folk" forms, and musicians like Martina have become renowned in these circles. They are able to capitalize on the connections to record and perform on national and international folk circuits. This level of fame, albeit outside their rural hometowns ("Nobody is a prophet in their own land!" they would often explain), breeds interesting dynamics of trust. However as these sides of their musical lives are mostly not explicitly aimed at reducing violence – more about making a living – I largely left them out.

² I arranged the tambora song "*Me robaste el sueño*" (which Martina had recorded on her second studio album *Canto, palo y cuero*) in a folk fusion, afrobeat-influenced style for Mama Julia. I also served as the link to help secure permission from the composer of the song Alberto González in San Martín, have Martina record the lead vocal part on the track, and coordinate her appearance at the album release party.

Despite working against divisive discourses of genre and locality, my analyses remain focused on two musical styles; *tambora* and *gaita*. The other styles I engage with; brass band music, vallenato and accordion music, champeta, and commercial cumbia, while useful points of comparison, are not central to my analyses. I even cut a whole section on a project involving the sung poetry in the form of *décimas*, and fictive kin trusting relationships in San Martín. While "genres" may not have existed in northern Colombia prior to Eurocentric listening and analysis (Ochoa Gautier 2014), they certainly do operate for most people now, and I remain tethered by them to a degree.

Perhaps most important, I have come to realize that I tend at times to treat violence as if it were a strange, necessarily bad phenomenon, somewhere out *there* in the world, from which young people especially must be protected. This is to ignore the ubiquity of the potential for violent acts among all humans, the somewhat paradoxical humanity of violence, if you will. As human, violence needs to be understood through the twisted histories that give rise to it and those that we tell each other and ourselves about it. Although I have attempted to narrate these histories at every point possible, more could be done to describe them from individual psychology up, and from global trends down to individual psychology. More must be done to take into account mental health issues, medicinal and recreational drug use and addiction, as well as the ways in which people and groups take certain violent acts to be just or acceptable. Among these people I include myself and the justifiability (or otherwise) of the symbolic violence involved in imposing a largely Peircean analytic framework (if nuanced and remolded by Colombian scholarship, the views of local organic intellectuals, and my ethnographic experiences) on the lives of my interlocutors, to the end of producing a dissertation.

What I have Argued about my Cases

I argue that among my interlocutors and the social groups of which they are members no single form of trusting predominates, and that despite various absolutist rhetorics people accommodate themselves to particular situations in an improvisational manner. There is a tension between the valorization of the virtuous and the cult of cunning, which entails that general trustworthiness is simultaneously revered, shunned, expected, and thought rare. People's trusting tends towards faith, rather than informed confidence, and particularist interaction with individual family members, friends, acquaintances, peers, patrons or clients, saints and God, rather than systems. Some people accept unquestioningly that trusting can involve coercion and negative reciprocity, while others strive for disinterested trusting relationships based in generalized reciprocity, where friends give aid with little or no thought of receiving anything in return. Different musical activities require participants to try out, and thereby facilitate the development of, different forms of trusting, only some of which are conducive to the reduction of violence.

Street tambora is a participatory musical practice, where the principle aim of most people involved is to celebrate by maximizing the breadth and duration of engagement by increasing the number of participants and keeping them actively engaged in music making for as long as possible (on one night of celebration, or over repeated nights and years). As such it requires any given participant to rely on many other participants thinly and repeatedly at many levels of periodicity. There are differentiations in the tasks involved, and some protagonism, but the trusting tends to involve more or less horizontal power relations with minimal coercion, especially when roles are changed frequently. Overall, the sounds and movements of street tambora favor repetition at multiple levels over virtuosic variation. Repeatedly participating in street tambora tends to strengthen thin, broad forms of trusting and reproduce thin trusting

relations across a broad network of participants. Following the terminology of the *Legión* we might call this kind of trusting "thin multivalent transversality" because most participants depend on most other people involved for a set of individually unimportant tasks that combine to achieve a valued shared aim. Within this kind of interaction, the idea of violence towards other participants normally seems absurd, as when San Martín residents laughed at the thought of fights breaking out during street tambora. It also tends to work against the splintering of the broad networks into smaller, oppositional groups that distrust each other.

As cultural elites and *gestores* in the river region attempted to harness this power of street *tambora* and strengthen what they saw as a dying "traditional art form" they inadvertently created a new musical practice and threatened the old one. By making festival tambora increasingly presentational and promoting the training of young people within this new more formalized practice they thereby limited performers' ability to maintain the participatory forms. Festival organizers did this with laudable intentions that included the construction of pockets of peace running parallel to the civil conflict. They worked to support positive processes of identification in opposition to years of violence and stigmatization of the region, seeking to identify the region with peace and its residents with each other. They provided learning environments in which younger generations could identify with estranged older generations and (some aspects of) their lifeways. They hoped this would help young people avoid active participation in the civil conflict and the haze of violence that surrounds it. My research shows some success in achieving these aims.

The many festivals and festival groups that have sprung up across the region potentially allow people from a specific hamlet, town or city to expand their network of trustees across the growing tambora cohort. They also provide relatively clear rules for musical and broader social

interaction, within which young people can more easily try out trusting. This interaction becomes an arena for building trusting relationships that go beyond the activities of the youth groups, though mostly for young men who have greater freedom to socialize. However, rather than jointly making celebration possible, festival participants are principally involved in the competitive production of musical sound and movement for passive audiences and judges with the power to reward them. As a result the cohort is based mainly on this presentational activity, its sounds and movements increasingly stylized and formalized, isolated from situations of communal celebration, and permeated by the aims of competition. As competition becomes increasingly important to participants, and the stakes become higher, trusting relationships spanning the cohort seem to be fading.

Many of the skills required for success in the presentational competitions of festivals are diametrically opposed to those required for participatory practices. For instance, the skill of being able to insert more and more stock verses into a song in order to maintain momentum is replaced by the skill of remembering a fixed sequence of verses and coordinating a clean ending at around two minutes. Strategies for success can become arbitrary rules for music making that some people naturalize over time as the *only* ways to make this music, as when Tori insists on following Idelsa's rule of "three repetitions and out!" Non-participant leaders like Idelsa often find it difficult to avoid replicating in miniature typical clientelistic relationships and that lie at the heart of much of the region's violence. While there is always resistance and stretching of arbitrary rules, and none of my interlocutors have become cutthroat competitors blind to the autotelic core of their musical practices, they are typically far less capable of maximizing participation in street tambora than musicians who are less engaged with festivals. Some, like Federico, are even willing to break moral expectations of group solidarity and do almost

anything to gain the prize money on offer. His case involved more than the low level corruption of which many festival competitors accuse other groups. He directly manipulated, lied and stole from his own group in an act of extreme negative reciprocity. The range of reactions among JSM show that some but not all members have developed more nuanced modes of trusting than many non-locals who do not participate in *tambora*.

