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Los Angeles

The Mayan Marimba
and the Musical Production of Place
in a Transnational Migrant Community

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Ethnomusicology

by

Logan Elizabeth Clark

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Mayan Marimba
and the Musical Production of Place
in a Transnational Migrant Community

by

Logan Elizabeth Clark

Doctor of Philosophy in Ethnomusicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Tara Colleen Browner, Co-Chair

Professor Anthony Seeger, Co-Chair

In my first meeting with the Maya Q'anjob'al community in Los Angeles, I gained two important insights into their existence in LA: first, they were here because they had been displaced from their land by a violent civil war in which non-Indigenous Guatemalans targeted Mayan populations. Second, their establishment in Los Angeles, a city that abounds with diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups, allows them relative freedom to redefine ethnic boundaries that had for centuries been defined for them. In this dissertation, I analyze the relationship among three fundamental aspects of Indigenous identity politics in the twenty-first century—migration, music, and transnational media networks—and the way in which each aspect interacts with the others to continuously reproduce identity despite dramatic changes in spatial orientation. During four years of fieldwork in Los Angeles and Guatemala, I used ethnographic interviews, participant observation, and repertoire analysis to analyze the ways in which people in ethnic

groups use music to construct ethnic identity in the creation of meaningful places. Specifically, I outline how Q'anjob'ales use marimba music to tie Q'anjob'al identity production to natural environments, reterritorialize Q'anjob'al identity in urban environments through musical symbolizing, regulate ethnic boundaries through musical interaction in urban audiotopias, and expand Q'anjob'al space transnationally through virtual music sharing. While geographers, ethnomusicologists, and anthropologists have focused on either the "acoustic ecologies" of social space or the role of music in communicating among displaced communities, I combine *both* approaches, theorizing music not only *in* place, but also *as* place through its transformation of digital space in multiple locations.

The dissertation of Logan Elizabeth Clark is approved.

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I dedicate this work to my grandparents,

Doris Anderson and E. Whittredge Clark, from whom I inherited my
love of music and adventurous spirit;

and to Florence Williams and G. Denman Hammond, who taught me
how to see the beauty in difference.

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GLOSSARY

Q'anjob'al	Pronunciation	Spanish	Pronunciation	English
A				
Ajaw	"Ah-HOW"	Dios, Creador, dueño		God, Creator, owner, leader
Ajtxaj	"Ah-TSCHAH"	Rezador		Maya Prayer leader
C				
Chanej	"Chan-EH"	Corte	"Kortay"	Mayan wrap-around skirt
		Chapín	"chah-PEEN"	A nickname for Guatemalan (adj. and n.)
		Cuchumatán (a Nahuatl* word borrowed by the Spanish)	"koo-choo-mah-TAHN"	A mountain range that stretches from northern Huehuetenango to western Quiché
E				
		Ewulense	"ey-woo-LEHN-say"	Adj. from Santa Eulalia, n. someone from Santa Eulalia
G				
		Guitarrón	"Guee-tarr-OWN"	Large concave bass guitar used in Mariachi music.
H				
		Huehuetenango (Nahuatl)	"way-way-ten-AHN-go"	Name of a Department in Guatemala (means "land of wise men" in Nahuatl).
I				
Ixim	"ee-SHEEM"	Maíz	"mah-EEZ"	Corn, and sometimes grains in general.
J				
Jolom Konob'	"Ho-LOAM Ko-NOHP"	Santa Eulalia (town name given by the Spanish)	"SAHN-tah eyu-LAH-lee-ah"	Q'an: "capital of the people" (Q'anjob'ales) Span: Saint Eulalia (Olaya)
Jolom Konob'		Casa Sagrada	"KAH-sah sah-GRAHD-ah"	Sacred house, temple. Specifically, the location where the Maya spiritual authorities pray and receive supplicants.
K				
Kapixhay	"Kah-pee-SHY"			A traditional woolen poncho that Q'anjob'alan men wear.
Kolej	"Coal-EH"	Hüipil (probably	"Wee-PEEL"	Mayan blouse

* Nahuatl refers to the language group to which many Mexican Indigenous languages belong. Because the Spanish conquistadors brought an army of Nahuatl-speaking warriors (such as Mexica and Tlaxcalan, who already had names for places inhabited by their Maya neighbors to the south) with them to Guatemala, many words considered "Spanish" (non-Mayan) in Guatemala were Nahuatl words that the Spanish adopted for their own orientation (K'iche' People and Recinos [1701] 1947:85). I thank Kristina Nielsen for pointing me to that reference.

Nahuatl)

M				
		Marimba doble	"mah-REEM-bah DOE-bley"	Double marimba (chromatic marimba)
		Marimba orquesta	"mah-REEM-bah or- KES-tah"	Marimba doble with Latin orchestra instrumentation.
		Marimba sencilla	"mah-REEM-bah sehn-SEE-yah"	Single marimba
Q'				
Q'anjob'al	"qan-hoe-PALL"			Mayan language
S				
Son	"sone"	Son	"sone"	A specific music and dance form
pl. Heb' son	pl. "ehp SONE"	pl. sones	pl. "SONE-ays"	
Spixan sat Kan	"spee-SHAHN saht KAHN"	Corazón del Cielo	"ko-rah-SONE dehl see-EY-low"	Heart of the Sky/Heavens
Spixan sat Tx'otx'	"spee-SHAHN saht TSCHOATSCH"	Corazón de la Tierra	"Ko-rah-SONE dehl MOON-dough"	Heart of the Earth
T				
Te' Son	"teh SONE"	Marimba	"mah-REEM-bah"	Marimba (general)
Tun	"toon"	Teponaztli (Náhuatl)	"teh-poe-NAHZ-tee"	Slit drum made of a hollowed log.
Tza pay	"tzah pahy"	Violín	"bee-oh-LEEN"	Violin (lit.: "thin skunk skin" – what the strings were made out of originally)
Tzuluma'	"tzoo-loo-MAH"	San Pedro Soloma	"sahn pey-drow sole- OME-ah"	Q': watery place with trees, S: Saint Peter of Soloma
W				
Wajab'	"wa-HAHP"	Guitarra	"guee-TARR-ah"	Guitar
X				
Xhumakil	"shoo-mahk- EEL"	Flor de	"FLOOR deh"	The flower of
Y				
Yalmotx'	"yahl- MOTSCH"	Santa Cruz Barillas	"sahn-tah krooz bah- REE-yas"	Q': Little basket, S: Barillas (former Guatemalan President) of the Holy Cross
Yich K'ox	"yeetch KOSHE"	San Juan Ixcoy	"sahn huan eesh- KOY"	Q': Underneath the k'ox trees, S: Saint John of Ixcoy

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INTRODUCTION: "LA COSA ES QUE YO NO SOY LATINO"

During the fall of 2014, several months into my fieldwork with a Guatemalan Mayan cultural organization in Los Angeles, I attended a series of meetings intended to educate first- and second-generation Q'anjob'al¹ Mayas about their culture. While the first several meetings were held in the living room of one of the community leaders, the group expressed a desire to have their own space—a storefront or office rental that could serve as a public place accessible and visible to other members of the community. I offered to use my connections with various non-profit organizations that assisted Mexican and Central American immigrants to see if they had any usable space in their offices. My suggestion was met with disapproval, not because they didn't want me involved or because those spaces didn't appeal to them, but for an altogether unexpected reason.

"La cosa es que yo *no* soy Latino," was Chico's² explanation: "The thing is that I am *not* Latino." My assumption was that these resource centers would be familiar places to them, and that since they had migrated from Guatemala, the Central American and Mexican immigrant communities would be obvious allies. But Chico's assertion brought into abrupt focus two important insights into this Mayan community's existence in LA. First, they were here because they had been displaced from their land by a violent civil war in which non-Indigenous Guatemalans targeted Mayan populations. Second, their existence in Los Angeles, a city that

¹ I have seen several spellings of this word. In earlier publications it has been written "Kanjobal" (Cahn-hoe-BALL). The spelling I use reflects the current choice of the Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages. The pronunciation of "Q'anjob'al" sounds similar to that of "Kanjobal," with a few differences: the Q' is pronounced in the very back of the throat with a glottal stop and the b' is pronounced like an English "p," pronounced while breathing in.

² Throughout the dissertation I use birth names, nicknames, pseudonyms, or else do not directly name my collaborators, depending on the personal wishes of each.

abounds with diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic groups, allows them relative freedom to redefine ethnic boundaries that had for centuries been defined for them.

This dissertation explores the relationship among three fundamental aspects of community—group identity, music, and place—and the way in which each aspect relates to the others to maintain community ethos through dramatic changes. Because this is a transnational community with a large incidence of migration, I will pay close attention to shifts in place, and the way that characteristics of group identity and music change in response to cataclysmic changes in, and limitations of, space. The main finding that I develop through this investigation is that music not only shapes and is shaped by place, but that music can serve as a substitute for familiar places in the process of identity production and re-production. Thus, for migrant communities whose group identity is based on a particular place (hometown), but exists in multiple locales (transnational), music can stand in for the lack of common location by recalling emotional connections to the hometown, while re-placing them in new foreign spaces. This dissertation investigates this process for the Q'anjob'alan Maya transnational community from the multi-local perspectives of one Q'anjob'alan hometown (Santa Eulalia, Guatemala) and one point in the Q'anjob'alan diaspora network (Los Angeles, California).

The first migrant from the Q'anjob'alan area of northern Guatemala had settled in Los Angeles in the 1970s, and since then several waves of Q'anjob'alan Mayas have come to LA and several other cities in the United States. During my period of interaction with Q'anjob'alans in LA, starting in August of 2013, this was a well-organized community: they had established various cultural organizations and had several music groups that would play for saints-day festivals, much as their family members do in their hometowns in the Guatemalan mountains. The main instrument they play, the marimba, is especially significant because it is historically a

Mayan instrument that has been appropriated by the Guatemalan government as a symbol of national identity.³ Through collaboration between artists in Guatemala and the United States, Q'anjob'alan musicians assert their style as something that is uniquely Mayan, yet rejects subjugation as a primitive relic of pre-historic civilization, as is so often the case with discourse around Maya people. The existence of Q'anjob'alan marimba groups in LA, and their interaction with Q'anjob'alan marimba groups in Guatemala, creates a space for a Mayan identity that is transnational and current, allowing it to supersede its relegated space in Guatemala.

There are two "dimensions" to my analysis of musical communication and identity reproduction that I explore in my dissertation; each affects and is affected by the other. The first considers the *intra*-community relations between Q'anjob'alans in different locations along the migration route (where location changes but ethnicity is relatively stable): Santa Eulalia – Mexico and border crossings – Los Angeles. The second considers *inter*-community relations between Q'anjob'alans and non-Q'anjob'alans in Los Angeles (where conceptions of ethnic boundaries shift but geographic location is relatively stable). Each dimension will be considered separately, in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively, as well as in relation to each other throughout Chapter 5 and the Conclusion.

BACKGROUND: WHO ARE THE Q'ANJOB'AL MAYA?

Q'anjob'alan-speaking Maya people have lived in the northwestern mountains of what is now Guatemala for as long as five thousand years.⁴ Q'anjob'alan was a Mayan language spoken in this area during the Formative Period of Mesoamerican civilization (roughly 900 BC to 100

³ The marimba is a type of xylophone: a wooden, keyed idiophone with resonating chambers underneath each key, amplifying the sound when it is struck with a mallet. I will discuss its history in greater detail in Chapter 1.

⁴ Personal communication with Q'anjob'al instructor at Guatemalan Academy of Mayan Languages, Santa Eulalia

AD). While Q'anjob'alan is no longer spoken, it evolved into four contemporary languages—Popti' (or Jakalteko), Akateko, Chuj, and contemporary Q'anjob'al—which share linguistic and cultural roots (see Figure 0-1 for language map). Culturally and linguistically, the Q'anjob'alan groups share much with the surrounding Mam and Ixil groups. Q'anjob'al elders consider the Mam to be their ancestors; many Q'anjob'al expressions use the word "mam" to mean father (*komam*) or ancestor (*jich mam*). The various ethno-linguistic communities in the Q'anjob'alan

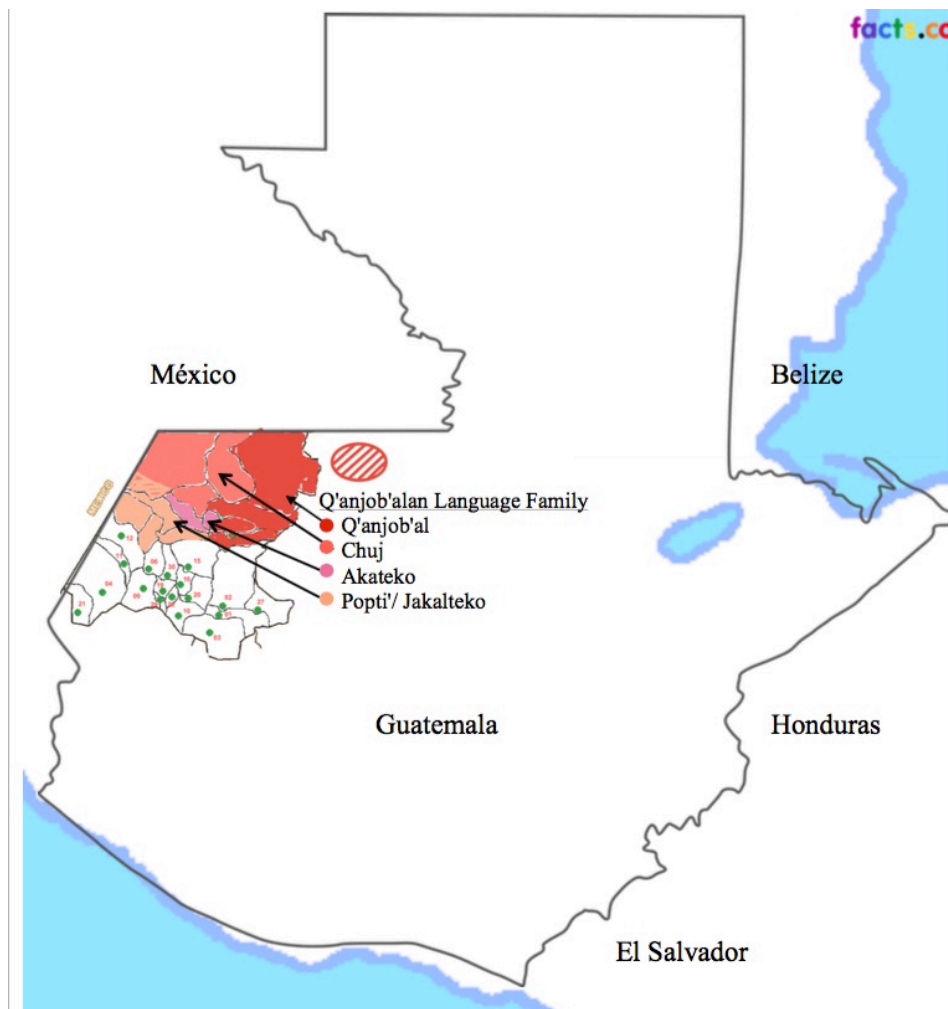


Figure 0-1: Department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, with Q'anjob'alan language areas highlighted. (Author's creation based on maps from guatemalamap.facts.co and zonu.com)

language family share many words, beliefs, and customs, and for this reason, close political relationships bind these communities together in Guatemala, as well as in the USA. Nonetheless,

the languages are significantly different, and—except arguably for Q'anjob'al and Akateko—they are not mutually intelligible. During my fieldwork in Guatemala, I focused my research mostly on those communities that speak Q'anjob'al proper (specifically the town of Santa Eulalia) because in Los Angeles they are the community with the most numerous and best organized musical presence. However, because of their shared cultural attributes and close affiliation in the diaspora, my Los Angeles fieldwork inevitably involved Akateko, Jakalteko, and Chuj communities as well as Q'anjob'al. Therefore, throughout the dissertation, I will use the term "Q'anjob'alan" to refer to the general ethno-cultural group that shares cultural history and adjacent territory in Guatemala, and the term "Q'anjob'al" to refer specifically to the subgroup of speakers of contemporary Q'anjob'al proper.

Of the twenty-one official Mayan languages in Guatemala, Q'anjob'al has the fifth highest number of speakers, with roughly 213,000.⁵ In the areas highlighted in red (Figure 0-1), Q'anjob'al speakers make up 99 to 95 percent of the population, with the remaining inhabitants being of the nationally dominant mixed-race or *Ladino*⁶ ethnicity. The majority of private and public activities in these areas are conducted in the Q'anjob'al language. (This pattern is the same for the Chuj-speaking, Akateko-speaking, and Popti'-speaking areas.) Four municipalities in the department of Huehuetenango⁷ make up the Q'anjob'al area, which stretches from the northern slopes of the Cuchumatán Mountains northward to the Mexican border. They are San Juan Ixcay, San Pedro Soloma, Santa Eulalia, and Santa Cruz Barillas. In addition, a population of

⁵ The author calculated this number, using the percent of Q'anjob'al speakers from the Guatemalan Ministry of Education's report (2008:5): 1.4%, multiplied by the population of Guatemala as of July 2016 (CIA 2016).

⁶ *Ladino* (not to be confused with *Latino*) is the term in Guatemala used to refer to the dominant, mixed-race (non-Indigenous) population.

⁷ The glossary starting on page x provides pronunciations and translations for Q'anjob'al and Spanish words that I use repeatedly throughout the dissertation.

Q'anjob'ales, displaced during the civil war in the 1970s and 1980s, migrated east and settled in the Ixcán area in the neighboring department of Quiché (see red circle in Figure 0-1). Before the Spanish arrived, the Q'anjob'al area was administered as one continuous polity, with Santa Eulalia as the center, hence its Q'anjob'al name: Jolom Konob' (lit. head of the people) (Asociación Maya-Q'anjob'al Eulalense 1995:38). For this reason, the majority of my fieldwork was conducted in Santa Eulalia and with Ewulenses (people from Santa Eulalia) in Los Angeles. In the center of Santa Eulalia, a recently constructed concrete pyramid covers what has been a sacred spot for thousands of years. This compound—which people varyingly call the *Casa Sagrada* (S: sacred house) and also Jolom Konob'—is oriented around a central altar. The altar acts as both a symbolic and a social center point for the Q'anjob'al people. Each year, four *ajtxaj* (Q': prayer leaders) from across all the Q'anjob'al-speaking area are elected to tend the altar, pray for the beneficence of *El Ajaw* (Q': The Creator), and receive supplicants. Music is an integral element in all of these activities.

Q'anjob'al Music

The two musical genres most prevalent in contemporary Q'anjob'al communities are the *conjunto de violín*, or violin trio—which consists of violin and vocal melodies, with guitar and *guitarrón*⁸ accompaniment—and the marimba (Q': *te' son*), which is particularly important to Q'anjob'al identity. Santa Eulalia is called *la cuna* (S: the cradle) *de la marimba*; two renowned

⁸ Guitarrón is the name for the string bass instrument used in Mariachi ensembles. The popularity of Mariachi music throughout Latin America has likely led to the prevalence of the guitarrón as the most accessible bass instrument in Guatemalan folk music styles.

workshops in the central town build marimbas for groups throughout the country, and in the municipality of Santa Eulalia itself, there are almost fifty different marimba ensembles.⁹

During my time living in Santa Eulalia, people constantly reminded me about how important the marimba is to their identity. In a book written by the Santa Eulalia Q'anjob'al-Maya Association, the authors claim that the marimba is one of the most important art forms: "It is the marimba that identifies [us] at any event. Among the Q'anjob'al people, music is inspired by important moments that they live: happy ones, sad ones, or sentimental expression dedicated to a special person or to Mother Nature" (Asociación Maya-Q'anjob'al Eulalense 1995:49, translated from Spanish to English by author). Natural surroundings and specific physical landmarks abound in musical and non-musical references to Q'anjob'al, and specifically Ewulense, local identity.

Migration to Los Angeles

Circular labor migration has for decades been an aspect of Q'anjob'al economic structures. Seasonal labor migration to work in the coffee plantations began in the late nineteenth century, gradually expanding in ambit as economic opportunities in Guatemala became scarce. The first known Q'anjob'alan people (they were Akatekos) to migrate to Los Angeles for labor did so in the early 1970s. They became the root of what would grow to be an increasing northern flow of Q'anjob'alan Mayas to many parts of the United States. These later migrants to Los Angeles, however, were not simply seeking work; they were fleeing a variety of threats, including a wave of genocidal military campaigns against Mayas in the 1980s and other

⁹ This is a rough estimate given to me by Tuncho Díaz, the director of the Association of Marimba Musicians in Santa Eulalia (Díaz Juárez 2015).

economic and political threats to their lives and livelihood that have continued into the twenty-first century.

A study in 1995 estimated that a little over ten thousand Mayas lived in Los Angeles (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001; García Sáenz 2013). Twenty years later, the number is most certainly higher.¹⁰ From three years of experience working with Mayan communities in Los Angeles, I have found that the Santa Eulalia community is one of the best organized. In fact, my decision to live in Santa Eulalia during the Guatemalan part of my fieldwork is precisely *because* they were the most organized and active group that I found in Los Angeles. At times, their *fiestas* in honor of Santa Eulalia drew up to seven hundred people from Los Angeles and surrounding areas (especially San Bernardino, and Escondido, CA).

Other organized Q'anjob'al groups from San Pedro Soloma and Santa Cruz Barillas (but, interestingly, not from San Juan Ixcay) exist, but are not as strong in numbers as the Santa Eulalia Association. Large populations of Ewulenses also live in Omaha, Nebraska, and central Florida; and there are growing populations in Alamosa, Colorado; Atlanta, Georgia; Greenville, South Carolina; and Mesa, Arizona. My fieldwork in Santa Eulalia and with Ewulenses in Los Angeles offers a focused study of one "spoke" on a wheel of migrant connections that expands outward from its center, Jolom Konob'.

Previous studies of Q'anjob'alan Communities

Q'anjob'alan communities have been well studied, both because of their relative isolation in the Cuchumatán mountains and because of the high incidence of emigration from these areas

¹⁰ I tried for years to get more current numbers, but estimating the number of people who identify as Maya in Los Angeles is difficult. Census data is inconclusive because its categorizations of people based on race, descent, or nation of origin do not align with how Mayas view themselves. Furthermore, because many are undocumented, they avoid filling out the census altogether. Inquiries to the Guatemalan Consulate and to church and community leaders revealed that they did not have any more updated statistics.

to Mexico and the US. One of the first anthropologists to publish ethnographic research on Q'anjob'alan groups was Oliver La Farge, who did research both in Jacaltenango and in Santa Eulalia during the late 1920s (La Farge and Byers 1931; La Farge 1947). His collection of oral histories, legends and myths, as well as ethnographic observations of festivals and ritual celebrations has provided invaluable documentation of traditions in those areas at the beginning of the twentieth century. After La Farge, local writers and committees of community leaders have published their own accounts of Q'anjob'al culture and identity, both in Santa Eulalia (Virvez and Un Comité de Vecinos 1969; Asociación Maya-Q'anjob'al Eulalense 1995) and in Soloma (González 1997, 1998b, 1998a).

Because of the high numbers of refugees in the United States, a number of academics have studied Q'anjob'al Maya migrant communities. Anthropologist Allan Burns worked with the largely Q'anjob'al settlement in Indiantown, Florida, analyzing their use of symbols to reinforce their Q'anjob'al identity in exile (1989, 1993). Sister Nancy Wellmeier's research with Q'anjob'al migrants has been extensive in both humanitarian and academic terms. Her work on the Florida-based Q'anjob'al settlements focuses on the patron saint festivals and the marimba as symbols of ethnic identity (1998a), and the practice of ritual in the US to recreate sacred time and place in the diaspora (1995). Her research on US Catholic parishes and the (re)production of ethnic identity among Florida-based and LA-based Q'anjob'ales (1998b) has largely informed my historical account of the first decades of Q'anjob'al settlement in the US, as well as the history of the Catholic Church in Guatemala. Fernando Peñalosa (1995) contributed greatly to the publication and dissemination of Mayan, and especially Q'anjob'al, literature. Many literary works are now available because of his translations and small publishing business, Yax Te' (which translates in Spanish to "Palos Verdes," the California town where Peñalosa lived).

Highlighting the more recently established Atlanta-based Q'anjob'al community, Brown and Odem (2011) have published an article on the continuation of patron-saint festivals among the second generation.

In addition, several anthropologists have worked with other Q'anjob'alan migrant groups, such as Akatekos and Jakaltekos in Florida (Camposeco 2000); Akatekos in Los Angeles; as well as non-Q'anjob'alan (K'iche', Q'eqchí) settlements in the US, Mexico, and Belize (Loucky and Moors 2000; Camus 2012). Sociologist Eric Popkin has explored Mayan immigrant organization in Los Angeles, finding that transnational migration alters ethnic boundaries at both ends of the migrant circuit, facilitating the creation of pan-Mayan (Q'anjob'al, Chuj, Akateko, K'iche') ethnic associations in the diaspora (2005), which, in turn, creates more leverage for Mayan communication with Guatemalan state and church institutions (1999, 2003). I draw from these important studies, adding to them an analysis of the role of marimba music in reproducing community identities, maintaining transnational connections, and negotiating ethnic boundaries. Because Santa Eulalia is known for innovations in marimba construction and musical compositions for the marimba, my analysis brings into focus a central element of Q'anjob'al identity that has too long been considered only peripherally, if at all.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because my research centers on a Mayan migrant group, the main social phenomena in question are ethnic identity (Mayan) and change in locality (migrant). Throughout my dissertation, I consider the expression of ethnic identity in relation to various locations throughout the migrant journey and the way in which music documents and helps community members process traumatic shifts in locality. What follows is a review of the references I use to

consider the interactions between identity, music, and the construction of social place in transnational migration. This will be a broad overview; each individual chapter will discuss relevant literature in more depth.

The Musical Emplacement of Identity

Why Identity Matters

The term "identity" has been used in various ways to explain a wide variety of social projects that don't always correlate. Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper expand on this concern in their detailed consideration of how the term has been used in psychology, anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences since the 1950s. They offer some alternative terms to apply to the different ways in which identity is seen in contemporary colloquial use, arguing that identity is most often used to indicate one of the following: identification and categorization; self-understanding and social location; or commonality, connectedness, and "groupness" (2005:76). Brubaker and Cooper suggest that much of what identity tries to do can be replaced by terms such as "sameness," "connectedness," or "groupness" (ibid.:71–77). Stuart Hall, on the other hand, argues that all similarities in these cases are constructed, and in fact are defined in terms of difference from a third other, even if silently or unconsciously so. "Every identity," Hall posits, "has at its 'margin,' an excess, something more. The unity, the internal homogeneity, which the term identity treats as foundational is not a natural, but a constructed form of closure, every identity naming as its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, that which it 'lacks'" (1996:5). In either case, people make identity claims in order to increase social position and power through a variety of strategies that I will discuss throughout this work (c.f. Barth 1969; Giddens 1991; Hall and Du Gay 1996; Castells 1997; Brubaker and Cooper 2005; McCracken 2008; Wimmer 2008; Massey and Sánchez 2010).

Ethnic Identities, Ethnic Groups, and Ethnic Boundaries

Despite the seeming contrast between Brubaker and Cooper's theorization of group identity as constituted by connectedness and Hall's characterization of identity as an assertion of difference, the analysis of *ethnic* identity requires a consideration of the interplay between both processes. Social scientists speak of "externally" constructed and "internally" constructed ethnic boundaries (Barth 1969; Sampedro 1998; Wellmeier 1998a; Edensor 2002) to indicate the formation of these boundaries. Many suggest that ethnicity is defined more by external political boundary-making than by the internal cultural or biological "essence" (Barth 1969; Rothschild 1981; Horowitz 1985; Cornell and Hartmann 1998; Brubaker 2004). Yet, the cultural values that form the sense of belonging within the boundaries are neither imagined, nor easily manipulated. Especially with Indigenous groups—whose cultural connectedness is rooted in centuries, often millennia, of cultural transmission, ancestral associations, and language retention—the suggestion that ethnic identity is an "option" (Waters 1990) sounds absurd. Furthermore, while certain people may have the power to "pass," "switch," or "choose" between ethnic identity, racially marginalized groups are always confined within the "coercive force of external identifications" (Brubaker and Cooper 2005:59). Thus, any analysis of the relative external or internal forces forming ethnic boundaries must take into account the interplay between power, racism, and cultural history pursuant to each particular group.

For this reason, identity boundaries of marginalized groups are often emotionally much stronger than those of privileged groups. But marginalized groups don't just construct group identity as reactionary victims; they also strategically regulate boundaries, determining the split between sameness and difference in efforts to leverage social positionality based on concepts such as moral superiority, authenticity, and cultural richness—a strategy Sociologist Andreas

Wimmer calls "transvaluation" (2008:1037). One obvious example of the strategic construction of identity boundaries is the difference between US definitions and Guatemalan definitions of Indigenous identity: membership in a US Native American tribe requires 25 percent Native ancestry, whereas in most cases in Guatemala, anything other than 100 percent Mayan ancestry is considered Ladino. I theorize that, in an effort to regain confidence and respect for the Maya people, Q'anjob'al migrants employ this "strategic differentiation" in a number of ways depending on the place. In some cases, ethnic borders are "blurred" or expanded to include more members in the group, and in some cases they are "brightened" (Massey and Sánchez 2010) or contracted to distance themselves from another group.

Groups are, of course, made up of individuals, and no individual experiences group belonging in the same way as another. Furthermore, each individual inhabits an array of intersecting identities—based on language, age, gender, nation, race, occupation, for example—at certain times in certain situations. However, the focus of my research has remained at the group level, assessing how individuals talk about and behave in connection with identifying as Q'anjob'al. I do not mean to suggest that Maya individuals don't think about who they are and how they fit into the social order—rather that when self-categorization based on Mayan ethnicity is asserted, it is in a community-minded way. When historicized within the dominant Euroamerican canon, the conceptual bases for "identity" are tied to culturally specific concepts such as individuality, essentialism, reflectivity, and status (Giddens 1991; Castells 1997; Nisbet [1966] 2004; Taylor 2007; McCracken 2008). This culturally dependent term, I argue, doesn't "fit" when applied to the actions of subaltern actors who have different cultural histories. Often, especially in Mayan ideology, speaking of oneself as Maya is done in an effort to support and

advance a community-based social positioning, not to distinguish oneself as unique or independent.

The relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic groups is a nuanced one, and the two concepts are often used interchangeably. In order to clarify my analysis, I will follow Barth's statement: "Ethnic groups are a form of social organization. . . . To the extent that actors use ethnic identities to categorize themselves and others for purposes of interaction, they form ethnic groups in this organizational sense" (Barth 1969:13–14). Ethnic groups, then, are the social organizations in praxis made up of individuals who ascribe to that group. Ethnic *boundaries* are policed by members of an ethnic group, thus reinforcing or rejecting an individual's proposed belonging. I will consider further the location-based formation of ethnic identity in Chapter 1 and the ways in which people's ethnic identities shift in Chapter 4. The important outcome of these discussions is that the dramatic shift in location experienced by Q'anjob'alan migrants allows for new strategies of "articulation and separation" (Barth 1969:17) in the diaspora, many of which are enacted musically.

Music and Identity

Many ethnomusicologists have written specifically about musical meaning as it pertains to group identity formation. Timothy Rice's 2007 article surveys the literature concerning music and identity that has been published in the journal *Ethnomusicology*, mostly appearing within the twenty-five years prior to his publication. He observes that authors theorize music as either reflecting identity or constructing it. I align my analysis with Thomas Turino (1984), and Martin Stokes (1994), who argue that cultural performances provide opportunities to construct and to reassign identity through the collective experience of creating shared memories. As Stokes opines, music has a stronger power than any other social activity to create group identity. "The

musical event," he writes, "evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity" (1994:3). Drawing from Stokes, Regula Qureshi writes that group musical experiences have the ability to reify the shared affect of feeling and sensation and code them into a new group identity based on a particular musical experience (1997). While I agree that music aids in creating contexts for group inclusion or exclusion, in order for those bonds to be strong, a musical event must be associated repeatedly over time within a certain space; the Santa Eulalia community that has danced a certain way to a certain song for centuries in the Jolom Konob' sacred temple is more emotionally connected than the community of fans who saw Aerosmith's Hollywood Bowl show on August 7, 2012. Increasingly prevalent in discussions of music and identity formation is the concept of space and the spatial elements of identity formation, or as some call it, the "emplacement" of identity.

Music, Identity, Place

Literature on music and space, or sound and space more generally, is not a new phenomenon. R. Murray Schafer has been credited for bringing sound studies into the anthropological realm with his 1977 publication, *The Tuning of the World* (Feld 1996; Samuels et al. 2010; Born 2013). Schafer's main project was to de-center the visual perception of one's surroundings and re-center it around auditory perception. Introducing new sound-centric terms such as "soundscape," "schizophonia," and "soundmark" ([1977] 1994), Schafer defined concepts that would be used in sound studies for years to follow. An array of academic disciplines, from ethno/musicology, to social geography, to anthropology, to fine arts have seriously considered the relationship between music and space, especially in the twenty-first century, as the digital mediation of music and sound allows for a contraction of space and time

not possible in acoustic musical settings. Each of these disciplines, however, has used words like "space," "place," and "location" in different ways—sometimes interchangeably, and sometimes in contradictory ways.

In the most comprehensive edited volume so far on *Music, Sound and Space* (2013), Georgina Born traces the trajectories of sound studies across various academic fields since Schafer's publication. She identifies three general ways in which these works relate sound and space: "pitch space," which is "allied to score-based, visual and graphic representations and analyses of music" (2013:9); "spatialisation," which refers to the "localisation of sound in physical and perceptual space," as well as synthetic and amplificatory manipulation of sound to experiment with the boundaries of human aural perception (ibid.:11); and "exterior spatialities," which are "configured by the physical, technological and/or social dimensions of the performance event or sound work." As the focus of my dissertation is on the use of music to convert physical space into socialized place, the literature relevant to my research falls within Born's third category: exterior spatialities. She further divides this category into three "orchestrations of space," which include the experimentation with the performance of space (as in sound installations); acoustic ecology, which concerns the "sounding environment" (natural or built); and digital technologies and their ability to create "simultaneous and shifting locations" through "virtual spatialities" (all of the above, ibid.:16).

Acoustic Ecologies

In the field of ethnomusicology, most publications on "music and space" also fall into the exterior spatialities category, with the *social* dimensions of performance being understandably much more represented than the physical or technological dimensions. Martin Stokes edited one of the first essay collections on this topic in 1994, with *Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The*

Musical Construction of Place. Stokes follows Anthony Giddens's definition of place: "the physical setting of social activity as situated geographically" (1990:18), setting the stage for the contributing authors to consider music as that social activity and its geographic "situation" to be considered mostly in terms of modern capitalist development, and the resulting social relations within urban and rural spheres. The first several essays consider the construction of a national identity through music, and its projects to imbue a certain socio-political boundary with location-based meaning. Following that, Sara Cohen and Fiona Magowan each have chapters that touch on the built and the natural environments in their relation between music and location-based identity. Cohen analyzes discourse about what makes the "Liverpool Sound," finding that the concept of an "authentic" sound relates to Liverpool's marginal socioeconomic status in comparison to London, and the resulting contrast between "natural" space and "industrial" space referred to metaphorically in Liverpool music. Magowan's investigation of Australian Aboriginal music focuses on the musical creation of relational identities based on the central goal of reinforcing Indigenous land claims. All authors in this collection discuss "place" and location, but few if any engage deeply with Giddens's theorization of space and modernity, which is constituted by the decoupling of space from time (see Chapter 5). Thus, the uses of terms like "place," "space," and "location" are mostly synonymous and do not engage with the contraction of geographical space or the spatial-temporal conditions of modernity as theorized by Giddens. Additionally, Stokes's poetically stated truism about the musical event, which contains "an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity" (1994:3), is denied by few if any, but none of the contributors convincingly explains *why*, or *how* exactly music does this.

Other scholars of ethnomusicology and anthropology of sound have developed theories on "soundscapes," and their role in creating "auditory" (Bull and Back 2003) or "aural" (Drobnick 2004) cultures. Samuels et. al. (2010) review literature on the soundscape, following Schafer's conception that a soundscape is "a publicly circulating entity that is a produced effect of social practices, politics, and ideologies while also being implicated in the shaping of those practices, politics, and ideologies" (ibid.:330). The term has, however, been used in vague and varying ways, which has led to its disuse in anthropology (ibid.:331). Soundscape studies are relevant in a range of academic projects, from subjective identification of sonic spatiality, to studio production, to sound in film. Several ethnomusicological works have integrated soundscape studies into their analysis of music and place. For example, Kevin Dawe (2004) uses space and place (interchangeably) as he refers to geographer Doreen Massey's conception of "power-geometry." This frames his discussion on the musical organization of space and gendered access to space through musical rituals. His analysis considers the causal relationships between acoustic properties of space, and movement of (male) musicians within that space to increase the efficacy of the musical event. Similarly, Matt Sakakeeny (2010) highlights the community "soundmarks" that result from the interplay of music and the built environment, "sounding" resistance to infrastructural boundaries that demarcate power and wealth in New Orleans. These authors expand on Stokes's collection by connecting the more phenomenological aspects of music's interaction with material space.

Most relevant to my research are acoustic ecologies that focus on the musical relationship between material (natural or built) surroundings and group identity, such as those conducted by Anthony Seeger on music in the construction of Kisêdjê concepts of nature and society (1981, 1987) and Steven Feld's germinal introduction of the "acoustemology of place" (1982, 1996) in

his understanding of Kaluli epistemology. In this theory of how knowledge can be gained acoustically, Feld argues that "acoustic time is always spatialized; sounds are sensed as connecting points up and down, in and out, echo and reverb, point-source and diffuse. And acoustic space is likewise temporalized; sounds are heard moving, locating, placing points in time" (1996:97). Few ethnomusicologists other than Feld (and perhaps Kruth and Stobart 2000 and Sakakeeny 2010) delve into the acoustic and perceptual aspects of music's interaction with the material environment, which is why I turn to geographers (Lefebvre [1974] 1991; Soja 1996) and sound artists such as Brandon LaBelle (2010) to further theorize this phenomenon in Chapter 1.

Ethnic Identity in Migration

If ethnic identity is emplaced through music, what function does music serve when people are uprooted from those places? How do competing ethnic groups interact when relocated in a completely different social system? Concepts of strategic differentiation—whether ethnic, national, or community-based—are deeply embedded in all interactions between Maya and Ladino Guatemalans. The boundaries that are relatively clear in Guatemala, however, become subsumed by other assertions of difference as migrants cross geopolitical and conceptual boundaries upon traveling through Mexico and settling in the United States. Both Maya and Ladino Guatemalan migrants experience a heightened awareness of identity in all of the ways in which Brubaker and Cooper characterize it: national identification (citizen or "illegal" alien), national categorization (others categorizing them by nation of *origin*—whether they are citizens or not), ethnic categorization (differentiation within Latino communities), hometown "groupness," as well as shifts in self-understanding. The two primary boundaries that are relevant in this study are those formed around ethnicity and those that are formed around hometown

community. For a more detailed review of the literature on ethnic- and place-based group identity, see Chapter 1.

In Los Angeles and other locations with a large immigrant population, authorities and members of the dominant population do not differentiate Mayas from other Guatemalans, and both are often identified as Hispanic, Latino, or even Mexican by an array of institutions, including census documents and community-based organizations. As Douglas Massey and Magaly Sánchez note, this has the potential to induce the internal creation of a new group that de-emphasizes national and/or ethnic boundaries in order to emphasize Latin American or "Latino" alliances in resistance to discrimination from dominant cultural and social trends in the United States (Massey and Sánchez 2010). To this effect, Eric Popkin suggests that Mayas in Los Angeles are continuously assimilating into Latino culture (1999).

As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, however, this is not the case with members of the Q'anjob'al community in LA, who have indicated a strong resistance to associating with non-Indigenous Latin American populations. This is likely in part due to Nora Hamilton and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla's observation that Guatemalans, and especially Mayas, experience acute discrimination from Mexicans in Los Angeles (2001). In some cases, it seems as though Maya and Ladino Guatemalans, treated as a minority (Guatemalan) within a minority (Latino), are joining together to bolster Guatemalan pride as a reaction to the dominance of Mexican culture. At the beginning of my fieldwork in LA, I did find some evidence that members of the Kaqchikel- and K'iche'-Mayan communities participated in Ladino Guatemalan activities. With the Q'anjob'al and other Q'anjob'alan groups from northern Guatemala (Akateko, Chuj), however, members choose to accentuate their difference from Ladino and other non-Indigenous Latin Americans.

In addition to analyzing "latitudinal," or cross-group relations in Los Angeles, I employ the transnational perspective, analyzing Ewulenses "longitudinally," as ethnic boundaries and cultural changes in Los Angeles translate to changes in sending-communities. Nina Glick-Schiller (1992; 1998), Luin Goldring (1998), and Peggy Levitt (2001; 2002; 2004) each contribute analytical structures considering changes in values, practices, and social status that flow from emigrant communities to the home community. I will argue in Chapter 5, however, that this flow is not unidirectional, but rather, happens in conversation "between" the hometown and diasporic places. Specifically, I will observe how this happens with musical genres and musicians as they flow through mediascapes and ethnoscapas between Los Angeles and Guatemala. As I will argue, the ability afforded by the information age to maintain real-time connection with and participation in hometown societies increases the options for the transnational community as a whole when forming a sense of belonging.

Reterritorializing Migrant Music: Globalization, Transnational Networks and "Virtual Spatialities"

As explored by ethnomusicological literature, music can migrate in two main ways. The first is migration of music in recorded and commodified form. The second is through the migration of musicians themselves.

Music and Migration of People

In terms of the latter, as Marina Alonso Bolaños observes with Maya immigrants in southern Mexico, musicians in the diaspora not only continue to play traditional religious repertoire, they also like to compose new songs incorporating international genres in order to claim their place in a global musical dialogue (2012:22). She writes that the desire for migrant musicians to perform international genres reflects their own process of migration. This

"repertoire of migration," as she calls it, represents the various landscapes and soundscapes through which migrant musicians have passed before arriving "on the other side." They do not replace the traditional music from hometown practices, but they add a necessary supplementation to the repertoire to make it effective in relating the things pertinent to other immigrants who have crossed the same physical and conceptual boundaries (ibid.:26). Music thus creates a place for migrants to process the necessary adjustments to group identity as group boundaries shift across temporal and geopolitical borders. Martin Stokes's essay (1994) on Turkish musicians and their reception in Ireland questions the concept of "context" and "localness" for musicians who spend the majority of their time outside of their place of origin. Sara Daynes uses space in her analysis of trans-Atlantic reggae music production to mean mostly location, as she refers to the locations of production in the African diaspora, and their relation to memory of an imagined location of origin (2004). In most ethnomusicological literature on migrant communities, "space" and "place" refer to a multitude of locations, but few theorize the process of the production of space and place *across* different locations (see Bazinet 2012 for a noteworthy exception). Literature on music and media approaches this issue.

Music and Migration of Media

The global dissemination and mediation of musical styles, as R. Murray Schafer and Steven Feld have theorized, potentially leads to a process of "schizophonia," in which music becomes detached from its context and repurposed without regard to its original meaning (Schafer [1977] 1994; Feld [1994] 2005). The localized receptions of global media, however, are not necessarily done in an exoticized way devoid of any original context. It has been the project of several music scholars to theorize the localized "recontextualization" of global media. Peter Webb refers to place as a "musical milieu" of migrant musics and people in creating the "Bristol

Sound," integrating theories on individual phenomenology with a Boudieuzian conception of a "cultural field" (Webb 2004). George Lipsitz argues that "songs build engagement among audiences at least in part through references that tap memories and hopes about particular places. Intentionally and unintentionally, musicians use lyrics, musical forms, and specific styles of performance that evoke attachment to or alienation from particular places" (1994:4). My research combines the imagined spaces created through digital music communities with the real spaces experienced by migrants from a common location. Digital technology may be used to mediate music in what Hamid Naficy calls "decentralized global narrowcasting," which, as opposed to "centralized global broadcasting," is less susceptible to schizophonia because it is aimed at and relevant to a particular community (2003:51). Thus, Internet music listening doesn't necessarily detach music from its context; in diasporic communities, it can expand the context transnationally *through* music.

The Musical Formation of Transnational Q'anjob'al Place

The term "transnational" has been used increasingly over the past two decades to describe the fact that these international migrants are more easily able to maintain ties to two or more nations simultaneously. Distinct from the term "international," which implies an exchange, between nations, "transnational" characterizes those community formations that are not bounded by national borders. As Michael Smith and Luis Guarnizo argue, this is a phenomenon specific to the information age, in which cultural connections no longer necessitate locational proximity (1998). While former studies of immigration and assimilation are significant in their consideration of how foreigners (others) relate to the dominant local ideology (self), transnational studies consider migrants as neither specifically immigrants (other becoming self) nor emigrants (self becoming other), but as actors who occupy a third space, adopting various

subject positions in strategic ways at opportune times. As many transnational theorists have explained, this allows (requires) migrants to shift between layered identity categories depending on the situation at hand, practicing what Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller call "simultaneity" (2004). How marimba music facilitates this simultaneity across space and time will be theorized throughout my dissertation according to several core theoretical frameworks on the production of place.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: WHAT'S IN A PLACE?

While the above-mentioned literature contributes important perspectives on music's use in certain geographical locations, their use of "space" and "place" are often undefined. In general, they serve as metaphors for interpersonal relations in a particular geographical location. But they do not consider what *exactly* music does *in* space, how it interacts with the material environment and socialized bodies, who interpret it in certain ways that create place-based identities.

The all-encompassing idea throughout this work relates to the ways in which music interacts with material spaces in creating a Q'anjob'al transnational place. To orient the reader, I have included a flowchart (Figure 0-2) unpacking the multi-layered elements that go into constructing place. At first glance, this diagram will more likely confuse than clarify, but throughout the dissertation, the reader may refer back to it in order to understand the relationships between the various factors of place as I approach them.

