The translation of *cuatro* learning in open and closed systems of transmission in Colombia: Towards an aural/oral approach in higher education

- Thesis–

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I, Andrés Samper Arbeláez, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This study investigates the cultural and educational elements involved in learning the *cuatro*, a traditional Colombian and Venezuelan plucked four-string instrument. I set out to investigate the basis for an identification of two, what I call 'transmission paradigms'. In one paradigm, learning takes place via relatively 'open systems of transmission'. These occur in contexts such as family, friends, social gatherings, festivals and self-directed learning. They involve mainly aural/oral and holistic practices. The ethos is relatively unsystematic, random and strongly situated in extra-musical cultural practices. In the other paradigm, learning occurs predominantly in relatively 'closed systems of transmission'. These are common in institutional settings, from the university to the private lesson. They tend to relate to learning that also involves a strong presence of imitation, but through graded exercises and pieces. The ethos is relatively systematic – based on isolation of knowledge, linearity, and tending towards fragmentation. In the first paradigm, both explicit knowledge (e.g. technical abilities) and tacit knowledge (e.g. feel and expression) are permanently at the centre of learning; with the second paradigm, however, one tends to privilege explicit knowledge since it is more easily isolated, objectified and fragmented.

A mixed methods approach was used, combining interviews and ethnography. Interviews were conducted with 44 *cuatro* players from Colombia and Venezuela who had contrasting profiles in terms of age and musical experience. Participatory and non-participatory observations took place within open transmission paradigms consisting mainly of large and small group gatherings at festivals; observations were also conducted within closed paradigms consisting of classes and one-to-one lessons at music academies and universities. Analysis took into account three crosscutting categories: ways of learning and teaching, contents of transmission, and teachers and learners' perceptions.

The most relevant findings of the study are that, although there were a number of contrasting elements between the two transmission paradigms, there were also many areas of similarity; in addition, some areas, such as the use of notation, turned out to be less contrasting than I had expected. Most importantly, a variety of what I call 'processes of translation' occurred between them.

Moved by personal interest, *cuatro* players learn through musical paths that include, to differing degrees, both paradigms of transmission. All of the participants had been exposed to open systems of transmission settings, and at least 30 out of the 44 had also had some type of contact with closed systems of transmission. Open settings are usually embedded in socio-cultural contexts that enhance the emergence of intense processes of early music enculturation, while most closed systems of transmission settings evidence intentional efforts to establish explicit contact with cultural contexts such as active participation in music festivals. With the exception of universities and private tutelage, where individual lessons are at the centre of learning, most *cuatro* transmission takes place within collective spaces of music making. In general terms, *cuatro* transmission is based on imitation. Notation is usually subsidiary and open, in the sense that musicians usually invent personal codes. While in open settings of transmission learning is rather holistic, in closed settings transmission generally it does imply linear and logical simple-to-complex sequences. Musicians are very versatile in terms of their ability to play different instruments and their capacity to accompany dancing. Within all contexts there is some level of integration of performing, improvising, arranging and composing.

Building on these findings, the present project puts forward a proposal for the teaching of the *cuatro* at local universities. Specific focus is placed on the idea of a 'mestizo' pedagogy that juxtaposes modern systematic approaches – which tend to be more of the closed type mentioned above – and local traditional aural/oral approaches in music transmission, which are more unsystematic and holistic in nature and are thus related to the open systems of transmission that were explored. This proposal suggests collective music making as a methodological axis of transmission within the university setting, and seeks to enhance the development of individual artistic voices, feel, celebration of music and vital contact with the cultural contexts that frame musical production.

Impact Statement

I expect this project to have an impact on several levels. By one part, at universities in South America that are interested in teaching traditional music as part of curricula within methodologies that take into account the ways in which this music is transmitted in local contexts. In this sense, the research methods and the proposal brought up by this study offer a pertinent reference for further pedagogical exploration, including the production of new pieces of research that are interested in blending formal and informal ways of learning music in Higher Education.