My case studies of *gaiteros* provide several useful contrasts. In Montes de María, people like Joche grew up among the sounds of war. However, through informal schools like that of his father José, they were offered the possibility of constructing sonic spaces of parallel peace through loud and deeply engaging gaita music. Because of *gaita*'s longer history of folklorization, and festival organizers' decisions to limit ensemble formats and focus on musical sound far more than dance, *gaiteros* have consolidated and standardized a small group format that focuses on improvisatory interplay between musicians. I characterize the ways in which *gaiteros* vary their rhythmo-melodic patterns and phrases in response to each other as "micro-improvisation," akin to the minute adjustments and tests a craftsman like Joche makes as he builds gaitas. In most *gaita* performance the principle aim of micro-improvisation is to generate and sustain intense focus and pleasure among performers; the flow state they call "*el viaje*" (the journey), in which consistently good and creative group performance seems to happen by magic. Repeated participation in this intense small-group experience, coupled with the significance of identifying as an accomplished *gaitero*, can lead to thick trusting relationships among small pools of musicians, even rebuilding friendships that seemed lost, as in the case of Kevin and Joche. Being an accomplished *gaitero* requires a high degree of virtuosity, exceptional skills of listening, responding and adapting one's sonic signs to maintain the groove and the interest of participants and anyone listening. It also requires the management of thick timbres, rich in

overtones and undertones, permitting the expression of boldness and strength. For this reason, there are powerful discourses of dedication, precision, and perfection around being a gaitero. For the same reasons that gaita is good at generating deep trusting relations, and the increasing consolidation of fixed gaita performance groups, gaiteros fare less well in forming broad-based networks of mutual support. Attempts have tended to fizzle out among recurring distrust between groups and individuals, as they compete within an increasingly mercantile environment.

The power of making gaita music to forge strong trusting relationships is part of the reason *gaiteros* associate it with non-violence. The ways in which they discuss gaita festivals especially in relation to the civil conflict suggests a strong link between gaita and peace. However, as seen in the conversation of Jota and Tiberio, these narratives can also involve the silencing of violences, or their disassociation from the political struggles of the civil conflict. In confidence, somewhat paradoxically, these silences can be both broken and reestablished to maintain the friendships that gaita-playing has built, which are themselves conducive to the peaceful living-together of friends who might otherwise have strong reasons to distrust each other, or perpetuate cycles of violence.

The wide range of activities related to *gaita* can provide a means of survival and sustenance for some highly skilled and dedicated practitioners. When Joche was displaced by guerrillas, gaita music was his lifeline. He was able to find work teaching, building and playing. As with many other gaiteros, whether in similarly vulnerable situations of not, much of his teaching has been with charities, foundations, NGOs and government (supported) social projects. *Gaita* can help build intense friendships across the divides of the civil conflict and in educational context, as Joche's work with *Fundesocial* shows. It placed him within a reconciliation project that united demobilized, one-time guerrillas and paramilitaries, and allowed him to build

friendships with young people from both sides of the conflict, as they in turn built similar friendships. With the most accomplished musician, Simón, this friendship became a deep trusting fictive kinship that extended outside the direct remit of the project and helped Simón develop a stable civilian life. However, such well-supported transitions into non-violence were not replicated or systematized by the foundation and remained open to the *desmobilizados* only to the extent they happened to engage deeply with the activities on offer. The flow-centered life that Joche seeks, and his tendency to look for patrons, while often useful for micro-improvising his way through the vicissitudes of working class urban living, make him ill equipped to break cycles of dependence, unemployment and depression. To this extent it is to the advantage of people like Simón that they avoid making *gaita* so central a feature of their processes of identification.

In further contrast the *Legión* seeks to promote a broad range of creative activities to engage all potential leaders of a third industrial revolution. It is a radically inclusive organization that uses and builds the extant creative skills of young people, including some of those with histories of and propensities for violence. It tends to integrate them into its work through musical activities that bridge presentational and participatory forms. Once in, they are offered the opportunity to work against the root causes of exploitation and estrangement from society (their own and those of the people they work for). They volunteer to build community in the face of multiple violences. If persistent, they are paid a social wage for their hard work, which allows them to avoid engaging in illicit activity that harms others. For many, participation offers transformative experiences, resignifying musical practices, building less (self-) destructive dispositions and habits of thought and action, and allowing them to become more trustworthy and trusting of others. The *Legión* has a well-honed ethos and methodology, with built-in

flexibility and reflexivity. It engages with the state as a well-structured hierarchy, capable of successfully guaranteeing funds for its ambitious projects, but fosters horizontal power relationships among all *legionarios* that facilitate creative conflict transformation at the local level and counter the tendency towards coercive, clientelistic trusting relationships.

"Traditional" musics like gaita and tambora feature heavily in the *Legión*'s activities. To an extent this is the product of neoliberal nationalist projects that support regional practices only within competitive, cosmopolitan frame such as festivals and cultural marketplaces. However *legionarios* tend to take a pragmatic stance towards selection of musical style, using whatever will best help them achieve their aims. Many *legionarios* have previous formation within "traditional" music cohorts. The shared know-how and transferable skills that this provides, and continued performance in shared styles that permit particular performance modes, help them maintain a sense of comradeship with other (potential) *legionarios*, whom they accompany in a shared set of struggles, and work against the paternalistic "do-gooder" mentality more closely associated with neoliberalism. In this sense, youth groups like JSM can provide "gateway activities" to the more socially engaged and transformative work of organizations like the *Legión*.

What I Provide for Broader Application

My main disciplinary intervention is to continue the development of a phenomenological semiotic approach to music making, showing ways in which we might and integrate it with an ethnographic account of trust and a consideration of how both music making and trust are useful in peacebuilding. My case studies allow me to develop theoretical considerations, which could

prove useful in analysis of other cases, and for understanding music and trust in general. I also offer a broad, universally applicable, definition of trust, and model for ethnographic accounts of local forms of trusting.

I show ways in which sonic periodicity at various levels of magnitude relate to reliability, interdependence and trust. Making participatory groove music like street tambora involves dicent signs of one's ability and willingness to maintain the practice, and requires participants to rely on each other at every level of magnitude. Because of the positive valance of tambora's associations with "respectable" celebration, religious devotion, local "culture," non-violence and care towards others, repeatedly trusting someone within the activity tends to lead to a trusting relationship with them beyond it. The impact of other participatory practices on tendencies of trust will depend in large part on the tasks and periodicity involved in making the music, its local indices and how these are valued.

I argue that scholars do best to reduce talk of "identities" to analysis of acts and processes of identification. Doing so allows the Peircean ethnomusicologist to use her extant analytic tools to show how "identities" play out through the use and interpretation of signs. In situations of violence that disrupt the reproduction of a cultural formation, and where people lack recourse to systems of protection or justice, such as during guerrilla or paramilitary occupation, musical "identity" projects like festivals can emerge as a response. They are one of few acceptable ways of opposing the violence by identifying in a way that marks residents as different from the warring parties. In the case of tambora, festivals founded by local cultural elites relied on the music's previous associations with locality and habits believed to be conducive to peaceful living together. However, the festivals also brought a host of new associations, importantly education and a nebulous notion of a peace in parallel to the ongoing civil conflict, and resulted in the

formation of a new cultural cohort based in presentational tambora. Understanding how such projects play out requires the analyst to oscillate between a consideration of individuals on the one hand, and the groups they identify with or against on the other, studying the significance of the signs in play during the process for the individuals and groups involved.

I show how intense flow experiences based in virtuosic, small group micro-improvisation can tend to lead to deep trusting relationships within a narrow radius. Making music in such formats involves paying close attention to one another through intense listening, in order to interlock and groove, but also to adapt one's own patterns in order to mimic, respond to, provoke, or coincide with the variations of others. That is to say such musicians engage in interdependent flow experiences *as individuals*, which is why I avoid describing what they call "*el viaje*" in terms of "experiential secondness" (Turino 2014). *Gaiteros* encourage, foster, and enjoy intensely the mutual sustenance of pleasure that comes with this form of sonic interaction. This is sometimes enough to repair frayed friendships and generate fictive kin relationships. However, greater valorization of virtuosity and insistence on a fixed format bring greater exclusivity and more obstacles to broad-based organization. Musical practices like these, common among *gaiteros*, while good for building thick in-group trust tend to work against efforts to build bridging social capital.