Space and Place

I frame my analysis of space and place with a tripartite concept of space, as originally theorized by social philosopher Henri Lefebvre and expanded upon by LA based geographer Edward Soja. The facets of social space according to Lefebvre, can roughly be reduced to

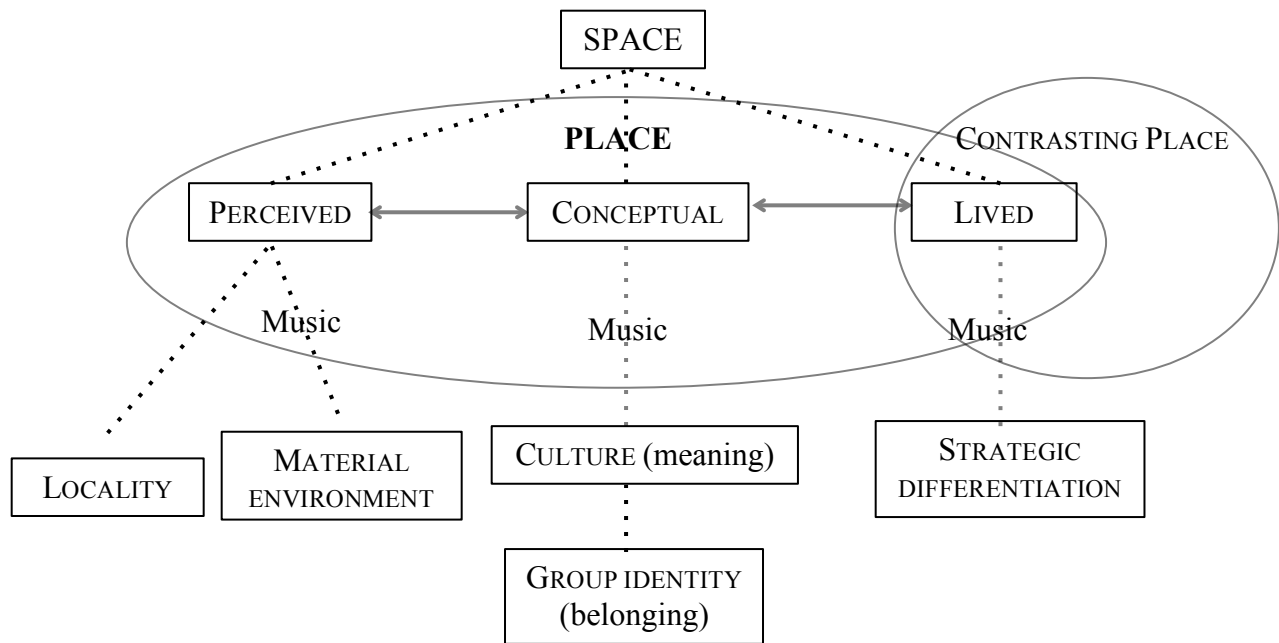


Figure 0-2: Conceptual model of the musical production of place.

perceived space, conceived space, and lived space (Soja 1996:10). Affording ill justice to the depth with which Lefebvre explores these facets, I will summarize by saying that *perceived space* relates to "the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation" (Lefebvre [1974] 1991:33), or as Soja summarizes, "materialized, socially produced, empirical space" (1996:66). *Conceptual space* refers to the mental, imagined aspects of idealized space—as exemplified in architecture and urban planning, and *lived space* refers to the application of perceived and conceptual spaces in praxis—the playing-out of how people live in these social spaces in different and possibly conflicting understandings. Adding to Lefebvre's and Soja's tripartite conception of social space, I consider anthropologists' theories of place-making.

Ethnomusicologists are not the only ones to blame for confusing spatial terminology. Theorists *also* use "space," "place," and "locale" or "location" in various, and sometimes contradicting ways. Drawing from Karin Aguilar-San Juan (2005), Sanjoy Mazumdar et al. (2000), and Roberta Raffaetà and Cameron Duff (2013), among others; I define **place** as the

dialectical product of perceived space and conceived space within a particular group: Group values inform conceptions of space, which in turn affects how people perceive the material environment. At the same time, the perception of the material environment shapes how people conceive ideal space. Place, then, is material space made meaningful through social interaction.

When I use the term **space**, I refer to the elements of materiality and locality *sans* cultural meaning, a theoretical "somewhere" before it has been turned into place by meaningful social interaction. This contrasts with the way that Anthony Giddens and Michel Foucault use place and space, which is almost the exact opposite of what I have outlined above. Lefebvre and Soja, on the other hand, differentiate between "absolute space" (what I refer to simply as "space") and "social space" (which is *not* exactly the same as my use of "place"; Lefebvre's social space is the product of interaction between perceived, conceived, and lived space. My definition of place is the product of interaction between only the first two: perceived and conceived space *within a certain social group*. Thus, their use of "social space" is one order higher, as it involves the lived result of several overlapping places).

My model for the musical production of place is the following: Ethnic boundaries are reproduced through social events that define belonging, and thus differentiation. Music, in the conceptual model above, "transmits" and "forms" the linkage of material space to perceived space; of culture to conceived space; and of differentiation to lived space. (These processes are demonstrated from left to right in Figure 0-2). While it is not the only way in which these elements are linked, music has a particularly strong emotional force that creates feelings of belonging based on culturally specific meanings. Music anchors this group-based belonging to certain spaces through its conceptual and perceptual interaction with the material environment,

thus converting those spaces into places. Lastly, music in its mediated form subverts the fixity of locality, thus allowing disparate perceived spaces to be brought into the same translocal place.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This research is the result of bi-national fieldwork that took place in the United States and Guatemala over the course of four years. I first met members of the Q'anjob'al community from Santa Eulalia in Los Angeles in 2013 and have taken part in social activities up to the writing of this dissertation. While I will focus mainly on the town of Santa Eulalia, I also visited and attended festivals in other Q'anjob'al and Chuj hometowns with representative populations in Los Angeles, and will incorporate those experiences into my analysis. In all locations I employed a variety of ethnographic methods, as well as repertoire analysis and interviews, to gain insight into what the musicians play in each context and why. In Los Angeles and Santa Eulalia, I took marimba lessons and participated in the preparations for various community celebrations to learn more about musical aesthetic values and the role of music and dance in performing community identity.

Fieldwork

To determine what role marimba music plays in negotiating ethnic identity boundaries across borders, I investigated aspects of identity performance through music as they took shape in Los Angeles, as well as in Santa Eulalia and other surrounding towns in Guatemala. During the second part of my fieldwork in Guatemala, in addition to Santa Eulalia, I also attended saints' festivals in the Q'anjob'al towns of San Juan Ixcoy and Santa Cruz Barillas; and the Chuj-speaking town of San Sebastian Coatán. All towns are settled at high altitudes in the Cuchumatanes Mountains, have populations that are about 90 percent Maya, and were strongly

affected by the years of focused genocide during the civil war. While all of these towns have representation in Los Angeles, however, Santa Eulalia is the most organized and cohesive migrant community. I investigated structures of Mayan hierarchy and homage between these towns in Guatemala to determine the background for social relations among these groups in Los Angeles.

From June through December 2014, I lived in the South LA area of Los Angeles, close to the neighborhood where many social activities happen for the Santa Eulalia community. Living in South LA allowed me to assess the connections between urban space and identity conceptualization, as well as experience the limitations and advantages for everyday life as they are organized by urban land and soundscapes. I participated in semi-weekly marimba lessons at the house of Virves Kwin García, my principal collaborator throughout this research project. Either Virves or his nephew José Simon gave me lessons on Tuesday evenings and Sunday afternoons from July through December 2014.¹¹ Virves is well known throughout both the US and Guatemalan Santa Eulalia communities as the head of Eb' Ajson (Q': The Masters of Marimba), an LA-based group that composed some of the songs that were popular during my fieldwork period (both in the Cuchumatanes and in the US settlements). He was also the leader of the Santa Eulalia Q'anjob'al Cultural Association's marimba group and the musical director of the youth marimba group, Juventud Maya (S: Maya Youth). He is also a deeply involved member of the Cultural Association. Much of my understanding of Q'anjob'al musical and spiritual elements comes from the hours I spent in the back of Virves's cell phone shop on the corner of Vernon and Broadway in South LA. José (not only his nephew, but also his employee), Virves, and any number of Ewulenses from the LA community would gather there periodically

¹¹ The majority of my marimba lessons with Ladino marimba teachers in LA occurred in the summer and fall of 2013 with two members of the group Marimba Alegría Chapina, a marimba orquesta based in Downey.

to chat, play guitar, eat, and drink. Virves's family members were my main hosts during my time in Guatemala. Two of his siblings, a brother and sister (José's mom) live in Los Angeles, while his parents and six other siblings (one brother, five sisters) live in the Vista Hermosa neighborhood of Santa Eulalia.

From January through August 2015, I lived in Guatemala, the majority of my time in Santa Eulalia except for a few short trips to other parts of the country. Virves arranged for me to live next door to his sister, Malín, who lived with her husband, Aurelio Antil Lwin, in Yichk'u, a part of Vista Hermosa at the bottom of the valley on the western end of Santa Eulalia (Malin and Aurelio's house is listed on the map in Figure 0-3 as "Casa Antil Kwin," for Aurelio's last name and Malin's last name). Though I did not technically live with Malín and Aurelio, their kitchen door was always open and I was always welcome to come over for a meal, a chat, or to be the judge for their children's mud pie contests. As is normally the custom, children live with their parents until they are married, at which time the women move to the land owned by their husband's family—either in the same house as the parents-in-law or into a newly constructed house built by the husband. Aurelio and his siblings live in adjacent houses on the edge of their father's (and their grandfather's) land, just north of the main auxiliary road running through Santa Eulalia. Thus, the houses line up almost like a generation of a family tree—starting with Aurelio's eldest brother Antil Lwin at the westernmost end, and Roberto, Aurelio, Antil Matín, and Ana's houses climbing up the hill along the road to the east. After Ana's house starts the row of houses of Aurelio's cousins, with his uncle living at the top of the crest.

Though not quite next door, the childhood home of Malín (and, of course, Virves) was also a welcome refuge. Their parents, Alejandro Kwin (former mayor of Santa Eulalia) and Ewul García, had lived in Nancultac, one of Santa Eulalia's villages, but had moved to town during the

Municipio de Santa Eulalia, Huehuetenango
Centros Poblados

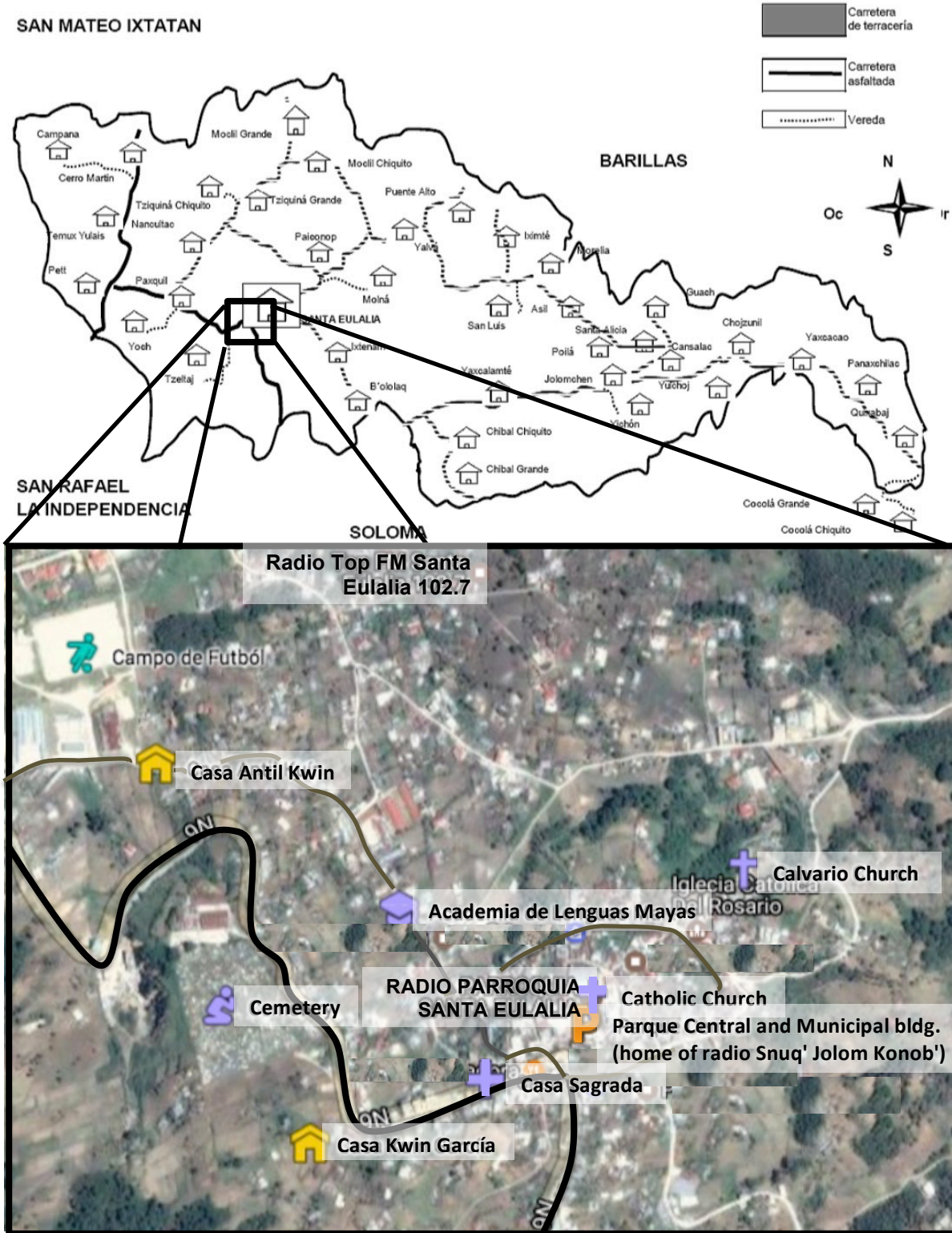


Figure 0-3: Map of municipality of Santa Eulalia (from Virvez and Un Comité de Vecinos 1969) with inset of the central town (from Google's My Maps, with drawings by author).

armed conflict because they felt too exposed in their country home, where soldiers would stop periodically to demand that their sons join the army. I had many dinners, conversations, fashion consultations, and sweat baths at the house of Virves and Malín's parents ("Casa Kwin García in Figure 0-3) with his unmarried sisters Yeraldiny, Lica, and Amanda. Malín, along with her sisters, took charge of my integration into society, dressing me in traditional *corte* for social events, finding me volunteer work as an English teacher at local elementary schools, and inviting me to their semi-weekly sweat bath in their *chuj*, a traditional clay sweat lodge for one or two people at a time—needed to bathe in this cold mountain town that rarely saw weather above sixty degrees Fahrenheit. The Kwin García girls introduced me to musicians and accompanied me to the Casa Sagrada, which was especially helpful during the preparations, practice, and post-celebration period of Saint Eulalia's celebration week in early February.

Research Methodology

In Los Angeles and Guatemala, I focused on three aspects of identity performance through marimba music: aesthetic values and sound quality, its role in social practices, and changes in repertoire. I employed a variety of methods to analyze each aspect. First, to assess changes in aesthetic values I took marimba lessons from respected musicians at each site. Aesthetic qualities such as pitch, rhythm, and harmonic spectrum are closely tied to identity conceptualization, especially as they differ between Ladino marimba technique and Mayan marimba technique. I used my experience from marimba lessons with both a Ladino group and a Q'anjob'al group in Los Angeles, and compared it to what I found in Santa Eulalia, Guatemala. Particular attention was given to scale practice, how concepts of harmony were taught, and what rhythms are most common. I also paid attention to the use of non-traditional instruments, such as the electronic keyboard, to supplement the marimba. Musical properties alone cannot reveal the

reason for consistency or change; therefore I also conducted interviews with the leaders of several marimba groups to ask for their reflections on changes in some aesthetic features and maintenance of others.

Second, I investigated changes in social practice regarding how the marimba is used in religious and other community events that promote Q'anjob'al identity. Throughout the festival season described above, I used participatory observation, as well as interviews with specific community members. I interviewed musicians who play in ceremonial contexts, respected community leaders who are considered knowledgeable about Mayan traditions, and dancers, musicians, and several members of the general public. At musical events, I paid special attention to demographics of musicians and audiences (gender, ethnicity, age, role in celebration); interaction between musicians, religious leaders, and community leaders; and the dynamics between Indigenous and non-Indigenous factions of the town (when applicable). In documenting these observations in Santa Eulalia and comparing them with my observations from Los Angeles, I identified patterns that may relate to influences from abroad.

Third, through interviews with experienced musicians, I have analyzed the changes in repertoire played by different marimba groups over time. Marimba repertoire is chosen based on a variety of factors including religious function, social function, and social positioning of the group. Repertoire analysis revealed changes in what is deemed most important or desired in each town, and how that has been influenced by taste developed in the US. To gather this data, I asked questions to the interviewees identified above that addressed perceived changes in repertoire and crowd reception.

Musical Analysis

A basic categorization of types of music played on the marimba includes *sones* to accompany ritual dances and processions; folkloric songs—elaborated *sones* that have come to represent pan-Maya identity on a national level; traditional, or "pure" songs, which are Guatemalan compositions based on European dance forms popular in the 1940s (foxtrots, mazurkas, waltzes); and pan-Latin social dance genres, such as merengue, cumbia, salsa, and bolero. From my experience over five years working in Guatemala, I have noticed that Mayan functions usually feature the dramatic *sones* that accompany the ritual dances, folkloric songs, and occasionally the traditional or "pure" songs on the *marimba sencilla*. Ladino functions use the *marimba doble*¹² with added percussion and brass instruments to play mostly contemporary pan-Latino dance genres, and will occasionally play some traditional "pure" songs on the marimba only. These genres project a position associated with modernity and cosmopolitanism (Amado 2011), as well as mark their knowledge of global and pan-Latino trends and hit songs. Maya musicians, however, while also listening to the newest cumbias and salsas on the radio, prefer to associate their marimba repertoire with a distinctly local identity fortified by connection with ancient traditions. One of my main questions for analysis was whether these musical boundaries change in the diaspora, facilitating more inter-ethnic interaction between Mayas and Ladinos in the process. I found that for the large part they do not, and that on the contrary, Mayas in Los Angeles experience more possibilities for ethnic expression, and thus move *away from* Ladino and other pan-Latin genres.

¹² See Chapter 1 for a description of the marimba sencilla and the marimba doble.

FINDINGS

While many authors have written about the results of transnational citizenship, few have written about the actual processes of reterritorializing a sense of belonging in the diaspora. Music and dance performance may not be the driving force behind these processes, but they provide an important diagnostic arena for considering the ways in which connections to place are formed and reformed through affective group experience. It is my intent to approach migration and identity through musical relations that I see as my main contribution to related research. Through exploring literature on the semiotic properties of music, the way these properties are linked to identity formation, and the way they are affected by migration (of both people and media), I relate marimba music to place-making and to processes of shifting boundaries and strategic differentiation in musical interactions.

I argue that marimba music ties Q'anjob'al identity production to natural environments, reterritorializes Q'anjob'al identity in urban environments through musical symbolizing, and expands Q'anjob'al space transnationally through virtual music sharing. Research focusing on the spatial elements of music has proliferated since R. Murray Schafer's extensive philosophical contributions to the epistemological potential of sound ([1977] 1994). While geographers, ethnomusicologists, and anthropologists have focused on either the "acoustic ecologies" of social space or the role of music in communicating among displaced communities, I combine *both* approaches, theorizing music not only *in* place, but *as* place through its transformation of digital space.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 starts with a description of the various types of marimbas used in Guatemala, and the particular orchestration with which Q'anjob'al musicians play the *son* music and dance style popular in Santa Eulalia. I then integrate theoretical literature on the production of place with literature on music, place, and identity; presenting the Q'anjob'al *son* music and dance form as a vital activity for place-making. I relate oral histories, local written history, and archaeological research to form a picture of how Q'anjob'al identity is deeply connected to natural phenomena, and how music plays a special role in this connection. In so doing, I briefly touch on the history of Mayan art in relation to natural space, and specifically the oral history of Q'anjob'al society in its five thousand years of habitation in the Cuchumatán Mountains. Concluding with a synopsis of the colonial era and the changes in Q'anjob'al cultural identity, I introduce the ways in which Q'anjob'al musicians use music to underscore ethnic differentiation and ownership in reaction to Ladino styles of marimba music.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of the political developments leading up to the civil war, the period of genocide, and the resulting exodus of Q'anjob'al people to Mexico and the US during the 1980s and '90s. It will document the process of uprooting and resettling in Los Angeles and the introduction of "music of migration" into general Q'anjob'al knowledge. I will show that the process of migration becomes integrated into the production of Q'anjob'al identity through changes in musical instrumentation, form, and thematic content.

Chapter 3 explores how Q'anjob'al people have used music and dance to inscribe LA's urban geography into Q'anjob'al identity for migrant and second-generation members. Revisiting the theorization on the dialectical production of place, I focus on the conceptual elements of Q'anjob'al identity carried in marimba music and the ways in which musical performance in Los

Angeles "reads" the urban environment through the conceptual and symbolic space created by marimba music and dance.

Chapter 4 explores the interactions between Q'anjob'alans and other ethnic groups in Los Angeles, theorizing the elements of *lived space* as sonic heterotopias, or audiotopias, according to Josh Kun. I recount the pan-Q'anjob'alan cultural meetings during my fieldwork in Los Angeles, whose goal was to find a space to educate the second-generation Q'anjob'alan youth. In observing how Q'anjob'alan leaders maneuvered potential collaborations, I note how musical interaction strategically facilitates contraction of ethnic boundaries to separate from "Latino" groups, and collaboration with Native North American groups to encompass new ethnic identities.

Chapter 5 focuses on the use of online media to create a digital place that in many ways transcends the physical, political boundaries prescribed by nation-states. Drawing from theorists of radio studies, I focus on the material aspects of digital space to argue that digital networks do in fact provide the material space that is converted to Q'anjob'al place through musical conversations via internet radio. Finally, in the conclusion, I examine all of the Q'anjob'al places previously described and describe the role each plays in re-constructing Q'anjob'al Mayan identity and re-conceptualizing the "hometown" as a transnational place. I summarize my conclusions and relate my research to larger issues of Indigenous transnational migration in the twenty-first century.

**CHAPTER 1:
TERRITORIALIZING Q'ANJOB'AL PLACE: MUSIC AND THE NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT IN THE FORMATION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY**

"The marimba is part of the family," Virves begins as he gingerly cradles a fresh cup of coffee between his hands. I am sitting with him at the dining room table in his South Los Angeles home. His wife and mother-in-law bustle about the kitchen preparing breakfast—this Tuesday morning meeting was the only time Virves had free with his busy work schedule. We both obviously need the coffee, yet Virves seems energized by explaining the significance of the marimba in Q'anjob'al tradition. "It is our link to nature," he begins. "The marimba comes from a tree, which is natural life. The four legs of the marimba represent the connection with the earth and with animals, which also have four legs."¹ A botanist might argue that once the hormiga tree is cut down to create the marimba keys it is no longer living. But the life that Virves speaks of; that which marimba makers discuss in Vida Chenoweth's (1964) accounts; which permeates the anthropomorphic public discourse about marimbas that "cry," "laugh," and "mourn;" comes from a different sense of life all together. Beyond the functions of xylem and phloem, trees are connected to a person-like life force that is present not only in each tree, but also in the mountains on which they grow. This life force emanates through the vibrating keys, affecting each listener differently. "This is why the keys in different registers speak to people at different stages of their lives," Virves explains. Everyone hears their parts [differently according to age]: babies hear the higher keys; grandparents hear the lowest" (Kwin García 2014).

As I began to learn that day, and continued learning throughout the next two years of fieldwork, the marimba is much more than a provider of entertainment for the Q'anjob'al community. As a living being, its significance goes beyond the sounds that it produces, into an

¹ In Spanish, Virves used the word *patas*, which differentiates animal legs from *piernas*: human legs.

ontological presence that is capable of relaying messages and even playing tricks on its interpreters.² Marimba music "speaks" to its listeners and does nothing short of enveloping them in the natural cosmic order of the universe and Mother Earth. The marimba plays a symbolic role in linking Q'anjob'al identity to nature and cosmic order. As I will describe below, it is one of the strongest symbols, both visually and sonically, in representing Q'anjob'al, and specifically Ewulense identity.

In this chapter, I theorize the relationship between perceived space—the material and locational elements of place-making—and conceptual space—the symbolic, cultural, and ideological aspects of place-making—in the production of Q'anjob'al ethnic identity. I argue that music serves as a tool for making meaning out of the natural (material) environment and reinforcing Q'anjob'al conceptions of cosmological order. First, I will discuss the history of the marimba and its different contemporary forms. Then, I will describe the *son* music form and its accompanying dance in the Q'anjob'al tradition. These social dances, and the marimba itself, serve as tools for understanding the material environment, associating symbolic meaning with it, and regulating the identity associated with it. In other words, they generate the three aspects of place-making: territorializing, symbolizing, and regulating. I will delve more deeply into theory on place-making and the relationship between geography and ethnic identity. In so doing, I will tie each aspect of identity production in the Q'anjob'al community of Jolom Konob' (Santa Eulalia) to the relevant history of pre-conquest and colonial-era Mayan civilizations. Throughout the chapter, I set the basis for a model of Mayan place-making, which values the natural environment as the ultimate conceptual ideal in spatial organization. This leads to a discussion of

² José, one of my marimba teachers in Los Angeles, jokes that when a marimba is in the room it "does strange things:" recorders will stop working, or things will suddenly break. He first mentioned this when my camera failed to record a piece he was teaching me. I replaced the batteries, but it still didn't record on the second try. "It's the marimba effect!" he declared. "I didn't used to believe it, but I've seen some things" (José Simón Pascual, personal communication with author, October 18, 2014).

the marimba and the son as symbolic representations of Q'anjob'al identity in opposition to Spanish and Ladino³ spatial encroachment.

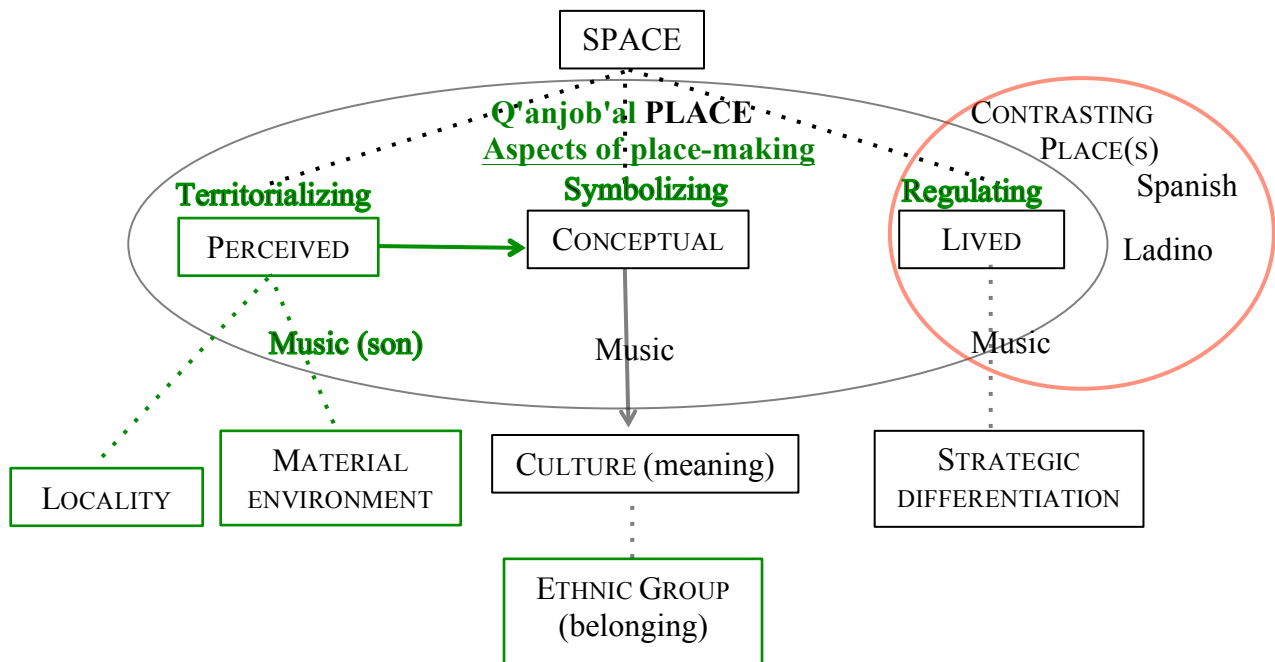


Figure 1-1: Conceptual flow of place-making and identity formation.

Referring to the conceptual model I presented in the Introduction, in this chapter I focus mostly on the elements colored in green (those making up perceived space), as they are perceived and made sense of via music and dance, and as they then contribute to conceptual space, culture, and group identity formation in making a "Q'anjob'al place." (Figure 1-1) I define place as the product of the dialectical interaction between perceived and conceived space, but this chapter focuses on one "direction" of that interaction—the way that perceived space influences conceptions of space. Chapter 3 will focus on the other direction—how cultural conceptions of space influence perceptions. This is not meant to indicate a process or cause-and-effect order—perceived and conceived space are always informing each other—but rather to isolate each element in this relationship to focus on one at a time. The red circle (contrasting

³ Non-Maya Guatemalan

place(s)) represents foreign ethnic groups' claim to place, in this chapter, representing intruding Spanish and Ladino cultures.

Nota Bene: because this chapter deals with the "roots" of Mayan and Q'anjob'al culture, many discussions highlight historical references to pre-capitalist Guatemala (more or less until the end of the Spanish colonial reign); however, references to this perceived traditional past come from a combination of sources, including archival documents, secondary historical literature, and contemporary oral histories collected both in Guatemala and in Los Angeles. Therefore, it references both outsiders' and insiders' assessments of the past, from the standpoint of the present. It is not meant to be chronological, but rather to begin the narrative from a place of rhetorical primacy that has been associated with the era during which the Mayan civilization was dominant and thriving.

THE MARIMBA AND THE SON

Rarely has a single musical instrument played such a significant role in defining national character as the marimba has done in Guatemala. Long prized as a uniquely Mayan form of cultural expression, this instrument can be heard in the central parks of highland towns on any given Sunday, at colonial-style hotels welcoming tourists, and at religious ceremonies celebrating Catholic saints or Mayan calendric events. The marimba is a symbol of Mayan ingenuity, as well as Guatemalan modernity (Amado 2011; Chenoweth 1964; Godínez 2002; Navarrete Pellicer 2005). As such, it has become a contested symbol of Guatemalan (Ladino), Mayan, and Afro-Latin identity.

History and Importance of the Marimba in Guatemala

Diego Félix Carranza y Córdoba, a priest in the department of Jutiapa, recorded the first Guatemalan written reference to the marimba, in 1680, in relation to the celebration of the debut of the Cathedral of Santiago de los Caballeros in the town of Jutiapa. He writes: "In the front walked a troop with boxes, kettledrums, clarinets, trumpets, marimbas and all the instruments that the Indians [*sic*] use; there was a large number of them, with rich dress as is the custom in their dances" (cited in Arrivillaga Cortés 2010:13). Though many believe that the marimba originated in Africa, and that slaves brought the design to Latin America during the conquest (cf. Chenoweth 1964; Garfias 1983; Scruggs 1998; Godínez 2002; O'Brien-Rothe 2006), other scholars offer convincing arguments that the Mayan use of the marimba preceded Spanish contact (Armas Lara 1970; López Mayoral 1978, 1983; Camposeco Mateo 1995). One such argument is based on the existence of Mayan names for the marimba (such as *te' son* in Q'anjob'al, or *k'ojom* in K'iche'), concentrated in the highlands where there was little to no contact with Africans. Another line of evidence can be found in archaeological records, which reveal that graduated rocks were played in a keyboard style similar to the contemporary marimba. Another instrument depicted in pre-Hispanic paintings, the *tun*,⁴ features wooden keys of three to four different pitches that could have been a precursor to the keyboard format (Camposeco Mateo 1995). While the research on the provenance of the marimba is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is a very meaningful discussion in Guatemala for several reasons: first, the marimba is tied to national identity, the discourse about which promotes Mayan and

⁴ The *tun* is a slit drum ubiquitous throughout pre- and post- contact Mesoamerican cultures (the Mexica called it a *teponaztli*). The slit is carved on the top of a hollow log in an "H" shape, making two tongues that are hit with mallets. They are often tuned a minor third apart, but have been found in other tunings including a fourth and a fifth (Stevenson [1968] 1976). The player can often get four different pitches, from the two tongues and each side of the instrument.

European features, and elides African contributions to Guatemala's cultural and biological *ladinidad*. Second, it is one of the few contributions to Guatemalan culture that acknowledges Mayan ingenuity. Therefore, it represents a source of pride for three separate constructions of identity: Guatemalans asserting their distinction from Spain, people of African descent claiming their place in the contribution to Guatemalan culture, and Mayas asserting proof of their musical and scientific ingenuity in the face of centuries of degradation by Ladinos. Whatever its origins, the Guatemalan marimba⁵ has changed dramatically over the past three hundred years to become a distinct instrument whose innovations are firmly rooted in Mayan tradition.

There are two types of marimbas widely used in Guatemala today: the *marimba sencilla*, (single marimba) which has one row of diatonic keys, and the *marimba doble* (double marimba), which has two rows of keys—diatonic and chromatic. The *marimba sencilla* is the most popular form of marimba played in contemporary Mayan communities. It consists of only one keyboard, with its keys forming a diatonic scale. The keyboard extends over five octaves, laid out over a large wooden frame. Underneath the keyboard, a row of resonating boxes is attached to a separate "track" of parallel wooden poles in such a way that each box is underneath its corresponding key when the keyboard is placed on top. Because this requires a rather long keyboard, it is usually played by three or four musicians (Figure 1-2). The *marimba sencilla* is commonly seen at festivals, in church, and accompanying ritual dances.

⁵ The earliest evidence of the marimba in Guatemala is in a form called the *marimba de arco* or the *marimba de tecomates*. This type of marimba is supported by a strap around the musician's neck and held away from the body by a wooden arch. It has gourds (*tecomates*) as the resonating bodies underneath each key. The Guatemalan *marimba de arco* is very similar to the Nicaraguan marimba, which uses bamboo resonators instead of gourds. The archaic *marimba de arco* and the Nicaraguan marimba are notably similar to the African Chopi *timbila* and the Bakuba *madimba* (Chenoweth 1964), to which the contemporary Guatemalan marimba bears only a slight resemblance.



Figure 1-2: Marimba sencilla played by the group Marimba Reina Pokomchí, in San Cristóbal Verapaz, Guatemala. (Photo by author, July 09, 2011.)

The marimba doble, invented around 1890 in Quetzaltenango, Guatemala (but also surfacing around the same time in Chiapas, Mexico), expanded the marimba sencilla through the addition of chromatic keys in a form emulating the piano—the chromatic keys form a row behind the diatonic keys. Because the marimba doble requires two separate parts to accommodate all of the 88 keys, it requires seven musicians to play (see Figure 1-3). The marimba doble and marimba sencilla have become icons of race and class in Guatemala (Chenoweth 1964; Godínez 2002; Navarrete Pellicer 2005). Because the marimba doble is often used to play European compositions in classical-style performances, it is tuned exactly to the European tempered scale. The marimba sencilla, on the other hand, often varies audibly from

that tempered scale. This microtonal sound makes it undesirable for most Ladino functions, but preferable for Mayan uses.⁶



Figure 1-3: Marimba doble at the Posada de Don Rodrigo hotel in Antigua (with marimba de arco hanging on the wall in the background). Photo from Revue magazine <http://www.revemag.com/2009/08/the-magic-of-the-marimba/>

The Son Music and Dance Form

Playing the Son

The word *son* ("sone") is used to describe an array of musical styles throughout Latin America. From the *son jalisciense* and *son jarocho* in México, to the *son cubano* from Cuba, the *son nica* from Nicaragua, and the *son maya* and *son chapín* from Guatemala; the rhythms, instrumentation, tempos, and dance styles vary widely. The word *son* comes from the Latin *sonus* and was used during the medieval period in Spain to refer to both a certain type of "sound," and the dance that accompanied it. In Guatemala, the word *son* has come to connote

⁶ A microtonal soundscape is likely compatible with pre-contact Mayan modal systems (Stevenson [1968] 1976).

particular musical styles that incorporate a blend of pre-Hispanic, European Baroque, Arabic, and African elements within a historical context of Guatemalan tradition (de Gandarias 2015:11). There are two main son forms in Guatemala: the *son chapín* (a synonym for Guatemalan), and the *son maya*. The *son chapín* is associated with a folkloric repertoire that has Mayan origins, but has been orchestrated and performed within Ladino contexts throughout the past eighty to ninety years. The *son chapín* is typically played in formal settings and is very seldom danced to. The *son maya* refers to the *sones* (plural of son) that are performed in Mayan communities in ritual, dance, or recreational settings (ibid.).

Sones in general throughout Latin America have a triple feel, and most can be notated in 6/8. Almost all *sones* include a polymetric juxtaposition of 3/4 against 6/8. In some, such as the *son jalisciense* played in Mexican mariachi music, this rhythmic interplay expresses itself in what is called a *sesquialtera*, or "changing sixes," in which the rhythm alternates between 3/4 and 6/8 (Sheehy 1999). In other *sones*, including the Guatemalan *son chapín* and *son maya*, the polymeter is simultaneous, with the melody outlining a 6/8 feel and the bass and center parts giving a 3/4 feel. Guatemalan *sones*—both *chapín* and *maya*—also generally feature homophonic texture, major tonality, diatonic melody, and triadic harmony using I, V⁷, and IV (or *primera*, *segunda*, and *tercera* according to most Latin American folk traditions) (Navarrete Pellicer 2005; de Gandarias 2015).

In general throughout Guatemala, musical style corresponds to marimba type: Mayan *sones* accompany rituals or dance dramas on the *marimba sencilla* (or on other instruments entirely, such as the violin trio or drum and *chirimía*); *sones chapines* emanate from the *marimba doble* in folkloric contexts; and pan-Latin dance music for parties is played by a *marimba*

orquesta,⁷ which adds Latin band instruments to the marimba doble. In Q'anjob'al areas, the marimba sencilla or the violin trio do indeed accompany ritual and traditional contexts. A marimba sencilla group plays in the Jolom Konob' Casa Sagrada on Sundays, or guides the dancers in the *danza del torito* (dance of the little bull), a traditional dance-drama performed in public areas during festival week. Unique to the Q'anjob'al area, and particularly Santa Eulalia, however, is the use of the marimba orquesta to play *sones* at social dances, rather than pan-Latin dance genres. At Q'anjob'al social dances, the marimba orquesta is not set up in the typical Ladino style, with brass instruments, conga drums, and other Caribbean-inspired instruments. Instead, the Q'anjob'al marimba orquesta normally features only the marimba doble, a drum set, an electric bass, and an electric keyboard. I will refer to this particular instrumentation as the *marimba orquesta electrónica*. Of the *sones* I heard in Q'anjob'al contexts—ritual, traditional, and social—I found these characteristics in common:

- Harmonic progression: Combination of I, V⁷, IV (primera, segunda, tercera).
- Phrasing: Usually four or five measures per phrase, with two phrases per section.
- Form: ||: AA BB :|| ||: AA BB :|| (circular, alternating between upper-voice marimba part (*tiple*) improvisation on melody and keyboard improvisation on melody).
- Melodic contour: A-theme: sweeping stepwise up, stays in high pitch for a measure, descends in terraced sequences. B-theme: variation of terraced descent.

⁷ The *marimba orquesta* refers to a style of marimba ensemble that augments the classical two-piece chromatic marimba with brass and electric instruments reminiscent of *merengue* or *salsa* band orchestration. This includes any combination of the following: a drum set, an electric bass, a *güira*, two or more saxophones, and often trumpets and a keyboardist as well. This arrangement is typically associated with Ladino parties and gatherings, though they are becoming more and more popular at Mayan saints-day festivals in Guatemala.

Son para Arrancar la Fiesta

Traditional

♩ = 50 bpm

Piano

Dance: Harmony: I R IV l L r R l L r R

Pno.

Pno.

The image shows a musical score for the song "Son para Arrancar la Fiesta". It consists of three systems of music. The first system is labeled "Piano" and includes a tempo marking of "♩ = 50 bpm". Below the piano part, there are dance and harmony instructions: "Dance: I R IV l L r R l L r R" and "Harmony: I R IV". The second and third systems are labeled "Pno." and contain two piano parts. The notes in the score are color-coded: black, red, green, and blue. The score is marked as "Traditional" in the top right corner.

Figure 1-4: "Son para Arrancar la Fiesta," a song often used to start the dancing at a social event. Different marimba parts are indicated in different colors. Black: *primera voz*, red: *segunda voz*, green: *centro* (played with two mallets in right hand), blue: *bajo* (also two mallets in right hand). (Performed by Virves Kwin García, transcribed by author.)

Above is a transcription of the son that is often played first at Q'anjob'al social events. Each color indicates a different "voice" or part. In a seven-person marimba doble set-up, four people play on the larger *marimba bajo* and three play on the smaller *marimba tenor*. On the marimba bajo, one person plays the *bajo* part at the very left end of the marimba (from the point of view of the person standing *behind* the marimba—in the diagram below it will be to the far right). To their right will be the *centro*, and to the right of the centro, two musicians playing the

primera voz (first voice – melody) in octaves. The *tiplero* is the musician who plays the highest octave,⁸ also called the piccolo, and is usually the one who will switch back and forth between the marimba and the keyboard. The marimba tenor sits to the right of the marimba bajo, usually at an angle so the players can all see each other. On the marimba tenor starting from the left will be another person playing *primera voz* (1a bajo), and the two playing on the right-hand side of the marimba tenor play *segunda voz* an octave apart (2a *pícolo* and 2a). The register of the *primera bajo* on the marimba tenor is lower than the *primera voz* on the marimba bajo. Similarly, the two *segunda* voices fall in between the *primera* and the *primera pícolo*. Thus, though the positions of the musicians are B – C – 1a – 1a *pícolo* – 1a bajo – 2a – 2a *pícolo*; the order in terms of register is B – C – 1a bajo – 1a – 2a – 1a *pícolo* – 2a *pícolo*.

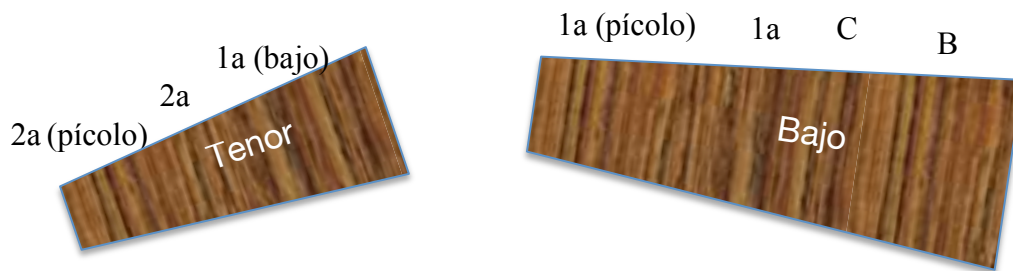


Figure 1-5: Diagram of marimba setup and player positions.

There are, of course variations to this orchestration. As you can see in Figure 1-5, sometimes only five musicians play the instrument if there is lack of funding or if musicians are unavailable. The band will repeat the song form, alternating between the full marimba troupe playing for one pass-through, and then the *tiplero* switching to keyboard when the form is repeated, while the other marimbists (except *centro* and *bajo*) rest. The drum set and electric bass play throughout the entire cycle. This general circular form will be repeated until the leader decides it is time to

⁸ In my marimba lessons and observations of group rehearsals, I often heard Maya musicians refer to the pitches as *más agudo* (sharp, acute) or *más grave* (deep), rather than *más alto* (higher) or *más bajo* (lower).

stop (when dancers have completed at least two turns around the circle, or if it's a small venue, around seven minutes), at which point, he will indicate with a nod of his head, a slight movement of the mallet, or just a look, that they should bring the last measure to a cadence.

Dancing the Son

The marimba musicians pay close attention to the dancers as they circle around in front of the marimba band. Q'anjob'al social dances for *sones* involve group movement in a large circle, two abreast, dancing around the perimeter of the circle in counter-clockwise direction



Figure 1-6: Q'anjob'al Marimba group Princesa Maya at the celebration of the saint's day for the town of San Sebastián Coatlán. (Photo by author, January 21, 2014.)

(though often some couples break into the middle of the circle to dance while facing each other).

The men dance on the inside of the circle,⁹ with hands behind their backs, resting together around the coccyx so that the upper body is bent slightly forward in a bow. The women have their hands at their sides or lightly holding the sides of their skirts, and sway side to side like a bell (or like a quetzal bird perching on a branch, as someone once suggested to me). Both engage

⁹ In Soloma, the men dance on the outside.

in a smooth, somewhat bouncing step where the outside (right) foot steps forward and out and then the left follows, resting briefly to allow the dancer to shift her weight. Then the left foot steps forward toward the inside of the circle, and the right foot follows, again resting briefly while the dancer shifts her weight. The rhythm of the dancers' steps aligns with the 3/4 iteration of the son meter. In Figure 1-4, I have indicated where the leading step takes place with a capital letter (R or L for right or left foot) on the dominant, forward-moving step, and a lower-case letter on the following step. Here, the pattern of the steps, which is in a duple meter (R l, L r), coincides with the beats of the bajo, electric bass, and drums playing the triple meter, adding yet another layer to the polymetric feel.¹⁰ **[Video example 01.01 shows an example of the Marimba Princesa Maya with the marimba orquesta electrónica set-up, and the son dance accompanying the music. (Footage taken by author, September 27, 2014).]** The connection created among the dancers, and between the musicians and dancers, helps to cement feelings of belonging and identity to the location where they dance the son. I theorize this process below and explain how the son also becomes a symbol for the Q'anjob'al conception of natural order.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN PLACE-MAKING

Identity and Place

The physical proximity of people within a bounded municipality creates the conditions for forming what Brubaker and Cooper call "groupness"—that is, "the emotionally laden sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded group" (2005:75). Groupness is distinct from what they define as commonality—the sharing of some common attribute—and connectedness—the relational ties that link people. Groupness usually necessitates commonality and connectedness,

¹⁰ Thanks to Taña Barajas, who helped me identify the pattern of the steps in relation to the 3/4 meter.

but must also be supplemented by a *feeling* of belonging together, "involving both a felt solidarity or oneness with fellow group members and a felt difference from or even antipathy to specified outsiders" (ibid.). Similarly, Manuel Castells acknowledges that local environments *per se* do not create collective allegiance, yet people "tend to cluster in community organizations that, over time, generate a feeling of belonging, and ultimately, in many cases, a communal, cultural identity" (1997:60). How is this feeling of belonging generated, and why does the natural environment matter? Henri Lefebvre believes that relation between natural spaces and meaningful places lies in the equation of nature with "absolute space," or space that has the least amount of meddling by greedy humans. According to Lefebvre, absolute space "was made up of fragments of nature located at sites which were chosen for their intrinsic qualities (cave, mountaintop, spring, river), but whose very consecration ended up by stripping them of their natural characteristics and uniqueness" ([1974] 1991:48). Nature then, represents that raw material perceived as important and thus made into meaningful symbols. Whereas Lefebvre mourns the "defeat" of nature and its inevitable "voidance and destruction" (ibid.:31), the Q'anjob'ales do not see this as inevitable at all, and much of their identity discourse revolves around continued protection of Xal Tx'otx' (Mother Earth).