By other part, I expect to contribute with the outcomes of this project to enrich local literature in music education enquiring into the impact and challenges of incorporating traditional music in academic contexts. It also contributes to enrich literature devoted to post-colonial and decolonial enquiries in music education, with a support in situated empirical evidence of the type of epistemological clashes and possibilities that emerge between academic and aural/oral transmission of music in South America. The socio-cultural historical overview that I offer of joropo music and of *cuatro,* and the findings in terms of the relation between learning and situated cultural practices, also add to enrich local production in the field of ethnomusicology.

In relation to the long-term goals of the project, I hope that the legitimation of the musical values of local cultures through universities will have an overall positive impact on the general social recognition of these cultural groups.

At the same time, I am sure that this exercise of inclusion will have interesting results for formal academic contexts, both aesthetically and pedagogically. It contributes aesthetically because it broadens the available referents within higher education music programmes in Colombia while including, with strength, local traditional music in the curriculum, in this case from the Llanos region. In terms of pedagogy, it brings forward alternative ways of learning that might also be pertinent to the learning of other instruments, for example classical or jazz. In this sense, it constructively challenges the dominant pedagogic paradigm of universities while inviting institutions to allow the intentional juxtaposition of its logics with alternative paradigms of transmission.

Finally, I expect to disseminate the findings of this project through regional and international forums of music education such as FLADEM (*Foro Latinoamericano de*

Educación Musical) and IASPM (*International Association for the Study of Popular Music*). I also intend to share the results of the project with the art faculties of local universities, with agents in charge of the Colombian Ministry of Culture's public policies, and in the local community centres of the regions where my study took place.

Acknowledgments

First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to God, author of life and joy, for this research experience that has transformed my way of seeing music and pedagogy. He lives within the music that touches our hearts.

I am indebted to Lucy Green, who generously guided me throughout this process. She offered valuable advice that was essential for the framing and development of my project. I admire her clarity and coherence.

I also feel grateful to all the musicians who took part as participants of this study because they all shared with generosity their musical biographies and knowledge with me. I admire and honour their personal paths and artistic voices.

I am thankful to my family for their material and emotional support. To my parents Ernesto and Sylvia, to my children Julián, María del Mar and Candelaria. And especially to my wife Sandra with whom I spent endless hours of conversation sharing my doubts and findings in search of advice. She has helped me to discover the tissue that connects life with art and pedagogy.

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'The first ingredient I mentioned before is freedom. Let's see what happens if I do this'. That 'Let's see what happens if I do this' is not always allowed in the formal world. The academic world works rather with 'doing this we have had certain results'. But in the academic world, that other questioning should also be present: 'And if we had done that differently, what would have happened ...'. Creativity is an impulse which alone brings life. I'll give you an example with plant life. In our house in Valencia, Venezuela, my wife had been trying for a long time to get some flowers that are called *belencitas* or *coquetas*, to be born. She had been cultivating the small seeds, trying to have them germinate. But we didn't have any success. Our surprise was big when suddenly one day, one of these plants was born in the wall of the house, in the cement. Untamed, wild. The same thing happens with music.... music belongs to life. Music is a manifestation of life. She is born wild. Our conservatories, our universities have become a kind of laboratory. But this manifestation of life occurs in a wild way. Then you have to let her have a little wildness so that what is most sincere in her, what is most spontaneous in her, doesn't' disappear'.

Leonardo Lozano – Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta
Interview, 2016

Looking into *cuatro* pedagogies as acts of translation between systems of transmission

I see this research project as a natural continuation of my own biography, in terms of my musical, pedagogical and vital quests. I am a classical guitar player and I have been learning music since I was an adolescent in formal and non-formal contexts such as universities and music academies where programmes are typically linear, highly structured and notation-based. At the same time, but with less intensity, I have also had a taste throughout my life of how it is to learn with family and friends within freer, unstructured and sometimes random processes. This research project has allowed me to gain a deeper insight into these contrasting ways of learning and to confirm or to better ponder my previous intuitions regarding their particular potencies and limits.