I suggest that we understand Peircean experiential thirdness as involving rule-following. I believe this helps us understand more clearly the particularity of situations where we must be creative in order to resolve problems, or select one of various possible rules to follow. This may require a development of the Peircean framework beyond the triad so central to its architectonic structure. I showed how festivals have arbitrarily come to reward particular kinds of performance, and how group leaders respond by developing strategies that, if repeatedly

imposed, become rules for music making. For young people who join a group like JSM, the set of relatively clear rules for music making and broader group interaction provide an arena of relative reliability in which they can test out trusting with other members. This can involve repeated restating of the rules of conduct, or bending the rules in order to sustain the enjoyment of play, both in the sense of continuing to make music and cheekily disobeying an arbitrary rule without getting caught or compromising shared aims of the group. I focused on a particular rule for stopping songs that might otherwise continue indefinitely, pitting tight form against groove, and forcing the young musicians into an intense experiential state – experiential fourthness? – as they try to resolve the dilemma and negotiate possible ways forward with no clear rules to dictate how. In such situations, participants come to trust those who are able to shift between different modes of engaging with the world based in habits, rules and negotiation. This is a useful life skill, essential to effective trusting in complex situations. My analysis of the *Legión* shows how it can be encouraged and applied in critical peacebuilding.

While all of the musical activities I describe can bring some benefits with regard to building trust and reducing violence, the most effective peacebuilding projects I have observed are those of the *Legión*. Their work highlights the importance of clear and focused aims; radical inclusivity; identifying and involving young leaders however checkered their past; generating an ethos of voluntary work for the benefit of others and solidarity in struggles against multiple violences; opening spaces for participation in autotelic performance, de-silencing, and critical reflection; and the negotiation of hierarchical versus horizontal organization. They show that paying a social wage to young people who are committed to social work can keep them from the violent activities they might otherwise have to engage in to survive, and that extended and repeated experiences with such an organization can have a transformative effect on participants,

bringing them to place more value on their own lives and the lives of others, trust more freely and effectively, be more trustworthy and less inclined to engage in future violence. Two great strengths of the *Legión* are that it uses and builds on existing strengths of its new recruits, and leaves them motivated to engage others in such transformational processes, whether within or beyond the official projects of the organization itself. If more can be done to show how the *Legión* negotiated support from successive neoliberal governments while challenging some of the structural violences they sought to impose, it could provide a model for future peacebuilding through music and creative social work.

We might still ask what kind of music is most effective for peacebuilding. I do not consider a broad enough range of musical activities to answer this comprehensively. For instance, I do not consider highly structured "traditional" presentational music such as western European art music (Baker 2014), or commercial music making ventures, neither do I delve into studio recording or art, or focus on music centered in word-based communication such as *décimas*. But I believe it is possible to generalize to some degree from my findings, based in a distinction I help develop between different forms of music making. My case studies show that answers to the question of what kinds of music have greatest potential for peacebuiding will require this level of research into the mechanics, intentions and experience of musical interaction between genuine people, rather than talk in terms of genre or other facile categorizations.

I contribute to Turino's drive to understand music making within four fields, by suggesting more fine-grained distinctions between different kinds of participatory music making. It is important to distinguish between different kinds of music that are ostensibly similar and often lumped together. My interlocutors mostly categorize *tambora* and *gaita* in all their forms together with myriad other practices as "traditional" or "folk" music. Turino's categories of

presentational and participatory performance are much more useful for separating out the different practices collected under, or excluded by these umbrella terms. Some "traditional" musical practices are highly folklorized, largely presentational and highly schematized, while other non-folklorized local musical practices with a long history may have more participatory forms. Folklorized *gaita* and *tambora* have their uses in Colombian peacebuilding, because of their association with peace before times of intense conflict, and their provision of clear rules, which can also come to form arenas for the formation of lasting friendships.

With respect to participatory music and its uses in building trust and peace, I help to begin a more nuanced distinction of aims and impacts. Turino notes that for participatory practices: "the quality of the performance is ultimately judged on the level of participation achieved" (Turino 2008a: 29). However, there are different ways to maximize the "level of participation," which have implications for musical interaction and the forms of trust generated. Participants in street *tambora* generally aim to maximize the breadth of participation, which is to say the number of people involved in music making. Such interaction tends to help build thin trusting relationships among a broad radius of people. Much *gaita* music is also highly participatory, but *gaiteros* typically aim to maximize the depth of participation in shared experiences of flow among a tighter radius of people. Musical forms with small, closed formats and a focus on virtuosity, like *gaita*, are likely to help to build deep trusting relationships among a tight radius of players has its benefits (as in the case of Simón), but can prevent the formation of broad based support networks, and leave some participants prohibitively addicted to the flow states that they generate (as in the case of Joche). In contrast, participatory musical practices like street *tambora* that allow participants to practice thin trusting among a broad radius may help form exactly the kind of broad networks of support that small format, virtuosic musics prohibit.

Recognizing these differences comes from paying close attention to the aims of musicians while they make music, as implored by Turino's four field approach, which can only be effectively achieved through intensely engaged participant ethnography.

Dramatic musical activities can be affectively effective in communicating messages that encourage cooperation, and if they resonate with previous experiences, their iteration can be part of a transformative process for performers (and perhaps audience members). This transformation happens primarily at the level of embodied habits of cooperation and pleasure in working as part of a shared struggle with others. This can be strengthened by coupling it with explicit sessions of reflection and critique of doxa that encourages violence.

To my mind the most effective aspects of all the musical forms I consider are those that humanize others most; that require participants to pay special attention to other participants as intentioned beings, to predict and react to their actions, and to develop shared aims that are conducive to both supporting the wellbeing of all (potential) participants and peaceful living together in general. For this reason I admire the pragmatic, multifaceted approach of the *Legión* where any musical practice is fair game as long as its use can be justified. I would warn peacebuilders to be vigilant of practices where some individuals are imposing arbitrary rules, especially ones that impair the ability of participants to maintain participatory practices that can foster horizontal relationships in which any participants can critically reflect and suggest ways of improving the practice.³ I am also in accord with Rifkin in holding that people engaged in this social work of peacebuilding through music making and other creative practices must be paid a living wage if societies are to survive a third industrial revolution (Rifkin 1995).

³ In this I echo some of the sentiments of Geoffrey Baker in his analysis of Venezuela's *El sistema* (Baker 2014).

Going Forward

How might my research be developed to understand the relationship(s) between music in general, trust in general and their roles in peacebuilding? I believe a fitting answer lies in an idea that I partially develop in chapter 3, namely an extension of the analogy between music and games. The comparison of music making to game play has long been fruitful, but using the model I hope to develop we would not compare music analogically *to* games, but literally understand some musical activities *as* games. Developing this model goes beyond my scope here, and may comprise a life's work. However, I offer some sketches to show its potential utility.

I envision a ludic theory of music making as nourished by a critical development of Sherry Ortner's concept of "serious games" (Ortner 1996, 2006), Wittgensteinian theory (Wittgenstein 2001 [1955]), recent developments in the philosophy of play (Combs 2000; Papineau 2017), as well as anthropology, ethnomusicology and Peircean theory on the subject (Radcliffe-Brown 1940; McNaughton 2008; Erlmann 1996; Gaunt 2005; Turino 2008; Sebeok 1981). According to my current understanding, to play a game is to engage in a potentially repeatable autotelic activity with clear, arbitrary rules. I recognize that not all music making is fully autotelic. The professional session musician, or orchestra member, the devotional singer, or dancing medium, are not simply doing what they do for fun. There are clearly more aspects to their reasons for making music. Furthermore, many musicians would balk at the idea of the rules of their particular style(s) being arbitrary, especially the "traditional" musicians I work with, many of whom believe their style is the necessary outcome of their cultural "essence." However, I believe it is important to recognize that at or near the center of all music making activity is playful interaction with other humans within potentially nested sets of rules that could be

otherwise than they actually are. The more serious this interaction and consequences, or the less clear the rules, the less game-like the activity. One benefit of a ludic theory of music would be the direct comparison afforded with sports and other games, to show their relative effectiveness for projects such as peacebuilding.