In order to consider the various uses of music and dance to create meaning from the environment, I start with Karin Aguilar-San Juan's distinction of three place-making activities and her conceptualization of the difference between space and place. "I distinguish between 'space,'" she writes, "as a broad gesture to 'homo geographicus' or to a more specific conceptual, analytical, or absolute category; and 'place,' a term that signifies the particularization of space through the attachment of social purpose, meanings, histories, or identities" (2005:39).

Connecting this definition to Lefebvre's and Soja's assertions about social space, I have proposed

that the making of place arises from the dialectical relationship between perceived space ("homo geographicus") and conceived space ("conceptual, analytical, or absolute category") through emotionally meaningful events. Thus, in what follows, I consider the interaction of perceived space with conceived space in the production of *places* that are cemented through emotionally connected elements such as "social purpose, meanings, histories, or identities" into certain geographical locations. Place is made, explains Aguilar-San Juan, in three main activities. These are territorializing, symbolizing, and regulating. After explaining each of these activities in general Q'anjob'al interaction with the natural environment, I will then explore how they employ music and dance specifically.

Territorializing

When "territorializing," Aguilar-San Juan explains, communities "extract structure and identity out of the surrounding physical environment" (2005:41). In this process, communities make meaning through routine social interaction around aspects of the natural or built environment. Thus, territorializing is most closely related to the realization of perceived space. Aguilar-San Juan draws from Anthony Giddens's theorization of "regionalization," which he describes as "the zoning of time-space in relation to routinised social practices" (1985:272). These regions, according to Giddens, are fundamentally time-based divisions of "locales," or "the use of space to provide the *settings* of interaction" (ibid.:271, emphasis in original). Thus, regions (what Aguilar-San Juan would call places) are established through repeated social interactions in certain spaces and at certain times (chronotopes). Aguilar-San Juan adapts this analysis to a community-based conception of the creation of social meaning, considering territorialization the establishment of *community* meaning or identity in a certain chronotope.

According to Giddens, the meaning of a region, or territory, to a social group is greater the more frequently it is occupied. (i.e. the more time that is spent in that space).

The concept of territorializing implies that space does not come *a priori* with meaning. In order to "extract" meaning out of it, a physical space must fit within a cultural conception that gives it the potential for meaning (hence the dialectical relationship). Thus, a certain mountain peak in Santa Eulalia might be territorialized differently by different cultural conceptions. Whereas the Q'anjob'al perception of mountains is influenced by their cultural conception as beings or as containing certain energetic potential, the Guatemalan government perception of the mountain is influenced by its potential for producing valuable minerals. Putting aside for the moment the power dynamics of regulating, we can see that certain *spaces* can constitute multiple "territories" in different chronotopes. The Q'anjob'al come from a long history of Mayan practices of territorializing, which draw heavily from natural elements of perceived space.

Classic-Period Civic Organization

As Wendy Ashmore has observed, Classic-period (~200–1,000 CE) Mayan settlements were influenced by and integrated into the natural landscape (2004). The general civic structure was designed around a three-tiered understanding of cosmic order: the watery underworld is home to supernatural beings as well as the origin of people, who emerged from caves to inhabit the middle world, the land floating on top of the underworld. The third tier—the celestial domain—is home to supernatural beings: to *El Ajaw*, or creator, and to the stars, which dictate agricultural and historical perceptions of time. This conceptualization of cosmic order helps to explain why settlements in the highlands were built in relation to local hills that contained caves, natural settings in which the underworld, the middle world, and the celestial world are closest together. In the flat lowlands, people built pyramids to serve as hills, and sanctified them by

burying kings underneath in tombs that acted as caves (ibid.). Of course, highland Mesoamerican settlements also built smaller pyramids, which tended to be at the top of hills with civic settlements extending down the sides of the hills, forming a parallel between altitude of domicile and position in social hierarchy (Robin 2004). This kind of social organization reveals the role of perceived space in influencing the cultural construction of conceived space, the built environment being designed to emulate the natural environment, not to conquer it.

Post-Classic Civic Organization

After the decline of Classic-period, lowland settlements like Tikal and Coban, populations in what is now the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico, saw a surge in new dynastic centers such as Chichén Itzá and Tulum. The highland Maya migrated and eventually split into numerous separate nations where languages and cultural practices changed, but religious and cultural rituals kept central values and scientific and historical knowledge largely intact for centuries. Around the tenth and eleventh centuries, lowland Mayan groups in the Yucatán Peninsula joined and cohabited with Olmec people living on the coast of what is now Veracruz and Tabasco, as well as with migrants from central Mexico—those called *Yaquís*¹¹ by the authors of the *Pop Wuj*¹² (K'iche' People and Recinos [1701] 1947:235)—to form the K'iche' people, who dominated Post-Classic Mayan civilization.¹³ While the Post-Classic Maya divided into

¹¹ As Adrián Recinos clarifies in his translation of the *Pop Wuj*, "Yaquí" did not refer specifically to the Yoeme people who currently live in Sonora and the Southwestern United States, but rather served as a catch-all term for those that others have called "Toltecs" or "Chichimecs."

¹² Los-Angeles-based Maya scholars Virves Kwin García and Salvador Zacarías urged me to follow the translation "*Pop Wuj*" rather than "*Popol Vuh*," explaining that the latter is a mistranslation of what in the K'iche' language means "book of the people" (K'iche' People and Chávez [1701] 2001).

¹³ Various Mayan languages and groups developed in the Yucatán settlements for centuries before migrating southwest into the interior of what is now Guatemala. According to the *Pop Wuj*, the various ethno-linguistic groups related to the K'iche' had already separated before they left the Yucatán. It mentions that the other "*tribus*" identified as the Kakchiquel, Tzutuhil, Achí, Pokomchí and Mam traveled with them, and they all grouped

smaller groups whose architectural creations have not lasted as long as some of the Classic-era settlements to which tourists flock, they were still founded around the same concept of connecting the underworld, the "face of the earth," and the heavens. My fieldwork with the Pokomchí in San Cristobal, Alta Verapaz, the Achí in Rabinal, and the Q'anjob'al in Huehuetenango confirms that hills and caves are reserved as the most sacred centers of Mayan cosmology, and still play an essential part in various rituals.

Q'anjob'al Settlements

Q'anjob'alan territory before colonization encompassed the entire expanse of the Cuchumatanes, to the north of the high mountain plateau that currently contains the Mam-Mayan towns of Paquix and Todos Santos (see Figure 1-8 for map). The entry into Q'anjob'alan land is marked by a pair of prominent rock formations called Kab' Tzin (Mam: "two rocks") on either



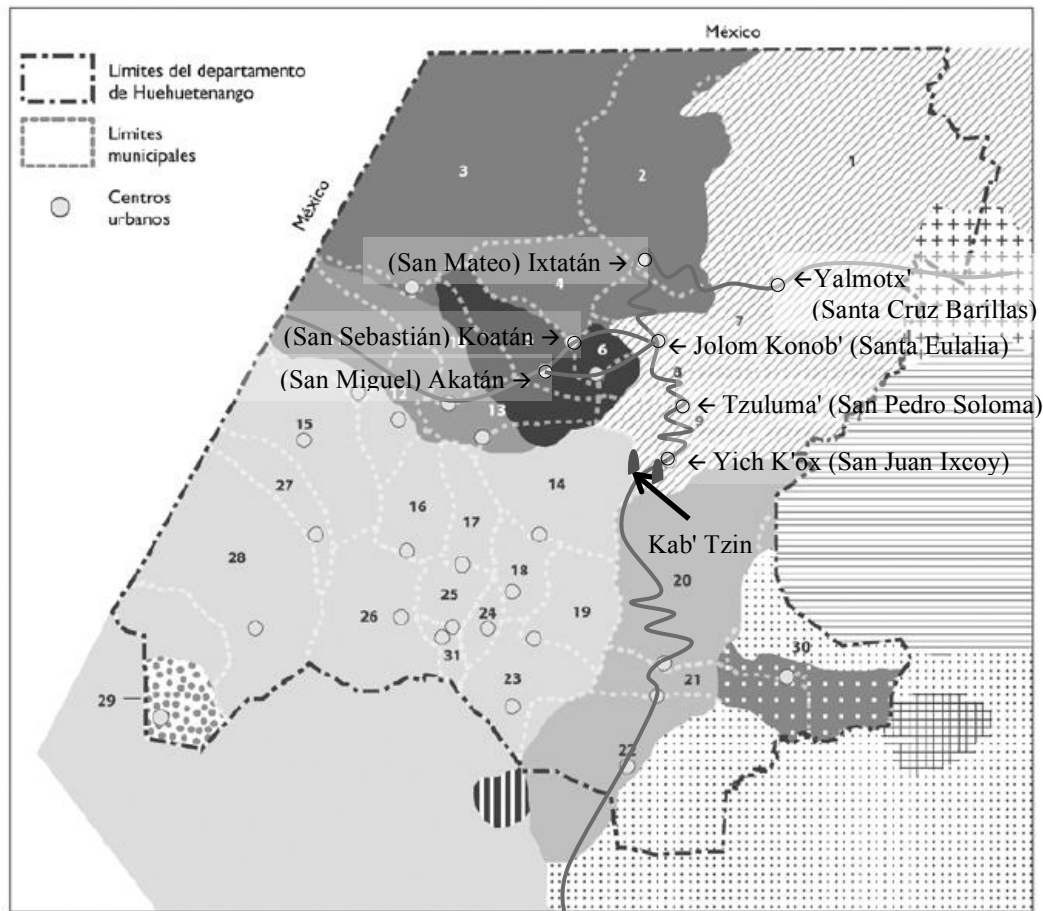
Figure 1-7: (above) One of the two rocks that comprise Kab' Tzin, the gateway to Q'anjob'al territory, with the Cuchumatanes range stretching out the north behind it. (Photo by Clima de Guatemala.)

(right) The second rock, to the right of the road and higher up than the first—taken from a different angle to capture its imposing presence. (Photo by author, August 04, 2016.)



together to watch the rising of the sun and the dawning of the era of men (K'iche' People and Recinos [1701] 1947). Importantly, the Q'anjob'al were *not* among this wave of migrants; they had already inhabited the area of the Cuchumatán Mountains a few thousand years before.

Mapa 1. Mapa etnolingüístico de Huehuetenango



Grupos étnico-lingüísticos



- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Barillas (Q'anjob'al) | 12. San Antonio Huista (Popti') | 23. Santa Bárbara |
| 2. San Mateo Ixtatán (Chuj) | 13. Concepción Huista (Popti') | 24. San Rafael Petzal |
| 3. Nentón (Chuj) | 14. Todos Santos Cuchumatán | 25. Colotenango |
| 4. San Sebastián Coatán (Chuj) | 15. La Democracia | 26. San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán |
| 5. San Miguel Acatán (Akateko) | 16. San Pedro Necta | 27. La Libertad |
| 6. San Rafael La Independencia (Akateko) | 17. Santiago Chimaltenango | 28. Culico |
| 7. Santa Eulalia (Q'anjob'al) | 18. San Juan Atitán | 29. Tectitán |
| 8. Soloma (Q'anjob'al) | 19. San Sebastián Huehuetenango | 30. Aguacatán |
| 9. San Juan Ixcóy (Q'anjob'al) | 20. Chiantía | 31. San Gaspar Ixchil |
| 10. Jacaltenango (Popti') | 21. Huehuetenango | |
| 11. Santa Ana Huista (Popti') | 22. Malacatancito | |

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Figure 1-8: Ethno linguistic map of the department of Huehuetenango. (Based on map from Camus 2012:77, with author's added drawings.)

side of a winding mountain road that descends from the plateau into the valley of Yich K'ox before climbing and descending again into the successive valleys housing Tzuluma', Jolom Konob', Ixtatán, and Yalmotx'. Interestingly, Jolom Konob' (Santa Eulalia) and Ixtatán ("head" of the Chuj population) are the only two towns that are on top of a peak instead of in a valley.

Kab' Tzin (Figure 1-7) is considered one of the five natural altars in Yich K'ox, to which spiritual pilgrimages are made. In Jolom Konob', one of the most prominent spiritual landmarks is the mountain called Yaxkalamte', which juts out prominently from the mountain range on the eastern horizon of the central town, providing a visual reference point that defines the landscape (Figure 1-9). The Jolom Konob' spiritual leaders make periodic pilgrimages to Yaxkalamte'; as



Figure 1-9: The central town of Santa Eulalia, with the village of Paikonob' in the background and Yaxkalamte' rising to ~9,000 ft. in the very back. (Photo by author, February 12, 2015.)

the highest point in the region, it is considered a propitious spot for venerating the heavens and Ajaw. Caves are the most sacred spaces in the Q'anjob'alan conception of natural formations.

The Calvario Church (pictured in Figure 1-9 to the very left) sits at the edge of a cliff. Behind the church, winding down the face of the cliff is the entrance to Yalan Na' (Q': below the house), a

cave that is closed to all but the most experienced spiritual authorities (not in Catholic theology, but in Mayan *costumbre*¹⁴).

Fundamentally different from the capitalist approach to the natural environment as a "spatially diversified bundle of 'natural' resources waiting to be discovered, exploited and transformed into systems of production of various sorts" (Harvey 2001:227), the Q'anjob'al and other Mayan groups view the land as a living being. Thus perceived, natural space informs culturally conceived space. In Q'anjob'al cosmology, Ajaw, (the Creator) is represented by three main entities: K'u (Sun), Aq'b'al (Night), and Ora (Time), with K'u being the center of the solar system and the source of illumination; Aq'b'al in charge of rest, darkness, and night time; and Ora in charge of the succession of time "without beginning and without end" (Asociación Maya-Q'anjob'al Eulalense 1995:44). At a lower order, there are energies that emanate from natural phenomena: Txoj (altars), Tenam (trees), Witz' (hills), and Ak'al (land in general) (ibid.:46; with help from Virves Kwin García and Salvador Zacarias in translation and interpretation).

Q'anjob'al relation to the natural environment exemplifies what David Harvey calls "local knowledges," or "the construction of symbolic meanings and the development of capacities to represent and 'read' the landscape and its signs effectively." The nature of such knowledges, he observes, varies greatly depending on local epistemological tools such as technologies, social forms, beliefs, and cultural practices (2001:226–227). For the Q'anjob'al and other Mayan groups, one of the most effective "tools" for reading the landscape is sound.

¹⁴ The Maya community leaders with whom I have worked emphasize that Mayan rituals and practices are not a religion, but rather a science. For this reason, they call Mayan spiritual practices *costumbre*, or "custom."

Sonic Territorializing

In Steven Feld's theorization of the "acoustemology of place," he suggests that "local conditions of acoustic sensation, knowledge, and imagination" become "embodied in a culturally particular sense of place" (1996:91). "Space indexes the distribution of sounds," he argues, as they are sensed "as connecting points up and down, in and out, echo and reverb, point-source and diffuse" (ibid.:97–98). Drawing from Aguilar-San Juan's proposal that territorializing "extracts" unity and meaning from the physical environment (though perhaps Harvey's metaphor, "reads," is more apt), I propose that sonic territorializing employs the same acts of place-making through routine moments of social meaning making, but with different conceptualizations of the boundaries of physical space. Several examples point to a Mayan tradition and conception of space corresponding not only to the possibilities of the movement of people, but also to the possibilities of the movement of sound. As Brandon LaBelle observes, "sound disregards the particular visual and material delineations of spatial arrangements, displacing and replacing the lines between inside and out, above from below . . . It's a sphere without fixed boundaries, space made by the thing itself, not space containing a thing" (2010:xxi). In Santa Eulalia, the folds of multiple hills create acoustic zones, which both amplify and contain "sonic parcels." People claim these spaces through sonic broadcasting of social occurrences. The announcement of public processions, for example, is done through homemade bombs set off periodically at various places along the procession route. What I jokingly call "Guatemalan twitter," these bombs announce to the community that something important is happening, and sonically locate the particular place of importance at that time. Another example is the interesting practice of social broadcasting of both public *and* private parties. A gathering is not important unless a set of concert speakers is rented and set up on top of the roof, or around the outside of the house, in

order to amplify outward the goings-on inside. Thus, early morning birthday serenades, late night wedding celebrations, or funeral wakes are not simply the business of the attendees, but also of anybody within earshot of the highly amplified proceedings. Thus, much as the Bosavi sense of place is based on the way that sound interacts with trees, rushes past in flowing rivers, and reverberates off of rocks (Feld 1996), the Q'anjob'al sense of place comes from a combination mountain top "broadcasting," and sonic "weaving" as sounds reverberate in valleys, disappear around bends, and overlap in the town square.

Symbolizing

If territorializing is reading meaning from the environment through social interaction, symbolizing is re-assigning a particular meaning to a space. "Symbolizing," explains Aguilar-San Juan, "is the act or process of embedding symbolic or mythical value in place. Symbolizing place enables the concretization of group identity in material form; for example, a monument carves an idea or a myth into place" (2005:42). If territorializing is related to the reading of perceived space, symbolizing relates to the grounding of conceived space. In Santa Eulalia, a clear example might be the statue of a marimba in the central square with the words "Jolom Konob': the cradle of the marimba" etched into it, thus framing anybody who is speaking on the central podium with a symbol of Santa Eulalia's importance in the world (providing marimbas and musicians).

Symbolizing can be seen in archaeological evidence from Classic and Post-classic Mayan structures as well. In many Mesoamerican civic centers of this period, architecture was often designed to create a central "stage" from which the king could "perform" community-defining rituals. Also called *Ajaw*, the king was considered the connecting point between the underworld, the middle world, and the celestial world, and used his position and knowledge to demonstrate an

advanced understanding of natural phenomena, cosmic order, and social order. As Arthur A. Joyce writes about Monte Alban, a central Zapotec administrative center cum *axis-mundi* in the late formative period (B.C. 100–C.E. 200),

Emotionally charged rituals linked people's identities to the symbolism of Monte Alban as embodied in its sacred geography, art, and nobility, creating a new corporate identity. The significance of the Main Plaza complex was not just that it reflected a new form of political organization. The plaza was part of the structural setting by which social practices gained their vitality; it was a product of new practices, but in turn shaped the dispositions of people who participated in its ceremonies or looked up at it from the valley floor in awe or fear. (2004:213)

So, the Mesoamerican central plaza was a symbol of the natural order of the underworld, middle world, and heavens. In an analogous way, Music and dance in Q'anjob'al culture serve as performative symbols that ground cosmovision into physical location.

Hometown Identities

Currently in Guatemala, the celebration of the town's patron saint at community-wide processions, fair festivities, and public dances is another prominent act of symbolizing. Veneration of Santa Eulalia helps to solidify a sense of intercultural, hometown identity across ethnic differences. In Santa Eulalia, the week leading up to February 12 (Saint Eulalia's day) is filled with public celebrations. Nightly marimba concerts are held in the municipal salon, and marimba groups play at the election of the *Xhumak'il Jolom Konob'* (lit. "Flower of Santa Eulalia"—the female who acts as a cultural ambassador of Q'anjob'al culture from Santa Eulalia for the year). In the various processions, marimba groups will be stationed at corners along the procession route to "cheer on" the procession of *La Virgen de Santa Eulalia* through the streets. Also, presentations of the traditional *Baile del Torito* take place daily in the central square. In each of these places, Maya and Ladino citizens share access to the central church, the central plaza, and central streets for processions. While ethnic divisions exist within the manner in

which the patron saint is celebrated, she acts as a symbol for the hometown, which constitutes one of the most important community-forming features for Guatemalans.

The Marimba and its Music as Symbols

Several physical monuments attach social meaning to certain locations in Santa Eulalia: Other than the statue of the marimba and the image of the *Virgen*, there is the centrally prominent Cathedral, and the installation of the Mayan Cross¹⁵ in sacred places. In addition, musical performance and dance constitute ephemeral monuments that consecrate the location in which they are performed. On one hand, the marimba itself acts as a visual symbol, and on the other, the musical performance symbolizes deeper cosmological beliefs rooted in the Q'anjob'al worldview. First, as a visual symbol, the form of the instrument itself represents cycles and stages of life. Because the keys are graded from longer to shorter to create the necessary physical properties to sound pitches from lower to higher, certain "positions" on the marimba represent both the cycle of the seasons (and various cycles of calendric time), as well as the human life cycle. As Virves explained to participants at one of the Q'anjob'alan cultural meetings in Los Angeles, the small keys represent infancy, the slightly larger keys represent adolescence, the medium bass keys represent adulthood, and the longest, lowest keys represent old age and wisdom. Additionally, as described above, the marimba symbolizes human connection to flora and fauna. The four legs of the marimba serve to index the four legs of the deer, which in turn symbolize the four "pillars" of the world. Lastly, the wooden keys and body of the marimba index the trees from which they are cut. Also mentioned earlier, the keys are considered to

¹⁵ The Mayan Cross (*Cham Kurus*) is different from the Christian cross. Whereas the latter features the horizontal line above the center of the vertical line (bespeaking the form of Christ's crucified body), the Mayan Cross is symmetrical on all sides. It represents the four corners of the world and is often treated as a spiritual being (Virvez and Un Comité de Vecinos 1969; Salvador Zacarias personal communication, May 27, 2016).

maintain the "soul" of the wood from which they came, and musicians often refer to them to as "singing wood" or "crying wood."

In its periodic performance, marimba music also symbolically connects important life events to the natural and spiritual entities in the material surroundings. For example, as Lwin Palas, spiritual leader and musician for rituals at the Casa Sagrada, explains, violin trio music serves during funeral processions to guide the soul of the deceased to Heaven (Palas 2015). The violin trio often accompanies solemn and sacred events and evokes feelings of sadness and pensiveness (ibid.) Though violin trio music also accompanies some social dances, marimba music is usually heard at more upbeat celebrations, such as the blessing of a new house. As Palas explains, "the reason we play the marimba [for these events] is to summon the spirits, to summon the spirit of the Heavens, the spirit of Time . . . It's not just to have a song, just to have a dance. There's a bigger meaning that we must learn about" (Palas 2015).¹⁶

In addition to musical connections to natural/spiritual forces, marimba music creates emotional connections between people. Playing in a marimba group serves as an allegory for human connection to community, family, nature, the seasons, and the life cycle. Community connection is achieved not only by the musicians working in harmony to play the instrument (unlike the connection between a typical band, in a marimba ensemble three to seven musicians are needed to play one instrument), but also through the connection of the dancers to each other, and the connection of the dancers to the musicians.

These interpersonal connections forged in the circular dancing of the son reference creation legends from the *Pop Wuj*. When anthropologist Oliver La Farge visited Santa Eulalia in

¹⁶ "Tzet yuj xan tol ay te' son, aj juntzan ti ach toq'onhay juntzan yesalil, aj juntzan ti ach toq'onhay yesalil kan mundo, aj juntzan ti ach toq'onhay yesalil ko ora . . . ay miman yelapnoq' tach ko kuyu" (Thanks to Andres Pedro and Juan Francisco for aiding me with the translation).

1932, he recorded many myths and legends of the area, including this localized version of the creation of humanity, stating that the creator or "former" of the world (variably called Cristo or Nuestro Señor in Spanish, Junajaw in Q'anjob'al) originally created humanity for the purpose of taking part in the Big Dance (*Miman Kanal* in Q'anjob'al). Several versions of the myth La Farge calls "Genesis" cite the *Miman Kanal* as the beginning of humans on the earth. The following excerpt was recorded by La Farge as told by one of his collaborators:

Then, "Mama," said Our Lord, "I am going to dance to God."

"Just Thou?"

"Yes."

And He Himself was making the costumes, and forming people—with earth or wood or whatever, I don't know. And He made the instruments, the *tunkul*, *marimba*, drums, *chirimiyas*, and the trumpet, such as we have in the church. He was ahead of His brothers, as it was He who wished to make Himself God.

When his brothers heard the music being played, they went to see. . . . He was dancing among the people, and they looked for him there. It was the *miman kanal*, and it came out [started] at midnight, hence our dances come out at midnight. (translated from Q'anjob'al and Spanish to English by Oliver La Farge 1947:51–52).

Though La Farge believes that the *Miman Kanal* refers a dance-drama popular in the Q'anjob'alan area called the "*Baile de Cortés*," a contemporary Q'anjob'al scholar (Salvador Zacarias) in Los Angeles clarifies that it is not the *Baile de Cortés*, but rather the social dance that has taken place at every Q'anjob'al event throughout the thousands of years of their existence. It is the dance in a counter-clockwise circle in front of the *marimba* that I described above—the one that I saw and participated in many times throughout my three years of communion with Q'anjob'al populations in Guatemala and Los Angeles.

The circular son dance may seem boring and simple to the outside observer—the pairs dance side-by-side and they do not touch, so there is little chance for flirtation. The steps are

slow and stately, and the music in general is very repetitive. But I believe that the repetitive nature of the dance serves to reinforce its very function, which is to solidify (through repetition) the reproduction of community identity; the dance of the creation of humanity is the same dance that creates community every time it is performed. Thomas Turino writes about a similar process in Peruvian Aymara migrant dances in Lima:

Music and dance bring the state of being in sync—of being together—to a heightened level of explicitness. With each repetition of a piece in Conima, the possibility of 'being in sync' is extended and the social union is intensified, contributing to an affective intensity. In such contexts, extended repetition does not lead to boredom; it is the basis of aesthetic power. . . . During special moments, culturally specific rhythms and forms of movement are not merely semiotic expressions of community and identity; rather, *they become their actual realization*. (Turino 1993:111, emphasis in original).

Similarly, people "become Q'anjob'al" through participating in these social dances. The dance not only recalls the myth of Junajaw's creation of humanity; it also references cosmic order. "As our grandmothers remind us," Virves sings in one of his compositions for marimba, "*Chon kanalwi ko toj ko sataq/ Kax chi joyon tzalok'ulal/ Suytoq ti' je axka yib'an q'inal/ Kay chi yun b'eyik' koq'inal* (We dance moving forward/ and encircling happiness/ we circle like the earth around the sun/ This is the rhythm of our life)" (García 2014, this is the song in the listening sample from Chapter 5). Thus, to many Q'anjob'ales, the sound of the son and the dances that accompany it reference concepts of Mayan cosmology, community connectivity, and a reminder of the thousands of years of Mayan presence in the Cuchumatán Mountains.

Regulating

The third element of place-making according to Aguilar-San Juan, involves the maintenance of established territories. The use of music and sound in the regulation of place appears in several historical sources, documenting its use in several Mayan groups throughout a

long period of time. Dances are often depicted as part of war and celebration of victory in Mayan glyphs. Archaeological evidence of these music and dance practices ranges from codices to preserved murals such as that at the Bonampak site in Chiapas, Mexico (see Figure 1-10). The



Figure 1-10: Musicians commemorating Yaxchilan's takeover of Bonampak. Bonampak ruins, Chiapas, MX. (Image from Mesoamerican Research Center - <http://www.marc.ucsb.edu>.)

four walls and ceiling of several enclosed rooms depict musicians using turtle shells played with antlers, long trumpets, and a wooden slit drum, called a *tun* or *tunkul* by Mayas who still play the instrument today. These murals commemorate the takeover of Bonampak by the king of the neighboring kingdom of Yaxchilan, indicating that music marked the celebration of territorial takeover.

In addition to archaeological evidence, accounts from the first Spanish settlers in Guatemala confirm the prevalence of music in adversarial encounters. Friar Bartolome de las Casas, who recorded many of his observations throughout the first thirty years of Spanish rule, writes of one of the first interactions between conqueror Pedro de Alvarado and the K'iche' king, Qu'q'umatz': "Arriving at the Kingdom of Guatemala [*sic*] they [the Spanish] entered with a great

massacre, but nonetheless he [the K'iche' king] came to receive them with processions including trumpets and kettledrums and many festivities, the leader and other noble men of the City of Utatlán, head of the entire Kingdom" (de las Casas 1552:45, author's translation from Spanish). This account indicates that for the K'iche', musical processions marked defeat as well as victory in territorial wars.

Additionally, literary historical sources indicate a history of regulating boundaries through sound. For example, in the *Danza del Rabinal Achi*, a prehispanic historical dance-drama, two warrior-princes disputing territory for their kingdoms describe the limits of their policed boundaries as defined by the acoustic reach of sound. The K'iche' warrior tells of his efforts to define and regulate the territory of the kingdom:

I came to give my first challenge
my first cry,
In front of the place called Cholo-chik Chaj
Cholo-chik Jyub.
Later, returning from there,
I came again to give for a second time my challenge
my shout,
in Paraweno
Chi Kabraqan . . .
Later, returning from there,
I came to give, again, for the third time my challenge
my yell,
At the place called Pan Ch'alib...
Later, returning from there,
I came to give, finally, a fourth time my challenge
my yell,
At the place called Xol Chaqaj...
It was from there that I heard, the drums of blood
the trumpets of blood, . . .
Amplified by the echo of the sky
Amplified by the echo of the earth. (Pérez [1913] 2000)

This passage from the text of the *Rabinal Achi* indicates a history of regulating boundaries through sound. The process of regulating place is often the same process in which place-based

group identity forms ethnic boundaries. Ethnicity arises when belonging to place is contested, and when lineage must be evoked to support claims to a particular space.

ETHNIC BOUNDARIES AND CONFLICTS OF PLACE

The most devastating conflict in cultural conceptions of place for the Q'anjob'alans was the arrival of the Spanish, who saw the Cuchumatanes as a deposit of resources to be farmed, mined, and converted to wealth through the slave labor of its inhabitants (who, according to the Spanish, were obviously of lower intelligence because they had not already done so themselves). This conflict of place is ongoing after more than five hundred years, and is the basis for the political struggles along ethnic lines that have mostly left Mayas disenfranchised, and forcefully deterritorialized from their *sense* of place, though they may *live* in the same space.

The Spanish Conquest and the Colonial Period

When Hernán Cortés sent his top soldier Pedro de Alvarado to expand the borders of Nueva España southward, the Classic Mayan kingdoms that thrived from 900 to around 1200 A.D. in the highlands had given way to more dispersed, smaller settlements of their descendants, who had established distinct languages and cultures. Alvarado, with the help of Tlaxcaltec soldiers from Mexico, successfully deceived the K'iche'-Maya and the Kakchiquel-Maya, pitting the dueling populations against each other to facilitate their submission. The rest of the Mayan settlements quickly followed. Varying levels of strictness in conversion tactics throughout New Spain led to variance in continued public practice of Mayan music and dance. In some

settlements, such as those closer to the newly established capital,¹⁷ Indigenous music and dance were outlawed, and thus relegated to private contexts. Other regions, such as the "Verapaces" (Alta and Baja Verapaz), are known for allowing a high level of continuation of Maya traditions integrated into Catholic rites. Records from this period (de las Casas 1552; Sapper 1985) show that marimba music, flute and drum playing, and masked dances were practiced throughout the country by all Maya populations, suggesting that much of this was carried on from the post-Classic period.

Spanish Geo-Political Organization

When Spaniards usurped Maya land as their own, they organized towns based on the Spanish-Moorish system, with a central square containing the religious and political power centers (the Cathedral and the municipal building). As is the case throughout Latin America, each town was named for a Catholic saint, and therein re-assigned a symbolic center that aligned with the physical center of the town. These towns were often superimposed on pre-existing Maya geo-political town systems; a second church called the *calvario* is found on top of a hill in almost every town in Guatemala. This is very likely the result of churches being built on top of the sacred hilltop sites discussed earlier. Thus, even though the central symbolic element binding the town together is a Catholic saint, rather than the God-King *Ajaw*, the importance of geographical surroundings in solidifying group-based local identity persists.

The Production of Ethnic Boundaries

In understanding how the binary separation between Ladino and Maya is constructed, I will review some prevailing sociological theories on the definition and construction of ethnic

¹⁷ First built on top of the ruins of the Kaqchikel city of Iximché (in western Guatemala, about ten miles east of Lake Atitlán), the capital was soon moved twenty miles southeast to what is now called La Antigua Guatemala (or Antigua for short). Antigua was the capital from 1527–1775.

groups and ethnic boundaries. The basic characteristic is the role that biology plays in their definition. Most sociologists agree that while ethnic groups are not biologically homogenous, it is important that these groups are *perceived to be* determined by biological factors (common ancestry or kinship) (Schermerhorn 1970; Weber [1922] 1978; Horowitz 1985; Cornell and Hartmann 1998). Stephen Cornell, Douglas Hartmann, and Donald Horowitz attribute this to a desire to view an ethnic group as a "family writ large." Max Weber argues that a natural instinct for exclusion of difference encourages people to form relatively hermetic cultures that then become biologically distinct. In other words, though Weber believes that social factors determine the composition of these "monopolistic cultures," and allow for some fluidity, their continued endogamy contributes to very real claims for common descent. Cornell and Hartmann, on the other hand, argue that there is very little genetic similarity within defined ethnic groups. Weber, Cornell and Hartmann, and Schermerhorn explicitly state the import of a perceived common descent in their definitions of ethnicity because they see it as something that is mostly defined internally, by the members of the ethnic groups themselves.

Donald Horowitz, Rogers Brubaker and James Rothschild, however, focus more on the ways in which ethnicity is defined externally—by people with political, social, or economic motivations for justifying certain treatment of an ethnic group. Brubaker takes the most radical position, arguing that ethnic "groups" don't actually exist, and that they are constructed by defined organizations with political agendas. Ethnicity, he argues, is simply a category into which anybody can be placed (or place themselves) at any given moment, but this is usually precipitated by an "event" causing the need for such categorization (2004). Both Brubaker and Rothschild see political ambition as the motivating factor behind the development of these events. As I alluded to in the Introduction, ethnic boundaries form through a mixture of external

and internal processes. These perspectives on the core essence of an ethnic group help structure how we think about Mayan identity formation in Guatemala. For example, the concept of Mayan identity was initially formed externally by Spaniards who needed to identify who should be subject to slavery and restricted from certain privileges. Recently, however, with the romanticism of Mayan culture, the Maya have organized to define their ethnic boundaries internally, deciding who qualifies to claim Indigenous identity and the cultural (if not economic) status that comes with it.

Guatemalan national identity in its own right is a complex construction. After centuries of privileging European culture and denying Indigenous influence, the national identity has been altered recently by the promotion of Mayan heritage. Despite the effort to include the Garinagu¹⁸ and Xinca¹⁹ in discussions of Guatemalan identity, pervading rhetoric revolves around the Ladino/Maya division. Though Ladinos are increasingly starting to take pride in the Indigenous part of their heritage, they are not allowed to freely claim Indigenous identity. Through the efforts of the Maya Movement (see Chapter 2), Mayas have been enacting what Sociologist Andreas Wimmer calls "transvaluation": the re-interpretation of stratified ethnic systems so that "the category of the excluded and despised comes to designate a chosen people, morally, intellectually and culturally superior to the dominant group" (2008:1037). Mayan ethnicity is thus a heavily guarded identity based on the provenance of a direct unbroken lineage leading back to the ancestors. Unlike Native American identity distinctions in the US (which often require least 25 percent Indigenous blood to be considered an enrolled tribal member), claiming

¹⁸ Garifuna-speaking people living on the Caribbean coast of Belize, Guatemala and Honduras. Descended from escaped slaves seeking refuge from indenture on the southern Caribbean islands, the Garifuna culture combines a mixture of Indigenous Arawak, Carib, African, and Guatemalan elements.

¹⁹ A non-Mayan Indigenous group with populations in southern Guatemala.

to be Maya in Guatemala seems to require 100 percent Indigenous blood, though, as I will show, certain cultural practices can provide evidence for a continued lineage even with mixed Maya-Ladino heritage.

Place and Lineage in Guatemala

While biological factors (lineage) are very important, language and cultural choices are also essential in forming Mayan identity and in drawing the distinction between Mayas and Ladinos. This is exemplified acutely by a conversation I had with a Pokomchí-Maya man while doing my fieldwork in San Cristóbal Verapaz, in the department of Alta Verapaz, Guatemala.

In San Cristóbal, there is one family in particular that actively negotiates the boundary between Maya and non-Maya. In this family, a Pokomchí woman married a British man whom she had met when he was running a non-profit that built schools in the area. Their children (four girls and one boy) represent a variety of phenotypes, some darker than others, and dress in both Ladino clothing (modern, factory-made) and Pokomchí *traje típico* (a particular style of woven skirt and *huipil*²⁰). They take an active role in the Pokomchí religious traditions and their parents have served important roles in the Pokomchí religious fraternities. I noticed, however, that when they competed in the local beauty pageants, as do many little girls all over Guatemala (see below), they competed in the Ladino pageant, called the *Señorita San Cristóbal* ("Miss San Cristóbal") rather than the Indigenous pageant, *Rixq'uun Kaj Koj* ("Queen of the Sacred Hill"). I confidentially asked a friend and member of the Pokomchí religious fraternity whether they would be allowed to compete in the Indigenous pageant and our conversation went something like this:

²⁰ a very detailed woven and embroidered top that has a square or rectangular form, with holes for the arms and head rather than fitted sleeves or collars.

"So could the Hooper girls compete in the *Rixq'uun Kaj Koj*?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"They don't have a Pokomchí last name."

"But their mom does."

"Yeah, but they don't speak Pokomchí."

"If they spoke Pokomchí and practiced the dances could they compete?"

"Yes, probably."

According to this dialogue, Pokomchí identity is first considered in biological terms—the last name indicates a connection to Pokomchí blood line (I'll avoid the discussion on matrilineal exclusion for the moment)—but when I pointed out that they're still technically "half Pokomchí," language and knowledge of cultural tradition was used as the determining factor. As I will discuss in more detail later, in addition to dress, musical practice also plays a significant role in defining Mayan identity.

Ethnicity and the Nation-State

The feeling of groupness, as Brubaker and Cooper explain, can exist even without the element of direct connectedness between people. In the case of nationalism they observe that what is originally an imposed commonality—citizenship—becomes groupness when nationalist movements inspire feelings of solidarity, and thus an "imagined" connectedness to all those who live within the national boundary. Benedict Anderson (1991) attributes the feeling of groupness in the first nationalist movements to dissemination of printed publications. Newspapers and other periodicals distributed within administrative boundaries reported "local" happenings with the intent to make all who received these materials feel that they were part of a certain shared story. Music, of course, also played an undeniably important role in nationalist movements around the world; radio airwaves and movie houses created symbolic connections where physical

connections were absent, convincing citizens of a shared essence or a common character that ended at national borders.

Anderson characterizes nationalism in Latin American countries as spearheaded by the elite creole classes—those of European blood who, being born in the New World, did not have the same access to the privileges afforded to their cousins born in the motherland. Thus, in their efforts to secede and assert their own power in new nations separated from the crown, these elite classes sought to create an identity different from the former European colonial one. Throughout Latin America, the symbolic materials for new Latin identities were appropriated from the cultural practices of the very Indigenous and African peoples they were simultaneously oppressing.

In Guatemala, this meant an exoticized borrowing of Indigenous practices, such as weaving patterns, sacred practices, and—most potently—marimba music. While at first the creole (Ladino) elites made sure to borrow carefully only those Mayan elements that could be used as "decorations" to more "civilized" European elements of culture, throughout the past one hundred years Mayan practices have become a much more valuable object of desire for Ladino culture. Anthropologist Charles Hale observes that "Indigenous culture has moved from becoming the subject of disdain to the subject of political recognition and desire" (Hale and Millamán 2006:283). Because Mayas are the majority in Guatemala, they are able to "police" the boundaries of appropriation to a certain extent—mostly through religious practices that exclude Ladinos—but symbols of national patrimony are mostly Ladinized versions of Mayan traditions,

such as the marimba, celebration of the quetzal bird, and the celebration of the thirteenth Baktun.²¹

Fredrik Barth's pivotal essay collection (1969) urged scholars to focus less on the cultural elements that members of an ethnic group express, and focus more on the specific traits that actors choose to differentiate—those "buttresses" holding up the walls. While the cultural "stuff" may be arbitrary in the construction of boundaries, I argue that it is still very important in forming the sense of belonging and connectedness that strengthens the desire to identify with a certain ethnic group. Marimba music is exceptionally important in these processes because it is the basis not only for the internal formation of Q'anjob'al cultural identification and belonging, but, as I will discuss further below, it is also one of the traits that Q'anjob'ales choose to reinforce the ethnic borders between themselves and Ladinos.

MARIMBA PERFORMANCE AND ETHNICITY

Mayan vs. Ladino Identity in Guatemalan Marimba Music

The typical Ladino Guatemalan marimba performance includes the big-band-influenced marimba orquesta.²² Mayan marimba groups, on the other hand, generally play the marimba sencilla (when playing for a Maya audience). This is what I have observed throughout six years of intermittent fieldwork in four different field sites, *except* in the Q'anjob'alan populations. In Q'anjob'alan areas, social dances and most life-cycle events (birthdays, first communions, weddings) feature the marimba doble in a stripped-down version of the marimba orquesta: the

²¹ This erroneous interpretation as the Maya "end of the world," conspicuously featured in the agenda of the Guatemalan Ministry of Culture and Sports, contributed in no small part to the spike in tourism as new-age pilgrims from around the world descended in droves on various Mayan archaeological sites in December of 2012.

²² See page 46 for explanation of *marimba orquesta*.

central piece is the marimba doble, accompanied by a rock-style drum set, an electric bass, and more recently, an electric keyboard with highly synthetic-sounding patches programmed for the keys. As the type of marimba used becomes an increasingly ambiguous indicator of ethnicity, Q'anjob'ales distinguish themselves primarily through difference in repertoire. As related to me by José Simón, a member of the Los Angeles youth marimba ensemble, Juventud Maya, "at the *pueblo fiestas* [Mayan-hometown-based celebrations], the marimba groups play mostly sones. That's what the people want. That's what they like to dance to. If the band starts to play a cumbia or something, people stop dancing" (personal communication to author, October 18, 2014). Because his Los-Angeles-based youth marimba group was contracted for "pueblo" events, as well as "Guatemalan" (Ladino) events, he had to know a wide array of *cumbias*, *merengues*, *salsa*, *paso doble*, and other popular dance songs. Figure 1-13 below is my transcription of a cumbia²³ taught to me by José. Marimbas are an essential element of both Ladino and Maya celebrations, but the separation between the musical traditions remains very distinct in terms of repertoire preferred, technique, and social function.

Marimba Music and Ethnic Differentiation in the Q'anjob'al Son

Music is used to express difference between ethnic groups in several ways: musical aesthetics, repertoire preferred, and social function. One of the more salient examples of how ethnicity is differentiated through music lies in explanations of how to play the marimba correctly, or musical aesthetics. Through taking marimba lessons and analyzing discourse about how to play properly, I have identified several themes pertaining to how Q'anjob'al Maya

²³ Originally an Afro-Cuban genre from the coasts of Colombia, cumbia music became popular throughout Latin America, and has increasingly dominated playlists and setlists from Chicago to Chile during the past 30 years. Many popular cumbia songs, and some original compositions, are arranged for Guatemalan ladino *marimba orquestas*.

musicians play marimba differently from Ladino musicians. These are concepts of musicality and repertoire choices.

Concepts of Musicality

The lack of importance of showy virtuosity in Q'anjob'al Maya marimba is evident in the approach to teaching beginners. During two months of lessons with two different members of a Ladino marimba ensemble, we focused alternately on learning melodies to cumbias and on technique. I was encouraged to learn the names of the notes and to practice the *tremolo* technique extensively. Because the marimba keys have a relatively short attack-decay pattern, a sustained sound can only be obtained by repeatedly striking the key with mallets in alternating hands. The goal is to coax a continuous, regular pattern of notes through even, controlled touches—the higher the rate, the better. For example, a "good" marimba player might strike the desired key 10 or more times in 1 second, being able to hold this rate steady for several seconds and increase or decrease the volume (force of the strike) and rapidity for interpretive emphasis. Thus, I was encouraged to practice the technique required to achieve this—holding the mallets at the right place and with a loose grip to allow for a controlled "bouncing" effect. I was told to practice this with pencils at home, and during lessons my teacher would leave me for several minutes just practicing this technique of going up and down the various scales—reminding me corporeally and emotionally of the frustration I felt with beginner piano lessons that focused on the technique of touch more than the understanding of melodic and harmonic content.

When I first talked with José and Virves about learning marimba with them, I expressed the difficulty I had experienced with mastering the tremolo technique and my continued confusion with "finding" the right keys on the marimba.

"You haven't played with us!" José responded reassuringly. "The way we show you, it will be easy." I wasn't quite sure what magic he could work that would make me learn faster, but I was encouraged by his approach, which seemed to suggest that playing the marimba wasn't an inaccessible feat open only to those who were musically gifted, but rather to anybody who wanted to try. Indeed, as I talked to various members of the Santa Eulalia Association, I learned that it was fairly common for people to have been part of a marimba ensemble at one time or other in their lives. It was treated more as a sort of vehicle for becoming part of the community than as a talent reserved for only a gifted few. On my first lesson, Virves jumped right in, teaching me the melody of a traditional son by repeating sections of it until I got it. He explained that students learn by ear and through memory, and therefore will often practice the same melody for up to three hours until they have it memorized and committed to "muscle memory." Unable to commit that much time, and without a marimba at home for practice, I would record the lesson and then transcribe it at home, using it during my next lesson to remind me of the notes I had forgotten. Needless to say, using sheet music to "cheat" meant that I did not have good recall of the songs. In contrast, Virves and José were able to draw from memory upon a repertoire of at least 100 songs, even, as in José's case, after not having played much for the past three years. At the next lesson, Virves taught me the bass part that accompanied the melody I had just learned. Whereas the Ladino marimba orquesta musicians mostly specialized in their various "parts" (first melody, second melody, first bass, second bass), the method taught by Virves and José to the Cultural Association marimba group emphasized the importance of learning all parts of the song in order to understand it better as a whole.

In addition to different conceptions of musical ability and virtuosity, Virves explained to me important differences in aesthetic preferences and playing style. He described an encounter

between the marimba group he played for and a famous Guatemalan marimba orquesta that was visiting Los Angeles and sharing the stage with Virves's group. "We played at a show with them," Virves explains, "and we were playing a song a certain way and some of their musicians came over to us and said, 'no, you have to play the notes *clean*, like this.' They thought we were being sloppy, but we weren't. We played it how it's supposed to be" (personal communication to author, August 20, 2014, translated from Spanish to English by author). Below I have included my interpretation of the differences in playing style as demonstrated for me by Virves.

Son para Arrancar la Fiesta

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Son para Arrancar la Fiesta". It features two staves: a treble clef staff (upper part) and a bass clef staff (lower part). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 6/8. The score is divided into two sections: "Traditional" and "Q'anjob'al". The "Traditional" section is marked with red notes and includes a circled measure where a grace note is played before the main note. The "Q'anjob'al" section is marked with blue notes and shows a different articulation style. Below the bass staff, the harmony is indicated as "I" and "IV".

Figure 1-11: Q'anjob'al style of articulation as demonstrated for me with the same son as above.