Music is good for building trust and reducing violence in large part because engaging in one or many of these nested games can be a low risk venture, but doing so can be the beginning of a process of deeply humanizing engagement with other participants, which can lead to musical interaction with higher stakes. On noticing a street tambora, deciding to take part in clapping or singing the chorus at the outside of the circle is a low risk venture, requiring minimal trust in other participants. However, the nature of iteration at expanding levels of periodicity, and potential for more demanding engagement towards the inside of the circle, provide opportunities for a lifetime of more serious trusting acts that can cement trusting relationships and useful tendencies of trusting that make violence towards others seem absurd, and promote effective trusting of trustworthy collaborators. Similarly, the clear rules of sonic, kinesic, and social interaction laid down for members of youth music groups allow members to try out trusting one another, and provide an arena for developing trusting relationships that surpass the musical activities of the group. Where musicians are intensely focused on maintaining each other's enjoyment and are afforded the right to play with expectations or the rules of engagement themselves, as in gaita, the trusting relationships thicken, perhaps at the cost of the ability to form broad-based networks, but with the benefit that participants are able to resolve conflict non-violently or (re-)build supportive kin-like relationships that can sustain processes of reintegration into civil society. Where such musical games are radically inclusive, coupled with serious de-silencing and learning, and where committed companions are rewarded with a social wage, as in

the *Legión*, participation can be individually transformative and can help in the construction of communities capable of resisting the violences designed to destroy them.

Of course musical activities are not a panacea. They provide opportunities to abuse trust; to reproduce coercive relationships; to form faith-like, uncritical and potentially risky trusting relationships, stubborn in the face of evidence against the trustee; to engage in the symbolic violence of imposing one of many possible ways of playing as the only possible way; to silence previous violence; to actively encourage violence and identification of people as violent or with violent groups. They are therefore most effective as a tool of peacebuilding when nested within broader activities of learning, un-silencing, challenging structural violence, critical reflection on how to do all of this more effectively, and most importantly interaction that promotes genuine loving friendship centered in generalized reciprocity.

The ongoing task of the applied analyst, then, is to understand and explain these nested and related games and not-so-game-like activities, to support those that best promote effective tendencies of trusting and non-violence, to play, learn, provide testimony, challenge violences, and reflect critically on the process to improve it, alongside our fellow participants and friends.

Glossary

<i>ágape</i>	Term used by the <i>Legión</i> for an act of love involving the sharing of food.
<i>agualoja</i>	A non-alcoholic drink made with <i>panela</i> (unprocessed sugar), and spices. Drunk during night time street tambora.
<i>aire</i>	Literally "air," ambiguous, as in English between breeze and musical style distinguished by rhythmic feel.
<i>animador(a)</i>	Person in charge of animating/ warming up the crowd before, between or during performances. Roughly emcee.
<i>artesano</i>	Artisan or craftsman, often seen as maintaining traditions by making locally salient artifacts such as musical instruments or weaved products that identify a particular region or town.
<i>bachillerato</i>	Equivalent to high school education for the American system and GSCSE qualifications for the British.
<i>banda criminal</i>	highly organized criminal organization. This term is often used by the political right to depoliticize neo-paramilitary organizations and dissimulate their historical connections to supposedly demobilized paramilitaries such as the AUC. Often abbreviated to <i>BACRIM</i> .
<i>baile cantado</i>	Literally "sung dance" a group of musical practices mainly found in Northern Colombia centered on song, dance, and percussion, including <i>tambora</i> and <i>bullerengue</i> .
<i>berroche</i>	(Sometimes <i>verroche</i>) fast duple feel musical style, part of the <i>tambora</i> family, associated with happiness because of its speed, often played more

during the day, because keeping it doing all night is too draining. Sonically similar to *merengue* in the *gaita* family.

Bienestar Familiar The *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Colombian Institute of Family Welfare) is the national child and family welfare agency.

bozá (Also *abozá'*, *aboza'o*, *goza*) probably from the verb *bozar*, to put a bridle on a horse, moor a boat, or tie up a captive, and by extension to rein them in, keep them steady, or control them.

1. section of *tambora* or other *baile cantado* performance in which the lead singer and chorus halve their cycles of interaction. Used as a rest between more extended singing of verses by the lead singer in participatory forms, or to indicate the end of a song in presentational forms.

2. section of a *gaita* performance in which the lead *gaita* plays a minimalist melody. Used as a rest before reinitiating the cycle of melodic phrases.

bullerengue A style of music mainly played on or near the Caribbean coast of Colombia with large populations identified as Afrodescendent. Its typical format includes lead singer (*cantador(a)*) and expandable group of responsorial chorus singers, *tambor alegre* and *llamador*, optional idiophones, and dancers that alternate, to maintain an ever changing mixed sex couple. Its family of rhythmic feels include *bullerengue* (slow duple), *chalupa* (fast duple), and *fandango de lengua* (compound).

cabeza Literally head; female leader, organizer, or host of a participatory *tambora* celebration.

<i>cachaco/a</i>	A term used by <i>costeños</i> (people from the north coastal region) to refer to a person from the highland interior of Colombia or more broadly any non- <i>costeño</i> .
<i>caja agraria</i>	State-owned bank with branches offering accounts and credit to people in rural areas without commercial banks.
<i>campesino/a</i>	(Lit.) Peasant farmer. More broadly a person "of the countryside" (<i>el campo</i>)
<i>cantador/a</i>	"Traditional" lead singer of The term is applied with respect to older singers, mainly in <i>bailes cantados</i> traditions, though also in marimba music on the pacific coast. It often denotes singers who compose and are able to improvise verses.
<i>carnaval</i>	Carnival held in February before <i>Semana Santa</i> (Easter) The most famous carnivals in Colombia are in Barranquilla and Popayan, but these are replicated in the north and south of the country respectively.
<i>casa de la cultura</i>	(Lit.) house of culture. Many towns have an institution, often situated in a central, visible building, funded by local government dedicated to local "culture" mostly understood as music, dance, theatre, visual arts or crafts. <i>Casas de la cultura</i> sometimes also house libraries and serve as meeting centers.
<i>casitas, las</i>	government housing provided to "vulnerable populations, especially families officially registered as displaced.
<i>chalupa</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fast motorboat for public transport along rivers, operated by cooperatives based in port towns 2. Fast duple rhythmic feel in the <i>bullerengue</i> family.

<i>champeta</i>	The name given in Colombia to commercial guitar dance music imported from West Africa, mainly French language soukous and Congolese rumba, as well as the local music based on it and produced mainly in cities of <i>La Costa</i> ; <i>champeta africana</i> and <i>champeta criolla</i> respectively.
<i>chandé</i>	A rhythmic feel, normally swung duple, now part of the festivalized <i>tambora</i> family, also popular at the carnival in Barranquilla. See <i>guacherna</i> for common confusion.
<i>concha 'e jobo</i>	cheap straw hat made and used in the river region. Now a sign of locality for "folkloric" groups.
<i>convivencia</i>	Peaceful living together. This term is ubiquitous in peacebuilding discourse in Colombia. It means more than simply "peaceful coexistence," which can imply peaceful parallel living, without interaction. "Living together" helps underline the interactive nature of <i>convivencia</i> .
<i>corralejas</i>	rural bullfights in a temporary bullring, typically hosted by a town during a religious festival, and involving brass band music.
<i>corredor</i>	literally "runner". A middle-man who buys agricultural products from <i>campesino</i> farmers (in this case, tobacco) and transports them to factories where he sells them to be packaged.
<i>costeño/a</i>	A person from the Caribbean coastal region of Colombia.
<i>cuba</i>	Small calabash gourd for collecting water from a larger vessel, for drinking or bathing.

<i>cumbia</i>	Very broad term used to denote a wide range of musical genres and practices. Probably originated in northern Colombia as a general musical celebration including drumming, dancing, singing and/ or aerophone playing. In the early twentieth century it was probably interpreted mainly in <i>pito atravesado</i> format, before being popularized in big band form by band leaders such as Lucho Bermúdez and Pacho Galán, and in accordion formats by artists such as Andrés Landero. It was likely only then adopted into some gaita formats because of the recordings of Los Gaiteros de San Jacinto. Commercial forms became popular across Latin America, especially in Mexico and Argentina, where new, but historically related styles emerged, often also called simply "cumbia." There are no sonic features that unite all styles called "cumbia" and distinguish them from other related forms. However, characteristic features include a mid paced duple feel with accent on the offbeat and a rhythmic pattern played on scrapper or the shell of a drum (x-xxx-xxx-xxx...)
<i>currulao</i>	In the <i>depresión momposina</i> (river region), this term is used to refer to the hand drum known also and elsewhere as a <i>tambor alegre</i> .
<i>DPS</i>	(<i>Departamento de Prosperidad Social</i>) Colombian Department of Social Prosperity. A government institution responsible for designing and implementing public policies for social inclusion and reconciliation.
<i>depresión momposina</i>	Low-lying wetland area surrounding the city of Mompox (or Mompós) in Northern Colombia. Topographically it is characterized by its flatness and the vast waterways formed by the confluence of the Magdalena river as well as the rivers Cauca, Cesar, San Jorge, and their spilling out into vast <i>brazos</i> (arms of the river), networks of tight <i>caños</i> (channels) and <i>cienagas</i> (lakes-cum-swamps). In wet seasons many settlements in this region flood as these waterways grow. In dry seasons the water retreats to reveal <i>playones</i> (large beaches) historically used for communal

agriculture. Despite the efforts of lobbyists such as Orlando Fals Borda, the area is not a unified department, but rather divided between the five departments of Bolívar, Cesar, Córdoba and Magdalena, each with distant departmental capitals. This has the effect of limiting state presence on the area, making it a kind of internal frontier land.

desmobilizado/a A person over 18 years of age who has voluntarily left an illicit armed group, whether paramilitary or guerrilla.

desvinculado/a A person under 18 years of age who has voluntarily left an illicit armed group, whether paramilitary or guerrilla.

ELN Armed guerrilla movement active in Colombia since 1964, advocating a blend of Marxism and liberation theology. The abbreviation stands for *Ejercito de Liberación Nacional* (National Liberation Army).

enfrentamiento combat or military confrontation normally involving gunfire, grenades, or shellfire.

espectáculo Spectacle, show. Used to distinguish flashy or professional concerts and performances from more meager or honest ones - can have positive or negative connotations.

estanco Locale selling alcoholic drinks, often with street seating and recorded music for clients.

FARC Largest guerrilla movement in Colombia, formed in 1964 as a Marxist-Leninist peasant force. Disbanded as an armed group between 2016 and 2018. Now a political party. Abbreviation stands for *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces).

Currently in the process of disarmament and transformation into an official political party.

<i>familias en su tierra</i>	Families on their Land, a strategy led by the DPS (Department of Social Prosperity), to provide assistance to internally displaced people.
<i>farotas</i>	cross-dressing dance in which male dancers dress as women with parasols. Popular in the <i>depresión momposina</i> .
<i>festival</i>	Competitive musical event (largely) free to competing groups and public audience, with (monetary or similar) prizes for winners. Most have a knock-out round system where judges qualify groups and decide on winners. Most are centered around a single "genre" or family of rhythmic feels, interpreted by a single fixed format.
<i>fiscal</i>	local public prosecutor, or fiscal representative of a municipality.
<i>foro</i>	Academic discussion sessions hosted by festival organizers during the down times of festivals.
<i>fundación</i>	Registered foundation for profit or non-profit, or charity organization.
<i>gaita</i>	1. Instrument: a duct flute normally made of a cactus tube, a head of beeswax mixed with charcoal, and a mouth-piece of duck or turkey feather, or more commonly now, a plastic tube cut from a disposable syringe. <i>Gaitas</i> are normally played in pairs. The <i>gaita hembra</i> (female gaita) has five finger holes, of which only four are played (the flute's range can be dropped roughly a tone by blocking the top hole with wax and playing on the four remaining holes) and plays the principle melody. The <i>gaita macho</i> (male gaita) has one or two holes and plays a supporting melody based on ostinati that modulate to follow the range of the main melody. The <i>gaita macho</i> player simultaneously plays a maraca.

2. The music played by a *gaita* group including *gaitas* and drums, and sometimes a singer.
3. The dance that *gaita* music accompanies.
4. A particular rhythmic feel among the "family" of feels interpreted by *gaita* groups.

gaitero/a A person involved in *gaita* music. More specifically a person who plays the *gaita* flute, either the *hembra* or *macho*. More specifically still a *gaita hembra* player.

gestor cultural A promoter, broker, fundraiser for "cultural" events (normally free, public musical or otherwise creative or artistic events with no or little commercial aims). Related verb is to *gestionar*.

gozar To enjoy [music] with great fervor, get into, get down to.

gozo Religious poems interspersed with song as part of the *novena* Christmas celebrations.

guache

1. A cylindrical metal shaker typically with seeds from a *chuira* plant inside, normally about 18 inches long and 3 inches wide. Sometimes called "guacho"
2. A rude man, aggressive and violent, rasping.

guacherna For most groups a fast triple or compound feel, part of the *tambora* family. Some groups use the term to refer to the feel other groups call "chandé."

hembrero *Gaita hembra* player.

Herencia de mi Tierra Heritage of my Land: Youth *Tambora* group in San Martín formed by the director of the Casa de la Cultura.

<i>homenajeado/a</i>	recipient of an homage. Festivals often pay homage to one or more exponents or participants in the musical tradition. If alive, recipients receive cash and certificates along with oral on stage explanations of the reasons for the homage.
<i>La Costa</i>	Common term to denominate the Caribbean coastal region of Colombia, or Northern Colombia as a whole.
<i>legionario</i>	(Lit.) Legionary. Member of the <i>Legión de afecto</i> . This organization has a very horizontal, open structure, whereby anyone who participates in its activities is considered a <i>legionario</i> . However, longer-serving members are registered and paid for their work, and can be integrated into project management roles over time.
<i>lobano/a</i>	A person from Loba: San Martín de Loba, or nearby Barranco de Loba and Hatillo de Loba. These three were once a single municipality.
<i>loquito/a</i>	Literally "little crazy person" - a dismissive term used to refer to an apparently unthreatening, but mentally "abnormal" person. Sometimes used (in the feminine form) to refer to gay men.
<i>llamador</i>	Small, single-skinned, conical hand-drum normally held horizontally on the player's lap. The name literally translates as "caller" and the drum "calls" the other instruments to accompany the <i>gaita hembra</i> 's tune. The llamador player typically plays a simple entry (o--o--o-), then maintains the offbeat for the rest of the tune (--o---o---o---o-).
<i>maestro/a</i>	Used as a term of respect to address and refer to established musicians. Literally maestro or teacher.
<i>metodología general</i>	