The main difference that Virves emphasized was with the articulation of the first note in measure two, measure four, and repeating motifs similar to these throughout the song. Whereas in Figure 1-11 the two upper parts play a grace note on the way to the resting note (in this case the dominant leading to the tonic in the melody, but not always the same interval), Virves explained that the marimba musicians in the Ladino group "corrected" them, telling them it should be a "clean" hit as demonstrated in Figure 1-12 below. It is also important to explain that Western notation does not accurately represent the actual Q'anjob'al technique for striking the grace note. Rather than a clear difference between the grace note and the resting note, as might

♩ . = 50 bpm

Traditional

Dance:
Harmony: I

R IV

L r R l L r R

Figure 1-12: García's interpretation of how Ladino marimbists would play this song. (Played by Virves García, transcribed by author August 20, 2014.)

be played by two keys on the piano, this is played in a sort of "rolling" technique in which the musician lightly brushes the mallets over the keys in between the two notes as she is moving from one to the other. This creates a feeling of microtonality "in between" the notes that is a desired aesthetic in the Q'anjob'al interpretation. It is this sound that the Ladino marimba players considered sloppy, or "unclean."

A second difference in aesthetic value and technique was explained to me as the difference between "playing" (*tocar*) the marimba keys and "hitting" (*golpear*) the marimba keys. In Virves's words, "*Hay algunos que empiezan fuerte, pero tocan suave. Hay otros que golpean*" (Some start the strike with force, but they end up touching the keys softly. Others just hit [the marimba]) (personal communication August 26, 2014). While he wasn't claiming that all Q'anjob'al musicians played with the proper "touch," and all Ladino musicians don't, this directive shows that being able to play songs very fast and loud (as is necessary in cumbias) is less important than playing smoothly and with the correct effect for the desired emotion.

Repertoire Analysis

The two approaches to musicality and aesthetic values also relate to the type of repertoire played by each ethnic group. In contemporary Q'anjob'al practice, there is no definitive

Jugo de Piña

Trans: Logan Clark

The musical score is presented in five systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and shows a main melody in the right hand with eighth and sixteenth notes, and a simplified bass line with whole notes. The second system is labeled 'Pno.' and continues the melody with a repeat sign at the end. The third system is labeled 'Pno.' and features more complex rhythmic patterns in the right hand. The fourth system is labeled 'Pno.' and shows the melody concluding with a double bar line. The fifth system is labeled 'Pno.' and begins with a repeat sign, showing the start of the main melody again.

Figure 1-13: Cumbia, "Jugo de Piña." Played by José Simón, transcribed by the author. Note, only the main melody is shown because I did not learn the other parts—which are quite complicated for cumbias.

separation between the marimba doble being played by Ladinos and the marimba sencilla by Mayas. Instead, the differences are most marked by the repertoire played at particular events. At a very cursory level, the cumbias played by Ladino marimba ensembles for Ladino events are more melodically, rhythmically, and harmonically complex, while the sones played by Maya musicians and preferred at Mayan social events are less so (see Figure 1-13 for an example of a cumbia).

CONCLUSION

The marimba and its music have become important symbols for Mayas, as well as for the nation of Guatemala. Though its provenance is contested, the marimba has been a keystone of Mayan culture for centuries, but only came into nation-wide fashion as a respectable instrument in the early twentieth century, when Ladino musicians adapted it to emulate the piano. For this reason, Q'anjob'al musicians take care to perpetuate a playing style and a repertoire that differentiates their marimba music from the more popular Ladino style and repertoire, which abounds with European dance forms from the first half of the twentieth century and pan-Latin orquesta dance forms. Q'anjob'al conceptions of musicality do not mirror the Euro-American values of virtuosity and articulation that is emphasized in Ladino training. Similarly, the "Mayan aesthetic" highlights nuances such as microtonality and dynamic interpretation over the "clean" and "strong" technique that they believe to be characteristic of Ladino marimbists. Lastly, while *type* of marimba (sencilla or doble) is no longer an indicator of ethnicity, marimba *repertoire* emphasizes the *son maya* as the distinctive sound pertinent to Q'anjob'al identity formation (though, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, migration has brought about repertoire and instrumental changes that stretch the definition of what exactly constitutes a Mayan son). By claiming

authority to designate the proper way to play the marimba, Q'anjob'al musicians indirectly claim the authority over the land and the community that the instrument symbolizes.

The importance of the son music and dance forms relates to deep historical associations with music, dance, and the sonic and performative aspects of territorializing, or making meaning out of material surroundings. Marimba son music serves as a tool for reading the natural environment, summoning spiritual forces that reside in natural phenomena, and reinforcing Q'anjob'al conceptions of cosmological order. I argue that son music is key in creating Q'anjob'al place through musical connection to the material environment, accumulation of symbolic meaning in material and sonic properties of marimba music, and regulating ethnic identity through aesthetic properties and repertoire in marimba performance.

This chapter exemplifies the dominance of perceived space in influencing conceived space. In other words, the built environment was designed to emulate the natural environment, not to conquer it. Fundamentally different from the capitalist approach to the natural environment as a "spatially diversified bundle of 'natural' resources waiting to be discovered, exploited and transformed into systems of production of various sorts" (Harvey 2001:227), the Q'anjob'al and other Mayan groups view the land as a living being. Thus, perceived, natural space informs conceived, culturally understood space. The marimba symbolizes human connection to flora and fauna, and musical performance connects important life events to the natural entities in the natural surroundings. Thus, to many Q'anjob'ales, the sound of the son references concepts of Mayan cosmology, community connectivity, and a reminder of the thousands of years of Mayan presence in the Cuchumatán Mountains.

CHAPTER 2: DETERRITORIALIZED Q'ANJOB'AL PLACE: CONFLICTS OF SPACE AND THE MUSIC OF MIGRATION

INDIGENOUS MIGRATION: AN OXYMORON?

Implied in many discussions about indigeneity is a rootedness to place. Often used to describe plant species, which originate and largely stay rooted in specific climate zones, the terms "aboriginal," then "native," and now "indigenous" have been used to describe people considered to have persisted in a certain place since an indeterminate "beginning." Not only do these terms ignore the fact that migration and resettlement have been part of the human experience since the development of *Homo sapiens*, their use as a universal category leads to the insidious conclusion that all Indigenous people are alike in some way. In fact, the only similarity between peoples typically categorized as Indigenous is the situational similarity of having been forcibly detached from the place they inhabited at the time of conflict with (usually Western-European) land-coveting foreigners. This is a very significant similarity—allowing for a feeling of groupness based on the common experience of having been violently uprooted by others within a certain period of worldwide conquest—but I am careful not to conflate this situational similarity with supposed universal similarities in essence. As David Samuels observes, by characterizing "native" Americans as linked to a primordial continuous history, American mainstream nationalist imagination casts them in a mold that does not allow for transformation (2004:238). The same tendency exists in Guatemala as well.

The reality is that—while for a millennium or so the Maya uprooted and re-rooted within the more limited area of what is now southern Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize—their migratory trends over the past century have increased not in frequency, but in distance. The dynastic centers of networks such as Tikal and Copan changed to imperial centers such as Guatemala and

Mexico Cities, and now to global capitalist centers such as Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. In Chapter 1, I explored the extent to which Q'anjob'al identity is linked to a specific location. In this chapter, I document the conditions that led to expanding migration patterns for Maya populations in general and the Q'anjob'alan Maya in particular. Whereas Chapter 1 reviewed precolonial and colonial periods, Chapter 2 focuses on postcolonial developments, starting with independence from Spain, then relating several important political developments in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that led to the exponential increases in rural-to-urban and international emigration of Maya people. I have split the chapter into two sections: the first is mostly historical background to the events that led to Mayas being expelled from their land, and the second section involves the changes in musical repertoire that have incorporated the migration process into Q'anjob'al consciousness.

The two most important political developments precipitating migration in Q'anjob'al and other Mayan communities were a) the privatization and agricultural development of land by Ladino and foreign influences in the second half of the nineteenth century and b) the civil war, which lasted from 1960–1996. These developments affected Mayas throughout the country in many significant ways. Pertinent to my research are the effects on migration patterns—first expanded labor migration, then forced exodus to escape genocide—on the spatial elements of musical expression and ethnic identity adscription. For the Q'anjob'alan groups, these social forces broadened and changed the nature of interactions with non-Q'anjob'alan groups, including Ladinos in the Q'anjob'alan area, other Maya refugees, Mexican Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and, for the first time, the dynamic ethnic, racial, and class-based milieu of social groups in the United States. Significant musical processes throughout this period relate to the Mayan Movement and the resulting developments in identity politics, and the phenomenon of *música*

migrante (migration music) as theorized by Marina Alonso Bolaños. In the case of the Q'anjob'al migrants, these expansions in physical and social territory were part of a constant feedback cycle relating these new experiences always back to Jolom Konob'.¹ In this journey, it is important to focus on the *spaces* traversed through the migration itself as an identity-forming element in the overall conception of Q'anjob'al *place*. "The conversion of spaces into places," Jonas and Rodríguez posit, "involves the assigning of social significance to particular settings. It is the conversion of a spatial setting into a 'significant symbol' shared in a group" (Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:22). For the thousands of Q'anjob'al migrants, the spatial symbols gain significance as they traverse the same paths and incorporate them into the Q'anjob'al conception of place through music.

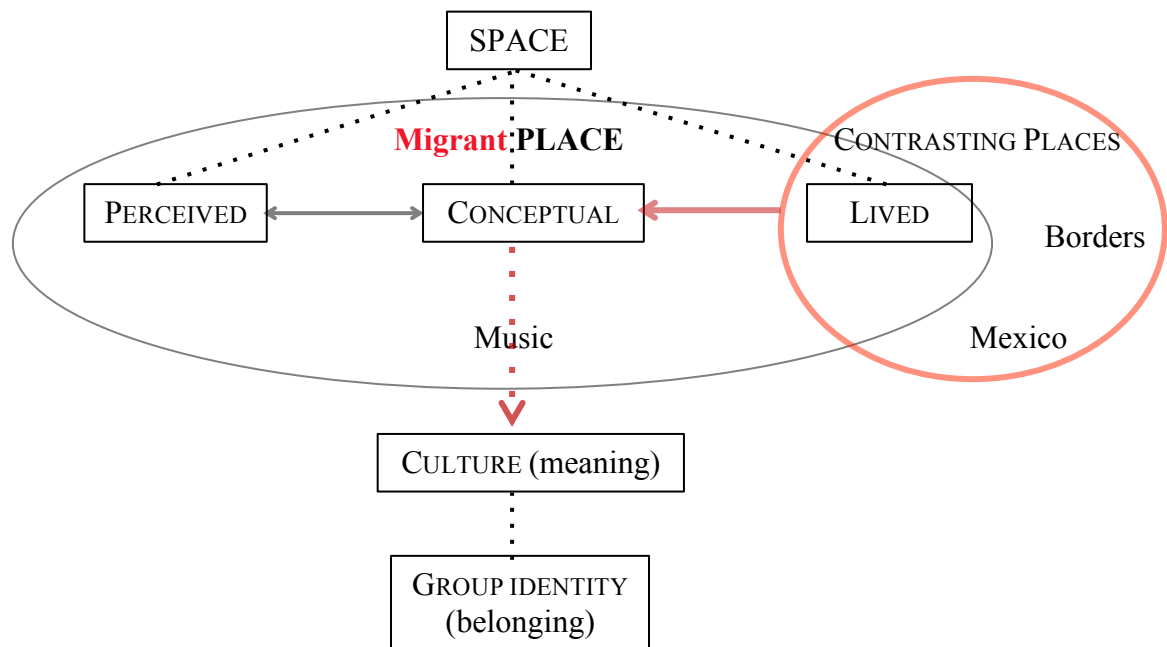


Figure 2-1: Conceptual model showing detachment of familiar locality and material environment, increased dependence on foreign places.

¹ The Q'anjob'al name for Santa Eulalia

The process emphasized in this chapter is represented on the conceptual diagram by the detachment from familiar elements of perceived space (locality and material elements of the Cuchumatanes), and the imposition of conflicting places (borders, paths through Mexico) on the Q'anjob'al conception of place.

PART I: HISTORICAL PRECEDENT TO CONFLICTS OF SPACE AND MAYAN MIGRATION

Independence and the Republic of Guatemala

The "Audience of Guatemala" gained independence from Spain in 1821, briefly becoming part of Mexico before it peacefully seceded to become the Federal Republic of Central America in 1823. Guatemala remained a state in the Federal Republic of Central America, which included Honduras, Nicaragua, and El Salvador, until 1838 when it rebelled and became an independent country. Rafael Carrera was instrumental in leading the secession movement from the Federal States of Central America in 1838. Not long after, he became president of Guatemala (1844–1848; 1851–1865), and though quite conservative, made concerted efforts to reach out to its Indigenous citizens (Pendergrast 1999). La Farge notes that, during his work in 1932, Q'anjob'ales still talked about Carrera, believing that he was Indigenous (in fact, he was a poor Ladino who gained popularity by pandering to Indigenous and working class populations) (La Farge [1947] 1994:38). However, Carrera's policies would prove to be anything but supportive of Indigenous and working class Guatemalans.

Coffee and Bananas

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Guatemala's export industry was based mainly on indigo² and *cochineal*, which produced purple and red dyes, which were in high demand in Europe. When synthetic dyes were invented in 1856, however, Carrera predicted a decline in trade and made the prescient decision to amplify coffee production in Guatemala (Pendergrast 1999:31). The Carrera government (and the succeeding Barrios government) did everything possible to encourage the coffee industry to become Guatemala's cash crop, but they had a hard time finding sufficient labor. In 1877, President Rufino Barrios (1873–1885) passed a tax exemption that would help foreigners obtain lands. This served to attract a large number of Germans, who arrived poor and in debt, but soon became very successful in dominating the coffee industry after only a decade in Guatemala (ibid.:34).

Coffee plantations proliferated throughout the country, including many on the Pacific slopes of the Sierra Madre Mountains, which produced a demand for manual labor that could only be satisfied by recruiting the highland Maya population. Consequently, the Barrios administration passed laws that facilitated this labor for the new cash crop. First by force, then through certain programs, such as the *habilitación* debt structure and anti-vagrancy laws, Q'anjob'al and other Maya men had to increasingly leave their own subsistence agriculture practices to sell their labor as migrant workers (González 1998b, La Farge [1947] 1994:14–15). Figure 2-2 shows the seasonal migration route to the coffee plantations, a journey that usually took a week on foot, or several days by truck by the early twentieth century. The winding mountain road between Santa Eulalia and the departmental capital of Huehuetenango itself was a

² Indigo came mostly from El Salvador, which in the beginning of the nineteenth century was part of the Federal Republic of Central America. Throughout this period, and even when the Federal States became independent countries, Guatemala was the *de facto* trade capital of the region (Lindo-Fuentes 1990).

two- or three-day journey on foot, and even with the advent of cars, the journey between the two towns took up the good part of the day, as the road remained unpaved until the first decade of the twenty-first century.

President Barrios set the stage for the turn of the century by passing land laws stating that all *tierras baldias*, or land not currently planted with coffee, sugar, cacao, or being used for cattle, could be seized and claimed as national property (Pendergrast 1999:31). In the first decade

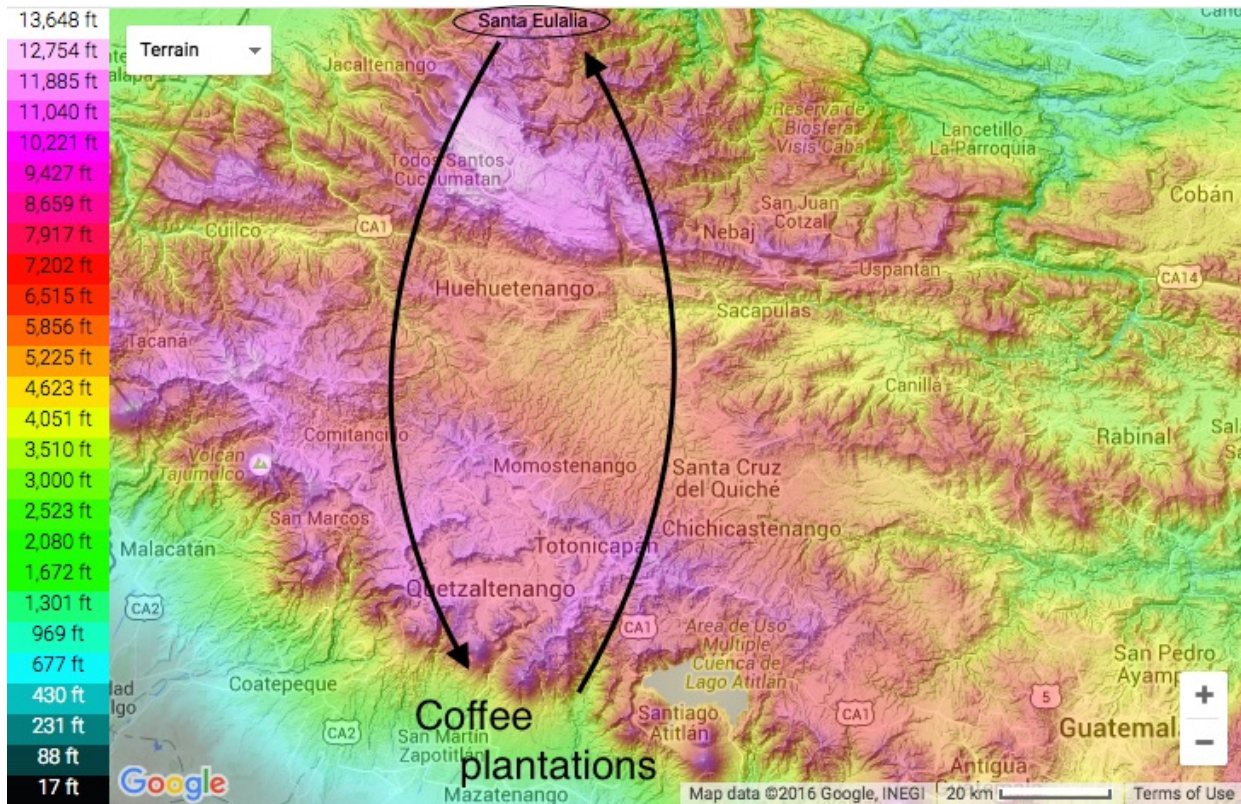


Figure 2-2: Migration route to coffee plantations from Santa Eulalia. (Source: Google Earth, with added drawings by author.)

of the twentieth century, Presidents Cabrera (1898–1920) and Ubico (1931–1944) took advantage of this newly usurped land and welcomed the United Fruit Company to Guatemala, which resulted in a continuous decline in the rights of Indigenous and working-class Guatemalans. During Ubico's regime, labor laws were intensified, and privatization of land for purchase by the United Fruit Company escalated (Forster 2001:29–32). This often included the

seizure of communal lands called *ejidos*, which were communal agricultural areas in Mayan towns for individuals who did not have enough room to plant crops on their own property (Lindo-Fuentes 1990). In Santa Eulalia, this period saw an increased influx of Ladinos, who until then had largely stayed out of the Q'anjob'al areas. Their presence resulted in usurpation of Mayan land, forcing many to work as sharecroppers, or to migrate to find work (La Farge [1947] 1994:26; González 1998b).

Conflicting Concepts of Space

As touched upon in Chapter 1, the way in which Q'anjob'ales in the Cuchumatán highlands conceive spatial organization is heavily influenced by their perception of the natural environment. Though the Catholic Church passed through the area periodically, maintaining a presence in Soloma, Q'anjob'ales remained relatively autonomous during the colonial period in terms of cultural practices. The encroachment of claim-staking Ladinos increased after the above-mentioned incentives to convert land into productive *fincas*, or plantations. David Harvey explains the colonial land usurpation as the forceful separation of "laborers" from the products of their own land:

The same truth, however, is expressed in colonial land policies . . . in which the powers of private property and the state were to be used to exclude laborers from easy access to free land in order to preserve a pool of wage laborers for capitalist exploitation. Thus was the bourgeoisie forced to acknowledge in the colonies what it sought to conceal at home: that wage labor is based on the forcible separation of the laborer from control over the means of production. (2001:298)

He describes capitalist space as in essence as a clash of social relations, revealed as such by the transfer of this system to new social contexts in which land ownership has a different social history. Whereas European capitalism grew from a history founded on private property (feudalism), the same concept of land ownership did not apply in Mayan culture. Of course there

were clashes over who could control desired locations—the Q'anjob'ales had spent centuries in land conflicts with the K'iche' settlers, and those they call the Lacandones³—but there was no system in which every square inch of land had an owner associated with it. Furthermore, Ladino conceptions of land ownership did not acknowledge the Q'anjob'al family descent-based property appropriations or the idea of communal lands.

Marimba Music at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Mayan land was not the only thing in which powerful Ladinos were interested; during the turn of the century, the marimba—until then considered an uncivilized peon's instrument—became the project of upper- and upper-middle-class Ladinos in search for consolidation of national identity. Guatemala's efforts to attract foreign investors was coupled with a drive to present itself as a culturally rich country. As Alfonso Arrivillaga Cortés writes, Guatemalan elites turned their eyes and their ears toward Mayan art and tradition, translating it through European aesthetic values in an attempt to bring Indigenous populations to "civilization" (Arrivillaga Cortés 2010). The invention of the chromatic marimba doble in the 1880s resulted from the popularity of the piano in upper-class settings. The first models of the chromatic marimba were even called *maripianos*, not only for the arrangement of the keys (the chromatic keys set above and in between the diatonic keys, like the black keys of a piano), but also to make Guatemalan music more "refined." Arrangements of *zarzuelas* and operas proliferated on chromatic marimbas, intoning with a unique "Guatemalan voice" a claim for a place in the international sphere (ibid.).

³ These are likely *not* the Yucatec-Lacandones who live in the Lacandon jungle in eastern Chiapas, but the Ch'ol-Maya. An analysis of local myths in the Q'anjob'al and neighboring Ixil-Maya areas point to the "undesired foreigners coming from the north" to be the Ch'ol Maya (Monika Banach and Lucas Ramírez personal communication; Nations 1994).

The most visible group during this time was the Hurtado Brothers marimba from Quetzaltenango. Having been one of the first groups to use the chromatic marimba, or marimba doble, this group of Ladino musicians became musical ambassadors of Guatemala, on international tours that led them through New Orleans, New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Vienna, Amsterdam, Budapest, Berlin, London, and Paris (Amado 2011). In 1915, this group represented Guatemala at the Panama-Pacific World Exposition in San Francisco. Andrés Amado notes that their repertoire, sampled on a recording they did with Victor around that time, heavily features demonstrations of US and European composers, such as Verdi, Strauss, and Sousa, among others. Throughout this tour, the Hurtado Brothers seemed to be caught in their own paradox of identity politics. In order to attract larger crowds in the US, they traded in their tuxedos for "stereotypical Guatemalan" garb—bandanas around their heads, bolero shirts and cummerbunds—which, while appeasing the Northern imagination of Mayaland, had absolutely nothing to do with either Mayan or Ladino traditions of dress (ibid.).

While Ladino musicians were gaining international notoriety during this time, the Maya musicians who had developed the marimba sencilla throughout several hundred years did not receive any credit, or opportunities for travel to national and international showcases of marimba music. Incidentally, this is about the time that Santa Eulalia put itself on the map as a top manufacturer of marimbas sencillas, which were now in demand around the country. The Díaz marimba workshop dates its opening to about 1915, when Tuncho Díaz's great grandfather moved from the Santa Eulalia village of Nancultac to the central town, in order to manufacture marimbas sencillas full-time (personal communication with Tuncho's father, Xhun Antún Díaz Balthazar, the current director of the Díaz workshop, August 10, 2016).

The "Guatemalan Spring"

In 1944, a popular uprising led by university students and labor organizations forced President Jorge Ubico to resign. The conservative government that followed him was quickly overthrown by a military coup, and elections following this coup brought Juan José Arévalo to presidency (1944–1951). Arévalo's instatement started ten years of increased peace and prosperity for Maya and *campesino* (agricultural, working-class) Guatemalans. Arévalo re-wrote the constitution, instituting social reforms, repealing the vagrancy law, and allowing for organized labor and freedom of the press; and oversaw programs that increased literacy and free elections (Forster 2001:97).

Jacobo Árbenz (1951–1954) followed Arévalo's momentum when he was elected president in 1951. He was most known for his land reform program, in which uncultivated portions of large land-holdings were expropriated in return for compensation, and redistributed to the poorest Guatemalans (Immerman 1982:64–67). Approximately five hundred thousand people benefited from the decree, the majority of whom were Indigenous people, who saw return of their land for the first time since the Spanish invasion.

Marimba Music in Guatemala's "Golden Age"

During the Arévalo and Árbenz administrations, marimba doble music flourished as a sonic marker of Guatemalan national identity. Ladino marimba groups continued to function as musical ambassadors, with the official government group, Maderas de mi Tierra (Wood of My Land), even touring beyond the Iron Curtain, to Romania (an act for which the members would later be arrested) (Arrivillaga Cortés 2010:90). The repertoire and presentation of the marimba during this time featured a more concerted effort to honor national composers and compositions. While popular European and US dances—such as the *paso doble* (two-step), *vals* (waltz),

shottish, mazurka, swing, and foxtrot—peppered the repertoire in official performances, more honored were original compositions that attempted to capture the "essence" of Guatemala. Of course, this meant integrating more Mayan elements into the music. One such composition was "Que lindo es mi Xelajú," (*How Pretty is My Xelajú*) a reference to the Mam-Mayan name for the city of Quetzaltenango. This song, written by Ladino musician Gudelio Cifuentes Argueta, is in the Mayan son format, one of the first times this song form appears in Ladino marimba doble repertoire. Of this song, a critic writes:

"Que Lindo es [mi] Xelajú," a national *son* written by the national composer: Gudelio Cifuentes, represents the distinctly autochthonous character of national music. It carries the indian [*sic*] sentiment, which can be heard through an interpretation that speaks of remote legend, of the maya and cakchiquel soul of our primitive roots, souls that in the character of this national folklore speaks to the marks left by the yoke of the Spanish. (Arrivillaga Cortés 2010:72)

Though related through the eyes (ears) of a foreigner, this passage demonstrates the change in approach toward the Mayan origins of the marimba. Whereas at the turn of the century, marimba groups were attempting to "civilize" the instrument—performing European classical repertoire in tuxedos—, during the "ten years of spring" marimba groups accentuated the Mayan elements of the instrument. Putting aside, for the moment, implications of appropriation—a topic rife for analysis during this period—the fact that the official government marimba group Maderas de mi Tierra played a son on their album, and changed their dress to display Mayan weavings, was a step toward recognition of Mayan ingenuity that was radical for the time. Again, few if any Maya musicians were recognized during this period. During the latter half of the twentieth century, nationally recognized marimba groups such as Maderas de mi Tierra and Hermanos Hurtado would continue to play songs promoting a nationalistic repertoire with the acceptable blend of European and Mayan influences. Maya musicians, however, felt less and less comfortable playing the marimba sencilla in public.

US-Backed Coup and the Armed Conflict

Much of the land that Árbenz redistributed was land that the United Fruit Company (UFC) had purchased from the Cabrera and Ubico governments (after they stole it from the Maya). Taking advantage of the Red Scare during the peak of McCarthyism, US Secretary of State John Dulles, along with his brother, CIA director Allen Dulles (both of whom had legally represented and were major shareholders in the UFC), claimed that Árbenz and his supporters were communists who posed a threat to US safety that had to be curtailed. In 1954, the CIA backed a coup led by Carlos Castillo Armas (Forster 2001, Grose 1994). Castillo Armas was the first in a long line of oppressive dictators who, backed by US funding and training, increasingly oppressed Indigenous and poor Guatemalans. The first uprising against Castillo Armas, which occurred in 1960, marked the beginning of a civil war that would plague the country until 1996.

While the civil war, also commonly referred to as the internal armed conflict, lasted for thirty-six years and saw a number of rebellions and increased militarization, the worst period was during the presidency of Efraín Ríos Montt (March 1982–August 1983), whose "scorched earth" military campaign has been officially ruled a genocide against Maya people. Because many Mayan communities had supported Árbenz, and benefited from his land reforms, they were subsequently targeted as "communist" insurgents against the new military government. During the 1970s and early 1980s, Maya and progressive Ladino insurgents organized to protect their communities from ongoing military attacks. This precipitated an escalation of military force in the early 1980s, primarily targeting highland Mayan communities, in which government-sponsored death squads indiscriminately killed Maya people, often wiping out entire villages under the pretense of counter-insurgency (see Figure 2-3 for a map of massacre sites). Six hundred twenty-six villages were destroyed, and over 150,000 civilians killed between 1981 and

1983, marking a height of genocidal actions not seen since the Spanish conquest (Loucky and Moors 2000:3; Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:4).

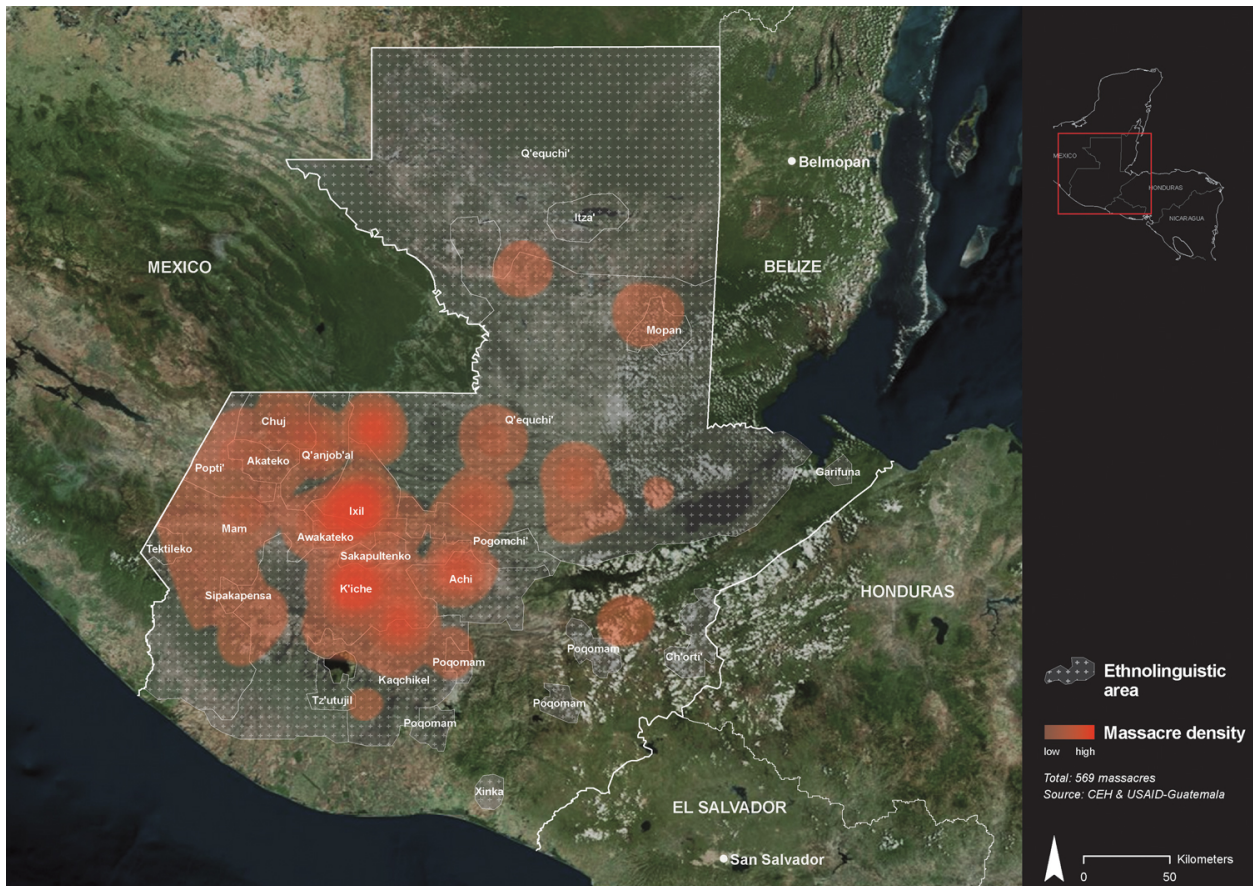


Figure 2-3: Map of massacres that occurred between 1960 and 1996. Higher casualty rates indicated by darker red. (Map created by Forensic Architecture www.forensic-architecture.org.)

During this heightened period of violence, refugees, mostly Mayas from the northern Guatemalan highlands, fled to Mexico and the United States. In the UN refugee camps set up across the Mexican border, forty-six thousand refugees were received (mostly Mayas), and in all, an estimated two hundred thousand Guatemalans fled during this period (Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:19). Following migration patterns established in the 1970s and earlier by other village or family members, large numbers of Mayas relocated to California, Florida, and Texas (Loucky

and Moors 2000:4). Those who stayed continued to fight in the armed resistance to protect their communities.

The Armed Conflict in the Cuchumatanes

The Q'anjob'alan area of the Cuchumatanes was highly targeted during the civil war, especially during the 1980s. While San Miguel Acatán (an Akateko-Mayan municipality) and San Mateo Ixtatán (a Chuj-Mayan municipality) were the heaviest targets for army counterinsurgency operations in Huehuetenango; Santa Eulalia and other Q'anjob'al areas were also heavily affected (see Figure 2-3). One man from Santa Eulalia, Pedro, who now lives in Los Angeles, recounted to me the story of how his journey to the US began—a story many immigrants are reluctant to share (warning: this is a gruesome story). Pedro was the secretary in the Santa Eulalia municipal government during the height of the death squads and scorched earth military campaigns under general Rios Montt. He related to me that for the past several years leading up to that time, the military presence in Santa Eulalia had increasingly caused an escalating sense of fear among Maya community members. In 1978, several students were kidnapped and were never found again (one of whom was Pedro's brother). As the municipal secretary starting in 1980, Pedro was in charge of recording births and deaths. As he began to travel around the municipality, investigating and recording deaths, he learned that the military had a pattern of killing people who were accused of being guerrillas, cutting out their hearts, and feeding them to their dogs as an added measure of disrespect. One day in 1981, the mayor called the municipal administrators into his office. He had just received a telegram, warning him that the military had just decapitated the mayor, vice-mayor, and secretary of a nearby town⁴ and put their heads on stakes as a warning to all "collaborating with the guerrillas." Pedro left

⁴ not revealed at that moment to Pedro, but likely San Miguel Acatán, where this is a documented incident.

immediately, fearing that as a municipal leader in Santa Eulalia he would also be a potential target. He, like most who fled that area, went to Mexico, which was just fifty miles north. After working for several months in Mexico, he came back to Santa Eulalia to get his wife and child and head north to Los Angeles. Most people of the Los Angeles community who fled during the worst conditions did not speak so freely about their own experiences.

Music During the War

During the armed conflict, Mayas throughout the country increasingly hid their distinguishing cultural characteristics. Children were discouraged from speaking their mother language, processions and public celebrations were cancelled, and Mayan *costumbre*⁵ was only practiced underground in secret. Even marimba playing could get one in trouble for being a "guerrilla" or a "communist." In July of 2014, at a symposium I attended held for Maya youth born in the US, members of the migrant generation spoke to the second generation about the oppressive circumstances that forced them to flee their hometowns. When it was Chico Diaz's turn to speak, he walked up to the small marimba that was on the stage (likely for decoration) and said: "I'm going to do something that I could not do for many years in Santa Eulalia." He picked up the mallets and played a song that was familiar to the majority of the audience. They whooped in emotional support, and joined in by singing the words (Figure 2-4). "I came from a family of marimba players," he recounted. "We had to play quietly, in secret during the war, but we never stopped playing." (Francisco Antonio Díaz, group presentation, July 19, 2014). Pedro, the municipal secretary mentioned above, confirmed that his marimba-playing family faced the same restrictions, and that during the height of the conflict, people could get in trouble even for

⁵ The Maya community leaders with whom I have worked emphasize that Mayan rituals and practices are not a "religion," but rather a science. For this reason, they call Mayan spiritual practices *costumbre*, or "custom."



Figure 2-4: Francisco Antonio Díaz playing "Un Día de Amor" at the *Pastoral Maya* conference in Los Angeles. (Photo by author, July 19, 2014).

ringing the church bells—which the military soldiers argued could be a method of secret communication between the guerrillas. Needless to say, the limitation on sonic symbols of Mayan identity during this period made the freedom to play music in Los Angeles all the more meaningful.

The Maya Movement and the Creation of Pan-Mayan Culture

During the Guatemalan Spring, Mayas experienced a heightened sense of freedom, which opened space for growth of pride in Indigenous identity. The Arévalo and Árbenz governments recognized Mayan leadership organizations, growth of labor unions, and agrarian reform. In addition, the Catholic Action movement, which started in 1948, involved missionaries who led literacy campaigns and supported cooperative movements among Maya and working-class Ladinos. This brief yet effusive period sparked a renaissance of pride in Mayan knowledge, customs, and cultural elements that would be rekindled during the Maya Movement in the 1980s and '90s (Wellmeier 1998a:30). Maya intellectuals mounted a cultural campaign throughout

Guatemala aimed to bolster a pan-Mayan identity for the purpose of growing a unified resistance and asserting the value of Mayan socio-cultural practices. Before this point, most Maya groups had referred to their ethnic identity by the linguistic community (e.g. Q'anjob'al, K'iche', Chuj, Kaqchikel, etc.). Because many of these groups descended from kingdoms that had been at war with each other for years before Spanish arrival, there had been little to no impetus to unify under a collective Mayan identity. The Maya Movement created this consciousness and group feeling of commonality through a concerted cultural campaign.

As anthropologists Charles Hale and Rosamel Millamán report, Maya intellectuals involved in the movement explained this as a Gramscian "war of position" strategy, "laying the groundwork for radical political transformation" (Hale and Millamán 2006:294). Gramsci's contrast between "war of maneuver" and "war of position" is an apt analogy for the Maya Movement. According to his analysis, the dominant civil society maintains hegemony by imposing a civic structure, educational system, and cultural ideology that legitimize the dominant class (Mayo 2006:111). Theorists of the Maya Movement have referred to this process in Guatemala as "ladinization," or the gradual assimilation of the Maya into the Ladino racial and cultural majority. Gramsci argued that one most effectively challenges such hegemony not through a "war of maneuver" (frontal attack or armed conflict), but through a war of position. In this strategy, members of the oppressed class enact "intellectual and moral reform" to delegitimize dominant cultural ideology (Gramsci [1929] 1971:132). Thus, Maya activists asked for Mayan-language academies, education about Mayan identity, and recognition of Mayan spirituality (Hale and Millamán 2006:294). The state granted these seemingly innocuous requests, not recognizing this as a pivotal battle in the pan-Maya war of position.

During the 1980s, Maya scholars began to publish reinterpretations of Mayan history that imbued pride and reverence into traditions that were formerly described as "backwards" and "uncivilized." One of the most seminal scholars was Dr. Cojtí Cuxil, who encouraged Maya people to resist the trends of ladinization:

The Maya people maintain a large measure of their worldview, their technology, they maintain their spirit of service to their community, and above all they maintain their languages, which are unmistakable symbols of their identity and existence. They maintain their ethnic loyalty. This is an awakening of the most informed of the Maya people who have come to reinforce the Resistance of the rural Maya. (Cuxil in Rodríguez Guaján [1989] 1992:30, translated from Spanish to English by author)

Many of these forms of resistance were based on a community-level "re-cognition" of traditional worldview, technology, community values, language, and cultural practices such as the traditional dance-dramas. Through a combination of cultural and armed resistance, Maya activists increasingly gained ground throughout the 1990s until negotiations between the *guerillas* and the government ended in the Peace Accord of 1996. Government initiatives such as the founding of the Academy of Mayan Languages, Guatemalan Indigenous Foundation, and the various initiatives of the Ministry of Culture and Sports have exemplified the improved perception of Maya people due to this local and nationwide cultural activism.

The Maya Movement had been in full force by the time the wave of military violence forced residents of the Cuchumatanes to flee north to México. In the refugee camps, Maya migrants from different ethnolinguistic groups lived together in large numbers for the first time. Many shared migration and resettlement experiences together as well, thus reinforcing the formation of pan-Mayan identity.

PART II: THE MUSIC OF MIGRATION

Migration and the Resocializing of Space

Although the majority of this dissertation focuses on communities with permanence in the Cuchumatanes and relative permanence in Los Angeles, it is important to focus on the places traversed through the migration itself as an identity-forming element. As Susanne Jonas and Nestor Rodríguez argue, as migrants move, they are "resocializing preexisting regions in a continual process of sociospatial reproduction" (2014:6). In this process, Jonas and Rodríguez explain, the people and places migrants encounter on their journey shape their spatial conceptions (and *vice versa*). The places/people who give them refuge, the particular path that *coyotes*⁶ must constantly re-draw in order to shepherd an increasing number of migrants past an increasing number of Mexican and US border officials, the places to avoid due to anti-migrant gang violence—are all imbued with social and symbolic meanings based on interaction within "social environment(s) with a symbolic system of assistance or danger" (ibid.:7). For Q'anjob'al migrants, notable places along the migration journey include refugee camps in Chiapas, Mexico, bus stations and bus routes to the northern Mexico-US border, "*el desierto*," the toughest part of the journey, where many die of heat or cold exposure, and "*la huerta*," which is the orchard owned by Native Americans who help migrants arrive in the United States (Wellmeier 1998a). These known spatial experiences have come up in several conversations and songs written about the migration process. As the migration routes expanded northward from Santa Eulalia, these places were inducted into the social landscape of Jolom Konob', as places in the imagination of those who had, and had not, traversed them.

⁶ *Coyote* ("Koh-YOH-tay") is the colloquial term for the person whom migrants pay to transport them from their departing location to their destination. This includes crossing national borders as well as transport through Mexico.

The re-socializing of space also occurs in what Marina Alonso Bolaños calls the "music of migration," or the songs and sounds that fill the soundscape of the migration process (2012:20). In this phenomenon, the integration of musical elements, trends, and styles picked up through migration "permits musicians to organize the experience of having migrated" and translate that experience for listeners (ibid.:26). In her research, she observes that Guatemalan Mayas who settled in Chiapas, Mexico, after an extended period as war refugees have reconfigured musical performance as a result of their interaction with Mexican national and local musical trends. The changes in musical repertoire, she argues, do not indicate "tradition lost," but rather additions to the repertoire that reflect the new matrix of social relations in a new geopolitical context. As Q'anjob'alans (she writes particularly about Jakaltekos and Chujes, but also mentions Q'anjob'ales) established increasing permanence in Chiapas, they continued to celebrate important moments—patron saints' celebrations, births, baptisms, weddings, funerals—much as they had in their hometowns. Every effort is made to continue the required music and dance elements for these occasions in the same manner as pre-migration celebrations (to the extent that Guatemalan marimbas and musicians would often cross the river along the Guatemala-Mexico border in order to play in the Chiapas-based communities).

Whereas those musical repertoires related to rituals have not changed drastically in the re-localization of numerous Chuj and Jakaltek communities, Alonso Bolaños observes, other repertoires have changed or disappeared as a result of the dominance of evangelical Christianity in the rural areas of Chiapas (2012:25). In addition, musicians incorporate the sounds they hear in new settings—from visits to the city, from radio broadcasts, from mixed tapes played on the *combis* that serve as the transportation system in Chiapas—into the repertoire that might be played at the social dance that happens *after* a ritual occasion. This musical interaction between

foreign Mexican genres, such as corridos, rancheras, or cumbias, played on the marimba, communicates to participants of social dances that they are part of Chiapas, part of Mexico, and at the same time they are still Mayas from the Cuchumatán mountains of Guatemala. Q'anjob'al migrants to the United States have similar experiences that mark the regional migration phenomenon through sounds of migration. This is notable through expansion in repertoire, changing instrumentation, and thematic content dealing with migration.

Changing Repertoire

One of the most obvious examples of this phenomenon is the adoption of Mexican mariachi and norteño repertoire into Q'anjob'al marimba music. As a marimba group leader in Los Angeles explained to me, marimba groups in LA are starting to play more Mexican styles because "as a migrant, you have to become Mexican in order to make it to the US." He clarified by explaining that Mexican police and immigration agents patrol stops along the most commonly traveled migration routes, looking for Central Americans who do not have the proper papers to be traveling through Mexico. In order to avoid deportation, they have to "act Mexican," which he believes unsettles or shifts identity conceptions because of the importance of believing it in order to "pull it off." In addition, he explained, many Mexican musicians sing about the migration process, and as he traveled through Mexico, he began to identify with groups that invoke that arduous ordeal, such as Los Tigres del Norte, and their song "Dos veces mojado" (*Twice Wet*—a reference to the derogatory name for immigrants, who have to cross rivers when crossing the border) (Jesús Aparicio in interview with author 13 September, 2016).

As described in Chapter 1, the son song form is the most prevalent in the Q'anjob'alan, and indeed in most Mayan communities. Because of its triple feel and relatively slow tempo, ranchera-style mariachi songs in 3/4 time are easily incorporated into a slowed-down 6/8 feel

typical of marimba son repertoire. Though the majority of Q'anjob'al repertoire is originally composed by the marimba ensemble itself, on several occasions I recognized the melodies of ranchera songs—especially those popularized by Vicente Fernandez and Antonio Aguilar, both of whom are popular throughout Guatemala. During my first weekend in Santa Eulalia, I attended a birthday party for which the marimba group Club Amistad (Friendship Club) provided music with the *marimba orquesta electrónica* instrumentation (described in Chapter 1). Most of the songs were from their newest album, but my ears pricked up at the beginning of a familiar melody.

"This is . . ." I turned to my host sister, Malín, searching my brain for a context to anchor this familiar tune in such an unfamiliar context.

"Hace un Año." Malín finished, nodding and confirming my recognition that this was a popular song. I sang some of the lyrics as I danced, replacing the gaps in my memory from when I had performed the song with my mariachi group in Los Angeles. Interestingly, the group that played marimba sencilla inside the Jolom Konob' temple also did a rendition of "Hace un Año" that would be indistinguishable from the other traditional sones in their repertoire if I had not known the melody [**Audio example 02.01: Club Amistad's version of "Hace un año" on marimba orquesta electrónica. Recording provided by a member of the group**]. Most marimba groups kept to the son song form, emphasizing to me on several occasions that the son was "*puro Maya*," that the people didn't want to hear genres popular among Ladinos, such as cumbias, polcas, or merengues. The Mexican ranchera song form, however, allows groups to play popular Mexican hits in the Q'anjob'al style, which does not get much public pushback. On the other hand, the respected marimba group Princesa Eulalense was starting to branch out and record these more popular pan-Latin genres. When I interviewed and recorded them, they played

a version of the song "Flor del Río," a *polca* made popular by Antonio Aguilar (famous Mexican singer who was a pioneer of *banda* music). One might argue that these songs likely entered the Q'anjob'al realm through the radio, and thus are not an indication of changing repertoire due to migration. I argue that it is likely these songs *are* on the radio, but that the increased migrant interaction with Mexican aesthetics and trends has an influence on what is played on the local radio and what songs are picked up by marimba groups.