<i>ajustada</i>	A format required for submission of project to a <i>Plan de desarrollo municipal</i> (see below).
<i>Montes de María</i>	a region in Northern Colombia characterized by a low elevated mountain range, spanning the departments of Bolívar and Sucre.
<i>machero</i>	A person who plays the <i>gaita macho</i> and maraca.
<i>malecón</i>	an area of raised earth along the banks of a river, or through a wetland area, serving as a levee and roadway.
<i>malicia</i>	trickiness, or cunning. Valued by those who seek negative reciprocity.
<i>mototaxista</i>	Motorcycle taxi driver. Some are members of cooperatives and are distinguished by colored shirts or vests. Others (the majority) work informally. The more formal the worker the more likely the motorcycle is to have wing mirrors and a helmet for the passenger. Many rent the motorcycle from an owner, who may rent out any number of such motorcycles, normally paying him a fixed rate per day, regardless of what they earn. Some <i>mototaxistas</i> have a "contract", an agreement with a particular passenger for a regular journey and fare. Most wait on street corners or at transport hubs in the hope of picking up intermittent fares.
<i>multiculti</i>	Adjective or noun used to denote multicultural discourses or the people who value them.
<i>municipio</i>	Municipality. Colombia is divided into thirty-two <i>departamentos</i> (provinces). Below this division are municipalities, comprising either a city, or a smaller town with surrounding countryside and hamlets. Each municipality is governed by a mayoral office with an elected mayor.

<i>navideño/a</i>	Literally "Christmassy" in reference to traditions making up part of Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus.
<i>novena</i>	Nine days of Catholic celebration running up to Christmas day, in church, at home, or often with neighbors.
<i>olla (en la)</i>	Literally in the pot. Ruined, bankrupt, in trouble, in hot water.
<i>palenque</i>	community established by people who had escaped from slavery (known as maroons in English, <i>cimarrones</i> in Spanish). The most famous in Colombia is San Basilio de Palenque in <i>Montes de María</i> . However, there were many more in remote areas of both coastal regions.
<i>pandilla</i>	Minor gang, typically made up of youth and without strong connections to highly organized crime.
<i>pandillero/a</i>	(Roughly) (young) member of a minor gang (<i>pandilla</i>), not thought to be as serious as a <i>banda criminal</i> , but sometimes "subcontracted" to carry out the work of more organized criminals and paramilitaries (Taussig 2003: 188).
<i>parranda</i>	Party or celebration, normally non-religious, involving music, dancing and food.
<i>pilanderas</i>	cross dressing dance in which male dancers dress as women with large rice-pounding pestles. Popular in the <i>depresión momposina</i> .
<i>plan de desarrollo municipal</i>	Municipal development plan. A document produced every four years by each municipality in the country detailing "social development" plans to be executed in the coming period.

<i>pueblo</i>	1. Roughly town, but also used to refer to the whole municipality that it governs. Smaller and more rural than a city, but larger and less rural than a <i>vereda</i> (hamlet). 2. The people of a particular town or region, or "the people" in general, typically the working classes.
<i>quinceañera</i>	A girl's fifteen's birthday party.
<i>quiosco</i>	Open-sided, palm-thatched structure.
<i>ratero</i>	Thief or trickster.
<i>reyes magos</i>	Three kings/ magi celebration in January.
<i>ronda (infantil)</i>	A game for children normally involving musical sound and movement and/ or acting in a circle.
<i>salado/a</i>	Cursed or unlucky. From practices of witchcraft or superstition involving putting salt or salt water on a person's land to bring them bad fortune by making the land "barren."
<i>semillero</i>	Literally seedbed. A musical youth group in which young people learn to perform music, normally of a specific tradition.
<i>son</i>	A broad term used indeterminately in <i>La Costa</i> to denote a tune, song, or feel. E.g. Ese son no me lo sé (I don't know that song/ tune/ feel). Sense is sometimes given by context. "Vamos a cantar esta canción al son de <i>tambora tambora</i> " (We're going to sing this song in the feel of <i>tambora tambora</i>).

<i>taburete</i>	A sturdy chair made of leather stretched over a wooden frame. Commonly made and used in <i>La Costa</i> .
<i>tambor alegre</i>	Large, single-skinned, conical hand drum, gripped between the legs with the open base resting on the floor when the player is seated, and played with both hands. The name literally translates as "happy" or "joyous" drum and the player is freer than other drummers to vary his or her rhythmic patterns and improvise temporally dense, "alegre" fills (see also <i>currulao</i>).
<i>tambora</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Instrument: A large, two-skinned, wooden drum played in <i>tambora</i> and other musics in northern Colombia. 2. Music-dance practice found mainly in the <i>depresión momposina</i>. 3. The most common rhythmic feel interpreted as part of the music-dance practice of <i>tambora</i>, characterized by the positioning of three strong beats on the skin of the <i>tambora</i> (instrument) and a three-step dance pattern. 4. Occasionally the group of musicians that interpret <i>tambora</i> music.
<i>tambora callejera</i>	Literally street tambora. Participatory musical celebration in the <i>depresión momposina</i> involving <i>tambora</i> music and dance. Now typically held at Christmas or after staged <i>tambora</i> festivals.
<i>toma (de la guerrilla)</i>	Literally "take" or "capture" by a guerrilla group, referring to a place (village, municipality, region) that is attacked by an insurgent group, and then controlled to some degree by them, even if guerrilla fighters do not remain stationed there.
<i>vallenato</i>	Common term for commercial accordion-based music produced and consumed mainly in <i>La Costa</i> . It once referred to the "folk" music of the city of Valledupar, which included both guitar-based <i>and</i> accordion-based songs. Accordion music also has a long history in other parts of Northern

Colombia, with groups interpreting rhythmic feels like cumbia on accordion and percussion. Some purists refer to "accordion music" as the broad category including all rhythmic feels, saving "*vallenato*" for only the four feels officialized by the festival in Valledupar, and these have come to be the most predominant.

velación Celebration dedicated to a saint or other religious figure to thank or ask them for favors.

vereda (n) (roughly) Hamlet. A territorial denotation for a small collection of houses on rural arable land. Various *veredas* can be governed a particular *municipio* (roughly town or municipality), which has its own local government of mayor etc.

villancico Spanish-language Christmas carol.

vitriola Clockwork gramophone.

zona roja Literally "red zone." An area of the country believed to be under left-wing guerrilla control, or generally violent.

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Appendix A: Percussion Transcriptions Explained

To represent rhythmic phrases or patterns played I use TUBS (time unit box system). This system of notation, first developed by James Koetting, uses one box to represent each of the fastest salient beats of a cycle (often equivalent to an eighth note, or sixteenth note in standard notation). If a tone is played on a given beat, the box is filled, if not, it is left empty. Simultaneous beats are aligned vertically, successive beats on the same instrument are aligned horizontally.

My adoption of TUBS would appear to go against the arguments of Kofi Agawú (2003), calling for the use of the language of the elite in representing the music of subaltern groups. His claim is that only in this way can the historically colonized hope to engage with the power of historical colonizers. However, the use of TUBS is now well established in academic circles (Simha 1991; Kisliuk 2006), and is widespread among practicing percussionists. Furthermore, it is easily graspable for most people including the illiterate and innumerate, and represents better the somatic approach to playing percussion which generally focuses on attack and timbre, rather than the duration of pitched tones. As such it is far more democratic and empowering a language for us all to adopt when dealing with percussive instruments than traditional notation could ever be. This is especially true of the form developed by Hungarian-Colombian percussionist and pedagogue Istvan Dely, which replaces letters with symbols that are iconic of the somatic experiences of percussionist.

The symbols I use in notation are adopted and developed from Dely's system for their iconicity with the contact between a player's hand (or stick) and the drum, or the movement of the instrument. Where necessary I show accent by filling symbols in gray. The sounds and

techniques I list here are necessarily abstractions from the myriad different ways of producing sounds with these instruments. However, they are abstractions used by most Colombian tamboleros in explanations and are sufficient for present purposes. I begin with the tambor *alegre*, as it has the widest array of possible strokes:

Tambor Alegre

Golpe abierto (open stroke):



The underside of fingers, held firm, connect with the skin to produce a full, round tone ("doong").

Quemado (literally burnt [stroke], slap):



Also known as a, *Golpe seco* (dry hit, or stroke), the hand is moved slightly further in towards the centre of the drum, with fingers held loosely to allow them to slap against the skin, or pulled tight at the last instant to produce a dry, high pitched tone ("ga").

Bajoneo (from "bajo", low):



Played with the padded part of the palm roughly in the centre of the drum to produce a low tone ("boh").

Cantoneos (from *cantar*, sing):



Played on the very edge of the drum, like a rim shot; they are usually played only by the player's stronger hand. The other mutes the skin (empty triangle) or produces a harmonic with a single finger resting on the centre of the drum (filled symbol). These are the highest pitched tones possible on the *alegre*. (Muted, they sound "tick" and with harmonic, "ting").

Tapado (muted stroke)



Also known as *fantasma* (ghost stroke), it is a faint, or muted stoke ("duh")

Abanico (fan)



The loose fingers of one hand are allowed to flap against the skin of the drum in rapid succession to produce a short roll ("rrrr")

Tambora Drum

The tambora is played with sticks on top or edge of the wooden shell:



With a full stroke on the skin, where the stick comes off after contact:



Or with a muted stroke where the stick remains in contact with the skin:



Maraca

The groove of the maraca combines two strokes; one downwards;

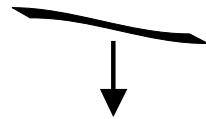


and one for which the maraca is moved up and away from the player's torso, to be pulled back with a snap of the wrist:



Guache

This cylindrical metal shaker is generally played with two hands in a motion that causes the seeds inside to hit the top wall of the cylinder in a wave;
then fall to the bottom wall together:



Example

Thus in the transcription of a common groove for the rhythmic feel of *tambora tambora*, we can see claps mark a slow pulse every four of the fastest beats. The guache also marks this slow pulse, adding a wave on beats 3 and 4. The tambora drum accents beats 1, 7, and 13, with strokes on the shell on beats 3, 4, 9 and 10. The currulao's (alegre's) initial open strokes fall with the tambora in the first half of the pattern, but against it in the second half, landing on beats 1, 2, 7,

and 8, 9, and 15. The slaps fall regularly in each half of the pattern, on beats 4 and 12. The feet of dancers mark a recurring pattern of three steps and a rest, on beats 1, 3, 5 (rest on 7), (starting on the other foot) 9, 11, 13 (rest on 15). The densest beat is 1, as it is marked by all participants and accented by the tambora drum. beat 9 (the beginning of the second half of the pattern) is similarly marked by all participants, but feels less dense because the tambora plays on the shell rather than the skin. Another strong beat is 13, accented on the tambora and marked by all participants except the alegre player.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
claps	X				X				X				X			
gauche	↓			↙	↓			↙	↓		↙		↓			↙
tambora	●			X X		○	●		X X		○	●		○	○	
cumbão	△△			/		△△	△△	△△		/		/		△		
feet	👣				👣				👣		👣		👣			

Appendix B: *La atravesá'* Transcription

One cycle of *La atravesá'* (in the feel of gaita) by Joche Álvarez

J=160

A

Gaita Hembra

B

G. H.

C

G. H.

33

G. H.

—

37 8

G. H. 

2 42 8

G. H. 

47 8

G. H. 

52 8

G. H. 

Appendix C: *El Ratón* Lyrics

El ratón (The Mouse) by Sebastian Mendoza

As sung by Alejandro Mendoza:

Esta noche no he dormido con el ruido del ratón (bis)
Y a mi abuelo le han ruñido las habarca' y el cinturón (bis)

Chorus:

Busca tu cueva ratón (x4)

Esta noche no he dormido por causa de una ratonera (bis)
Y tambien se le ruñieron las chanclas a mi abuela (bis)

Chorus

As sung by Juan de Diós Narvaez:

Esta noche no he dormido por el ruido de un ratón (bis)
Y a mi abuelo le han ruñido (bis) la correa 'el pantalón (bis)

Chorus:

Busca tu cueva ratón

Púllete al queso ratón

Te coje el gato ratón

Busca tu cueva ratón

Mucha' gracias niña Mayo por coserme los bombachos (bis)

Esta noche viene el raton (bis) a ruñirse los zapatos (bis)

Chorus

Esta noche no he dormido por culpa de esa ratonera (bis)
Y a mi abuela le han ruñido (bis) la chancleta y la pollera (bis)

Chorus

Appendix D: Proposal for Project with Martina Camargo

Propuesta

Talleres de música y juego tradicional para la musicalidad y la convivencia de jóvenes en San Martín de Loba, Bolívar

Presentada a la alcaldía del municipio de San Martín de Loba

Por: Martina Teresa Camargo Centeno (Lic.)
martinacamargo@yahoo.es 314 794 9791

Asesorada por Ian Middleton (Mmus, MA)
itmiddleton@googlemail.com 310 715 6894

Se propone realizar talleres musicales para menores de edad. El proyecto tiene un costo de \$18,000,00 (DIEZ Y OCHO MILLONES DE PESOS).

Objetivo principal:

Fortalecer las prácticas de música y juego tradicional entre los menores de edad en San Martín de Loba.

Objetivos secundarios:

1. Brindarle a niños la oportunidad de rescatar, aprender y jugar rondas y juegos infantiles de la región lobana.
2. Ofrecer un proceso de iniciación musical para niños sin experiencia en la música.
3. Entrenar jóvenes en tocar, cantar y bailar los cuatro aires de la tambora.
4. Augmentar las habilidades y repertorios de jóvenes que ya tocan música tradicional.
5. Incrementar la convivencia entre los jóvenes y su comunidad, aplicando la música como herramienta social para el beneficio del pueblo entero.

Justificación:

San Martín de Loba es conocido por su festival internacional de tambora y los ejecutantes que la han llevado a otros escenarios en el país y el mundo. Sin embargo no se encuentra en el pueblo una escuela de formación en los aires de tambora. Esa falla la queremos empezar a rectificar, formando nuevos interpretes y fortaleciendo los que ya participan.

Algunos niños que ya participan en la música de tambora carecen de un nivel de musicalidad (afinación, pulso, manejo de volumen etc) la cual les podría permitir ejecutar la música en contextos mas importantes. Otros jóvenes que ya ejecutan la tambora han expresado el deseo de aprender otros ritmos del caribe, y desarollar sus habilidades musicales, lo cual es muy dificil sin un profesor adecuadamente capacitado.

Mas allá de lo sonoro, la música puede servir como herramienta social. Siguiendo el *Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia* generado por el *Ministerio de Cultura*, tenemos el propósito de << promover los vínculos de convivencia pacífica basado en el respeto a la diversidad, el fortalecimiento y la articulación institucional, y el impulso a la participación social, mediante la práctica, la comprensión y el disfrute de la música.>>

Beneficios para San Martín

- San Martín tendrá mas practicantes de la música tradicional.
- Estos serán mas capacitados para presentaciones.
- Se proyecta un incremento en la convivencia pacífica entre jóvenes.
- La casa de la cultura se quedará con los instrumentos comprados para los talleres.