Changing Instrumentation

The second sonic marker of migration is the unique sound of contemporary marimba orquestas electrónicas throughout the transnational Q'anjob'al network. The settings preferred on the keyboard produce a 1980s, new-wave-style synthetic sound that seems out of place at first for something considered Mayan music. However, as Club Amistad leader Lwin Kwin García reflects, the incorporation of electric instruments into the Mayan son is a logical outcome of musicians drawing from their migrant experiences:

Before, there were no electric instruments here. In the world there were, but not here in Santa Eulalia. But with the emigration of our people to the United States . . . at first, they started leaving for the coasts, the warmer climates where there are coffee plantations. There they absorbed the experiences of other cultures, of Ladinos or other Mayas. Afterwards, at the international level the Q'anjob'al people started traveling further. And they started staying—maybe someone left to work and they ended up marrying someone there. And this continued growing with more and more people migrating. That's how the marimba started mixing with saxophones and pianos. Now half the world plays electric instruments.⁷

"Who introduced electric instruments to Santa Eulalia?" I asked.

⁷ "Antes, no existían los instrumentos electrónicos aquí. En otras partes del mundo sí, pero no en Santa Eulalia. Ya con la migración de los paisanos a los Estados Unidos . . . Al principio, empezaron a salir a las costas, la tierra caliente, donde hay cafetal. Allí absorbieron algo de las experiencias de otras culturas—que pueden ser ladinas y también que son Mayas. Ya después al nivel internacional, se fue yendo la gente Q'anjob'al. Quizá alguien fue a trabajar y se casó con alguien, y se quedó. Esto se fue proyectándose, habiéndose mas. Ya se mezcló la marimba con saxofones, con pianos. Ahora medio mundo conoce el instrumento electrónico." (All interviews in this chapter translated from Spanish to English by author).

Definitely the musicians. Some left Santa Eulalia to work or for a visit. And because they're musicians, they learned to play [electric instruments]. When they came back, they brought their own instruments [back with them], and they started sharing their experiences.⁸

"And others have told me that the popularity of the electric keyboard started with you and Club Amistad . . ." I continued. Lwin corrected me, saying that it actually didn't start with his marimba group, but rather with his church choir for which he played keyboard.

In 1987 I played piano for praise songs. I would work with the choir, and as is our culture, after a church-related gathering—a birthday let's say—they say: "play us some sones!" And since [the choral group] were also members of a student music group, we had a small marimba [that we could play with] the keyboard and two guitars. And we would play sones with the instruments we had. And that's how we started mixing keyboard and marimba with Club Amistad.⁹

From Lwin's explanation, it seems that the keyboard was not integrated into the marimba groups, but rather the marimba was integrated into church-based music groups, which today usually include an electric keyboard, bass, and guitar, as well as a drum set. Nevertheless, his narrative positions the introduction of the keyboard into Q'anjob'al repertoire as a result of increased migration to (and through) Mexico during the 1980s and '90s (L. Kwin García 2015).

Leader of Marimba Hermanos Díaz, Antonio (Tuncho) Juan Díaz Juárez (mentioned earlier), reflected that even the marimba doble wasn't very popular until about the same time as the electric keyboard in Santa Eulalia, and that it was a very recent trend started by Club Amistad (the marimba group led by Lwin, quoted above):

⁸ "Definitivamente los músicos. Algunos salieron de Santa Eulalia a trabajar o a visitar. Y como son músicos, aprendieron a ejecutar. Ya llegando acá, trajeron sus instrumentos propios. Empezaron a compartir sus experiencias."

⁹ "El primer piano que toqué, toqué en el año 1987, pero es en alabanzas. Estaba trabajando con un coro, y como es la cultura nuestra, después de un convivio religioso—un cumpleaños digamos—dicen ellos: "tóquenos unos cuantos sones ahí!" Y como nosotros manejamos estudiantil, llevábamos una marimbita pequeña, y más teclado y dos guitarras, y tocábamos sones, y como teníamos instrumentos de música, no necesitábamos enseñar manejos. Y así se fue introduciendo la marimba a Club Amistad."

Through Club Amistad the keyboard was popularized at the same time as the marimba doble. . . . The keyboard came to replace the saxophone. Amistad and other groups have used saxophones in the past, but when the people first heard the keyboard, they started asking for more.¹⁰

He laments that "*marimba pura*" (only the marimba [sencilla or doble], without accompanying instruments) is not appreciated anymore in Santa Eulalia; when Díaz started Marimba Hermanos Díaz, his goal had been to focus on that more traditional form:

In our case, for example, for Hermanos Díaz, of which I am the founder, my idea was not to work with the keyboard. It was to work only with marimba pura. But sometimes we are invited to go play places and they demand that we have the keyboard. So we had to incorporate it because if we didn't, nobody would contract us. Now, a marimba group that comes without those [electric] instruments, they are not well accepted: the people don't dance. But once they hear the sound of the keyboard, there's a change [in the mood].¹¹

Tuncho and I continued to talk about this being a phenomenon only in northern Huehuetenango, among Q'anjob'alan groups. As an example, he explained that whenever they go play elsewhere (he gave the example of Sololá, the Kakchiquel-speaking area two departments south of Huehuetenango), there's no demand for the keyboard—and that, furthermore, marimba pura is preferred to marimba with saxophone or other accompanying instruments (Díaz Juárez 2015).

Q'anjob'al musicians use the electric keyboard in ways that emphasize the timbral variations only possible through an electronic synthesizer. The digitized sound is strikingly different from the vibrations of wooden keys emanating from the marimba. I believe that it is this stark juxtaposition of the "futuristic" sound of the keyboard, mixed with the "traditional" sound

¹⁰ "Por el Club Amistad entró el teclado de una vez con doble. . . . El teclado vino a suplir el saxófono—porque Amistad y otros conjuntos han utilizado saxófonos, pero como la gente, ya cuando escuchó que introdujeron el teclado, le gustó la gente y eso es lo que pide."

¹¹ "Por ejemplo, en el caso de nosotros, el conjunto de Hermanos Díaz, yo soy el fundador. Mi idea no era trabajar con teclado. Era trabajar solamente con marimba pura. Pero como a veces nos invitan y vamos allá, exigen que tengamos teclado. Entonces, tenemos que incorporar porque si no, nadie nos contrata. Ahorita, una marimba que solamente llega y sin esos instrumentos, no es bien aceptado: no baile la gente. Pero cuando escuchan ya el teclado, es un cambio."

of the marimba that has grabbed the attention of so many Q'anjob'ales over the past few decades. Of the groups I recorded and/or observed, the most popular keyboards in use were Korg Pa50 and Is50, the Roland E-09, and the Yamaha PSR-series. The most important elements for the keyboard are twofold: First, that it has options for hundreds of different "instrument" settings (I noticed panpipe, trumpet, and saxophone as the most popular). Second, that it includes a pitch-bend wheel. One of the distinguishing elements of any group is its technique on the pitch bender. This wheel to the left of the keys has a knob that the musician can manipulate to create an effect



Figure 2-5: Marimba Maya Jolom Konob'. Moclil Grande village, Santa Eulalia. (Photo by author, August 30, 2015.)

[Video example 02.02 shows the pianist from Marimba Maya Jolom Konob' using the pitch-bending technique. Also, notice the smooth transition from keyboard improvisation back to marimba].

similar to that of a blues guitarist bending a string. The pitch bender can be used to create a futuristic "wa-wa" sound, and also to approach the microtonal aesthetic valued in much Mayan music. I proposed to Lwin my theory that Q'anjob'ales liked this element of the keyboard

because it sounds similar to the expression of the violin or *chirimía*,¹² both of which use microtonal variations to the major or minor scale. Lwin thought about my proposal and said that it's something different all together: "yes, there's a certain way to play the piano [keyboard], but it is the violin that moves people to feel more. The keyboard can never arrive at 100 percent of the pure sound [of the violin]" (L. Kwin García 2015).

Thematic Content

The third element in Q'anjob'al music of migration is thematic content: the words, pictures, and titles that accompany the songs. In general, singing does not traditionally accompany marimba performance. While violin trio music, and of course Christian worship music often feature a lyrical element, marimba music is for the most part purely instrumental. Nonetheless, more and more new marimba compositions feature singing or spoken poetry. This allows for an element of textual communication in addition to the cultural changes communicated musically. One of the groups that heavily features vocalists is Marimba Trece Baktun.¹³ The group's fourth album, titled *Tragedia en el desierto* (Tragedy in the Desert, see Figure 2-6), is dedicated to the many residents of Santa Eulalia and surrounding areas who have gone North to find work, but who have not survived the journey.

Lyricist Diego Elijio explains Marimba Trece Baktun's popularity as a result of their lyrical repertoire that recounts the migrant experience. Their fourth album—the one they were recording while I was conducting my fieldwork—contains several songs related to migration,

¹² A Mayan shawm whose wide, reedy sound accompanies the drum in leading religious processions. Though *chirimía* players are sparse in Santa Eulalia, its sound floats in the air of collective memory, and it is still played in the neighboring Chuj municipality of Coatán.

¹³ This is a reference to the completion of the thirteenth b'aktun on December 21, 2012, which closed a five-thousand-year cycle of time since humans' ascent to the earth. The cycle of thirteen b'aktuns being completed, a "new era" for humanity started on December 22, 2012. Many believe this new era will see an evolution in humanity, wherein we will become more peaceful and more respectful of the earth.

such as "La vida de un inmigrante" (The Life of an Immigrant), "Tragedia en el desierto de Arizona" (Tragedy in the Arizona Desert), and "El indocumentado" (The Undocumented Man), among others. As a growing number of men and women are forced to migrate to find work, this theme becomes part of the identity of what it means to be Q'anjob'al. Because many have

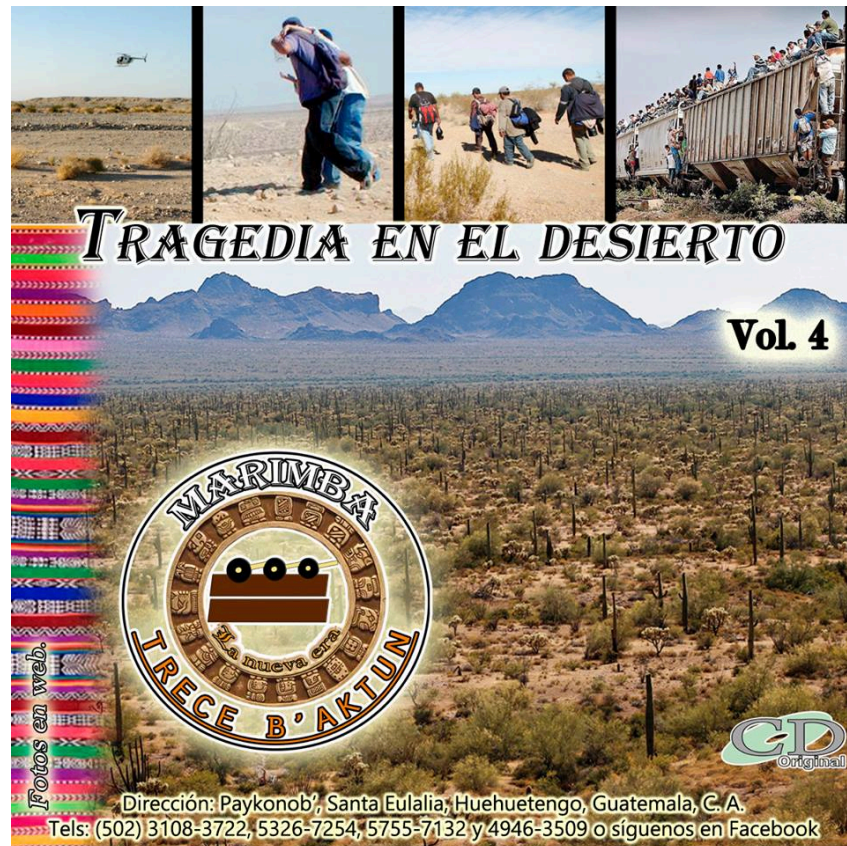


Figure 2-6: Album art for Marimba Trece B'aktun's fourth album, depicting the trials of Q'anjob'al migrants.

returned to Santa Eulalia, voluntarily or through force, Diego's lyrics draw strong responses from local crowds as well as listeners in the United States. Diego explains:

Many of my countrymen (Q'anjob'ales) have listened to our music over there (in the United States), and many have told us that the music touches their hearts because it is what they are living: how they left their land, how they grabbed a pair of T-shirts, a pair of pants, maybe a photo to pack in their backpack. They left to go over there, thinking that everything would be better. But, as I've told you, on the way there are many things that you experience, many dangers. There

is suffering—mostly in the desert. For that reason our songs are heard a lot in the United States.¹⁴ (Elijio 2015a)

Diego's lyrics could be considered what Jonas and Rodríguez refer to as migration knowledge and coping knowledge. Through migration knowledge, those who have been through the trial educate the rest of the community about the perils and strategies for survival (Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:6–7). Another song Diego recently composed, for example, talks of a friend who died in the Arizona desert while they were crossing the border together. By playing this song, Marimba Trece B'aktun not only memorializes this man, but also warns potential migrants about the risks of the desert crossing, considered by many to be the most difficult part of the journey.

I was inspired to write this son, which talks about a fellow migrant who died in the desert—in the Arizona desert. When I remember it . . . well, sadness surges in me. Melancholy comes. And as I've told you, this is the reality that many of my countrymen live through. Honestly, they are just looking for a better future, looking to progress because they have families, looking for prosperity. This song is dedicated especially to those who have died in that desert, for those who never got farther than that; for those who had dreams, who had goals they wanted to reach, but unfortunately couldn't reach them; for those friends who did not manage to get to the United States, who never lived that American dream.¹⁵ (Elijio 2015a)

Thus, even those who have never left Santa Eulalia have knowledge of *el desierto*, of *la huerta* (the orchard)—names that refer to specific landmarks along the migrant passage. A photograph of the bleak Arizona desert, perhaps the exact area where coyotes take people across, adorns the

¹⁴ "Muchos paisanos la han escuchado allá, y nos han comentado que a muchos les ha tocado el corazón porque es la propia vivencia de ellos: de cómo salieron de su tierra, de cómo agarraron un par de camisas, un par de pantalones, tal vez una fotografía en su maleta. Bueno, cargaron la mochila y se fueron par' allá, pensando que todo fuera mejor. Pero, como le digo pues, en el camino hay muchas cosas que recorrer, hay muchos peligros. Hay sufrimiento, más en el desierto. . . ese son ha sonado bastante ya en los Estados Unidos."

¹⁵ "Me nació de mi persona escribir este son que habla de un paisano que se muere allá en el desierto . . . en el desierto de Arizona. Al recordarlo pues, surgen las tristezas, las melancolías. Y, como le había comentado, es la situación que viven muchos paisanos acá, muchos paisanos que emigran par' allá. Sinceramente es por buscar un futuro mejor, buscar salir adelante porque tienen familiares, buscar la prosperación. Este dedicación especialmente para los que han muerto allá en el desierto, para los que allí quedaron; para los que tenían sueños, tenían metas que alcanzar, pero lastimosamente, no pudieron hacer; para esos amigos inmigrantes que ya no lograron llegar a los Estados Unidos, ya no lograron alcanzar el sueño Americano."

cover of the album, eliciting a warning for young potential migrants, and a symbol of survival for those who traveled that same passage.

Some songs also provide coping knowledge, or "the lore of migration survival and norms of migrant behavior associated with particular spatial conditions" (Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:7). Diego's lyrics to "La vida de un inmigrante" (The Life of an Immigrant) educate and recount the experiences of the migrant if he *does* survive the desert. Even managing to enter the United

"La vida de un inmigrante"

Letra por Diego Elijio

Llevo diez años acá en los Estados Unidos.
Como han pasado los años desde que deje mi
patria.
Y nunca se me ha olvidado las cosas que yo he
vivido.

Trabajé de jardinero, también probé de mesero.
Ay que tristeza la mía: cada rato me corrían
Por no tener experiencia, y por ser un inmigrante.

Cuantas veces me quede durmiendo bajo la noche,
Sin un centavo en la bolsa, con una pena en el
alma,
Una gran deuda encima; ay que triste es mi
destino.

Esta misma situación, la viven muchos paisanos.
Que como yo han sufrido, anhelan volver a casa.
La vida de un inmigrante es lo más triste que
existe.

Muchos ya quieren volver para su pueblo querido.
Les hace falta el amigo, el calor de su hogar
Sueñan con un día poder regresar

No se angustien jamás, no se sienta triste amigo;
Alguien le espera en su nido con un abrazo de
amor.
Sus seres queridos lo han de esperar.

"The Life of an Immigrant"

Lyrics by Diego Elijio

I've been here in the United States for ten years.
How the years have passed since I left my
homeland.
And I've never forgotten the things I've lived.

I worked as a gardener; I tried being a waiter.
Oh how sad my lot: any moment they'd fire me
For lack of experience, or being an immigrant.

How many times I slept in the open night,
Without a cent in my pocket, with shame in my
soul,
A large debt I carried. Oh how sad is my destiny.

Many of my people live this same situation.
They've suffered like me; they long to go home.
The life of an immigrant is the saddest that exists.

Many want to go back to their beloved hometown.
They miss their friends, the warmth of their home.
They dream of one day returning.

Don't anguish any longer. Don't be sad friend;
Someone waits for you in your nest with a loving
hug.
Your loved ones will wait for you. (Elijio 2015b)

States, the American dream is still far from the reality that most experience upon arrival. The lyrics, transcribed and translated below, serve as a form of education, warning, and lamentation of the life that awaits Q'anjob'al immigrants on the other side of the border.

From the turn of the twentieth century to the earlier years of the twenty-first, Q'anjob'ales and other Maya peoples underwent several stages of adaptation to rapid political and economic changes in Guatemala. While several advances have been made toward improving rights for Indigenous people at home, many have had to adapt by leaving the regions their families had inhabited for centuries. Mayan communities close to international borders saw the highest instances of migration, especially Q'anjob'alan populations in the Cuchumatán Mountains of northern Huehuetenango. These expanding waves of emigrants fleeing from (and, increasingly, returning to) Jolom Konob' and the Q'anjob'al homelands has shifted the spatial coordinates in the production and reproduction of Q'anjob'al identity. Much of this shift can be heard through changing repertoire, incorporation of new instruments, and lyrical and thematic content of music that circulates throughout the transnational Q'anjob'al community.

CURRENT CONDITIONS AND CONTINUED MIGRATION

With an experience this traumatic, one might wonder why Q'anjob'alans choose to migrate in the first place. Psychological assessments of refugees have shown that the trauma experienced by migrants is slightly lower than that experienced by war victims. As reported by Nestor Rodríguez,

The average number of different types of psychological and physical harmful events experienced by the Central American adolescents during their migration was 3.7, which was almost identical to the 3.8 average of different types of harmful events they experienced in their war-torn home countries before emigrating. In other words, the young Central Americans faced a level of personal

risk in their undocumented migration that was nearly equal to living back home in a war zone. (2007:84)

The difference between the two experiences, then, is that one offers hope for changing their life trajectory dramatically. Furthermore, the wartime conditions have not changed much, as Mayas in the most removed rural communities (such as in the Cuchumatán Mountains) continue to experience acute discrimination and many obstacles to prosperity. Although the Peace Accords were signed in 1996, several have told me "*la guerra sigue*" (the war continues). Most projects financed by the Guatemalan government (and largely aided by the United States government) in the name of "economic development" are aimed toward those sectors of the country compatible with the neoliberal capitalist system. For example, the Alliance for Prosperity Plan, proposed by the Obama administration to curtail emigration from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, outlines investments mostly in extractive and industrial development projects (García 2016). These projects—including gold mining, nickel mining, palm oil processing, and hydro-electric power plants—are not only reminiscent of the United Fruit Company's activities a century ago; they also cause many Mayas to feel that the conditions have not changed since the armed conflict. As members of a collective of Ixil-Maya women once intimated to me, the rampant sexual violations, murders, and land-grabbing committed by the companies in charge of development projects "feel just like the war—only the people [in charge] have changed" (Interview with members of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation, Nebaj, Quiché, Guatemala, August 4, 2015). In the Q'anjob'al areas of Santa Eulalia and Santa Cruz Barillas, mining and hydroelectric projects have faced strong opposition from the Q'anjob'al inhabitants. Unfortunately, the leaders of this movement are victims of a corrupt legal system that has kept them incarcerated as political prisoners for sixteen months.

The Q'anjob'alan people in this area continue to be victims of economic stagnation, as profits from these development projects are largely channeled out of the area and the system of political power punishes those who try to change the situation. Until there is committed investment in community-run development projects, emigration is likely to continue. The difference between the two choices—to stay in a war zone or similar circumstances, or to risk serious injury or death by migrating—is that the latter often seems to have a higher likelihood of success. For centuries, people who had protested against conditions of poverty and discrimination against poor and Maya Guatemalans have been silenced through political murders and disappearances. Hope that conditions would change in Guatemala was all but extinct, whereas the opportunities for Guatemalans in the US to make economic (and even political) change from afar makes it worth the risk for many.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have emphasized the process of traversing the geographical distance between Santa Eulalia and the places where people are able to find work and livelihood (whether the coastal coffee plantations, Guatemala City, Mexico City, or the United States), my aim is to begin to shift conceptualization of geographical *space* to social *place*. For the thousands of Q'anjob'al migrants, the spatial symbols gain significance with the frequency with which they have trodden the same paths—through the same perilous border crossings, train and bus rides, run-ins with authority figures, desolate desert crossings, and for many, detention centers and deportation flights—inscribing this passage into the Q'anjob'al experiential landscape, or "lifescape." Thus, while many Q'anjob'ales have never left the Cuchumatanes, the symbolic places of the migration journey communicated through pictures, stories, and music are part of

their everyday conception of what it means to be Q'anjob'al. This is why, from this chapter on, it becomes harder and harder to locate my ethnographic standpoint as being relevant to a particular location. Yes, the adaptation of the keyboard into marimba music "started" in Santa Eulalia with Club Amistad, but it was due to the influences of those who had migrated and returned, having acquired tastes for different sounds. Similarly, lyrical content about the migration experience has proliferated as it becomes more ingrained in the Q'anjob'al cultural consciousness. Leaving behind the open surroundings of the Cuchumatanes mountains to occupy the harsh and sparse spaces in crossing Mexico (truck beds, train roofs, miles of desert), Q'anjob'al migrants are cut off from the natural resources that renew and reinforce Q'anjob'al identity. They must now "belong" in the contrasting spaces in the coffee plantations, crossed at the borders and along the road through Mexico. This journey irreversibly affects the concept of what constitutes Q'anjob'al place—not just for the migrants themselves, but for all of their family, friends, and those who listen to the music they make.

**CHAPTER 3:
RE-SYMBOLIZING Q'ANJOB'ALAN PLACE: CREATING MUSICAL REAL ESTATE
IN LOS ANGELES**

SIRENS AND SONES

On July 19, 2014, I attended a Mayan ceremony in the parking lot of the Holy Cross Church in the Vernon/Main area of South Los Angeles. To begin the ceremony, old and young men wearing the traditional Q'anjob'alan kapixhay garment led the gathering in saluting the six directions. First, two musicians trumpeted their conch shells toward the southeast, while the congregants kneeled and listened to the prayers of the two female spiritual guides or (in K'iche') Aj Iq—one speaking K'iche' and the other Spanish. The two shells sounded a very close interval so that their combined sound had a vibrating, shimmering effect that seemed to make the asphalt and concrete surroundings come to life. Three young men played a steady beat on a drum, emulating a heartbeat (bum bum-bum; bum bum-bum). Next, the congregation stood and turned to the northwest. Another long blow on the conch shells and another set of prayers as the drums continued.

As the sky darkened and the ceremony continued, various sounds began to interrupt the ceremony. On the southeast corner of the adjacent block, a blaring police siren came to a halt as it pulled a car over. The authoritative voice over the megaphone resounded against the outside brick walls of the church—broken, distorted, and inscrutable—but the Aj Iq remained focused on their praying; if the sirens bothered them, they did not acknowledge it. After the prayers to the six directions were finished, both guides began to pray for individuals. One by one, supplicants approached with candles and bowed our heads as the Aj Iq passed candles over us and before throwing them in the growing fire reaching ever upward toward Ajaw. As one of the women began to sing a slowly rising and falling melody, two helicopters flew over the parking

lot and began to circle over the area. Their loud blades almost drowned out the song of the woman and the murmurs of the prayers, but the ceremony continued despite the disturbances. As I walked back to my car that evening, I found it surrounded by police and onlookers who were observing a man being arrested and taken out of the house next to where I had parked. I waited for the scene to clear so I could leave, and as I watched, I couldn't help but reflect on the interaction of sounds that had shaped my experience of the ceremony—the sounds of prayer, communication with Ajaw; the sounds of cultural persistence, and their clash with the sounds of domination and power. In this chapter I observe the importance of sound, and specifically music, in forging a space for Q'anjob'alan Mayas amidst the cacophony of contrasting and conflicting sounds demarcating other ethnic groups and regulatory bodies. Continuing with previously introduced theories on the social production of space and the process of place-making, I expand the analysis to consider how established ethnic concepts of place are transferred to new spaces—especially from rural to urban ones.

THE CONCEPTION OF NUESTRA SEÑORA LA REINA DE LOS ÁNGELES DEL RÍO PORCIÚNCULA

The double entendre of the word "conception" is intended here: the reference to the Virgin Mary's immaculate conception is implied in the full name of the City of Los Angeles—"Our Lady the Queen of Angels of the River Porciúncula"—the name of the patron saint assigned to the town by Spanish friars in 1781. Just as *Nuestra Señora* conceived the savior of the Christian world, Spanish conquistadors, and then Mexican governors, and then American governors, and then International industry, have conceived the various iterations of Los Angeles's built environment. Whereas Henri Lefebvre's "perceived space" refers to the physical and material characteristics of space, "conceived space" refers to the idealized organization of

space and the birthing of that conception into physical space by those in power. Lefebvre's conceived space is a simplification of what he categorizes as "representations of space," which are tied to "the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, and to codes" about idealized space ([1974] 1991:33). As Edward Soja observes, conceived space is imbued with power and ideology. Those with power determine the boundaries of, and who has access to, certain physical spaces. Q'anjob'alan migrants arrive in Los Angeles then, as a place that has already been made and re-made. Centuries of competing cultural ideals reveal themselves in the Spanish colonial Placita Olvera, surrounded by towering bank buildings; in the Tongva Springs site in West LA, whose only assertion of existence is a small sign hanging on a chain-link fence separating it from the Brentwood business district. It is obvious whose conception of ideal space has won in building and regulating physical space in

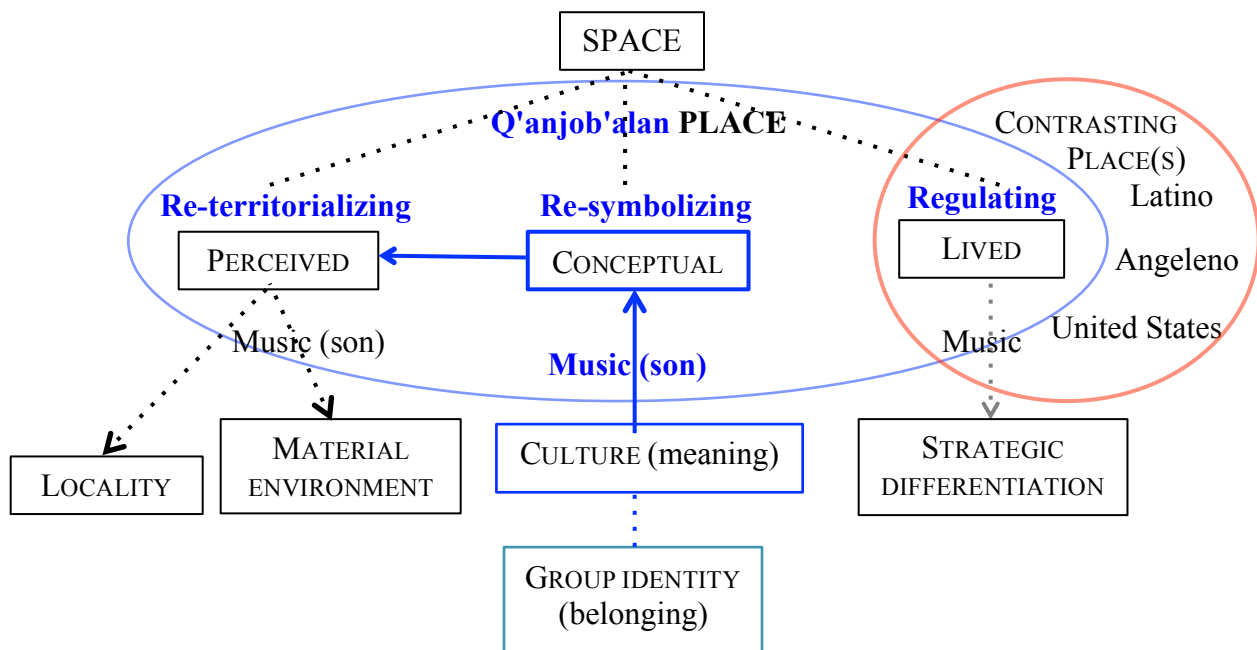


Figure 3-1: Conceptual model for the musical re-symbolizing of urban space. Emphasizing the effect that symbolically conceived space has on re-territorializing perceived space.

Los Angeles. As immigrants with insufficient economic, social, or cultural capital to occupy a block of physical real estate, music becomes a tool used by Q'anjob'alan migrant communities to

conceptualize and re-perceive existing places by reproducing the process of territorializing, symbolizing, and regulating through the community-specific meaning fostered by marimba music and dance. Similar to the caveat I gave in Chapter 1, this iteration of my theoretical diagram emphasizes the effect that conceived space has on perceived space—it is not meant to suggest that the material and locational elements of perceived space are not in play, rather that the conceptual element is underscored in the absence of a familiar material environment for the Q'anjob'alans.

Nota Bene: Because Los Angeles is home not only to migrants from Q'anjob'al towns (Santa Eulalia, Barillas, Soloma), but also to organized migrant groups from Acatán (Akateko) and Coatán (Chuj), much of my Los Angeles fieldwork involved interaction with these other hometown organizations as well. Therefore, many of my observations fit within a larger, Q'anjob'alan community analysis, as *Acatecos* and *Coatanecos* attended many of the same events with *Solomeros*, *Barillenses*, and *Ewulenses* (Q'anjob'al). Significantly, at all but one social event I attended, whether for a Q'anjob'al hometown celebration or an Akateko or Chuj hometown, Q'anjob'al musicians (almost always Ewulenses) provided the marimba music (see Appendix A for a list of all marimba groups with which I worked in the Los Angeles area). As I will discuss in Chapter 4, efforts toward emphasizing a pan-Q'anjob'alan identity in Los Angeles mean that most of the events I describe produce a Q'anjob'alan place that is not particular to Q'anjob'ales.

The Spatial History of Los Angeles

Los Angeles represents the opposite of the Q'anjob'al conception of space. Rather than emulating and incorporating natural formations into built environments, Los Angeles's built environment represents the domination of human creativity over nature: through elaborate systems of aqueducts, green lawns line the paved streets of the desert city; whereas the road to

Santa Eulalia carefully follows the curves of the mountains, the LA freeways carve right through the hills so that they stretch straight and wide, thus maximizing the speed and amount of people who can travel them. In an act of what David Harvey calls "cartographic identity," city planners develop cities to reflect their conception of the "'rational' organization of space for capital accumulation" (Harvey 2001:220). This, he explains, involves not only the building of factories, but also the required infrastructure to house and provide for its workers and managers. How this infrastructure is "rationally" organized differs by city, but often favors those in power while restricting the movement of the poor and dominated classes.

Gaye Theresa Johnson explains the history of spatial regulation to the detriment of poor populations in Los Angeles, beginning with a dramatic nationwide shift in city structure after World War II. During the war, she explains, LA differed from city structures in the rest of the nation because it did not have an industrial core surrounded by a suburban network. Instead, the working class commuted to industrial suburbs, but did not live or vote there. In fact, at the time, real estate companies supported covenants restricting "Mexicans and Blacks" from purchasing homes in those areas (Johnson 2013:14). After the war, however, tax incentives were offered to industry to move into "undesirable areas." The Avalon section of South Central became periodically "littered with industrial debris and saturated by industrial liquid runoff" (ibid.:53). Increasingly in line with what George Lipsitz calls the 'white spatial imaginary,' white flight redirected contract laws and deed restrictions to focus amenities to the suburbs, taking business with them and leaving the undesirable elements of capitalist space in the working class areas of South LA (ibid.).

The Los Angeles to which the first wave of Q'anjob'alan refugees arrived in the early 1980s was that of the Reagan era, of the "War on Poverty" and the resulting housing segregation,

lack of transit options, and reduced mobility due to "urban renewal" projects. The second wave of war refugees to come in the late 1980s and early '90s, and were caught in between South LA and Koreatown during 1992's LA Riots, where temporary contestation of capitalist space was followed by increased territorial policing—not only by the LAPD, but also by gangs.

Power and Creativity in Capitalist Spaces

Representational or conceived space is also the space of artistic resistance to those who dominate the spatial imaginary. As David Harvey highlights in his explication of the spaces of capitalism, production always requires the human imagination, yet only a select few are able to mobilize their designs: the means of production that regulate workers' productive activity. In response, Harvey explains, workers developed compensatory creative "cultures" (Harvey 2001:125). That working class cultures develop creative means of resistance to industrial designs I do not doubt. However, I argue that—in the case of Indigenous migrant workers, at least—this creativity is not solely compensatory, but is rather a radical continuation of practices of spatial entitlement within different restraints. After all, the capitalist imagination did not stop at industrial Europe, but rather has dominated spatial conceptualization throughout the globalized world. Mayan cultural agency becomes more urgent in reaction to these transnational regulations, but certainly does not exist only in reaction.

This persistence of cultural imagination in conceived space, Lefebvre and Soja theorize, are most potent and meaningful in non-verbal communication, especially because of their propensity to enact coded, experiential information. Through exploring music communication in more depth, I will analyze how this phenomenon occurs within the Q'anjob'al community, unpacking exactly what music *does* in terms of imagining, resisting, and enacting a sense of belonging in terms that redefine oppressive spaces. First, I will summarize some statistical and

background information about Guatemalan migration to Los Angeles, using oral history and previous research to fill in information about Q'anjob'alan migration specifically.

ARRIVAL IN "*EL NORTE*"

Oral history places the first Q'anjob'alan migrants to settle in LA around the mid 1970s. A pair of brothers from the (Akateko speaking) town of San Rafael la Independencia are said to have ventured north as labor migrants and thus established the first anchor point for refugees who would follow. In the 1990 census, thirty percent of Guatemalans living in Los Angeles reported to have entered between 1980 and 1984, the height of genocidal operations under Guatemalan presidents Lucas and Rios Montt (Popkin 2005). The census did not track how many of these immigrants were Mayas, however according to the 2012 Guatemalan Migratory Profile, there is a significant correlation between the departments with the largest emigration rates and those with the largest Mayan populations. These are the largely northwestern departments of Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, El Quiché, and Totonicapan. The three Mayan ethno-linguistic groups with the largest emigration rates are the Q'anjob'al, Chuj, and Mam, all leaving hometowns based in Huehuetenango (Caballeros 2013).

The first influx of Q'anjob'alan migrants settled initially in the Pico-Union and Westlake neighborhoods, which were and continue to be neighborhoods with large populations of Ladino Guatemalans, Salvadorans, and other Central Americans (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001). Specifically, a large number of migrants, from San Miguel Acatán and Santa Eulalia settled on Bixel Street because of its cheap rent and proximity to other people who spoke the same language (see Figure 3-2 map). The concentration of Q'anjob'alan migrants on and around Bixel during the 1980s and '90s meant that this neighborhood became a significant territory in the

memory of Q'anjob'alan migration, and it is often referred to today with a sort of nostalgic reference to initiation into the city. Most of those buildings have since been razed and Bixel is now the home of luxury apartments marking the "revitalization" of downtown LA.

While certainly not an extremely visible population, recent estimates calculate that over ten thousand Guatemalan Mayas live in Los Angeles. This number was reached over ten years ago, however, and migration statistics as well as comments from Los-Angeles-based Mayan communities suggest that this number has increased significantly, locating (Guatemalan) Mayas as 5–10 percent of the Guatemalan population in LA (Alonso Bolaños 2012:27; Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001). Of the Mayan immigrant communities I have identified in Los Angeles, the majority comes from Huehuetenango. Of these, four are Q'anjob'al-speaking, one is Akatek-speaking, and one is Chuj-speaking. The community that is involved with the Ladino church celebrations is from Kaqchiquel-speaking Xenacoj, in the department of Sacatepéquez. Though I know of K'iche'-speakers who sometimes participate in Mayan Catholic events, I have not identified a cohesive K'iche' community. There is also a sizeable number of Yucatec Maya from Mérida, México, but in general the Guatemalan and Mexican Maya don't collaborate culturally or politically. My choice to focus on the Q'anjob'al-speaking community from Santa Eulalia is based on their cohesiveness as a community and the large number of Q'anjob'al marimba musicians in Los Angeles.

By 1990, the highest concentrations of Guatemalans were in the Pico-Union/Westlake neighborhoods, Hollywood, and South Los Angeles. Throughout the 1990s, as Eric Popkin's fieldwork revealed, the majority of Q'anjob'al Guatemalans relocated to South Los Angeles, which was considered by some residents to have higher quality housing and less violence than Bixel (Popkin 2005:695). Another factor influencing the relocation of the Q'anjob'al community

was the openness of the Church of the Holy Cross in the Vernon/Main area to support Mayan spiritual and cultural activities.

Refugees, Undocumented Migrants, and Citizens

The conceptualization of national borders in terms of Guatemalan entry has shifted significantly throughout the past eighty years. Guatemalans, both Ladino and Maya, have been migrating to Los Angeles and other destinations in the United States in noticeable numbers since the 1940s. Many successfully presented themselves as Mexicans and came to the USA during the Bracero program from 1942–1960. In the 1970s, the Guatemalans who settled in Los Angeles were mostly middle or upper class and had business or professional backgrounds in their homeland (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001:44–45). During this time, entry into the country, and even citizenship was not particularly difficult to attain. However, when a large number of peasant immigrants from Guatemala and El Salvador began arriving as war refugees in the 1980s, their entry started to be much more heavily policed. Though the UN declared these migrants refugees and set up support camps in México, those who continued to the US would find no such acknowledgement. Most petitions for asylum from Guatemalans and Salvadorans were denied because the US administration would not admit that the military-government actions they supported were a legitimate cause of persecution. Meanwhile, Nicaraguan petitions, coming from a state whose government was opposed by the US, were approved with much higher frequency (Rodríguez 2007:86). Because of this, many Guatemalans and Salvadorans were forced into spaces of hiding, experiencing lack of access to the resources and rights that many of their Latino neighbors enjoyed at the time.

In 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act ruled that anyone who had been in the United States since 1982, or who had worked in agriculture for at least ninety days during 1985

could apply to have their status "regularized" and start the process toward residency and citizenship. However, the accompanying strictness in employment sanctions made it difficult for anybody arriving after 1988 to work at all (Wellmeier 1998a:33). According to Nancy Wellmeier, approximately two-thirds of Guatemalans living in the United States in 1998 were undocumented (ibid.). Even after the war, discriminatory Guatemalan government policies and corrupt politicians perpetuate the underemployment of Maya people and the simultaneous usurpation of their land by foreign extractive companies (see Chapter 2). Hence, the steady increase in Guatemalan, and particularly Mayan, migration to the United States. Due to more lenient immigration laws for minors, many of those arriving every day are under the age of eighteen, never having worked outside of their village, and are thus discriminated against in the LA Latino community for their lack of command of the Spanish language (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001).

Cultural Citizenship: Establishing Belonging

Maya immigrants in the 1990s established community, if not national, belonging through strong church affiliations that stemmed from religious responsibilities in their hometowns. At first, churches in Latino areas of Los Angeles only offered services in Spanish, but as Linda Light observed, in 1995, three Catholic congregations and one Evangelical Protestant church offered services in the Akateko language (1995:21). In 1991, Father David López, the pastor in Santa Eulalia and San Sebastián Coatán at the time, visited the Catholic migrant congregations in Los Angeles and established formal Mayan confraternities based on each hometown: *La Caridad de Coatanecos* ("Charity for People from Kohatán") and FEMAQ – *Fraternidad Ewulense Maya Q'anjob'al* ("Santa Eulalia Maya-Q'anjob'al Fraternity"). Together with Sister Nancy Wellmeier, who at the time had been working with the Q'anjob'al migrant community in Florida, López

established the Pastoral Maya Ministry in 1997, whose mission is the "provision of pastoral care in the Indigenous languages of Maya Catholics in the United States" (Juanatano Caño, Consultant on Native American Affairs, US Conference of Catholic Bishops, email message to author, September 18, 2016). Importantly, in addition to promoting Maya leadership in US Catholic organizations, the ministry emphasizes the transmission of Mayan cultural values and traditions through these church communities. Not only did these churches and religious organizations recreate the basic customs and cultural activities around which Indigenous identity is constructed in Guatemala, they also offered political and economic benefits to migrants in Los Angeles by sponsoring educational activities, such as workshops on learning English, workers' rights, and legal advice (Loucky and Moors 2000:219). During Wellmeier's work in the mid 1990s, over eight hundred former residents of Santa Eulalia were members of FEMAQ. This organization was mostly religiously oriented, holding a weekly prayer session led by a faith-animator trained in Guatemala, but they also organized secular events for the whole community, including basketball and soccer tournaments, celebrating the annual Fiesta de Santa Eulalia, and other cultural events (1998b:116). Eric Popkin observed that in the mid-1990s, FEMAQ created marimba ensembles for young migrants and second-generation youth in order to reinforce Q'anjob'al identity (2005:697).

FEMAQ eventually became divided due to disputes about the practice of Mayan *costumbre* in Catholic facilities. Many members transferred from the church in the Pico-Union area to the Church of the Holy Cross in the Vernon-Main neighborhood of South LA, where clergy were more receptive to allowing non-Catholic practices on their grounds (such as the Mayan ceremony described in the beginning of this chapter). This church transfer, in fact, is one of the factors in the Santa Eulalia community's relocation from Bixel to the Vernon-Main area

(see Figure 3-2 for map). Currently, two parallel Santa Eulalia organizations operate in coordination—the Catholic cultural group associated with the Holy Cross Church, and the Asociación Q'anjob'al Ewulense-LA, which organizes cultural activities for Ewulenses of all religions (this organization has been especially supportive of those who want to learn more about Mayan *costumbre* than the Catholic cultural group teaches). Though tensions between the two groups still exist, they generally sponsor large events together, and try to make all Ewulenses feel welcome to both. Importantly, the one cultural element that has been consistently promoted by both groups is the funding of marimba groups and marimba lessons for youth.

Charismatic Evangelical Churches have expended their presence exponentially throughout Latin America. They have taken especially strong hold in Guatemala and currently rival the Catholic Church for membership (Carlsen 1997). While most Catholic churches (in Guatemala) accept the continued syncretic practice of various elements of Mayan *costumbre*, Evangelical churches are known to be much less tolerant of Mayan customs, often discouraging the practice of music, dance, and any elements of *costumbre*.¹ Thus, evangelical Mayas tend not to participate in the activities sponsored either by the Catholic Church, or by the Cultural Associations—either in Guatemala or in Los Angeles.

The Akateko community in LA has also had a strong organized presence in LA for the past thirty years. Light noted that IXIM ("ee-SHEEM," the word for corn in most Mayan languages) sponsored practices for a marimba groups and for a dance troupe that practiced the deer dance during the patron saint festival for San Miguel Acatán, and other cultural activities specific to Akateko customs (1995:36–40). Since the founding of IXIM in 1986, James Loucky observed that about a dozen associations connected with different towns of origin and religious

¹ though not in all cases: I have worked with several evangelical missionaries who have contributed large amounts of time and money to support locally run cultural organizations that actively promote the continued practice of Mayan traditions

faiths had formed by the late 1990s (2000:220). These associations not only promoted sporting activities and cultural events, they also continued the commemoration of religious holidays, offered financial and emotional support, and organized the repatriation of remains back to Guatemala. The continuation of these support systems, argues Loucky, played a key role in "the replication and re-creation of Maya modes of social organization" (2000:220).

These organizations are important in imbuing foreign spaces in the US with feelings of belonging, thus creating a sense of "cultural citizenship." While scholars have used this term to mean various things, I use this term to speak to those whose legal citizenship is often under scrutiny, but who are contributors to cultural communities within the United States. Aihwa Ong uses cultural citizenship to refer to "a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society" (1996:738). Q'anjob'al Angelenos experience the presence of the nation-state and civil society in this process through limited access to the resources available for citizens, such as claims to certain rights, social services, and freedom of movement. For Q'anjob'al migrants in Los Angeles, many of whom do not have the power to "decide" whether to become legal citizens, as do Ong's flexible citizens, their efforts to create a livelihood and a sense of belonging must be *in spite* of legal and dominant cultural limitations to that belonging. As Gaye Theresa Johnson observes, even legal citizens experience differing levels of social membership: "Though citizenship has long been determined through legal means, local institutions and policies traditionally govern access to social membership. Denied access to basic housing, educational, and vocational rights, repressed communities relied upon alternative routes to becoming American" (2013:64–65). Cultural associations such as FEMAQ (Santa Eulalia), IXIM (Acatán), and Caridad (Coatán) delineate these alternative roots for Q'anjob'alan migrants through activities that instill a sense of belonging in Los Angeles, and

therefore, US spaces. This sense, Raffetà and Duff argue, is tied to the embodiment of affect. "One of the most significant affective states associated with the experience of place and mobility," they argue, in the case of Ecuadoran immigrants in Italy, "is that of belonging—or not belonging—to the bodies, spaces, or territories one encounters in that mobility. For this reason, the affective states occasioned by place should be understood as substantial features of belonging (or not-belonging)" (2013:341). As the daily lives of Maya migrants living in Los Angeles are shaped by not only legal limitations to mobility, but also social limitations, how do migrants transfer their sense of belonging in a place to spaces where their belonging is contested? In what follows, I describe the act of place-making, which involves re-territorializing institutional spaces of non-belonging through the symbolic evocation of belonging through musical activity.

REMAKING Q'ANJOB'AL PLACE IN LOS ANGELES

In Los Angeles, where conceived space dominates perceived space, regulating is the purview of the City—architects regulate built space, city planners regulate access to space, the police regulate mobility. With limited access to space, especially to natural spaces, Q'anjob'alan communities territorialize and symbolize through marimba music. After describing a typical fiesta for a hometown community's patron saint, I will explore Thomas Turino's analysis of music's semiotic capacities to communicate at iconic and indexical levels, and his thesis that music's ability to "create emotional responses and to realize personal and social identities is based on the fact that musical signs are typically of the direct, less-mediated type" (1999:224). In other words, music communicates through signs that incite actions and emotions within certain cultural boundaries. The fact that these meanings are only intelligible to some (those who can

understand without the abstraction of language) compounds music's emotional effects with a sense of inclusivity/exclusivity.