Intervención:

- Talleres gratuitos abiertos a cualquier menor de edad.
- Capacidad: 25 participantes en cada uno de los cuatro ejes.
- Duración: Cuatro semanas, de lunes a viernes, seis horas diarias.
- Se enseñará los siguientes ejes:
 1. iniciación musical; juegos y rondas infantiles;
 2. canto, toque y baile de los cuatro aires de la tambora (tambora, berroche, guacherna, chandé);
 3. ejecución de otros ritmos tradicionales del caribe colombiano (cumbia, gaita, bullerengue entre otros).

Al final habrá una muestra pública de lo que aprendieron los participantes.

Metodología:

Nuestra metodología está enfocada en el alumno y subraya la importancia del respeto, la interacción pacífica y el alcance de retos personales. Tiene cinco elementos básicos que facilitan un aprendizaje perdurable:

1. Establecimiento de conocimiento previo y objetivos de aprendizaje

El profesor identifica lo que los alumnos ya saben para partir de ese punto y no perder tiempo repitiendo o haciendo actividades demasiado complejas.

2. Facilitación de experiencia de aprendizaje

El profesor es facilitador de oportunidades de aprender. Brinda actividades lúdicas y divertidas para participantes de varios niveles y estilos de aprender.

Para la iniciación musical se trabaja habilidades de escuchar, identificar y generar sonidos de la naturaleza, fabricar y tocar instrumentos no convencionales, componer y presentar rimas y cantos propios.

En el canto se trabaja la habilidad de escuchar melodías cantadas, repetir frases cortas y robar el ról del lider del ensamble.

El baile y la música se acopla mas que todo en la habilidad de indentificar diferentes patrones ritmicos de la percusión y adaptar los pasos y la interacción de pareja acorde con esto.

En la percusión se desarolla técnica manual, identificación y ejecución de distintos ritmos, y herramientas para improvisar.

3. Oportunidades de practicar habilidades desarrolladas

Se brinda un ambiente amigable, minimizando la ansiedad, para que los alumnos puedan practicar sus nuevas habilidades musico-danzarias.

4. Muestra

Se hace una muestra de manera publica de lo que desarollaron los alumnos en sus estudios. Esto permite que los alumnos se enfoquen hacía un reto que sea memorable para todos.

5. Valoración y reflexión

Finalmente el estudiante reflexiona sobre el valor del proceso que ha vivido y las nuevas habilidades que ha desarollado. Se realiza una reflexión crítica sobre los talleres para pensar los aspectos buenos y como mejorar en el porvenir. Se presenta un informe del anterior.

Personaría y cargos:

Profesora de canto, danza e iniciación musical:

Martina Teresa Camargo Centeno: Destacada cantadora de tambora y otros aires del caribe colombiano. Licenciada en pedagogía infantil. Asesora del Ministerio de Cultura en capacitación de maestros de música en iniciación musical. Líder de talleres para adultos y niños en canto y baile tradicional en Colombia, Italia y Egipto entre otros países.

Profesor de percusión e iniciación musical:

Alfonso Mario Acosta: Conocido percusionista de la música tradicional del caribe. Interprete de percusión con las agrupaciones Orito Cantaora y la Chalupa, Martina Camargo; Son de la Costa. Estudiante de diplomado en música en la Escuela Distrital de Arte, Baranquilla.

Profesor de percusión e iniciación musical:

Jony Castilla: Estimado percusionista de la música tradicional del caribe. Músico de los grupos Conjunto Tradicional; Son de Ovejas; Álvaro Ricardo. Estudiante de diplomado en música en la Escuela Distrital de Música, Baranquilla.

Asesor de concepto, pedagogía y administración:

Ian Middleton: Musicólogo de la universidad de Illinois, EEUU. Músico, profesor y académico que estudia los procesos de aprendizaje de música tradicional en la costa caribe y su impacto social. Coordinador de proyectos culturales de la música tradicional colombiana en Inglaterra, Estados Unidos, y Cali, Colombia.

Requisitos:

- Necesitaremos el uso de la casa de la cultura por seis horas diarias durante las cuatro semanas del proyecto.
- Se requiere el pago de por lo menos la mitad de los fondos cinco días hábiles antes de empezar el proyecto para asegurar el compro de materiales, pasajes, vivienda etc. de los profesores.
- Se requiere el pago de la segunda mitad de los fondos a mas tardar el ultimo día del proyecto.

Fechas:

Opción 1: 17 de noviembre - 11 de diciembre del 2015.

Opción 2: 11 de enero - 5 de febrero 2016.

Presupuesto:

Concepto	Costo \$ Pesos Colombianos	Notas
Profesora de canto y baile	5,000,000	Martina Camargo, 6 horas diarias por 20 días
Profesor 1 de percusión	3,000,000	Alfonso Mario Acosta, 6 horas diarias por 20 días
Profesor 2 de percusión	3,000,000	Jony Castilla, 6 horas diarias por 20 días 1 Juego de tambores tradicionales (tambora, currulao, llamador), 1 par de gaitas, 1 maraca, 1 guache, 1 flauta de millo
Instrumentos	1,500,000	Marcadores, papel, fotocopias, materiales para fabricar instrumentos no convencionales
Materiales	440,000	Ian Middleton: Tiempo en redactar propuesta, administrar fondos, co-ordinar trabajo, redactar informe y balance global.
Administración	1,000,000	
Transporte	960,000	\$60,000 por persona por 4 viajes
Alojamiento	1,800,000	\$20,000 por persona por 30 días
Comida	900,000	\$10,000 por persona por 30 días
Refrigerio para niños	400,000	\$1,000 por niño por día por 20 días
Total	18,000,000	

Cualquier inquietud, favor comuníquese con Ian Middleton, o Martina Camargo.

Apoya la cultura, apoya la música tradicional local, apoya la convivencia pacífica.

Apoya este proyecto.

Appendix E: IRB Letter

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
805 West Pennsylvania Ave
Urbana, IL 61801



May 25, 2017

Thomas Turino
Music
2134 Music Bldg
1114 W Nevada
Urbana, IL 61801

RE: *Trust in Music: Tambora and Gaita in efforts to minimize violence and deal with its effects in Northern Colombia*
IRB Protocol Number: 12765

Dear Dr. Turino:

You have indicated that your continuing project entitled *Trust in Music: Tambora and Gaita in efforts to minimize violence and deal with its effects in Northern Colombia*, Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol number 12765, is undergoing data analysis only and that you are no longer gathering data from human subjects. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign IRB has approved, by expedited continuing review, continuation of your project for data analysis only; the approval expires on 05/24/2020.

Because this approval is only for data analysis, you are *not authorized* to involve human subjects in any aspect of the protocol and we have not returned any consent forms related to the project. IRB approval must be obtained to reinitiate enrollment of human subjects in this protocol.

You were granted a three-year approval. If there are any changes to the protocol that result in your study becoming ineligible for the extended approval period, the RPI is responsible for immediately notifying the IRB via an amendment. The protocol will be issued a modified expiration date accordingly.

If you have any questions about the IRB process, or if you need assistance at any time, please feel free to contact me at the OPRS office, or visit our website at <https://www.oprs.research.illinois.edu>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald A. Banks".

Ron Banks, MS, CIP
Human Subjects Research Coordinator, Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

c: Ian Middleton