Ephemeral Territories: Patron Saint *Fiestas* in Los Angeles

Q'anjob'alan acts of territorializing in Los Angeles must make meaning out of an environment that is the antithesis of their home environment. They do this through a combination of using natural resources when possible, and "naturalizing" the built environment when not. Los Angeles parks, for example, provide some natural sources for what Mazumdar *et al.* refer to as "place congruent continuity," which maintains a sense of place through characteristics of spaces that are "generic and transferable from one place to another" (2000:320). For example, the Griffith Park Observatory, where some Q'anjob'alans go to meditate and conduct small-scale ceremonies, serves the dual purpose of being a natural space on the top of a hill, which is a somewhat acceptable substitution for the Jolom Witz' (mountain altar, lit.: "Head Mountain") in Q'anjob'al hometowns. Pine trees on boulevard dividers provide pine needles to continue the tradition of spreading them around the floor for special events. The Holy Cross parochial hall and/or parking lot serve as the "central plaza" of the town; many Q'anjob'ales live within walking distance to the church, and this allows for casual social interactions as community members encounter each other on the street during their daily neighborhood activities. Some Q'anjob'alan social places in LA, however, must be made without these "generic and transferable" natural characteristics. In these cases, non-congruent spaces must be transformed through social activity, such as social dances, which—held in the same halls year after year—transform those unfamiliar spaces into Q'anjob'al places.

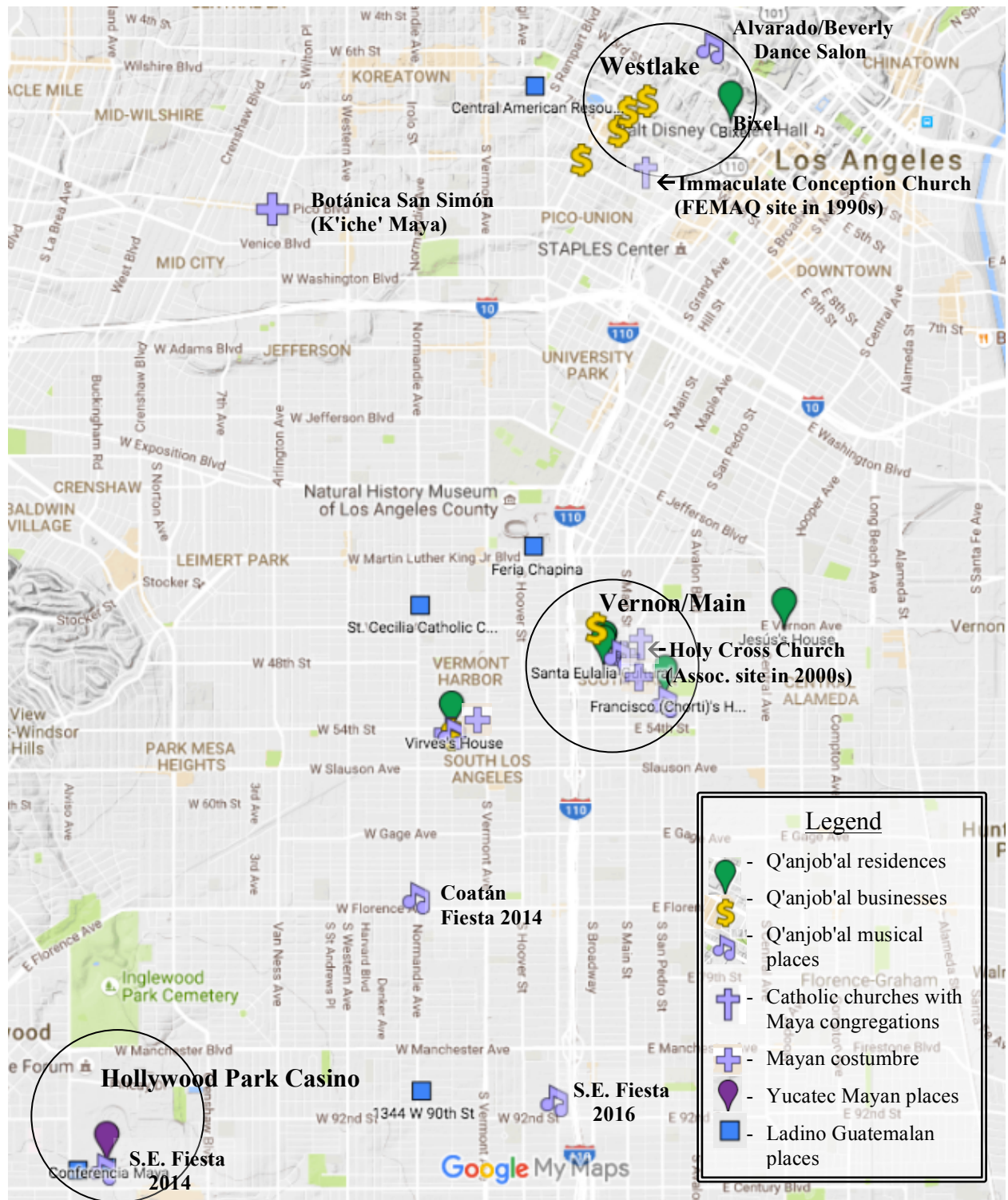


Figure 3-2: Map of central gathering areas for Q'anjob'alan and other Maya community events. Locations are approximate so as to protect the privacy of people mentioned. (Made by author using My Maps by Google.)

Occasions for social dances are usually the celebration of important patron saints, milestone birthdays (1st, 15th), and weddings. Whereas in Santa Eulalia these are held in the municipal hall, or in homes if it's a family event; In Los Angeles, the organizers usually must rent a banquet hall to hold all members of the community who participate. Throughout the three years that I have been working with Q'anjob'alan hometown communities in Los Angeles, I have noticed that certain dance halls are rented more than others. From attending planning meetings, it is evident that although proximity to South LA (along the Figueroa Corridor, south of Vernon) is preferred, price is the determining factor. The most frequently used location is a second-floor space above an adult day care center in the Westlake neighborhood (Alvarado/Beverly dance salon, depicted on map in Figure 3-2 and detailed below in Figure 3-3). Here, I have attended

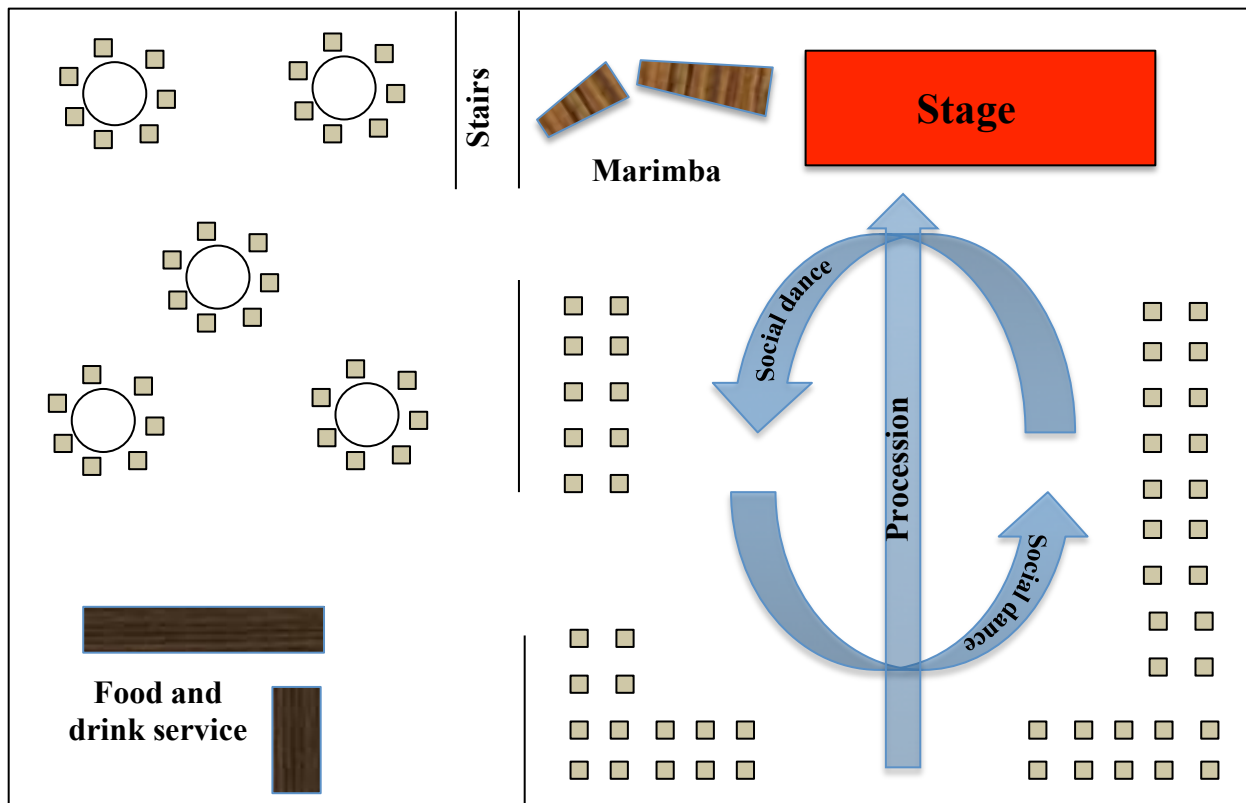


Figure 3-3: Diagram of Westlake dance hall. Most other dancehalls feature one big room, with the tables and food/drink service set up behind the chairs. (Created by author).

three patron saint fiestas for the hometown of San Miguel Acatán—always on the Saturday closest to Saint Michael's day (September 29). This is also the space where the celebration for Santa Cruz Barillas was held on May 7, 2016. Though these events are held for specific hometown communities, each of which has its own cultural association that organizes the party, the events are attended by members from all of the Q'anjob'alan communities that have a presence in Southern California: Santa Eulalia, San Pedro Soloma, Santa Cruz Barillas, San Sebastian Coatán (Chuj), and San Miguel Acatán (Akateko). I have also met a few people from K'iche' communities who attend the Q'anjob'al fiestas. Very few, if any, Guatemalan Ladinos attend. The format of one of these fiestas is similar throughout the communities. My most extensive notes and recordings are from September 27, 2014, for the San Miguel Acatán fiesta, so I will describe this particular "territory" in detail and note any important variances in other events.

As I drive past the front entrance to the dance hall, I know that I am at the right place because I see a family with women dressed in traje típico ("traditional outfit": hüipil and corte) walking from the corner toward the hall. I feel rather emotionally touched to see this unapologetic display of Mayanness in the middle of Los Angeles—and baffled that I have lived here for eleven years and have never seen anyone wearing a Mayan traje on the streets. The women inside the hall would be donning the most colorful, modern cortes and hüipiles, brought to them by family members, or purchased on their most recent trip to Guatemala, but there's something about seeing it on the city streets—the bright pink, green, red patterns dancing against the backdrop of wire fences, grey sidewalks, and metallic parked cars—that brings together two worlds that seem to be from different eras. I drive around the neighborhood for about fifteen minutes before finding a place to park. As I circle, I identify more party-goers—a

man and woman with dark coats, but with a red corte showing beneath the woman's coattails; an older sister tugging on the arm of a toddler who is struggling to keep up in her traje; it very well might be the first time she's ever worn it. I approach the entrance to the hall and the whining twang of the piano emanates through the doorway along with the smell of freshly trodden pine needles. The guards briefly check my bag at the door, their eyes lingering ever-so-briefly before moving on to some young men dressed in flashy norteño-style clothing. Their style suggests they are Mexicans, but as one flashes a smile, I see the characteristic metal adornments that Guatemalan Mayas often choose to decorate their teeth when they get dental implants. I guess that they must be recently arrived Solomeros, though I really have no proof for this.² I wonder what the guards must think of this event. One is African American, so I assume he is not a member of the community (but then, one would also assume that about me, which is why they must have stared for a millisecond). The other is hard to tell from his appearance, but he acts like this is all just part of his job—he doesn't seem to know anyone and doesn't react to any of the exuberant sound and light coming from inside.

The marimba group that has been contracted for the night starts playing at the beginning of the event, usually around 7:00. Some, like me, who have arrived early start to dance, but most are in line, in the adjoining room, to buy homemade tamales or fried chicken from Pollo Campero, which are being sold to try to make up for the costs of space rental. I see Salvador and feel a sense of relief as he hands me a can of Gallo³ and leads me to a table where he is sitting

² Q'anjob'al men from Soloma stereotypically dress in a more Mexican style (pointier boots, bigger belt buckles, wider hats), a form of conspicuous consumption that bespeaks the fact that many Solomeros find economic success from trading across the border.

³ The Guatemalan national beer brand, a lager similar to Corona. Served most frequently in can form—a white base with the black silhouette of a rooster's head as it emerges from a gold oval with a red banner across it. I have been unable to find it sold in Los Angeles, so I'm curious to find out where the fiesta organizers procured it.

with Virves and Roberto. Marimba Princesa Maya (one of the local groups that play the "Q'anjob'alan circuit," of patron saints fiestas)⁴ is set up to the side of the presentation area in the typical formation (see Figure 3-3 and 3-4), with the marimba tenor on the left, the marimba.



Figure 3-4: Marimba Princesa Maya at the Fiesta de San Miguel Acatán. (Photo by author, Sept. 27, 2014).

bajo on the right, the drum set in front, the electric bass to the right of the marimba bajo, and the keyboards right behind the pianista, who will switch off between playing marimba and soloing on the keyboard. They will play throughout the event, about five hours, with only small breaks in between. The presence of live music is essential to these gatherings, as people will generally not dance to recorded music at community events. Folding chairs are set up in a circle around the perimeter of the main room. Its fluorescent schoolhouse lighting is not ameliorated by the cheap

⁴ See Appendix A for a list of all of the marimba groups I met during my fieldwork.

chandelier that has been installed in the middle of the ceiling, but the fiesta organizers have transformed the presentation space with a stage including benches for the visiting princesses and a throne decorated with traditional fabric for the new princesa of Acatán to rest after the coronation (see Figures 3-3 and 3-5). The stage is decorated with small palm plants in each corner and an altar just in front and right of the stage. A blue, geometrically patterned, traditional fabric adorns the altar, with a candle and a small decorative marimba set in front, awaiting the placement of the statue of San Miguel.

After about an hour of socializing and eating, everyone gathers in the main dancing/presentation room and finds a place to sit or stand around the perimeter. The cultural program portion of the evening proceeds with great ceremony. First, a young woman in traditional white hüipil (Mayan blouse worn by females) and red corte (Mayan skirt) marches the American flag from the back of the room to the stage slowly, for the duration of the US National Anthem (in all events I attended, the American flag preceded the Guatemalan flag). When the American flag is in place, another young woman in more modern hüipil and corte with elaborate gold and brown designs does the same with the Guatemalan flag, marching it from the back of the room to the stage while the Guatemalan Flag Song plays (Guatemala has a national anthem as well as a separate song just for the presentation of the flag). Next, the couple in charge of guarding the imagen, or small statue of San Miguel, starts the solemn procession from the back of the space to the front. Two women with incense follow them, and lastly a young man in traditional clothing (white cotton pants and shirt with a red sash around the waist and a straw hat) follows behind beating a drum. They place San Miguel on the top of the altar while the two women with incense prostrate themselves in front of the altar, whispering prayers and bowing

their heads to the ground. The young man places the drum in front of the altar, next to the small marimba, and says a quick prayer on one knee before leaving.

After these opening formalities, Marimba Princesa Maya strikes up a song again to welcome the procession of the princesses, each representing an allied hometown association, as they dance a reverent son step in their traditional clothing, holding an image that represents their town—Acatán's incumbent Flor de Ixim (corn flower) with a silver scepter, Santa Eulalia's Xhumakil Jolom Konob' (flower of Santa Eulalia) carries a small marimba, Soloma's princesa carries a scepter with an crystal apple on top, Coatán a carved chirimía. They are all seated on



Figure 3-5: The princesses from other hometowns line up across the stage while the elected *Flor de Ixim* bows to San Miguel. (Photo by author, September 27, 2014.)

the stage before a new song starts for the newly elected Flor de Ixim, who will fill the role for Acatán for the following year. She takes a particularly long and decorous route to the stage,

stopping in the middle of the space to bow to each of the four cardinal directions, then kneeling to the ground and touching her forehead, then standing and looking up with arms raised—saluting spixan sat tx'otx', spixan sat kan (heart of the earth, heart of the sky)—before proceeding to the altar to give her thanks to San Miguel (Figure 3-5), and finally to take her place on the stage.

Each girl know the importance of her duty as the representative of her hometown, and no cell phones come out for the duration of the ceremony. The ritualized way in which each princesa dances across the space in the room elicits meaning from the otherwise drab asbestos vinyl floors. Though this ceremony often happens outside in the public square of the hometown, which is much more connected to the natural environment than an aging adult day care center in Westlake, the *spixan sat tx'otx'*, *spixan sat kan*, and the four cardinal directions remain the same. Acknowledging them reterritorializes a capitalist space and reinterprets it within a larger frame of Mayan cosmology. Similarly, the measured, reverent steps danced by the princesses seem to indicate a stoppage of clock time in order to acknowledge the Q'anjob'al *Ora*,⁵ and the eternal succession of cycles of time.

After two long speeches by the leaving and the entering princesa (usually given in Spanish and then English, though on this particular occasion the incoming Flor de Ixim spoke in Akateko and English), the marimba starts again, and the most vibrant and lively part of the evening begins. It is around 9:30 and people are beginning to come in droves as they finish work shifts. The various princesses start the social dance, with the entering Flor de Ixim leading the procession to start the Miman Kanal. Men get up from their tables and venture into the dance space, first crowding at the entryways to observe and scan the room, and only some continuing

⁵ See Chapter 1

to approach a woman sitting around the perimeter of the circle and invite her to dance. The social dance style at community events is composed of pairs of women and men (or sometimes women and women) who dance the son step in a counter-clockwise circle, as the planets revolve around the sun (see Chapter 1 for more detail of the significance of this). Marimba Princesa Maya starts with "Son para Arrancar la Fiesta" ("Song to Get the Party Started"), which animates the dancers as they lean into the synchronized steps, making sure to stay with their partners but adding their own finesse to each step—whether it's the male adding a few backwards steps while turning to face the female, or the female stepping with a delicate bounce, as if she's gingerly tiptoeing through a meadow. Small children follow behind their parents, their steps still clunky and out of rhythm as they learn how to dance. I notice that nobody corrects their steps or guides them—they simply watch the adults and do their best to copy them. Eventually, the teens pull out their cell phones and start texting friends; the mood of the dance has lost its reverence and it is now a lively cacophony of conversations, amplifier feedback, and belting laughter coming from the other room where men are ordering beers and catching up with friends. As the party gets going, men start to hover in the doors between the eating room and the dancing room, looking around to identify whom they will ask to dance.

In general, women are the only ones who dress in the traje at these dances. This is also true in Guatemala, where Maya men had to adopt Ladino dress (jeans, plaid button-up shirts, cowboy hats) in order to find employment. Whereas Maya women mostly dress in traje on a daily basis in Guatemala; in Los Angeles, they typically do not. Therefore, the periodic hometown fiestas are special occasions to don the traje, and to teach the young girls born in the US how to do so as well. Just as these dances are special occasions for Q'anjob'alan women in Los Angeles to "dress Mayan," men at the LA fiestas are also more likely to sport a shirt with

some sort of embroidered pattern or woven design. Some of the older men wear the *kapixhay*, which is a woolen pullover perfect for the cold weather in the Cuchumatan mountains. The attendees at these fiestas tend to be majority first generation, with the second generation mostly represented by young women and children. Though second generation adolescent boys tend to be absent, a good number of recent immigrant young men do tend to come. Of the men with whom I have danced around the circle, only two were born in the US.⁶

Re-Symbolizing

As Mazumdar *et al.* (2000) show in their analysis of Little Saigon in Orange County, CA, symbolizing can be done internally or externally. Internal establishment of place happens through everyday social interactions and through ritual. External establishment can be seen through projection to the world via architectural structures, which symbolize those social ties that take place within and between structures. In Los Angeles, the Q'anjob'al have little access to the economic or political resources to create permanent structures that might create a visual symbol. This is why the statue of the hometown patron saint is so important. As Wellmeier observed with Q'anjob'al communities in Florida, "the close identification of the saint with place, physical town boundaries and intense local loyalty is found to be expandable, in the sense that a saint's fiesta can migrate, along with its practitioners, to another country and the saint's power can be extended to include new places" (Wellmeier 1998a:40). The Santa Eulalia church community had a statue of Santa Eulalia made in Guatemala and "migrated" to Los Angeles in 2014. Thus, she not only symbolizes the hometown, but also the migrant population as continuing members of that hometown.

⁶ A discussion on why this is the case is necessary, but is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

It is also my position that rented dancehalls come to symbolize the Q'anjob'al community in LA through what Mazumdar et al. call "place referent continuity," wherein places have continuity through emotional connection (2000:320). As Jonas and Rodriguez posit in their analysis of the migrant experience, spaces are converted into places through the association of that space with a "significant symbol." Borrowing this term from social psychologist George Herbert Mead, they are referring to a gesture (usually vocal) that elicits a particular act or response within a given community (Mead [1934] 2015:47). "The social structure of the significant symbol," they claim, "consists of the spatial setting, the social interaction that transpires across it and characterizes it, and the images and emotional predisposition held by the group regarding the symbol" (Jonas and Rodríguez 2014:22). Thus, the Westlake dance hall, the Hollywood Park Casino, the halls along Normandie in South LA, are places that suggest a particular act (dancing, socializing) and recall emotions of nostalgia, togetherness, and hope for the continuity of a place to be Maya in Los Angeles.

This happens in Santa Eulalia, much as it does in Los Angeles, through dancing in a counter-clockwise circle. In tracing the circles around the dance floor, the dancers apply conceived ideas of cosmological space (related to the direction in which the planets revolve around the sun) to the material spaces available to them, thus embedding these locales into the overall lived space of Maya Q'anjob'al community. The dance halls, however, are just a secondary symbol for what happens inside them. The real significant symbol is the *marimba*. The marimba ensemble constitutes the sonic center from which sonic place emanates. As a visual symbol, the marimba is an important element of most Mayan communities in Guatemala, but it is especially important as a sonic symbol for Santa Eulalia. As a visual symbol, it adorns Santa Eulalia's municipal flag and official municipal letterhead, it is the image carried by the Xhumakil

Jolom Konob' when she represents Santa Eulalia at diplomatic events. Externally implied in its image is the uniqueness of Santa Eulalia in its contribution to the world through music and musicians. Internally implied are memories of the many dances held throughout the year through which Ewulenses recreate the world in the communal dance.



Figure 3-6: Dancers dancing in *son* style, counter-clockwise, to the tempo of the marimba. San Miguel Acatán celebration. (Photo by author, September 27, 2014.)

Los Angeles, however, marimba music gains more importance as a *sonic* symbol: its timbral, melodic, and rhythmic qualities act as icons and indices according to Thomas Turino's theorization of semiotic properties of music. Music's efficacy as a uniting force is related to its semiotic properties. Specifically, the timbre, materials, and shape of the marimba itself act as icons—signs that are "related to their object through some kind of resemblance between them" (Turino 1999:227)—of natural phenomena in the Cuchumatán Mountains. The "vocal" timbral quality of the hormiga-wood keys and its amplification through the cedar resonating boxes are icons of the natural surroundings of the Cuchumatanes, as well as the belief that natural elements have anthropomorphic qualities. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the marimba's four legs serve as

icons for the four legs of many animals, especially the deer, whose legs are said in the *Pop Wuj* and throughout Mayan cosmology to represent the four pillars of the world (K'iche' People and Recinos [1701] 1947). Lastly, the circular song form of the son (exemplified in Chapter 1), in combination with the circular dance form, serve as iconic metaphors, not only for the circling of the planets around the sun, but also for the circular nature of time itself in Mayan cosmology.

Marimba music also acts as a melodic index—or "a sign that is related to its object through co-occurrence in actual experience" (Turino 1999:227)—of the experience of being in the hometown. Certain sones act as Mead's "significant symbols," or what Turino would characterize as signs with "secondness," in that they index existing objects with an energetic interpretant (or response). "Son para arrancar la fiesta" is an example of such a son: it indexes (relates through co-occurrence) the object (one of the first sones in every social dance, regardless of marimba group) by creating an effect in the mind of the perceiver (interpretant) leading her to an (energetic) action, which is to stop whatever she is doing and go join the dance. The strength of meaning in such a sign is increased by the fact that this knowledge is culturally bounded. Only Q'anjob'ales recognize the "Son para arrancar la fiesta," or the "Sones de despedida" (Goodbye Sonos) and know what to do upon their recognition. Similarly, only Q'anjob'ales know that certain rhythms mean that one should dance with more energy, or "hop" in their step, and certain rhythms mean that one should step more solemnly (Kwin García 2014; Aparicio 2016). Furthermore, the emotional connection and formation of "groupness" (Brubaker and Cooper 2005) is stronger specifically *because* this group reaction is elicited by signs that do not involve language (Turino 1999:224).

These sonic places may not align with the landmarks mentioned by Aguilar-San Juan and Mazzumdar *et al.*, but I argue that they do create what R. Murray Schafer calls a "soundmark," or

"a community sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community" (Schafer [1977] 1994:11). Because of the mobile nature of soundmarks, they can occur in a variety of spaces. In Q'anjob'al dance practice, these soundmarks engage the community not only through recognition of melodies, but also through physical experience. Symbolism in marimba music constitutes what Wellmeier refers to as a "continual reassortment of symbols which not only reflect change in the social situation but also effect what they signify" (Wellmeier 1998a:40). Social dances in Los Angeles not only index Q'anjob'alan identity; they also reproduce it through repeated performances. Similarly, Steven Feld's term "acoustemology" proposes a dual process of sensing the sonic environment, while at the same time sounding it.

Raffetà and Duff hold that place-making (or re-making) requires a meaningful interaction between people and their material surroundings: "affect creates resonant affinities between body and place, thus establishing a means for bodies and places to 'territorialize' one another" (2013:341). In this process, marimba music is not only an affective, but also a physical link between body and material space. The acoustic properties of the resonant hormiga wood and the distorted textures of the electric keyboard bounce off the walls and permeate the dancer, enveloping her in warm, thick homophonic movements. As Juan Pablo Diego, musical director of Marimba Princesa Eulalense in Santa Eulalia reflects, "we carry marimba music in our blood; it moves us. And—I at least—when I hear a note of the marimba, I feel a vibration in my body, where I feel the flavor . . . being away from the country, it brings your mind back to the hometown"⁷ (Marimba Princesa Eulalense in conversation with author, May 30, 2015, Pett,

⁷ "La música de la marimba la traemos en nuestra sangre; nos enlanta. Y—por lo menos yo—cuando escucho la nota de la marimba, siento una vibración en mi cuerpo, donde se siente el sabor . . . estando fuera del país, llega la mente en el pueblo."

Santa Eulalia). Thus, marimba music communicates and elicits feelings that connect the dancers and listeners to the homeland through shared affective experience; participants may be in Los Angeles, but they are feeling the same things they felt in Santa Eulalia and dancing with many of the same people. Furthermore, as the saints' days are often celebrated simultaneously in LA and in Guatemala, the home community is dancing at the same time as the LA community, and likely to the same songs. This phenomenon takes something that is very "place incongruent," and through "place referent continuity" (Mazumdar et al. 2000:320), transfers the dance halls into Q'anjob'al place. Thus, the square white walls of the hall in Westlake interact with the community conception of cosmological space, territorializing this hall as a community place—more and more familiar as fiestas continue to be held here.

Regulating

Following Foucault, Aguilar-San Juan posits that territories are regulated through the "distribution of bodies in space" (2005:42). As discussed above, Los Angeles's built environment reflects conceptions of urban space based on several types of regulation: regulation of the movement of transnational capital (Harvey 2001), regulation of bodies and national borders in the transnational labor market (Harvey 2001; Heyman and Campbell 2009), and regulation of personal and social spaces through civic codes (LaBelle 2010; Johnson 2013). The Q'anjob'alan community has very little power to regulate their social territories physically, which is why music allows a subversive sonic response to the limits they face in South Los Angeles. Even in South LA where sonic competition is part of the everyday soundscape, space rentals must abide by noise ordinances, and thus many dances end at midnight (whereas in Santa Eulalia they tend

to go all night). After these hours, the only sounds permitted to permeate and penetrate multiple spaces, of course, are sirens, loudspeaker announcements, and helicopters.

Sonic broadcasting doesn't occur to the same extent in South-LA-Q'anjob'al events as it does in Santa Eulalia, but the sound still "bleeds" beyond visual delimiters. In LA, Q'anjob'al regulation of place takes the form of "spatial entitlement," which, according to Johnson "entails occupying, inhabiting, and transforming physical places, but also imagining, envisioning, and enacting discursive spaces that 'make room' for new affiliations and identifications" (2013:1) on top of already existing regulated places. LaBelle goes on to postulate that sonic territories, or what he calls acoustic territories, are demarcated not by material containment of a particular event, but rather by the context in which sound ceases to be perceived as meaningful and starts being noise (2010:59). In other words, the boundaries of sonic territory are not regulated so much by the physical properties of sound as they are to the meaning for the listener (ibid.: xxiv); though the distinct whine of the keyboard seeps through the doors and windows of the dance hall onto the street, audible by anybody, it only calls to some.

CONCLUSION

Through the practice of music and dance, then, the Q'anjob'ales activate the industrial space, marginalized and ghettoized by the dominant capitalist society, and convert it temporarily to a home place. In so doing, they continue to practice the form of resistance characteristic of Maya in Guatemala throughout half a millennium of colonial and neoliberal domination—maintaining their identity through flexibility in form but continuity in core function and meaning.

Let's return to the original vignette that opened the chapter—the Mayan ceremony in the Catholic Church parking lot. I perceive it as the site of a heterotopia—two opposing places of

social meaning superimposed on one physical space (Foucault, Miller, and Palladino 2015; Soja 1996; Kun 2005; LaBelle 2010). These heterotopias become audible through the sounds of survival overlapped and clashed with the sounds of authority. Though nobody from the community was arrested that night, it was a reminder of the constant city regulation of delinquency, as well as the nation-state regulation of the right to exist within the US borders, that which, according to US law, many "undocumented" members of the migrant community don't have.

CHAPTER 4: REGULATING Q'ANJOB'ALAN PLACE: AUDIOTOPIAS AND STRATEGIC DIFFERENTIATION

In Chapter 3, I reviewed the process of Q'anjob'alan settlement and place-making in Los Angeles, and the ways in which they use marimba music and dance to re-symbolize industrial space with sonic symbols and "soundmarks." In Chapter 4, I consider how these sonic places conflict, overlap, and join with competing sonic spaces in specific Los Angeles sonic heterotopias (or audiotopias), and how the interaction of physical boundaries and sonic boundaries affects ethnic boundaries for the Q'anjob'al community. Furthermore, while Chapter 3 focused on the establishment of Q'anjob'alan places in Los Angeles, Chapter 4 takes a wider view of the various interactions that, over the course of thirty years, have affected the way that Q'anjob'alans conceive their ethnic identities and the core cultural values; as well as a glimpse into the identity orientations of the second generation. One of the most significant changes that has occurred since they first arrived in LA is the shift in emphasis from ethno-linguistic boundaries outwards to incorporate geographic and historic commonality—focusing on similarities as people from the Q'anjob'*alan* linguistic family and from the northern Cuchumatán mountains, and deemphasizing linguistic or municipal differences. The core organizing principle of social gatherings is still the patron saint of each hometown, but the fiestas serve as chances for *all* Q'anjob'alans to come dance together.

Nationwide and Citywide regulations have significant effects on forming spatial and demographic juxtapositions of ethnic groups in Los Angeles, as they influence the spatial maneuvering of the Q'anjob'al and other cultural associations. For the migrant generation, Los Angeles offers an opportunity to be autonomous—to not depend on Ladinos to grant them the space and the ability to practice their customs. In these spaces, Q'anjob'alans practice and listen

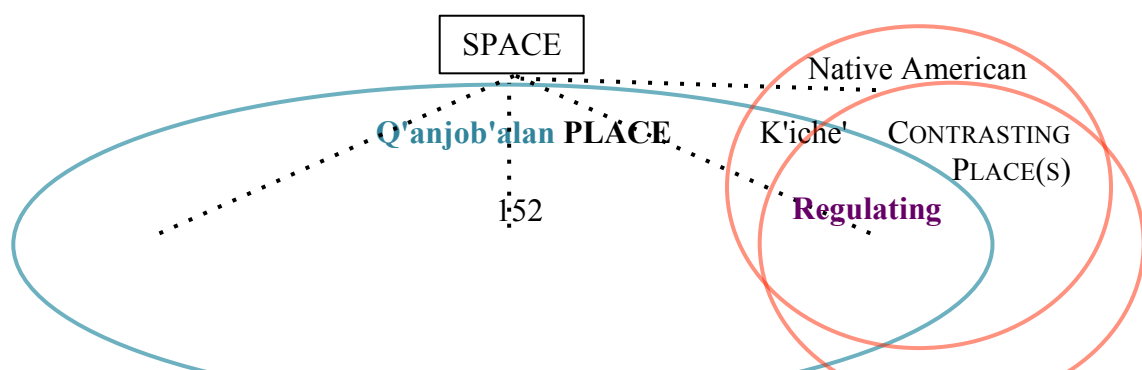
to music in ways that separate them from certain ethnic groups and join them with others. In Los Angeles, the Ewulenses have the best organized and most numerous marimba groups, and because of this, they are finally in a position to dominate the music scene—K'iche' and Ladino events will often hire Ewulense groups to play their parties if they want a "traditional" sound. The second generation, on the other hand, is much more open to consider outside influences, not only between Q'anjob'alans, but also from K'iche's, Ladinos, and Indigenous Mexican and Native North American groups in LA. In this chapter, I will refer to theories of ethnic boundary and ethnic identity shifts from Fredrik Barth and Andreas Wimmer—outlining the demographic "ecosystem" of cultural resources in LA, and how competing parties overlap to vie for cultural space. Music, I propose at the end, creates overlapping senses of place for different parties, and can thus serve to bolster competition for space, or to invite collaboration within space.

LIVED SPACES

In Chapter 1, I argue that place is the dialectical product of perceived space and conceived space. Through re-symbolizing and re-territorializing, the Q'anjob'al community takes industrial buildings and square spaces and inscribes them into Q'anjob'al conceptions of space, thus over time converting them into Q'anjob'al places—even if ephemerally so. Soja and Lefebvre's third category—"spaces of representation" or "lived spaces"—refers to the multitude of places that might exist in one space. In Los Angeles, the demographic diversity and density means that place-making activities may overlap or conflict, both physically and sonically. Spaces of representation, according to Lefebvre, are spaces of praxis. As Soja summarizes, this dialectical interaction is guided most effectively by non-verbal communication, or "signifying sets," among which he includes "music, painting, sculpture, architecture, and certainly theatre,"

and which are "characterized by a spatiality which is in fact irreducible to the mental realm" (Soja 1996:62). Chapter 4 will give several examples of lived spaces as overlapping places, existing consecutively or simultaneously, which are reconciled through musical interaction.

The analysis of lived spaces speaks to the conflictive element of place-making as well as the resulting revisions in social practice and identity adscription. Lived spaces are analogous to Foucault's "heterotopias" or Soja's concept of "thirdspace." Soja uses this term to expand on Lefebvre's theorization of Spaces of Representation. Thirdspace goes beyond the dialectical interaction between perceived space and conceived space (i.e. place) to describe the interaction of a multitude of places that exist within one space (at different times and at the same time). Though not quite the same, many aspects of lived space/thirdspace map onto Foucault's concept of heterotopia. In his lecture "On Other Spaces," Foucault describes heterotopias as "capable of juxtaposing in one real place [space] several different spaces [places], several sites that are in themselves incompatible or foreign to one another" (Foucault, Miller, and Palladino 2015). Furthermore, these heterotopias are often "counter-spaces" that challenge the power-laden capitalist spaces they occupy (Soja 1996; LaBelle 2010). I will consider lived spaces mostly in analyzing the conflicts and collaborations between marginalized groups (African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, Guatemalans, Mayas) as they are realized through sonic interaction in heterotopias, or to borrow a term from Josh Kun, "audiotopias" (2005).



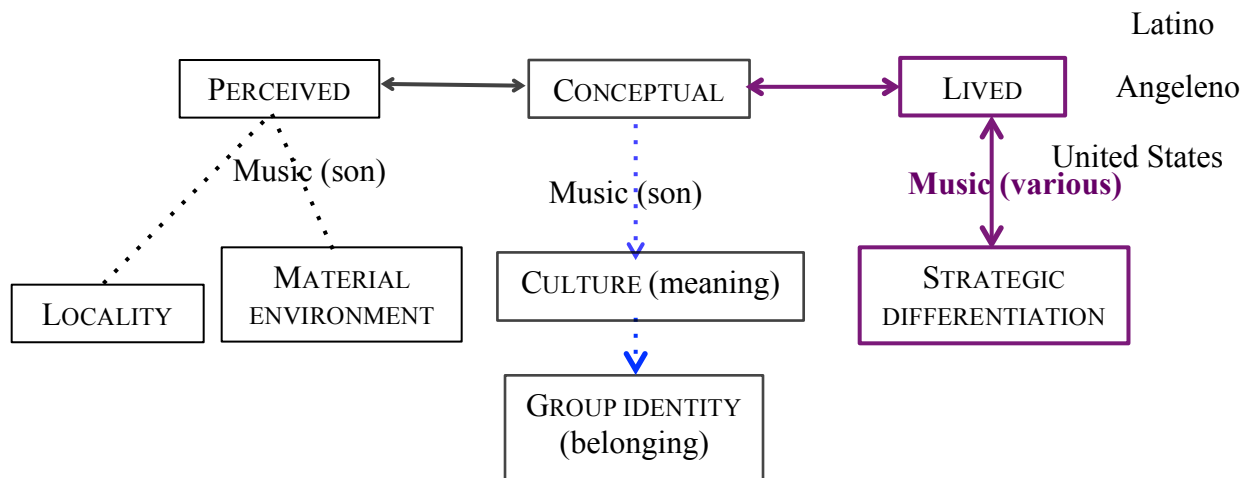


Figure 4-1: Conceptual model for the musical regulation of ethnic boundaries.

In Chapter Four's version of this model, I highlight the boundary-shifting effects of urban lived spaces, wherein Q'anjob'alans come into contact with new ethnic groups under new structures of power. As migrants continue to reproduce the Q'anjob'alan ethnic group's internal values, they also regulate the ethnic boundaries brought into focus through the praxis of lived space. Using musical interaction to engage in strategic differentiation, Q'anjob'alans expand the boundaries to incorporate identification with Native Americans and constrict the boundaries to exclude Latinos (including Ladino Guatemalans), and increasingly, non-Q'anjob'alan Mayas.

Audiotopias

According to Kun, audiotopias are heterotopias ("multiple, conflicting utopias") created through sound. Foucault gives the metaphorical example of a mirror to describe a heterotopia: The image seen in the mirror is perceptual; it does not "exist" in geographical space, but rather in the mind of the person looking into the mirror. The reflected image is thus representative of a utopia. The mirror, however, *does* exist in geographical space, and is what allows the gazer to view the image. The mirror is a metaphor for a heterotopia (Foucault [1967] 1984:4). Applying this to the re-symbolization of space as discussed in Chapter 3, I propose that the emotional

evocation of Q'anjob'al homeland (Santa Eulalia) is the utopia that is realized through social dances in LA (heterotopia). Because these dance halls are not occupied by Q'anjob'ales at all times, and are subject to the spatial and regulatory restraints of Los Angeles, they are not always "reflecting" the image of Santa Eulalia. In other moments, they facilitate different utopias for different inhabitants—be they aging adults and their families, church groups, or gamblers. Sometimes these heterotopias are consecutive, in that the space is occupied by different groups at different times, and sometimes they are simultaneous. Many audiotopias interact in simultaneous "slices of time," with one musical place colliding with another as sound "bleeds" between separate spaces.

Audiotopias are musical spaces of confrontation and difference, Kun continues. This confrontation can occur in the interaction between meaningful sounds, or sometimes in the same piece of music. These conflicts, he posits,

do not cancel each other out but coexist and live through each other. Thus in a sense, audiotopias can also be understood as identificatory 'contact zones,' in that they are both sonic and social spaces where disparate identity-formations, cultures, and geographies historically kept and mapped separately are allowed to interact with each other as well as enter into relationships whose consequences for cultural identification are never predetermined. (2005:23)

Audiotopias, I posit, are unique spaces because of the nature of music-communication. As I discussed in Chapter 3, because music is a form of non-lexical communication, musical interactions are meaningful (Turino 1999) spaces for experimentation (Samuels 2004), which can form unexpected conflicts or collaborations. Soja confirms that "spaces of representation embody 'complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not.' They are linked to the 'clandestine or underground side of social life' and also to art, which Lefebvre described as a coding not of space more generally but specifically of the spaces of representation" (Soja 1996:67). These heterotopias of lived space in Los Angeles highlight the conflicting territories—

whether sonic or physical—that come into play as the Q'anjob'al community leverages for its access to spaces and places. These conflicting interactions act to reform Q'anjob'al ethnic boundaries, first through the project of gaining access to physical spaces, and second through interacting audiotopias in shared physical spaces. In the first part of this chapter, I will describe the regulatory limitations on access to physical space in which cultural gatherings can be held. In the second part, I will introduce several spaces that Q'anjob'ales share with other ethnic groups in Los Angeles, and the resulting audiotopic interactions.

US POLICIES, LOS ANGELES POLITICS, AND COMPETITION FOR CULTURAL SPACES

Many of the determining factors of Q'anjob'al lived space relate to the spaces they are "allowed" to occupy, and the things they are allowed to do in them. One of the important considerations underlying this entire research project is that the reason over 10,000 Mayas live in Los Angeles is that they were no longer able to access the necessary spatial resources (land to cultivate, private residences, sacred spaces) in Guatemala. As discussed in Chapter 2, the surge of violence against Maya populations during the Guatemalan Civil War meant that Maya youth were faced with three choices—"become" Ladino and join the Guatemalan military activities against Mayan villages, join the Maya guerrilla organizations, or flee. During the apex of violence in the 1970s and '80s, Mayan public cultural expression was relegated to private, secret contexts, since overt expression of Mayan identity singled one out for persecution (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of sonic oppression in Santa Eulalia). In Los Angeles, Mayas have much more freedom to practice their culture, but much less space in which to do it.

Despite the freedom from persecution that Mayas experienced upon taking refuge in Mexico and the United States of America, recent increases in strictness of immigration policies,

heightened anti-immigrant rhetoric and accompanying border security, and restrictions on resources for undocumented immigrants place undeniable limits on Maya migrants' access to basic and cultural resources. Unlike the "transnational citizens" and cosmopolitan multiple-passport holders described by some scholars (Appadurai 1990; Ong 1999), Guatemalan Mayas migrate to Los Angeles within a context of stringent financial and legal restrictions. This characterizes the experience of Guatemalan Maya migrants as one of restricted, largely unidirectional flow from small rural hometowns to working class *barrios* in Los Angeles. Relatively few members of the Q'anjob'al community return to their hometowns regularly. A significant number have been in Los Angeles for twenty years or more without returning to Guatemala because they have not been granted citizenship or permanent residency. Interestingly, one member of the community is revered as having a high level of credibility and knowledge of Q'anjob'al culture because, when deported, he spent time in Santa Eulalia living with the *abuelos* (lit. grandfathers) at Jolom Konob' for several years before he was able to return to Los Angeles. Because access to oral transmission of Q'anjob'al knowledge is essential in maintaining Q'anjob'al culture, the limitations placed on personal contact by the U.S. Government have a great effect on access to cultural resources. In addition to limiting movement across borders, undocumented status limits movement within Los Angeles. Mayas are less likely to complete census forms or interact with City officials, despite a concerted effort by the City of Los Angeles to collaborate with Mayan migrant communities (Francisco Ortega, City of Los Angeles Liaison to Mayan communities, personal communication to author, March 12, 2013).

Demographic and Spatial Restrictions on Cultural Resources in Los Angeles

In addition to pressure felt from national, state, and city-level regulations, Mayas hesitate to collaborate with Latino groups, such as Ladino Guatemalans, Central Americans, and

Mexicans. This is despite the relative socio-economic equalization that happens in the diaspora. In LA, other recent migrants and working-class citizens are subject to the same system of legal restrictions, poor education opportunities, and the increasingly expanding gap between wealthy and working Americans. Contrary to typical patterns of class stratification in Guatemala, Ladino and Maya immigrants often work the same types of jobs for the same wages. Those in hiring positions usually do not hold the same patterns of racial discrimination that exist in Guatemala. Furthermore, because of the structure of Los Angeles's industrial economy, many Maya find work alongside Ladino Guatemalans, Mexicans, and Salvadorans in the garment industry (Loucky 2000, Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001). This has created a reversal of the socio-economic structure in Guatemala wherein Mayas tend to hold the low-paying jobs and live in the poor areas. In Los Angeles, Maya and Ladino Guatemalans work the same low-wage jobs and live in the same neighborhoods. According to the 1990 census, Guatemalans were concentrated in service positions (32 percent), operative transport positions (23.1 percent) and craft positions (17.4 percent) within Los Angeles. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, most Q'anjob'ales held work as sewing machinists in garment factories, earning minimum wage (Popkin 2005). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, Q'anjob'ales have begun to search for other areas of employment because of the saturation of the garment industry. According to Eric Popkin, beginning in 2000, "Kanjobal informants began to speak of the declining availability of work within the garment industry in Los Angeles due to their perception of a dramatically increasing number of Mexicans entering this labor market as a result of deteriorating conditions in their home country" (ibid.:695). These conditions led Q'anjob'alans to combine work in the garment factories with informal jobs such as taking in boarders or cooking and selling *tamales* and/or stable part-time jobs. As people become established in Los Angeles, a number of

Q'anjob'alans have become entrepreneurs, opening store-front shops in the MacArthur Park or Vernon-Main areas of LA (See \$\$ symbols in Figure 3-2). Of the Q'anjob'alans I have met in Los Angeles, a list current occupations includes three small business entrepreneurs (technology repair, tailor, money transfer, cellular phones), food service manager, student, clerk, park manager, property manager, bank employee (corporate office), driver, elementary school teacher, consul employee, and only one in garment industry work.

Therefore, Maya migrants have experienced upward mobility in terms of class, and for the first time have the same access to jobs, housing, and food as Ladino Guatemalans and other mixed-race Latinos. Yet the Q'anjob'alan Maya don't necessarily join forces with other Central American migrants as was observed by Douglas Massey and Magaly Sánchez among Latinos on the East Coast of the U.S.A. (2010). In fact, the equalization of socio-economic and ethnic status may actually contribute to the desire for further separation between Q'anjob'alans and Latinos. Because most Angelenos do not distinguish between Mayas and Latinos, they are treated relatively equally. Within the Mexican and Guatemalan communities, however, where discrimination still exists (Hamilton and Chinchilla 2001; Virves Kwin García, Chico Díaz, personal communication to author), socio-economic equality does not erase racial inequality. For this reason, I have found, Q'anjob'ales feel more comfortable interacting with other marginalized groups, such as African American and Native Americans (including Native North American and Native Mexican).

To describe this phenomenon, I return again to Barth's metaphor of an ethnic ecosystem to shed light on the reasons for hardening or blurring of ethnic boundaries that is a bit more nuanced than what Massey and Sánchez observe. According to Barth, there are three main types of relations between co-habiting ethnic groups:

- 1) They may occupy clearly distinct niches in the natural environment and be in minimal competition for resources;
- 2) They may monopolize separate territories, in which case they are in competition for resources; or
- 3) They may provide important goods and services for each other, i.e. occupy reciprocal and therefore different niches but in close inter-dependence. (Barth 1969:19)

Inherent in Barth's conceptualization of an ethnic ecosystem is competition for resources.

Though competition for basic resources, such as employment and housing, are essential factors for Maya Angelenos,⁸ these are not the determining factors in the positioning of ethnic groups—The limited resources that determine ethnic boundary formation are cultural and educational resources for the practice and transmission of Maya lifeways—including teaching the Maya calendar, Maya languages, music and dance, and philosophical and scientific knowledge passed on through ancestors. There are several systems at play in Los Angeles that affect the ways in which the Q'anjob'al Maya strategically regulate (specifically, expand in some circumstances and contract in others) boundaries of group identity.

Latino and Maya competition for Social and Cultural Resources

Relation number 2 above most accurately describes the reason that most Maya groups do not associate or collaborate with the Latino population in L.A. Though they more or less have the same access to jobs, food, and housing as other recent Latino migrants, Mayan groups do not have the same access to social or cultural resources. Because of the limited way in which Angelenos in positions of power tend to view ethnicity (often conflating it with race), Maya Angelenos tend to be lumped into the same group as Latinos when it comes to census data and the resultant educational and cultural resources. For example, the organization CARECEN

⁸ "Angeleno" is the common term Los Angeles residents use to refer to themselves. I choose the term because it implies an emergent group experience that includes a variety of ethnicities and socio-economic statuses, based on a similarity in everyday experiences of navigating the challenges of living in Los Angeles. Also, it does not denote documented or undocumented status of inhabitants.

(Central American Resource Center) is funded by the City of Los Angeles, as well as many other local and some nation-wide foundations (<http://www.carecen-la.org/about-us/funders/>). Some leaders in the Q'anjob'al community, however, have confided in me that they do not feel comfortable going to CARECEN because in the past they have been treated poorly and called "indios." Q'anjob'alans refused to approach other organizations that provide potential social, cultural, and economic resources to marginalized Angelenos, like Esperanza Community Housing SAJE (Strategic Actions for a Just Economy) for similar reasons—because they were perceived as catering to Latinos. For this reason, the emergent group with whom I did most of my fieldwork decided to solicit other groups for funding help, such as Southern California Native American Tribes, and Los Angeles City Council District 9. Interestingly, as District 9 serves South Central L.A., characterized as a mostly African-American district, the group felt that they would be received with greater respect than if they had solicited help from more Latino-focused organizations.

Inter-Mayan competition for cultural resources

When I first started my research on Mayan groups in LA, I expected to see a growing pan-Mayan collaboration and assimilation, as practiced during the Maya Movement in Guatemala,⁹ and as observed by Eric Popkin (2005) in his study of the Santa Eulalia hometown association fifteen years prior to my research. Other studies of Indigenous immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico, show that inter-Oaxacan collaboration in Los Angeles resulted in positional gain in LA as well as in Mexico. The *Frente Indígena Oaxaqueña Binacional* (FIOB), for example, is an collective in Fresno that incorporates all Indigenous groups from the Oaxaca region: Zapotec, Mixtec, Triqui, and Mixe (Domínguez Santos 2004). Similarly, the *Federación*

⁹ See Chapter 2 for more information on the Maya Movement.

Oaxaqueña de Comunidades y Organizaciones Indígenas en California (FOCOICA) unites formerly competing Indigenous organizations in California so that they may stake a claim for support and recognition from the Mexican Government, as other Mexican mestizo migrant organizations have done (Rivera-Salgado and Escala Rabadán 2004). As Oaxacan Indigenous organizations seem to have maintained their strength, however, Guatemalan pan-Indigenous organizations are hard to find at present, with the notable exception of Eterna Juventud Maya (Mayan Eternal Youth), an organization of second-generation youth and some young immigrants (growing in numbers because of the recent influx of minors migrating from Guatemala).

Despite the initial strength of federations such as IXIM, FEMAQ, and GIC (the Guatemalan Information Center) in L.A., however, factionalism among different Mayan groups has prevented them from uniting to form the long-term federations that Oaxacan Indigenous immigrants in Los Angeles have formed. IXIM has now split into two factions, and the AFG (*Asociación de Fraternidades Guatemaltecas*), which brought together the various patron-saint fraternities, no longer exists. Some authors suggested that there were significant efforts to emphasize pan-Maya identity within IXIM and AFG, but my fieldwork has revealed that unity among the Mayan groups in Los Angeles is far from the norm. While some indicated that the various groups unite for common purposes frequently, others intimated that there is still a large degree of factionalism (anonymous sources, personal communication with author, March 12 and 20, 2013).

Q'anjob'alan organizations did at one time share office space and community resources with K'iche' organizations, but felt that their perspectives were not respected, and so decided to split off. My perspective is that the K'iche' have been active in attempting to form pan-Maya collaboratives, but that the Q'anjob'alans feel the need to organize separately because K'iche'

practices have historically tended to dominate such organizations. From the Maya Movement in the 1970s and '80s in Guatemala to pan-Maya organizations in Los Angeles, K'iché interpretations of the sacred book *Pop Wuj* and K'iché versions of the sacred calendar dominate the face of "Mayaness" presented through official means. Q'anjob'ans use musical tradition to explain the differences between them and the K'iche'. "The K'iche' have dominated the Mayan public image in Los Angeles and in Guatemala," several musicians have explained to me, "but their knowledge comes from books. They don't have the oral connection like the Q'anjob'ales. They read about their traditions but we have lived them. The sones call to our people; the K'iche's mostly dance to cumbias (so they don't have that direct musical connection to the past)." I imagine that this is quite an exaggeration, and that proof that this is not so for the K'iche's abounds, however the salient point is that "they mostly dance to cumbias" is considered an insult.

Cultural Association Meetings

As sharing space with the Catholic groups and with the K'iche's did not work out for the Santa Eulalia Cultural Association, the meetings were held in private homes of the members during my fieldwork period. For six months I attended bi-weekly Cultural Association meetings. These were usually Sunday mornings, before work or church started so that more could attend. During the six months of dedicated fieldwork from June to December, 2014, during which I lived in South Los Angeles, most of the meetings were actually a pan-Q'anjob'alan gathering of the leaders of a number of different associations (Q'anjob'al from Barillas and Soloma, Chuj from Coatán, and Akateko from San Miguel Acatán), which were held apart from each individual municipality's Cultural Association meetings. I will talk more about this later, but in order to describe a typical meeting in detail, I will use my fieldnotes from the first meeting I attended, which was the meeting of the Cultural Association for Santa Eulalia specifically.

I meet Roberto at the Holy Cross Church at 3:05—a bit late, but he's waiting for me. He greets me and tells me he'll guide me over to the place where the meeting will be: the house of the Cultural Association's Vice President, Aurelio Andrés José. I walk silently behind Roberto on an open sidewalk sparsely populated with trees. The street is lined with craftsman houses, some of which have been converted into duplexes, some more kept up than others. Every house has a wrought-iron fence separating the front yard from the sidewalk, with a gate that would slide or swing open to allow for the ingress of cars or people pertaining to the property. Behind the fences, I observe an alternating array of landscaping that varies from summer-scorched grass lawns to potted trees and plants, some completely cemented to allow for more parking space, and some a combination of pavement and plants. The occupants of some of the houses are outside in their yards or on their porches, watching me briefly, but warily, as I follow Roberto. I notice a mix of Black and Latino residents. A full head taller than Roberto, I must stick out as the only white woman they've seen walking down their street in quite a while.

We arrive at Aurelio's house, a nicely kept one-story craftsman with large bougainvillea bushes outside. Roberto opens the white iron gate, ushers me into the cement yard, and closes it behind me as a dog barks from the backyard. Walking up the porch steps and in through a screen door, I try my best to smile as my eyes adjust from the bright August LA afternoon light to the cool darkness of the hardwood-floored room, lit only by the natural light coming through the tree-covered windows. A group of about eight men and one woman are sitting in a circle. I go around the circle shaking the hand of each member; a man in the center who must be Aurelio hands me a bottle of water and tells me that I am welcome. I look around for a seat, and two men scoot apart making room for me on the couch. I start with a brief description of my research project, which is received with a warm and sincere, yet relatively silent and formal welcome. I

can't help but be a little distracted—as we are talking, kids are sitting at the table just behind us in the "dining room," (which is the southern half of the large room in which we are meeting). Women and seemingly unaffiliated young men slip out doors into the kitchen, feed their kids, tell them to hush if they get too loud. (I would later learn that there were roughly three families living in Aurelio's three-bedroom house, and that the ability to tune out background noise was essential to accomplishing anything in the space.)

The meeting starts with an announcement of the day according to the Mayan (Q'anjob'al) calendar and an explanation of its significance. This day was twelve Lamb'at, the latter being the name of the nawal or ora in charge of the day, and the former being the level of energy. Lamb'at, a man named Rogelio explains, is related to seeds, to life, and to the fluorescence of culture and nature. It is a day to dialogue, especially about conflicts—it would be a day of darkness if you had conflicts or troubles inside, but a day of reflection if you were at peace with them. "Remember this is not a religion," cautions Rogelio. "This is a science. You can be Catholic, Christian, Evangelical, or whatever, and still live by the Mayan calendar."¹⁰

The meeting focused on three main topics: requests for the Xumak'il Jolom Konob¹¹ to represent Santa Eulalia at other hometown fiestas (continuing the form of inter-municipal diplomacy that exists in Guatemala), organizing the basketball and soccer tournaments between municipalities, leading up to the Santa Eulalia Fiesta in February, and organizing the details of the Fiesta. Virves (the secretary of the Association) ran through the items on the agenda.

¹⁰ This statement was one I heard often throughout my fieldwork, but especially in Los Angeles. The leaders of the Cultural Association in LA were particularly interested in promoting a connection with Q'anjob'al tradition for migrants and their second-generation children alike. Because the Holy Cross Catholic Church is at the physical and social center of one of the largest organizations of Ewulenses, the members of the Cultural Association wanted to emphasize the lack of conflict between Catholicism and Mayan cosmology.

¹¹ Q': "Flower of Santa Eulalia." See Chapter 3 for a description of the role of the Xhumak'il Jolom Konob,' an adolescent girl chosen annually—both in LA and in Santa Eulalia—to serve as a cultural ambassador for each town.

First, could the Xhumak'il Jolom Konob' represent Santa Eulalia at the Fiesta for San Francisco La Unión, a municipality from the Department of Quetzaltenango whose migrant community was centered in Canoga Park, CA. Most members opined that the notice was too short (two weeks) for the girl to prepare. They turn to Juana, the only woman present, who confirms, as a former Xhumak'il back home in Santa Eulalia, that it wasn't enough advance notice. The rest of the meeting is spent mostly talking about organizing the basketball tournament that would happen in the last few months of the year; however, as discussions get heated the members switch from Spanish to Q'anjob'al and I have to guess at what's going on. I suspect that most meetings take place in Q'anjob'al and that they only started in Spanish for my sake. Simón, who is sitting next to me, momentarily breaks out of the conversation and asks me if I understand what's going on—half in jest, and half seemingly cautious that I actually do. I smile and shake my head, "no tengo idea," I whisper. After a heated topic was resolved and the discussion dies down, Antonio Díaz, the President, becomes aware of me, and jokes that I have to learn Q'anjob'al to really understand what is going on. I am relieved that they act like I'll be around long enough to do so. At the end of the meeting, Antonio thanks me for my presence and interest in the group, saying that he had learned things about me just from the way I sat silently, but remained attentive, whether or not I understood what was going on. I took this positive reinforcement as a suggestion of how I should behave at future meetings.

Inter-Association Meetings and the Search for a Q'anjob'alan Space

As I mentioned briefly above, the period during which I did my most intensive fieldwork coincided with a movement of collaboration between five municipally based cultural associations (Santa Eulalia, Soloma, Barillas, Coatán, and Acatán) in an effort to combine resources to solidify a cultural presence for the benefit of the second generation in LA. These

meetings were scheduled about once every two weeks, early on Sunday morning so as not to conflict with work and church schedules (in fact, I missed the beginning of the first meeting because I assumed that "7:30 on Sunday" would be in the evening). Virves hosted the first three meetings in his house in South LA. An old craftsman on a corner lot, the house was home to Virves, his wife, his in-laws, his wife's cousin's family of four, and a guard dog very intent on fulfilling his mission to prevent people from entering the yard without permission. Behind the house, on the other side of a concrete parking pad, a small shed that must have once served as a garage was now home to Virves's marimba and recording studio. On the first floor of the main house, the living room and office were separated by a sliding door, which, when opened, allowed for a sizeable gathering. Roughly twenty-five people squeezed into the space at the first meeting I attended on August 24, 2014. Each hometown was represented by three or four leaders, and in addition most of the *princesas* were present in traditional hometown regalia. For this meeting, Virves had brought the *tenor* half of his marimba into the living room, where he and a few members of the Santa Eulalia Cultural Association marimba group would play and educate the group about the importance of the marimba. Though I missed this explanation (which happened during the first part I missed), Virves summarized the lesson for me later that week (see the opening to Chapter 1). I entered during the break, when Aurelio, Chico, Antonio, and Mateo were playing a *son* while the guests drank Sunny-D, coffee, and pastries. After the break, José Simón (my marimba teacher who had been a member of the Eternal Juventud youth marimba) spoke, imploring the listeners to do what they could to get the youth group up and running again. "It kept me off the streets and taught me who I am," he explained. At 9:00 Virves had to leave to open his shop, but Salvador and Antonio continued leading the meeting, suggesting that the

group meet regularly to teach the second generation, and remind the migrant generation, about the significant elements of Q'anjob'alan culture.

At the second meeting, Salvador spoke for thirty minutes about the Q'anjob'alan calendar, what each *ora* (ritual day) means, and how it is different from the K'iche' and Yucatek calendars. Afterward, the recently elected Flor de Ixim from San Miguel Acatán (see Chapter 3) spoke about her experience as a second-generation Akateka in Los Angeles. The *lingua franca* of the meetings had been Spanish, since not everybody spoke the same Q'anjob'alan language. However, as a child of parents who had come from the very rural villages of Acatán, the young woman had grown up speaking Akateko with her parents and English in schools—and did not speak very much Spanish. She spoke mostly in Akateko, breaking into English when she didn't know a word (which would then be translated to Spanish by Lourdes, a leader of the Acatán community), about her experience as a teenager, her work in community college and then at UC Berkeley, and her decision to major in anthropology to study more about her heritage (Chico translated for me later—Akateko is the closest to, and up until recently was considered a dialect of, Q'anjob'al, so he said he understood most). She admitted that the path had been particularly difficult, but that being involved in the community had helped her persevere, and that it was important for the second generation to work hard to achieve what their parents had sacrificed so much to provide for them. She had received grants to fund her way through college (some from money raised by IXIM to support educational expenses for second-generation akatekos), and she reminded the parents and teens present that there are opportunities for those who could not afford to pay for college. José finished the meeting, talking about his experience working full time and studying at University of La Verne, a school inland of Los Angeles.

Though each meeting had a cultural component, a major tenet of this effort was to find a literal space for cultural activity—a storefront or office where the various communities could house their marimbas, hold practice, keep their dance regalia in one central place, hold language lessons, and continue to hold cultural meetings. Virves's living room was not a sustainable solution—especially since his first child was due soon and he would not be able to continue hosting after his wife gave birth. Despite my initial understanding that I was welcome only as an observer to cultural meetings, the inter-group meetings had more of a short term, action-driven goal. In this case I was welcomed and even requested to take part in the meetings and help with the projects. It was through this involvement that I learned the most about the requirements for an acceptable and meaningful social space for these Q'anjob'alan migrants.

As I became involved in this process, I learned the details of how these Q'anjob'alans viewed their ethnic "eco-system" and the corresponding spaces where their cultural activities would either flourish symbiotically, or be uprooted by competing ethnic groups. My first suggestion that I reach out to my contacts in Central American and Mexican migrant resource centers elicited the emphatic response that began the introduction to this dissertation: "*la cosa es que no soy Latino.*" (*the thing is that I am not Latino*).

When I suggested that I approach the City Councilmember of LA's Ninth District, I received no pushback and even some genuine interest in the possible collaborations with the office, which represents South Central: an area of Los Angeles that is perceived as mostly African American. My collaboration with the Councilman's office did not result in finding office space, but *did* result in a genuine interest in making the Mayan population feel welcome. Virves and the Cultural Association's marimba group were invited to perform in the 9th District Día de

los Muertos (*Day of the Dead*) concert, but they had to cancel at the last minute because of lack of sufficient musicians for the event.

As I continued to investigate potential office spaces, many were crossed out because they were too expensive, didn't allow for the "noise" that would come with hosting marimba and dance practices (though I explained that the space would mostly be used on weekends), or because of conflicts related to inter-Mayan contentions and unequal levels of cultural and social capital. Unfortunately, the momentum for this project derailed as the year drew to an end and individual municipal cultural associations focused on planning their own saint's day fiestas.

HETEROTOPIC SPACES AND ETHNIC BOUNDARIES

Q'anjob'al Youth in Native American Audiotopias

While the migrant generation appears to be holding tight to the cultural values and boundaries set in Santa Eulalia, the second generation feels more impulse to explore and experiment with different genres and different settings. This includes collaborations with K'iche's, Native American groups, and even Ladino groups in Los Angeles. One of the organized youth groups that I learned about was a marimba band composed of second-generation Ewulenses called Juventud Maya (which, interestingly, included boys and girls). They had stopped practicing and performing several years before I began my research, but it was where one of my marimba teachers, José, had learned to play. José told me during one of our marimba practices that there was always tension between what the Santa Eulalia Cultural Association (the benefactors and teachers of their youth marimba group) wanted them to play and what they wanted to play. "The leaders of the cultural association wanted us to play only sones, but we really liked playing cumbias. And we would get hired to play for Guatemalan [Ladino] events, so

we had to be able to play them." José explained that he understood why the leaders (one of whom was his uncle, Virves) wanted them to focus on sones, but they felt that it limited their creative and musical curiosity. As members of Juventud Maya started leaving to go to college, the group disbanded, and, José's efforts to lead his own youth group (now that he has graduated from college himself) have not come to fruition (mostly due to a lack of space in which to host the marimba and the lessons).

A second youth group that *has* remained in tact is one called Eterna Juventud Maya (I don't think there's a relation between the youth marimba group and this youth group), which invites youth from all Mayan groups. The leaders mostly come from a K'iche' family from Quetzaltenango, and I have met Akateko, Q'anjob'al, and other K'iche' members from the group. They come from a variety of towns in Guatemala, not only in Huehuetenango, but also some in the department of Quetzaltenango and some from Totonicapán, who also have large numbers of migrants in the US. They are also regularly invited to and involved in Native American youth cultural events. One of the first dances that I attended during my fieldwork was a fundraiser put on by EJM, in August of 2014.

The guest of honor during this event was Shirley Ventura, who had recently been elected as Daughter of the Native Fire at a pan-Indigenous gathering in Oregon. The organization, she explained during her speech to the audience, includes Native American groups from the US, such as the Cahuilla; from Mexico, such as the P'urhépecha and the "Aztecs;" and several Mayan groups, such as Akatekos, K'iche's and Q'anjob'ales. Her statement for the press emphasizes a message of shared Native American heritage, firmly placing Mayas in the same category as other indigenous "siblings" of the continent.

We are a unique circle that makes an effort to represent and share the authentic richness of all cultures. Through the Sacred Fire, the Sacred Ceremony, our

dances and music, we honor the Supreme Creator of the Universe and our Native ancestors, legacies that we preserve and transmit to future generations. We salute the four cardinal directions at the beginning and at the end of our dances with conch shells, drums, rattles, copal and pom (incense), amplifying the presence of Gran Ajaw, called Ometeo by the Native Americans, Curiacuari by the P'urhépechas. (Ventura in *La Voz del Inmigrante* 2014)

Naming musical instruments used to salute Ajaw, she noticeably left out the marimba from this list, implying to me that she was looking to emphasize her practice as a Native American



Figure 4-2: Shirley Ventura wearing the headdress and blanket she was granted as the 2014 Daughter of the Native Fire. (Photo from *La Voz del Inmigrante* 2014, August 11).

woman, not just as a Maya or K'iche' woman. Though I was never able to do a significant amount of work with Maya youth in LA, I did meet and talk with a few who came to the patron-saint fiesta dances, or who were in a marimba group. I learned from one young man from Santa Eulalia, Juan Pedro, that he regularly attends the LA pow wow held at UCLA. "I go every year

with my mom and my aunt," Juan told me. He explained that he doesn't feel as connected to Mayan culture here in LA, but that going to the pow wow reminds him that he comes from powerful ancestry that has survived for centuries. "My mom tells me that I used to go to all the [Q'anjob'al] dances when I was young, but then I started growing away from that stuff. But then I started going to the pow wow when it was in East LA and continued when it moved to UCLA, and now I go to the Santa Eulalia dances when my mom wants me to" (Juan Pedro, personal communication to author, May 30, 2016). From Juan's statement, and other testimonies I had heard at the Pastoral Maya youth conference in July 2014, it seems that Maya youth grow up in LA accompanying their parents to hometown events, and even speaking their Mayan language, but then at the beginning of adolescence they start to feel ashamed of their obvious differences from their Latino classmates. The option to identify as Native American in the US gives them new perspective on their differences from Latinos, and many come back to learn about their Mayan roots with gusto in college or early adulthood.

Though the youth are more open in their cultural collaborations, the migrant generation does seem quite receptive to sharing Native American space. I saw evidence for this not only in the Q'anjob'alan cultural initiative's willingness to solicit support from Southern California Native American Tribes, but also in the invitation that the Santa Eulalia Association extended to Aztec Dancers to perform at their "reception" for Santa Eulalia's arrival (at least her statue's arrival) to the Holy Cross church, and, most poignantly, from the participation of a pan-Maya dance troupe in an Indigenous People's Day event in the fall of 2016. This event, in a San Fernando park, was part of a growing nation-wide movement in protest of the US celebration of Columbus Day. It was hosted by members of the Tatavium and Cahuilla/Serrano tribes, and consisted of a large circle of tents set up around the park, with a stage at the northern end of the

circle. I arrived as the Cahuilla Birdsingers were finishing and a Native hip hop duo were taking the stage. The line for fry bread was about a half-hour long, so waited in line while I watched the crowd, including some of my friends from Eterna Juventud Maya, dance to the hip hop beats of LightningCloud. The elder attendees were not as motivated by the beats of DJ RedCloud and MC Crystle Lightning, so they grouped in the southern end talking amongst themselves.

When LightningCloud left the stage, however, and the Mayan dance troupe started their performance/ceremony, everyone turned to listen. The same Aj i q who had led the Mayan ceremony at the Holy Cross church in 2014 (see the beginning of Chapter 2) took the stage. She spoke in a mixture of K'iche' and Spanish, while her daughter translated to English for the crowd. They identified themselves as Maya, not as K'iche' or Q'anjob'al. "We are all the same," the woman spoke. "The 13th Baktun has ended and this new era is a time to reach out, to give our hearts, open our hearts, and embrace spirituality." As the two women left the stage, the marimba group standing behind them started playing a rendition of the well-known *son chapin* "Rey K'iche'." Though they were an Ewulense group, they did not have the typical orquesta electrónica set-up, but rather, a stripped down marimba sencilla with saxophone, bass, and drumset. As they started playing, the procession started with the spiritual guides in the front and the rest of the "dance" troupe processing in a solemn son behind them. The women reached into baskets and drew pine needles, spreading them around the circle as they swayed back and forth to the music. Behind them, the last to enter was a young man playing a drum. He seemed to ignore the beat of the marimba group, playing his own interpretation of the event's rhythm. As the circle took form, the male spiritual guide invited the tribal leaders of the Tatavium and Cahuilla tribes to come and participate in the ceremony. As several elder women and men stepped inside the circle, those demarcating its edges turned inward, with their backs to the audience, indicating that this was

more of a ceremony than a performance. The drum kept beating the rhythm of the ceremony, while the saxophone and the marimba continued on stage, but now in more of a background music function.

In this event, the pan-Maya dance group (made up migrant *and* second generation) presented their music and their culture to the original inhabitants of the land they were on. They thanked them, and, in inviting them to take part in the ceremony, cemented a relationship that seemed to say, we've all suffered removal from our land, we must bind together in this new era. The musical overlapping of the marimba and the ceremonial drum symbolized the coincidence of two ethnic groups expanding to include each other—not necessarily dancing in the same rhythm, but coexisting in peace and solidarity.

CONCLUSION: STRATEGIC DIFFERENTIATION AND THE SECOND GENERATION

Andreas Wimmer proposes a taxonomy of forms of ethnic boundary change that help to interpret why the migrant generation seeks greater division in ethnic boundaries and the second generation does not. There are two modes encompassing five different strategies through which people can reinterpret their ethnic group boundaries: The first mode is to change the "topology," or shift the boundary line to 1) expand or 2) contract the group membership. The second involves changing the meaning and implications of an existing boundary through 3) transvaluation—shifting the perceived hierarchy of stratified ethnic groups, 4) boundary crossing—changing to "pass" as member of another ethnic group, or 5) emphasizing group belonging based on non-ethnic characteristics (Wimmer 2008). I believe that the migrant generation has a greater dedication to strategy 3, transvaluation without changing boundaries, while the second generation—not having experienced the ethnic violence that forced their parents to leave the Cuchumatanes—are interested in strategy 1, expanding the emphasis to incorporate more people.

In Guatemala, the Maya-Ladino ethnic boundary constitutes what Fredrik Barth has typified as a "stratified system" of ethnic boundaries—wherein one ethnic group has control of the means of production utilized by another group (Barth 1969:27). In Guatemala, Mayas had to use the strategy that Wimmer has defined as "positional moves," or crossing to the other side of the boundary, in order to work. Thus, male and female workers or entrepreneurs had to "act Ladino" in economic situations. In Los Angeles, however, there is space for them to free themselves from subordination and enact transvaluation by becoming equal to Ladinos in terms of class status. They have no interest in letting others in who threaten to undermine that equality.

The second generation, however, does not have the same emotional stock in emphasizing Q'anjob'alan identity in reaction to K'iche' or Ladino dominance. In recognizing the similarities between Q'anjob'alans and other Maya groups, between Mayas, Native Mexicans, and Native Americans, they have managed to secure more collaborative spaces to share their music and understand who they are in relation to others. This does not, as many fear, mean that they will forget their Mayan heritage. On the contrary, for many it allows them an avenue through which to finally appreciate and promote it with the support of others who have been through similar processes in the US. While second generation youth collaborate with many other ethnic groups in Los Angeles, the Native American and Native Mexican organizations are those that their parents increasingly welcome. An emphasis on spiritual values and traditional musical practices of the *abuelos* has inspired neo-traditional marimba groups in LA, such as Eb' Ajson. This traditional turn, as I will describe in Chapter 5, has also taken root in Santa Eulalia, through the online radio phenomenon, which allows for more musical communication across borders.

CHAPTER 5: RADIO FIELDS AS TRANSNATIONAL PLACES

DIGITAL SPACE, TRANSNATIONAL PLACE

For the past several decades, scholars of migration have debated the significance of transnational communication between immigrants and their sending communities. In this discussion, scholars assess the ways in which immigrants exercise "simultaneity" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004) by balancing the identities associated with their hometown and the host society. Because the host society is usually an urban center in which the migrant is exposed to an array of economic and social opportunities, anxieties arise as to how migrants change, and as a result, how they influence economic and social opportunities in their sending hometown community. In the 1990s, the term "social remittance" became useful as a way to imagine "the ideas, behaviors, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities" (Levitt 2001:11). Of main concern in these discussions were changes in cultural values back home, as emigrants, who increased their status in and influence over the sending community through economic remittances, adopted values and attitudes of the host community and "sent" them back home. I argue, however, that the flow of social influence is not unidirectional as it is with financial remittances. Rather, transnational networks create a deterritorialized place "in between" the locations of community members, where social and cultural values come into conversation and affect populations throughout the migrant network.

This transnational network does not have a location, but it *is* physical; its materiality exists in the digital process of communications. In his introduction to the essay collection *The Media of Diaspora*, Karim H. Karim suggests that "electronic media [of diaspora communities] reterritorialize the diaspora through the resonance of electromagnetic frequencies . . . their rhythms resonate transnationally to mark out non-terrestrial spaces that stretch out

intercontinentally" (2003:10). For the Q'anjob'al community, Internet radio is a particularly potent example of this non-terrestrial space. It composes what Lucas Bessire and Daniel Fisher might call a radio field: "unruly ethnographic sites, as well as zones where social life and knowledge of it are organized in specific and comparable ways" (2012:4). The ethnographic sites of Q'anjob'al Internet radio are the radio station studios, the listeners tuning in on their various analog or digital apparatuses, the community social events that are broadcast live across borders, or the websites that collect comments from listeners.

Sociologist Roger Waldinger (2004) has argued that communication patterns among hometown communities that span national borders are fundamentally no different in the twenty-first century than they were in the twentieth. I agree, however, with scholars such as Michael Smith and Luis Guarnizo that modern technology has radically changed the ways in which immigrants consider their identity in relation to their sending communities (1998). In particular, I observe the process of Internet-based musical exchange among Q'anjob'al Mayas in Los Angeles and Guatemala, analyzing the verbal and musical conversations that happen in this space. I begin with a review of theory on the materiality and spatial elements of radio, a history of community radio in Latin America and Guatemala, and then an analysis of transnational community radio as a sort of "virtual central park" through which Q'anjob'al identity is recreated.

Anthony Giddens writes that one of the most important conditions of modernity is the separation of time and space from their localized social systems. In other words, the "emptying of time and space" (Giddens 1990:18) can be conceived as their decontextualization from cultural conceptions (or, as I would characterize it, the imposition of Western European concepts of time and space over all other concepts of time and space). The "emptying of time," he explains, occurred with the standardization of "regions" of time as represented in mechanical

clocks (ibid.:17). The "emptying of space," on the other hand, lies in the separation of *space* from *place*, what can be distilled to mean the existence of "presence" without face-to-face interaction, or what he calls "facework" (ibid.:88). In this chapter, I theorize that music shared across digital networks can serve as a sort of face-to-face interaction that allows for trans-local place.

The Migrant Network as a Digital Place

In characterizing a migrant community based in Oaxaca, México, Adriana Cruz-Manjarrez argues that "transnational social spaces are combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states" (2013:57–8). Furthermore, these "positions in networks" exist within overarching fields of power. Josiah Heyman and Howard Campbell argue that Appadurai's characterization of transnational "flows" undertheorizes the hierarchy of forces at play in restricting and directing these flows. They argue that there is greater "weight" to the power of global capital and secondarily to the power of nation-states in directing "financescapes," "ethnoscapes," "technoscapes," "ideascapes," and "mediascapes" (Heyman and Campbell 2009:132). In fact, as David Harvey and others emphasize, *transnational* does *not* mean *postnational*; the very same national regulations that facilitate ease in flows of capital financescapes across national borders also form obstacles for the resulting reverse flow of people through ethnoscapes (Harvey 2001; Heyman and Campbell 2009). Yet, this does not mean that all significant positions in the migrant network are necessarily in the diasporic urban centers.

Migration scholar Michael Kearney introduced the "Articulatory Migrant Network" as a comprehensive model for assessing the anchor points and pathways for directing Appadurai's transnational flows of people, media, finance, technology, and ideas (1990). Articulation theory

is a response to "modernization" and "dependency" models of migrant communities. The former proposes that modern development flows from the "center" to the "periphery" through immigrants and their connections to their sending communities, while the latter argues that, instead, labor and other resources flow from the periphery to the center, thus perpetuating underdevelopment. Articulation theory takes a more nuanced look at the interactions between various flows exchanged between different "nodes" of a particular network. Kearney gives the example that even though economic remittances flow from the receiving community to the sending community, they articulate with and are made meaningful within the localized economy and value structure of the sending community. Furthermore, migrants living in the receiving community do not become simple conduits for global capitalism; they interact with and perpetuate sending-community cultural value structures within the urban centers (Kearney 1986). Kearney's theorization of the Articulatory Migrant Network shifts the "center" to the sending community as a "distinct corporate settlement with a well-developed identity," and the periphery is seen as the "daughter communities" formed by migrants living in various diasporic settlements (ibid.:353). Thus, while economic remittances flow from the host community to the hometown community, social, technological, and ideological influences do not necessarily do so.

Jumping off from Kearney's conception of the Articulatory Migrant Network, I examine how increased access to high-speed Internet "updates" this model, making the network an "itinerant place" where real-time interactions and conversations bring people in disparate locations into meaningful interaction. In this case, radio signal composes the perceived space in interaction with the conceived symbolization of space through marimba music. Borrowing from Louisa Schein's conception of "itinerant ethnography," which she describes as "in spirit siteless," where research encounters are "ephemeral, constituted by transient aggregations of people"

(2002:231), "itinerant place" is composed of simultaneous individual listenings that create an aggregation of people in space through radio transmission. Radio fields and Internet fields don't consist of contiguous territories, but rather a collection of material "islands."—that are enacted only when the signal is activated.

Locality

These articulations through Internet radio happen between individuals in different locations who are "alone together." Very rarely do Q'anjob'ales in Los Angeles listen to the radio as a group activity. Usually, someone will listen by calling a number on her cellular phone or listen through a smart phone application (these listening methods are explained in further detail below). In her article on "localizing" musical ties between Mexico and the United States, Helena Simonett observes that "despite the apparent irrelevance of place in today's globalized world and its cultural products, it is 'the local' that gives credibility to music" (2008). As an example, she explains that the *Duranguense* style of *banda* in Chicago signifies northern Mexico through dress, but articulates it in a distinctly Chicago locality. Whereas the sonic places in Los Angeles theorized in Chapter 3 are considered *acoustic* spaces in that the production of sound is more or less in the same locale as reception of sound, digital places have a divided, multiple locality of reception, with usually one site of production. The localities become homes, cars, work sites. As I will describe below, these individual locations become connected to the radio space through calling in, online chats, and requests.

Materiality

The second aspect of perceived space, besides locality, is material environment. As Raffaetà and Duff remind us in the process of place-making, "belonging is a social and affective achievement that is *necessarily linked* to the materiality of specific territories" (2013:341).

Though Internet radio listeners connect through different locations that have different material environments, the radio signal itself can arguably be considered the shared material environment. Though radio signal is not carried through a contiguous sound-conducting "ether" that connects the speaker to the listener, many still attest to radio's ability to transmit supra-textual healing or spiritual essences *a la* Aimee Semple McPherson through radio transmission (Bessire and Fisher 2012; Blanton 2012; Taylor, Katz, and Grajeda 2012). Whether via (analog) electromagnetic frequencies or via (digital) satellite or cable, radio signal often carries with it more than just the content of its transmission; it also brings the physical element of what Anderson Blanton calls sonic "prosthesis" (2012:225), and the affective element transmitted through "the voice."

The Voice

Various studies have explored the elements of the "voice" in communicating time, place, and personal connection across distances. Of note in soundscape studies is an understanding of how a mediated voice (human or musical) can facilitate an "auditory intimacy while maintaining a sense of socially, geographically, and historically emplaced relationships" (Samuels et al. 2010:337). Radio ethnographies investigate the use of the voice to communicate presence (Kunreuther 2012), amplify collective identity (Fisher 2012), embody social ideology and experience (Feld et al. 2004), and realize the emotional significance of a piece of music (Barthes 1977). With the advent of electronic microphones in the 1920s, early radio became a way to "transport" the male crooner into the home of the listener, creating "a sense of intimacy with his listeners by evaporating the usual physical boundaries between the performer and the audience" (McCracken 1999:376–377). Whereas electronic sound amplification was first used to transmit the "naturalness" of the human voice, it is now used to make the voice a "superhuman" presence. As Cathy Ragland observes in the practice of Mexican *sonideros*, these DJs mark their sonic

territories by manipulating the sound of their voice through the use of delays, echoes, reverb, and other sound distortions to "reinterpret and create new meanings and a new sense of place" (Ragland 2003:342). Similarly, radio DJs in Santa Eulalia use these special effects to distort their voices during announcements for social events or advertisements in order to affect a sound of modernity and relevance to the listeners.

In his analysis of spiritual healing via radio, Anderson Blanton focuses on the materiality of the voice, noting that it is not simply a matter of sound and meaning, but the *delivery* of the message that carries an "excess to meaning" (Blanton 2012:225). This relates to what Roland Barthes calls the "grain" of the voice, or that which embodies the significance, the pleasure in delivery of, in other words the voicing of, a message. This meaning, he writes, "is not—or is not merely—its timbre; the *significance* it opens cannot better be defined, indeed, than by the very friction between the music and something else" (Barthes 1977:185, emphasis in original). In terms of radio communication from hometown centers to diasporic peripheries, the specific qualities of timbre in delivery of the musical voice mark its significance in the distance it is traveling to reach the listener. Much as the migrant listener himself had to battle the obstacles of law enforcement, extreme cold and heat, long periods of discomfort, in ways that temporarily "distorted" his humanity, the sound of the marimba produced through the listening apparatus (usually a mobile phone with headphones) is distorted because of its journey from the marimba keys to the recording device, the CD to the radio station's computer, the computer to satellite, then cable signal, and finally through telephone lines and/or wireless internet networks.

Sonic Prosthesis

As briefly mentioned above, radio sound can be materially localized through "textures" of listening practices based on the listener's material surroundings (Tacchi 1998), but it also

involves a direct material connection between the voice and the listener. Much more than just the message, the lo-fidelity of the mediated sound creates "a kind of doubled awareness that recognizes simultaneously the instrumental machinations of the apparatus and a vague sensation of something else at work behind the apparatus" (Blanton 2012:225). Thus, in Blanton's study of radio evangelism, "faithful listeners experienced an artificial or prosthetic embodiment of Roberts's spiritual gift of haptic detection; they literally experienced the tactile sensations of heat and pressure from the vibrating electric diaphragm of the radio loudspeaker" (ibid.). Such a connection is transmitted through Internet radio, from the vibrations of the marimba, to the vibrations and sound distortion of the telephone speakers. Through the local environments and material extensions of the "voice" of Santa Eulalia, Internet radio activates the Q'anjob'al articulatory network through a transnational conversation. As I will explore below, the DJ not only produces the voice, she facilitates conversation throughout the transnational network in real-time.

COMMUNITY RADIO IN LATIN AMERICA AND GUATEMALA

Social Movements in Latin America

Community radio has an important place in Latin American history. Indigenous and rural farming populations have used radio in subversive ways for clandestine communication, and in resistance to larger stations broadcasting government policy and propaganda. The earliest use of community radio in Latin America is possibly the 1947 case of the Aymara and Quechua silver miners who used radio communications to advocate for better working conditions (Fisher 2012:71) and to organize union positions between physically isolated mining sites (Bessire and Fisher 2012:7). Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, community-oriented Catholic radio stations and pirate radio broadcast messages of liberation theology, drawing heavily from

the writings of Paolo Freire, throughout South and Central American revolutionary movements (O'Connor 1990).

Radio History in Guatemala

Radio in Guatemala has followed along these lines. Radio broadcasts are often the only sources of local, municipal-level news. In Guatemalan highland communities, where villages can be several hours from the town center by car (days by foot), and illiteracy is common, community radio is the most effective means of community organization and formation. The Guatemalan government founded the first radio station in the early 1930s, and until the 1980s, radio stations were dominated by churches or government organizations, which disseminated information on Guatemalan culture, health, and the official government stance on political matters. Most stations broadcast foreign music, but there have been programs devoted to playing "native folk music" that promoted folkloric marimba music (Lloréns 1991). During the internal armed conflict, guerrilla radio stations in the highland areas proliferated to broadcast messages of human rights and subversive information about the military action that contradicted government news. Many of these stations have turned into community based educative programming including music, health education, and local news. They also disseminate messages of identity as well as promotion of Mayan language and customs. Pride in language and traditional music has seen an upswing since the proliferation of community radio stations (Dombrowski 1970).

Several legal documents back the legitimacy of community radio in Guatemala. The Peace Accords in 1996 and the Indigenous Accords of 1995 have language specifically about radio, and the Guatemalan Constitution, the International Labor Organization Convention, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights have more general language about the freedom of expression. The Indigenous Accords promise the Guatemalan Government will provide "wider

access to communications media for Mayan and other Indigenous communities and institutions"¹
by

opening spaces in official communications media for sharing Indigenous cultural expressions . . . promoting congressional reform in the Radiocommunications Law to provide frequencies for Indigenous projects, assuring the observance of the non-discrimination principle in the use of such media, and promoting the repeal of any legal provisions that hinder the right of Indigenous peoples to have access to media for promotion of their identity.² (Gobierno de la República de Guatemala and Naciones Unidas 1996, translated from Spanish to English by author)

Many of these stations, however, operate as pirate stations because the costs of owning bandwidth are prohibitive. Purchasing bandwidth can cost up to \$28,000, and can be done only at an auction when a certain frequency becomes available. Thus, those that are legal are mostly commercial and foreign owned (Camp 2010). As stations have proliferated and increasingly connected Mayan rural communities around Guatemala, local governments have begun to shut them down, claiming that they are operating on illegal bandwidth. In several cases, community stations have been closed and their equipment raided by local governments. In the case of a 2006 raid in Sumpango, a 2014 raid in Sololá, and a 2015 raid in Santa Eulalia, the radios have returned to operation after community protest, but the equipment is rarely returned (Camp and Portalewska 2005).

¹ "más amplio acceso a los medios de comunicación por parte de las comunidades e instituciones mayas y de los demás pueblos indígenas"

² "abrir espacios en los medios de comunicación oficiales para la divulgación de las expresiones culturales indígenas . . . promover ante el Congreso de la República las reformas que sean necesarias en la actual Ley de Radiocomunicaciones con el objetivo de facilitar frecuencias para proyectos indígenas y asegurar la observancia del principio de no-discriminación en el uso de los medios de comunicación. Promover asimismo la derogación de toda disposición del ordenamiento jurídico que obstaculice el derecho de los pueblos indígenas a disponer de medios de comunicación para el desarrollo de su identidad;"

Radio in Santa Eulalia

In Santa Eulalia, three main radio stations dominate the airwaves: Top FM, Radio Parroquia Santa Eulalia, and Snuq' Jolom Konob' (Voice of Jolom Konob'). While Top FM uses a mix of Spanish and Q'anjob'al, Radio Parroquia Santa Eulalia and Snuq' Jolom Konob' are mostly in Q'anjob'al. Each station fills a different niche, but together they keep the populace informed of community events, news, and most importantly, the latest hits from the Q'anjob'al community's many marimba groups. In the most rural areas of the mountains, where electric lines do not reach, they use their battery-operated radios or mobile phones to listen and stay informed.

Top FM

Top FM is a commercial station with a community focus. Their programming is a mix of entertainment, education, and information. They rent signal space from an affiliate station in Huehuetenango, and must raise money from commercial sponsors, but as DeeJay Vicky López (La Nieta de Jolom Konob', "The Granddaughter of Jolom Konob'") points out, Top FM serves the community as well, covering deaths and funerals, social activities, and local sports. There is also educational content related to health and promoting a more widespread awareness of Q'anjob'al cultural knowledge, such as the calendar. For example, each day's programming starts with an announcement of the day's *Ora*, or spiritual representative, an explanation of the significance of that *Ora*, and a conscious effort to base the programming on the day's *Ora*. Certain days are good for covering financial issues, others for health, others for giving thanks to parents. Those who need to brush up on their knowledge of the Mayan calendar can listen daily to Top FM to become more familiarized. Top FM also makes a significant effort to make sure the radio covers *all* of Santa Eulalia. As Victor López, the station's director, recounts, radio is

one of the few ways that the most removed areas of the Santa Eulalia municipality can be reached, and Top FM's signal reaches farther than most. Their mission

is focused on [reaching] the faaaartheest away rural areas of Santa Eulalia. There are seventy-eight communities in Santa Eulalia, and in the eastern region there are twenty-nine communities that don't get radio signal. Three months ago we installed a small signal repeater that through the Internet now expands the signal to the lowlands, to the community where I was born. (V. López 2015)³

The musical programming (which also is guided by the day's *nawal*) is a mix of contemporary pan-Latin dance music—such as *cumbias*, *banda*, *rancheras*, *rock en Español*, and other Spanish-language pop—and marimba and violin music from Q'anjob'al composers. Assistant Director, Carlos López (DJ El Tigrillo), reflects that at first the station didn't play any *sones*—only *rancheras* all day long—but that the people demanded that they play more *sones*. "The *sones* are like our roots," Carlos explained. "We have several fundamental pillars in our culture. One is our language. . . . The other is culture: music. Mayan music is the other fundamental pillar" (C. López 2015). As Carlos reflects, they started a show for *sones*, and over time, in response to community demand, marimba and violin *sones* take up the bulk of their programming. La Nieta de Jolom Konob' estimates that they play about seven hours per day of local *sones*, during the late morning and afternoon.

"Also, our friends in the United States want to hear marimba," Carlos continues.

"Wherever we may go, when we hear *sones*, we remember our community that watched us grow. We remember our roots. Hearing a *son* is nostalgic, especially when the *marimbistas* add flavor,

³ "está enfocado en las áreas rurales maaaas lejanos del pueblo de Santa Eulalia. En Santa Eulalia hay 78 comunidades. Enfocamos más en los áreas del este: hay 29 comunidades que no tienen esta facilidad de escuchar programaciones como esto de la Top. Desde hace tres meses tenemos una pequeña repetidora que por medio de Internet comunica hasta abajo en mi tierra natal" (all interviews translated from Spanish to English by author).

emotion or melancholy" (C. López 2015).⁴ Thus, Top FM considers itself a source of information that provides a service to *all* Ewulenses, whether separated by mountains or international borders. It is a cultural resource for Ewulenses to access when they need to strengthen their roots, hear local news, or assuage the pain of missing their homeland.

Snuq' Jolom Konob'

Radio Snuq' Jolom Konob' ("The Voice of Santa Eulalia") is a progressive and more ideological community radio station for Santa Eulalia. It is funded by the municipal government and meant to serve and represent all members of the community. However, during the time I was there it was off the air due to political turmoil. The station's founders are storied community leaders in Santa Eulalia who tend to be associated with Indigenous rights and government resistance movements. Therefore, it is perceived as left-leaning, though a member of the radio adamantly states that they offer air time to people with opposing views, but it is not used. One of the founders learned about the power of community radio during his time in the *guerrilla* during the civil war. The founding of Snuq' Jolom Konob' was conceived as a result of the 1996 Peace Accords, which provided the right to community-based education and information via radio. They considered it a vehicle for informing Santa Eulalia's citizens of their universal human rights. Like Top FM, Snuq' Jolom Konob' includes social programming that has included themes such as family health, combating alcoholism, and education on Mayan Cosmovision. The music programming heavily favors local marimba music (sones), as well as some national and international genres. Unlike Top FM, Snuq' Jolom Konob' only plays marimba sones in its music programming. The station does not have a news program *per se*, but their DJs have always been

⁴ "A dondequiera que nos vayamos, al escuchar sones, nos recordamos de nuestro pueblo que nos vio nacer. Nos recordamos de nuestras raíces. Es nostálgico escuchar un son. Especialmente cuando los marimbistas le ponen sabor, le ponen este melancolía en sus sones."

active in informing the community about local emergencies and people who needed assistance, as well as important real-time updates on municipal-wide news. Santa Eulalia has no local newspaper, nor blogs dedicated to local reporting, so Snuq' Jolom Konob' was the only resource for such updates, other than Facebook posts.

Snuq' Jolom Konob' has a history of collaborating with US-based Internet radio broadcasts, such as Q'anjob'al radio personality Pancholón. Originally from Barrillas, Pancholón runs an Internet radio station out of Michigan that started out mostly as a commercial and entertainment-based station, but has recently turned to conscientization of the US diaspora about important conflicts with mining companies in Q'anjob'al territory. This reflects the importance of the station's role in the US-based community, which it sees as continuing "cultural and spiritual education" for all Q'anjob'ales, whether in Santa Eulalia or not. "Through the radio," one member observes, "our community members living in the United States have learned very important things. They listen to the radio and become conscious of what is going on in their homeland. They learn a lot about themselves through the radio."⁵ The international community was instrumental in getting Snuq' Jolom Konob' back on the air.

Radio Parroquial Santa Eulalia

As the name suggests, this is the parochial station, associated with the Catholic Church. RPSE broadcasts Sunday mass in Santa Eulalia, which is conducted in Spanish by the priest and then translated to Q'anjob'al by a local parishioner. Importantly, RPSE also broadcasts activities associated with the Holy Cross Church in Los Angeles. One of the leaders of the Santa Eulalia branch of Pastoral Maya in Los Angeles has a weekly show that is broadcast from Los Angeles.

⁵ "Los objetivos de la Radio Snuq' Jolom Konob' es eso de la formación cultural, espiritual. A través de la radio se ha dado conocer muchas cosas interesantes que tienen que ver con la vida. Los paisanos residentes en los Estados Unidos escuchaban la radio, todos los temas que se pasaba allá. Entonces se fueron concientizando. . . . aprenden mucho de sí mismo por la radio."

This is done through a sister radio station, called Radio Santa Eulalia, which is a purely online station based in Los Angeles. Radio Santa Eulalia collaborates with RPSE to facilitate programming that seamlessly integrates programming from Los Angeles with programming from Santa Eulalia, all on the same broadcast. One of the most notable examples is the exchange of broadcasts of the Santa Eulalia festival week activities taking place in Santa Eulalia and in Los Angeles.

In this way, Top FM, Snuq' Jolom Konob', and Radio Parroquial Santa Eulalia conceptualize the community to include the local contiguous geographic area as well as the transnational places in the diaspora, serving as a deterritorialized place to connect territorially disparate spaces.

TRANSNATIONAL PLACE-MAKING THROUGH RADIO COMMUNICATIONS

Even before migrants had ready access to the Internet through their phones, radio played an important role transnationally. In refugee camps and settlements across the Mexican border, Mayas were able to receive Guatemalan radio broadcasts (Alonso Bolaños 2012). Beyond the reach of electromagnetic signals, media exchange has been a fundamental form of communication throughout the migrant network. First, VHS tapes, then DVDs were mailed across the border. More recently, social dances are recorded, sent to someone in Los Angeles with high-speed Internet, burned to DVD, and then sold to Los Angeles Ewulenses in DVD format. This is mostly done by the father-son team who make up the business Eco Jolom Konob'; the son records and uploads in Santa Eulalia, the father downloads and distributes in LA the highlights of each festival. The same also happens in reverse order from LA to Santa Eulalia. As the time between media sharing diminishes, the space in between places contracts.

Internet Apps

While the radio waves reach into the remote mountains and valleys of Santa Eulalia, the stations also broadcast simultaneously online, allowing them to reach listeners thousands of miles away in the U.S. There are several options for listening from the U.S.: online through a website; by calling a U.S. phone number that has the live program running; or through a Smart phone app, such as TuneIn. My marimba teacher in Los Angeles, José, first told me about the influence of this app.

"You know Virves is famous, right?" José is referring to his uncle. He owns the cell phone store in South Central L.A. where José works, and where many of our meetings happen.

"No, I didn't know that!" I exclaim. I knew that Virves was involved in the L.A.-based Q'anjob'al cultural organization, but I didn't know much about his own musical contributions.

"Yeah," José says, "his songs get played all the time down there. I didn't know that until I started listening to TuneIn."

José's (and my) surprise that Virves is "famous" highlights the fact that musicians in the diaspora have just as much chance to influence the community soundscape as those in Santa Eulalia itself. An example of one of the most popular songs composed by Virves for his group Eb' Ajson is the song "Xal Chikay," or "The Grandmother." Its instrumentation recalls some of the more traditional musical elements of Q'anjob'al music. Namely, the use of the maraca-like rattles called "chin-chines," and the quality of the vocal delivery and harmony, which is done with an airy head voice in parallel thirds that vary microtonally between minor and major thirds. **[Audio example 5.01]**. I was not able to get a full translation of the words, but Virves offered to translate the passage that I include in Chapter 1. It is the third sung verse in the song, the one that speaks to the importance of the Miman Kanal, or circular social dance: "*Chon kanalwi ko toj ko*

sataq/ Kax (chi) joyon tzalok'ulal/ Suytoq ti' je axka yib'an q'inal/ Kay chi yun b'eyik' koq'inal
(We dance moving forward/ and encircling happiness/ we circle like the earth around the sun/
This is the rhythm of our life)" (García 2014). This album, called *Eb' Ix Q'anjob'al* (Q'anjob'al
Women) is notable for its relative lack of electronic keyboard, except when emulating traditional
elements like the *chirimía*, and its resulting "traditional" sound. Even when keyboard is present,
it is very low in the mix, overpowered by the marimba notes—uncharacteristic of most albums
released in the past years, which foreground the synthetic, distorted sounds capable on the
keyboard. Not only the acoustic instrumentation, but also the text of the various songs, reminds
the listeners of the importance of family and Q'anjob'al values. Song names include "Ix Jikan"
(My [female] cousin), "Kumare Ewul" (Midwife Eulalia [in honor of his mother]), and "Eb' Ix
Q'anjob'al" (Q'anjob'al Women) another "hit" played frequently on the radio and used in cultural
presentations in Santa Eulalia. This song champions the traditional beauty of Q'anjob'al women,
singling out those from each of the Q'anjob'al municipalities. The lyrics talking about respecting
Q'anjob'al women in their *trajes típicos* and the traditional way of courting them through social
dances, are certainly a large contrast to some of the popular Latin dance songs played on Top
FM, and offer alternative examples for Q'anjob'al youth.

Interaction

Listener Dedications

In addition to broadcasting music, these radio stations provide a medium of interaction
between Santa Eulalia and its diasporic communities. One RPSE DJ estimates that about 10-12
people per show call in from the US to request a song dedicated to family members in Santa
Eulalia. Worried mothers or wives also send *saludos* from Santa Eulalia to their sons or husbands
in the U.S. for the DJ to read on the air. Online listeners can also send comments via the station's

INICIO DIOCESIS DE HUEHUETENANGO LA SANTA SEDE

PARROQUIA SANTA EULALIA
Municipio de Santa Eulalia, Departamento de Huehuetenango

INICIO DECANATO NORTE PROGRAMAS PASTORALES ORGANIZACIÓN FORMACIÓN PROYECTOS

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Hoy Total 3689

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IGLESIA PARROQUIAL EN CONSTRUCCIÓN
Vista de la iglesia, en vías de construcción.

Exclusivo para USA

ClustrMaps
Visual Visitor Analytics
Create New Widget

Visitor Map for Parroquiasantaeulalia.com

Google

SIGUIENOS

VISITAS POR PAÍS
268 Pageviews
Jan. 01st - Jan. 31st

HOY LA IGLESIA CELEBRA LA ASUNCIÓN DE LA VIRGEN MARIA, MODELO Y DEFENSORA DE LOS CRISTIANOS
By Pascual Pedro 11:07 No comments

Santa Eulalia 15 de Agosto 2016
Hoy la Iglesia celebra la Asunción de la Virgen María, modelo y

MENSAJERÍA

escuchando en atlanta Geogia saludos al padre andres
22 Aug 16, 02:08 PM

RONY RAMIRZ: Hola muy buenas tardes mun cordial saludos a todos los que estan escuchando la radio atravez del internet y me complace con un son de herencia q'anjob'al flz dia
17 Dec 16, 04:47 PM

enrique: q tal radio parroqui santa eulaliamuy buenas noche un saludo a todos los q trabajan en radio kiero escuchar en son con mader a de mi pueblo llorando me boy gracias po leer por mi mensaje
5 Jan 17, 09:39 PM

pedro: hola radio santa eulalia me complace con un musica de raul raymundo ante un altar soy isidro estoy escundo la radio aqui en huehue saluda a mi familia en nankultak
5 Jan 17, 09:41 PM

isidro: 53609426
No hay mensajes nuevos

[Upgrade Cbox] actualizar

nombre e-mail / url

mensaje ok

ayuda · emoticonos · cbox

RADIO TV

USTREAM

MENSAJERÍA

17 Dec 16, 04:47 PM

enrique: q tal radio parroqui santa eulaliamuy buenas noche un saludo a todos los q trabajan en radio kiero escuchar en son con mader a de mi pueblo llorando me boy gracias po leer por mi mensaje
5 Jan 17, 09:39 PM

pedro: hola radio santa eulalia

Figure 5-1: Radio Parroquial Santa Eulalia webpage from January 13, 2017. www.parroquiasantaeulalia.com

website, or as part of the TuneIn app. In Figure 5-2, you can see how the Radio Santa Eulalia website not only keeps a live stream of the comments, but also shows a map of the locations from which people are listening. Notice that the largest numbers at the time I took this screenshot are from Guatemala (Guatemala City if you look at the statistics posted below the map), Los Angeles, the Bay Area, and Omaha, NE. However, the smattering of red dots throughout the Southeastern states represents the increase in job opportunities in those states.

Musical Conversations

In addition to these verbal conversations, DJs and listeners facilitate what might be called musical conversations within this diasporic community. One particular example happened on a day in late February, 2015, when Top FM was paying homage to a recently deceased violin player, Bartolo Mateo. Mateo was part of the *son de violín* tradition, which is characterized by thick timbres played on violin to the triple-meter accompaniment of a guitar and topped with a harmony in thirds. Audio sample 5.02 gives an example of one of his songs that La Nieta played during the homage: It was performed live by Mateo's son and grandsons. **[Audio example 5.02]** This song immediately made me smile as I realized it was a "cover" of Virves's song, the one recorded in Los Angeles and popularized via radio in Santa Eulalia. Two significant things were communicated through this selection. First, the seemingly anachronistic "cover" by a respected artist like Bartolo Mateo of a song composed in the diaspora immediately integrates this new music as an index of Q'anjob'al traditional music. Second, DJ La Nieta's juxtaposition of the two recordings puts the two musicians in musical conversation, before the ears of public listeners, although neither is physically present.

“Chikay” by Eb’ Aj Son



“Chikay” by Bartolo Mateo



Figure 5-2: (Left) Virves Kwin García and Alfredo Simón of Eb' Ajson perform "Xal Chikay" live for Los Angeles based Internet radio station, Radio Santa Eulalia. (Photo from Radio Santa Eulalia website.) (Right) Bartolo Mateo, QEPD, pictured with his violin. (Photo provided by family.)

Top FM DJ Carlos (El Tigrillo) says that their radio station has promoted a little bit of competition between local groups and the marimba groups in the US:

Here (in Santa Eulalia) is where the best sones are played. What we do is promote the most recently released sones, the new ones. And of course our friends [in the US] listen to them. It becomes a bit of a competition between groups. They listen over there and they make their own music, just like groups do here. In that way, they don't fall behind. There's like a little competition: we also play all of the sones from the United States groups, as well as those from here. Always promoting that nobody stays behind. Like the *Popol Vuh* says: let all stand up, let nobody fall behind. (C. López 2015)⁶

⁶ "Aquí se interpretan los mejores sones. Nosotros, lo que hacemos es promover los sones recién salidos, los nuevos. Entonces, también los paisanos allá los escuchan. Es como una pequeña competencia entre los grupos. Ellos escuchan allá y fabrican su propia música, como fabrican sus propios sones acá. Entonces, ellos no se quedan atrás. Hay como una pequeña competencia: nosotros tenemos sones de todos los conjuntos de los Estados Unidos y también de los paisanos acá. Promoviendo siempre que nadie se quede atrás. Como dice el *Popol Vuh*: que todos se levanten, que nadie se quede atrás."

Context

Radio DJs regularly mediate these kinds of musical conversations by playing selections from US-based and Santa Eulalia-based composers back to back. Lyrical themes and musical resources tend to be different based on the location of the composer. Composers in the US use words, ideas, and musical arrangements that express a yearning for the Santa Eulalia of the past, the one they remember from their childhood or from their grandmothers' stories. Recall, for example, the use of *chinchines*, valorization of grandmotherly knowledge, and the nostalgic imagery used by L.A.-based Eb' Aj Son. Composers in Santa Eulalia, on the other hand, write about the passage to the US: the disappointments of those who tried to get to *el norte*, but died or were deported. Musically, the Guatemalan recordings foreground greater use of technology, electronic instruments, and musical references to the US. A good example is Sonora Internacional G.C.'s cover of the song "My Heart Will Go On," by Celine Dion—the theme music to the film *Titanic* [**Audio example 5.03 – "El Titanic"**]. The song starts off with the keyboard playing an interpretation of the iconic flute theme in a jaunty 6/8, accompanied by the lively "chung-chung" of the marimba's *bajo* and *centro* musicians on the 2 and 3 beats. The *pianista* skillfully manipulates the pitch bender on the cadences between phrases, eliciting a Dion-esque melisma, but with a satirical tongue-in-cheek flair. For the first several repetitions of the verse, the keyboardist seems to be using the "Pan Pipe" setting. After this, the keyboard drops out and the full marimba takes over, with the melody-players elaborating a syncopated counter-melody, rather than re-interpreting the main melody, for a rather long eight phrases before the keyboard comes back in. When he gets to the chorus, he uses a different "instrument" setting—sounding like some sort of reed flute. This interpretation changes the feel of the piece from the slow, dramatic duple-meter anthem sung by Celine Dion to a bouncing *son*, perfect for

dancing. The interpretation of this Hollywood hit elevated Marimba Sonora G.C. to the top of the list for Ewulense cultural groups in the U.S. who were looking for a group to play their festivals. The flier in Figure 5-3 shows Sonora G.C.'s first tour to the US (under that name—most of the members had toured with the earlier group iteration called Sonora Azul).

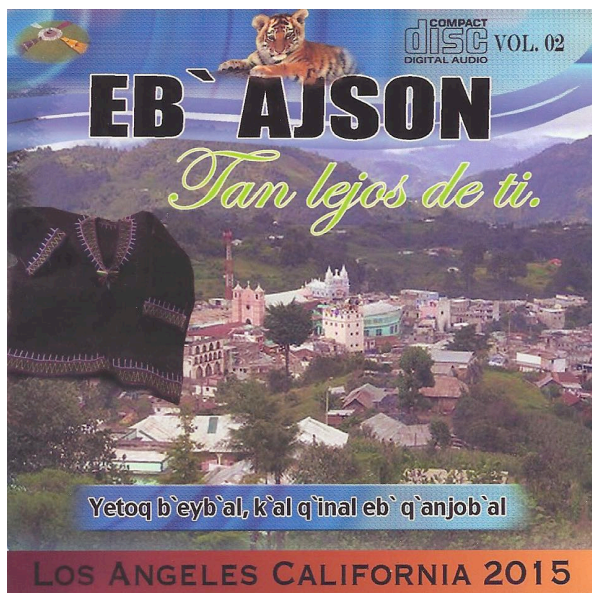


Figure 5-3: (Left) 2015 album from LA-based Eb' Ajson, entitled "So far from you." (Above) 2015 tour announcement for Santa-Eulalia-based Sonora G. C. (Images scanned by author).

In this "exchange of imaginings," LA-based bands create musical images of a Santa Eulalia that is bucolic, adherent to the ideas of the ancestors, maintaining traditional dress. They draw on visual and sonic imaginings of Santa Eulalia as the natural place in which their identity is rooted. Those based in Santa Eulalia, on the other hand, imagine life in the US, with an array of urban sounds and themes of migration. They draw on visual and sonic imaginings of the US as the modern place in which their identity remains relevant.

Social Remittances?

Scholars of transnational migration have observed that communities with a large number of members living abroad experience distinct shifts in social structure in the sending community that allow for unprecedented mobility in aspects such as social status (C. López 2015, Goldring

1998), gender roles (Levitt 2001, Levitt 2001), political affiliation (Cruz-Manjarrez 2013, Cruz-Manjarrez 2013), and ethnic affiliation (Rivera-Salgado and Escala Rabadán 2004). As Peggy Levitt theorizes, the increase in social capital that emigrant community members experience in their hometown community means they have strong influence in shifting normative structures (ideas, values, beliefs) and systems of practice (the actions shaped by normative structures) (Popkin 2005).

While some things do flow unidirectionally, like money and political influence, status; social influence and ideas arguably flow from Jolom Konob' outward toward the "daughter communities." Maya emigrants living in Los Angeles certainly occupy positions of status, both economically, and socially, but there is also a sense of deference to ancestral authorities in Santa Eulalia, from whom LA-based groups constantly seek wisdom and advice. In the same vein, the LA-based musicians are more interested in revitalizing traditional musical styles, such as use of the marimba sencilla, *chinchines*, and even the violin. Thus, rather than a unidirectional influence from the socially and economically advantaged emigrants, cultural shifts "meet in the middle," in a conversation between cultural authority (Santa Eulalia) and economic/social authority (Los Angeles). Because of the ease of movement of music across borders, this is seen especially in Internet radio and the real-time musical and verbal conversations that take place in what becomes a transnational place.

CONCLUSION: STRENGTHENING ETHNIC IDENTITY IN TRANSNATIONAL PLACE

The expansion of Q'anjob'al place to include Los Angeles affords the community as a whole more clout to negotiate ethnic boundaries. As expressed by Chico Díaz in Chapter 2, Los Angeles offers the freedom of cultural expression that was denied during the Guatemalan civil

war. Though urban sonic space is regulated, as described in Chapter 3, Mayas are not targeted for discrimination in Los Angeles as they are in Guatemala. For the authorities in Los Angeles (which are no longer Ladinos), Q'anjob'al sonic territorializing flies "under the radar" as semiotically indistinguishable from the musical milieu of the South Los Angeles soundscape. While Mayas have to obey noise regulations, they do not have to hide the fact that they are Mayan. In fact, through increasing collaboration with Native North American cultural activities, they are encouraged to "sound Mayan." As Nancy Wellmeier observes, "transnationalism presents possibilities of *unfixing* identities—particularly nation-derived ones—and arriving at new, cosmopolitan perspectives on culture and belonging" (Wellmeier 1995:55, emphasis in original). Thus, while the movement of people is still limited by national boundaries, ideas of social and cultural expression can be transmitted instantaneously through digital musical interaction across national borders.

Marimba Princesa Eulalense's director, Juan Pablo Diego, a return migrant who spent thirteen years in Los Angeles, philosophizes:

For music, there are no borders. Music carries everything equally. With marimba music, it's like . . . it moves through the air at I don't know how many miles per second. For example: today we're playing this and tomorrow we'll put it on YouTube and the whole world can listen. Not just Guatemalans. So this means that there are no borders [for music].⁷ (Marimba Princesa Eulalense in conversation with author, 30 May, 2015)

Music in diasporic networks, as theorized by Gilroy and Hall among others, can serve to continuously produce cultural identity by "re-telling the past" through presentation of shared "memory, fantasy, narrative and myth" (Hall 1990). International radio broadcasts facilitate musical exchange between Santa Eulalia and those living in the USA, forming a transnational

⁷ "Para la música, no existen fronteras. Para la música lo lleva todo parejo. La música de la marimba es como que si, en el aire camina no sé cuantos millas por segundos. Un ejemplo: hoy estamos tocando esto, ya mañana lo ponemos en el YouTube, ya todo el mundo. No solamente gente Guatemalteca. Esto quiere decir que no existe fronteras."

community narrative about Mayan identity through music, albeit one that may differ depending on the location of the composer. This narrative consists of a conversation between ancestral traditions considered to be rooted in Jolom Konob', and "music of migration" (Chapter 2), music that incorporates the soundscapes of migration into the traditional musical repertoire.

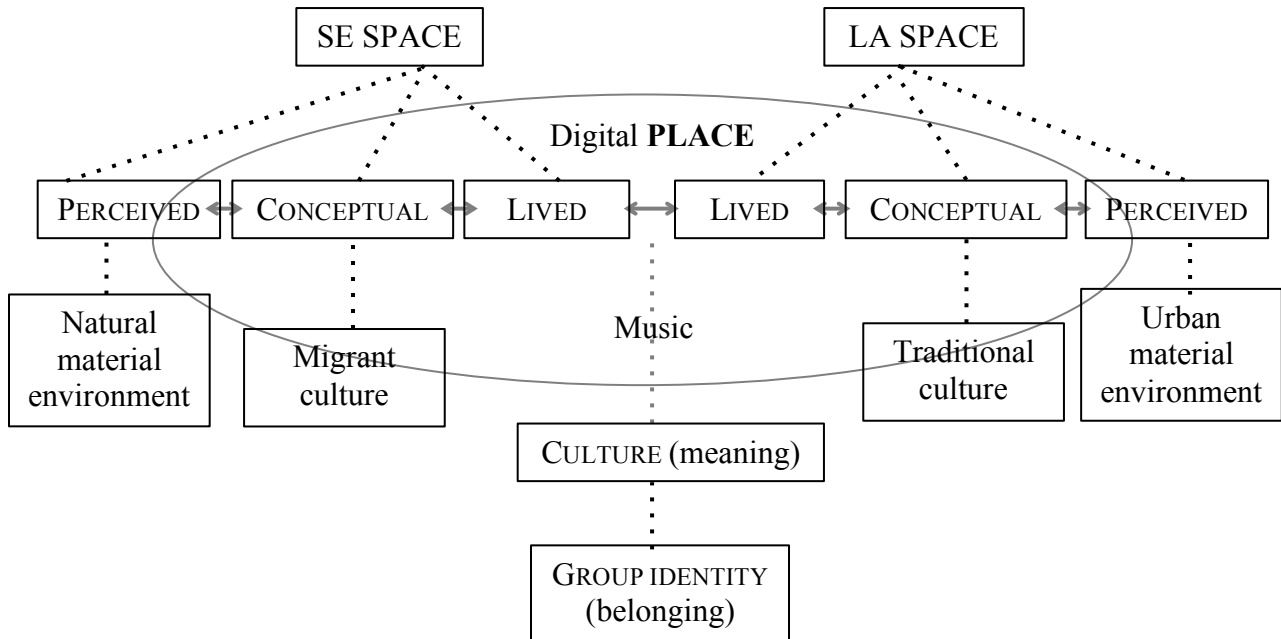


Figure 5-4: Conceptual model of digital place.

Whereas the previous chapter demonstrated the effects of two different places within one space, Chapter 5 observes the process of two different spaces making up one place. In the first space, Santa Eulalia, the natural surroundings inform, but are taken for granted in the conception of place. They instead focus on the places that Q'anjob'al migrants have traversed in their conception of Q'anjob'al place. In the Los Angeles space(s), they culturalize the industrial, unnatural surroundings, through music that elicits conceptions of traditional, pastoral Santa Eulalia. These projections meet in the middle through the lived space of the Internet and digital interactions, which interact to create a deterritorialized Q'anjob'al place that spans all spaces.

Although international communication between hometown and migrant communities is not a new phenomenon, I believe that the increasing ability to have conversations through and about music in "real time" creates a context in which hometown ethnic identity is more easily accessed. This is not only relevant to immigrants living in the US, but also to non-immigrants living in the hometown, for whom indigenous identity necessarily incorporates images, sounds, and imaginings of *El Norte*. In this case, the mediascape of Internet radio creates a space for discursive musical reterritorialization in which diasporic and home communities co-create interdependent identity narratives of a transnational community.

CONCLUSION

There is a common legend about the origin of the marimba—one I've heard recounted verbally by several Q'anjob'ales, and one that has been published as the account of one of the most skilled marimba makers in Santa Eulalia (Xhun Kwin). It goes like this:

About five-hundred-or-so years ago, long before the foreigners arrived, one of our ancestors was climbing up a hill looking for firewood. He noticed that there had been a fire, and that there was a tree lying on the ground whose core must have been drier than the outside of the trunk because only the core had burned—even in the branches that remained attached, they had been hollowed out too. As the man was standing there, a woodpecker landed on the tree and started to peck at the branches. What a sound they made! They rang like a bell! Surprised and a bit scared, our grandfather reported to his wife what he had seen and heard. Our grandmother suggested that he go see the spiritual guide; the fact that it was a woodpecker could be a bad omen. When our grandfather asked the spiritual guide to interpret the meaning of what he had experienced, the guide told him not to worry. He was not going crazy or seeing apparitions, he had been chosen to be a musician and to bring the beautiful sounds of the *hormiga* tree (*Platymiscium dimorphandrum*, Q': *sanik te'*) to the world. He told our grandfather that he could chop the tree into pieces and form them so that they make musical sounds—but first he had to light some candles and ask God for permission. Then he could cut it and bring the pieces back to his house and make an instrument. Our grandfather did so, and he learned that by shaving the pieces just so, and by leaving them to dry, he could tune them to sound much better. First, he attached them to strings and laid them over a hole in the ground so that the sound would resonate. Later, when his son happened to be playing with a *jicara* (drinking vessel made from a dried and hollowed large fruit), he put the empty cup underneath one of the keys and realized that the sound resonated much more. After that, they arranged the keys so that a *jicara* hung under each key, and they attached them to a frame that the grandfather could rest against his body to suspend the keys. This made it mobile so that he could accompany dances and ceremonies where they danced the *son*. This is why it's called *te' son*. This was the first person to play what is now called the marimba, and it happened in Santa Eulalia. (paraphrased from story recounted in Camposeco Mateo 1995:88–91, translated from Spanish to English by author)

This origin myth ties the provenance of the marimba not only to Santa Eulalia, but also to a discovery that was divinely revealed through communications by natural beings (the tree, the woodpecker), not by any conceptual design of the grandfather. The marimba, then, is the ultimate example of the role of nature in creating culture.

In this dissertation I have analyzed the relationship among three fundamental aspects of Indigenous identity politics in the twenty-first century—migration, music, and transnational media networks—and the way in which each aspect interacts with the others to continuously reproduce identity despite dramatic changes in spatial orientation. I focus on the way in which people in ethnic groups use music to construct ethnic identity in the creation of meaningful places. Specifically, I outline how Q'anjob'ales use marimba music to tie Q'anjob'al identity production to natural environments, reterritorialize Q'anjob'al identity in urban environments through musical symbolizing, regulate ethnic boundaries through musical interaction in urban audiotopias, and expand Q'anjob'al space transnationally through virtual music sharing. While geographers, ethnomusicologists, and anthropologists have focused on either the "acoustic ecologies" of social space or the role of music in communicating among displaced communities, I combine *both* approaches, theorizing music not only *in* place, but also *as* place through its transformation of digital space in multiple locations.

Emplacing Mayan Music

Throughout the dissertation, I argue that the making of place arises from the dialectical relationship between Lefebvre's perceived space and conceived space through emotionally meaningful events. Q'anjob'al social dances, and the marimba itself, serve as tools for understanding the material environment, associating symbolic meaning with it, and regulating the identity associated with it. In other words, they generate the three aspects of place-making: territorializing, symbolizing, and regulating. Territorializing implies that space does not come *a priori* with meaning. In order to gather meaning from it, a physical space must fit within a cultural conception that gives it the potential for meaning. If territorializing is "reading" the

environment for meaning through social interaction, symbolizing is re-assigning a particular meaning to a space.

Chapters 1, 3, and 4 each corresponded to one process in place-making and also one element of Lefebvre and Soja's tripartite construction of social space. Thus, Chapter 1 details the role of music in territorializing the geographical landscape of the Cuchumatán mountains. The history of Mayan relation to the natural environment means that in this process, though perceived, conceived, and lived space are always interacting with each other, perceived space has a dominant role in idealized Q'anjob'al place—conceptions of cultural meaning emulate the natural surroundings. I also touch on the processes of symbolizing and regulating for comparison when I focus on these processes in the migrant setting. Chapter 2 describes the development of conflicting places as Ladino Guatemalans begin to encroach upon Mayan space—imposing their contrasting ideas of nature's purpose (to produce for capital gain). These conflicts result in a detachment from Q'anjob'al place—as they are alienated from the land on which they become tenants. As these conflicts get bloody, many flee their land and are then physically detached as well as conceptually detached from their home environment.

Chapter 3 examines how conceived space, and its pertaining cultural values, is translated through marimba music and dance in urban spaces, thus re-symbolizing urban space to create Q'anjob'al(an) place. In Chapter 4, I describe how settling in Los Angeles has brought Q'anjob'alans into audiotopic encounters with many different ethnic groups in the praxis of lived space, where various ideal places interact and ethnic boundaries are regulated through expansion or transvaluation. Lastly, Chapter 5 connects disparate Q'anjob'al spaces through digital place, as negotiated through Internet music exchange and real-time processing and conversation. A final

diagram would need more dimensions than I have on this page to represent. Ideally, the reader can look back at each model in correspondence with the structure I have summarized.

THE MUSICAL PRODUCTION OF PLACE

Place, as I theorize it, is material space made meaningful through dialectical social interaction between the physical environment and the formation of ethnic identity. The material environment shapes how Q'anjob'ales conceive ideal space, and at the same time, Q'anjob'al identity constructs inform perceptions of the material environment. The main finding that I develop through this investigation is that music not only translates physical space into cultural place, but that, in migration, music can also reinscribe cultural places into foreign spaces. Furthermore, for migrant communities whose group identity is based on a particular place (hometown), but exists in multiple locales (transnational), music can stand in for a common place by recalling emotional connections to the hometown while simultaneously existing in many locations at once. Thus, my research connects literature on "acoustic" ecologies of natural and built space in face-to-face social interaction with literature on displacement, migration, and digital networks of music to see how they form "digital ecologies" that are deterritorialized, yet emplaced through "itinerant" radio materializations and musical conversations that reproduce emotional senses of belonging in transnational contexts (Chapter 5).

Ethnic Identity as Reproduced in Marimba Music

Whereas the type of marimba used is an increasingly ambiguous indicator of ethnicity, Q'anjob'ales distinguish themselves through difference in repertoire. Music is used to express difference between ethnic preferences in several ways: musical aesthetics, repertoire preferred, and social function. One of the more salient examples of how ethnicity is differentiated through

music is in explanations of how to play the marimba correctly, or musical aesthetics. Through taking marimba lessons and analyzing discourse about how to play properly, I have identified several aesthetic themes pertaining to how Q'anjob'al Maya musicians perceive indigenous aesthetics versus ladino aesthetics. I have divided these themes into perceptions of virtuosity and musicality, perceptions of desired tonality, and perceptions of "life" in the sounds that emanate from it.

Music serves as a tool for making meaning out of the natural environment and reinforcing Q'anjob'al conceptions of cosmological order. Marimba music and the accompanying social dance imbue group meaning, creating Q'anjob'al place through musical connection to the material environment, accumulation of symbolic meaning in material and sonic properties of marimba music, and regulating ethnic identity through aesthetic properties and repertoire in marimba performance. By claiming authority to designate the proper way to play the marimba, Q'anjob'al musicians indirectly claim the authority over the land and the community that the instrument symbolizes. The marimba symbolizes human connection to flora and fauna. Music connects important life events to the natural entities in the natural surroundings. Thus, to many Q'anjob'ales, the sound of the son references concepts of Mayan cosmology, community connectivity, and a reminder of the thousands of years of Mayan presence in the Cuchumatán Mountains.

MIGRATION AND THE RESOCIALIZING OF SPACE

Although the majority of this dissertation focuses on communities with permanence in the Cuchumatanes and relative permanence in Los Angeles, it is important to focus on the *spaces* traversed through the migration itself as an identity-forming element in the overall conception of

Q'anjob'al *place*. For the thousands of Q'anjob'al migrants, the spatial symbols gain significance as they traverse the same paths and incorporate them into the Q'anjob'al conception of space through music. Pertinent to my research are the effects on migration patterns—first expanded labor migration, then forced exodus to escape genocide—on the spatial elements of identity and musical expression. For the Q'anjob'al, these social forces broadened and changed the nature of interactions with non-Q'anjob'al groups, including Ladinos in the Q'anjob'al area, other Maya refugees, Mexican Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and, for the first time, the dynamic ethnic, racial, and class-based milieu of social groups in the United States.

Significant musical processes throughout this period relate to the creation of *música migrante* ("migration music") as theorized by Marina Alonso Bolaños. In this phenomenon, the integration of musical elements, trends, and styles picked up through migration "permits musicians to organize the experience of having migrated" and translate that experience for listeners (2012:26). The changes in musical repertoire, she argues, do not indicate "tradition lost," but rather additions to the repertoire that reflect the new matrix of social relations in a new geo-political context. Q'anjob'al migrants to the United States have similar experiences that mark the regional migration phenomenon through sounds of migration. In the case of the Q'anjob'al migrants, these expansions in physical and social territory were part of a constant feedback cycle relating these new experiences always back to Jolom Konob'. This is notable through expansion in repertoire, changing instrumentation, and thematic content dealing with migration.

For the thousands of Q'anjob'al migrants, the spatial symbols gain significance with the frequency with which they have trodden the same paths—through the same perilous border crossings, train and bus rides, run-ins with authority figures, desolate desert crossings, and for many, detention centers and deportation flights—inscribing this passage into the Q'anjob'al

experiential landscape, or "lifescape." Thus, while many Q'anjob'ales have never left the Cuchumatanes, the symbolic places of the migration journey communicated through pictures, stories, and music are part of their everyday conception of what it means to be Q'anjob'al.

MUSIC AND PLACE IN LA

Q'anjob'alan migrants arrive in Los Angeles, as a place that has already been made and re-made. Through exploring music communication in more depth, I analyze how this phenomenon occurs within the Q'anjob'al community, unpacking exactly what music *does* in terms of imagining, resisting, and enacting a sense of belonging in terms that redefine oppressive spaces. In Los Angeles, where conceived space dominates perceived space, regulating is the purview of the City—architects regulate built space, city planners regulate access to space, the police regulate mobility. With limited access to space, especially to natural spaces, Q'anjob'alan communities territorialize and symbolize through marimba music. Q'anjob'alan acts of territorializing in Los Angeles must make meaning out of an environment that is the antithesis of their home environment. They do this through a combination of using natural resources when possible, and "naturalizing" the built environment when not. This happens through symbolizing the Q'anjob'al values onto Los Angeles's built environment. The ritualized way in which each *princesa* dances across the space in the room elicits meaning from the otherwise drab asbestos vinyl floors. Though this ceremony in a Westlake dance hall, the *spixan sat tx'otx'*, *spixan sat kan*, and the four cardinal directions remain the same. Acknowledging them reterritorializes a capitalist space and reinterprets it within a larger frame of Mayan cosmology.

The Marimba and its Music as Symbols

Music connects important life events to the natural and spiritual entities in the natural surroundings of Santa Eulalia. Marimba music is usually heard at more upbeat celebrations, such as the blessing of a new house. In addition to musical connections to natural/spiritual forces, marimba music creates emotional connections between people. Playing in a marimba group serves as an allegory for human connection to community, family, nature, the seasons, and the life cycle. Community connection is achieved not only by the musicians working in harmony to play the instrument, but also through the connection of the dancers to each other, and the connection of the dancers to the musicians.

Similarly, the repetitive nature of the dance serves to reinforce its very function, which is to solidify (through repetition) the reproduction of community identity; the dance of the creation of humanity is the same dance that creates community every time it is performed. The dance not only recalls the myth of Junajaw's creation of humanity; it also references cosmic order. Thus, to many Q'anjob'ales, the sound of the son and the dances that accompany it reference concepts of Mayan cosmology, community connectivity, and a reminder of the thousands of years of Mayan presence in the Cuchumatán Mountains.

The marimba ensemble constitutes the sonic center that acts as a significant symbol from which sonic place emanates. As a visual symbol, the marimba is an important element of most Mayan communities in Guatemala, but it is especially potent for Santa Eulalia: it adorns the municipal flag and official municipal letterhead, it is the image carried by the Xhumakil Jolom Konob' when she represents Santa Eulalia at diplomatic events. Externally implied in its image is the uniqueness of Santa Eulalia in its contribution to the world through music and musicians. Internally implied are memories of the many dances held throughout the year through which

Ewulenses recreate the world in the communal dance. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the marimbas four legs serve as icons for the four legs of many animals.

But the marimba is also a *sonic* symbol: its timbral, melodic, and rhythmic qualities act as icons and indices according to Thomas Turino's theorization of semiotic properties of music. These sonic places may not align with the landmarks mentioned by Aguilar-San Juan and Mazzumdar, but I argue that they do create what R. Murray Schafer calls a "soundmark" (Schafer [1977] 1994:11). Because of the mobile nature of soundmarks, they can occur in a variety of spaces. In Q'anjob'al dance practice, these soundmarks engage the community not only through recognition of melodies, but also through physical experience. Symbolism in marimba music constitutes what Wellmeier refers to as a "continual reassortment of symbols which not only reflect change in the social situation but also effect what they signify" (Wellmeier 1998a:40). Social dances in Los Angeles not only index Q'anjob'alan identity; they also reproduce it through repeated performances.

In the production of place, I show that music's efficacy in "creating emotional responses and to realize personal and social identities is based on the fact that musical signs are typically of the direct, less-mediated type" (Turino 1999:224). In other words, music communicates through signs that incite actions and emotions within certain cultural boundaries. The fact that these meanings are only intelligible to some (those who can understand without the abstraction of language) compounds music's emotional effects with a sense of inclusivity/exclusivity. The marimba plays a symbolic role in linking Q'anjob'al identity to nature and cosmic order. It is one of the strongest symbols, both visually and sonically, in representing Q'anjob'al, and specifically Ewulense identity.

Through the practice of music and dance, then, the Q'anjob'ales activate the industrial space, marginalized and ghettoized by the dominant capitalist society, and convert it temporarily to a home place. In so doing, they continue to practice the form of resistance characteristic of Maya in Guatemala throughout half a millennium of colonial and neoliberal domination—maintaining their identity through flexibility in form but continuity in core function and meaning. This continuity is facilitated through marimba music itself, which considered to be the direct source, the mainline to Q'anjob'al knowledge.

DIGITAL SPACE, TRANSNATIONAL PLACE

Because the host society is usually an urban center in which the migrant is exposed to an array of economic and social opportunities, anxieties arise as to how migrants change, and as a result, how they influence economic and social opportunities in their sending hometown community. In Chapter 4, I argued that this flow is not unidirectional, but rather, happens in conversation "between" the hometown and diasporic places. Specifically, I observed how this happens with musical genres and musicians as they flow through mediascapes and ethnoscapescapes between Los Angeles and Guatemala. I also argued that the ability afforded by relative ease of Internet access to maintain real-time connection with and participation in hometown societies increases the options for the transnational community as a whole when forming a sense of belonging.

International radio broadcasts facilitate musical exchange between Santa Eulalia and those living in the USA, forming a transnational community narrative about Mayan identity through music, albeit one that may differ depending on the location of the composer. This narrative consists of a conversation between ancestral traditions considered to be rooted in Jolom

Konob', and "music of migration," music that incorporates the soundscapes of migration into the traditional musical repertoire. Although international communication between hometown and migrant communities is not a new phenomenon, I believe that the increasing ability to have conversations through and about music in "real time" creates a context in which hometown ethnic identity is more easily accessed. This is not only relevant to immigrants living in the US, but also to non-immigrants living in the hometown, for whom indigenous identity necessarily incorporates images, sounds, and imaginings of *El Norte*. This research departs from the anxieties expressed about schizophonia and the detachment of sound from its context, arguing that this very ability in the digital age allows for the re-contextualization of foreign industrial spaces for migrant communities. In this case, the mediascape of Internet radio creates a space for discursive musical reterritorialization in which diasporic and home communities co-create interdependent identity narratives of a transnational community.

LARGER IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As increasing numbers of migrants enter the United States, it is imperative that we understand that the issues at stake for migrant self-actualization and social survival are less focused on paths to assimilation, but rather to the continued reproduction of transnational cultural place. Especially for Indigenous migrants, whose attachment to post-colonial nation-state identities is weak at best, the opening up of more locations and spaces to perform Indigenous place contributes to the emergence of a supra-national cultural territory. In the Q'anjob'al case, as their transnational place becomes increasingly anchored in US locations, Q'anjob'ales in Guatemala draw from wider networks of social resources and influence that allows for greater power to fight oppression from the Guatemalan state. This was exemplified in the international

campaign in 2015 and 2016 to free five political prisoners who were social activists from Q'anjob'al territories. Community members from throughout the diaspora started letter-writing campaigns and contacted human rights organizations in the US and Canada—actions they would not have been able to do so freely in Guatemala because of the government's systematic criminalization of dissidents. As George Lipsitz writes, "the power of transnational capital means that all of us must become transnational too" (1994:17).

In the future, this research might contribute to further investigations of transnational Indigenous social movements both online and on the ground. One of the interesting outcomes of Q'anjob'al settlement in the United States is their ability to take part in Native North American communities, which has translated to more political power in Guatemala. I would like to investigate the extent to which diasporic and digital networks are creating places of belonging for other Indigenous groups in Central America, and how music frames the conversation between these various groups about what it means to be Indigenous in the Americas. In addition, future research with second-generation Q'anjob'al youth—which I started during my fieldwork, but could not gather significant data—is needed to understand the strength of reproduction of Q'anjob'al identity in the absence of childhood locational attachment to the hometown.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that this work in no way suggests that Q'anjob'al territory is "floating in space" and that the physical location of Jolom Konob' and its natural surroundings is decreasing in importance. On the contrary—Jolom Konob' and the Q'anjob'alan societies that surround it become even more important as a physical place to "store" significance. In fact, its significance as a source for natural and spiritual rejuvenation becomes *more* important within a transnational context. Just as the various data "clouds" in twenty-first-century discourse are at the end of the day only existent *between* individual users and large rooms of servers,

Q'anjob'al culture—and all diasporic cultures for that matter—can only exist in the connection between the "central servers" of emplaced identity formation, and the digital "downloads and uploads" of individual practitioners of that identity throughout the ethnic network.

APPENDIX A: LISTS OF MARIMBA GROUPS IN SANTA EULALIA AND LOS ANGELES AREAS

MARIMBA GROUPS IN SANTA EULALIA

(Note: these are only the marimba groups with which I worked. In total, there are around thirty in Santa Eulalia, and several other prominent groups from Barillas, Soloma, and Ixcoy.)

- Hermanos Díaz
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: A mix of original and traditional sones, cumbias, boleros
 - Leader: Tuncho Díaz
 - Location: Santa Eulalia town, Calvario neighborhood

- Club Amistad
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Mostly original sones
 - Leader: Lwin Kwin García
 - Location: Santa Eulalia town, San Miguelito neighborhood

- Trece B'aktun
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Mostly sones, almost all newly composed
 - Leader: Mario Xhapín
 - Singer/Lyricist: Diego Elijio
 - Location: Paiconob' village, Santa Eulalia

- Princesa Eulalense
 - Style: Marimba orquesta, marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: A mix of original and traditional sones, cumbias, boleros
 - Leaders: Mateo Lorenzo López, Juan Pablo Diego
 - Singer: Juan Pablo Diego
 - Location: Pett village, Santa Eulalia

- Maya Jolom Konob'
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Mostly original sones
 - Leader: Javier Mateo
 - Location: Moclil Grande village, Santa Eulalia

- Sonora G.C.
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Mostly original sones
 - Leader: Gaspar Cristobal
 - Location: Yichtenam village, Santa Eulalia

- Jolom Konob' Casa Sagrada Troupe
 - Style: Marimba sencilla
 - Repertoire: traditional and ceremonial songs
 - Location: Santa Eulalia town, central neighborhood

MARIMBA GROUPS IN LOS ANGELES AREA

- Eb' Ajson (mostly recorded materials, few live performances)
 - Style: Marimba sencilla, marimba doble, marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Mostly original songs in traditional style
 - Hometown: Santa Eulalia
 - Leader: Virves Kwin García
 - Singer/Lyricist: Virves Kwin García
 - Location: South Los Angeles
- Suspiro Q'anjob'al
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Original songs and songs written by other Q'anjob'al groups
 - Hometown: Santa Eulalia
 - Leader: Carlos Toledo
 - Location: South Los Angeles
- Princesa Eulalense, Los Angeles
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica, marimba doble
 - Repertoire: Original songs, songs written by other groups, Catholic songs
 - Hometown: Santa Eulalia
 - Leader: Jesús Aparicio
 - Location: South Los Angeles
- Princesa Maya
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Original songs and songs written by other Q'anjob'al groups
 - Hometown: Santa Eulalia
 - Leader: Gregorio Simón
 - Location: Westlake neighborhood, Los Angeles
- Valle del Ensueño
 - Style: Marimba orquesta electrónica
 - Repertoire: Original songs and songs written by other Q'anjob'al groups
 - Hometown: Soloma
 - Leader: Gaspar de Jesús
 - Location: Fallbrook, CA (near Temecula)
- Ajpop Tecun
 - Style: marimba sencilla

- Repertoire: Dance dramas (*Danza del torito*, *Danza del venado*)
- Hometown: Acatán, Santa Eulalia
- Leader: José Martín
- Location: Compton, CA

- Juventud Maya (youth marimba, no longer playing)
 - Style: marimba doble
 - Repertoire: sones, cumbias, boleros, traditional pieces
 - Hometown: Santa Eulalia
 - Leader: Virves Kwin García
 - Location: South Los Angeles

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