In addition to this, while I am a classically trained musician, I have also been strongly attracted by traditional music from different parts of the world since I was a teenager. I have been seduced by the emotional richness that is embedded in folk music and by the way its meaning is related to the territories and the cultures that frame it. I have been sensitive, in this sense, to the way in which several of these local cultures have been excluded from formal music curricula in South America for decades. As such, I see this research as a privileged opportunity to explore an instrument (i.e. the *cuatro*), and a traditional musical genre (i.e. *música llanera*) of which I have been fond since my youth; I also relish the chance to immerse myself in the culture which surrounds this music.

Additionally, for many years I have been interested in exploring ways of seeing the world, and specifically the approaches adopted in local indigenous and mestizo cultures; this exploration has given me pertinent answers to questions I have had in relation to areas of my life, such as health and spirituality. These views have complemented the western, rationalist paradigms on which most of my formal general education was based. I have also explored my interest in how these views help to understand and construct meaning around music.

These previous experiences and interests have certainly influenced my choice of research topic and have obviously affected the way in which I have looked into the

learning of the *cuatro*. From a practical point of view, being a classical guitar player has allowed me to conduct more in-depth observations of the transmission of the *cuatro*; this has also, to some extent, facilitated my learning of the *cuatro* because of the similarities between both instruments in terms of construction and technique. At the same time, I have had to let go of several traits which I picked up from my formal training, such as reliance on notation; abandoning these traits has allowed me to fully grasp the essence of aural/oral transmission. It is *aural* because it implies transmission via the faculty of hearing, or rather, listening, and the imitation of sounds in relation to corporal gestures; moreover, it is *oral* because it also implies verbal transmission via formal and informal discussions, explanations, and the use of non-written lyrics.

In parallel, over the last decade, I have been sharing with local colleagues an interest in the teaching of traditional music in formal contexts; this has led to us questioning the best ways in which to teach local music in formal settings. To some extent, we have concluded that it is not just a matter of 'bringing repertoires' into academic settings in order to learn them in the same way as we normally learn classical or jazz music at most local universities in Colombia. Such a traditional approach involves isolating music from its original context, fragmenting knowledge, and linearly ordering it. Conversely, our attention has thus been driven towards the 'ways' in which these repertoires are learned 'in the outside world'; indeed, these 'ways' produce the outstanding types of musical performances that can be witnessed in local scenes, both in terms of technical performance and of feel and enjoyment.

Aims of the project

Sitting within this frame of ideas, and using the learning of the *cuatro* as the focus of my study, the central aim of this project is to propose a music pedagogy at local universities which makes it possible to use, on the one hand, the control that fragmentation and linearity have over knowledge; while at the same time incorporating transmission practices that allow for freer spaces of music making that enhance the development of individual artistic voices, feel, celebration and vital contact with the cultural contexts that are embedded in the production of music. I will refer to this type of transmission as a 'mestizo' pedagogy that juxtaposes systematic approaches to pedagogy that are recurrent in formal institutional contexts, and typical

traits of the aural/oral and situated logics that characterise the transmission of traditional music in South America.

In this sense, I should mention that the category 'mestizo pedagogy' is not necessarily in general use nowadays, nor have I consulted local musicians on its suitability. I rather built this notion based on some local researchers' ideas, such as Arenas (2014), who use the term 'mestizo pedagogies', when referring to transmission practices that blend local traditional ways of learning (e.g. through imitation) with modern western approaches (e.g. using abstraction and notation). Other authors in South America refer to this 'blended' type of transmission as a 'frontier pedagogy' (Convers & Ochoa, 2007) based on Walter Mignolo's postcolonial ideas regarding emerging epistemologies in Latin America. In this sense, Mignolo brings up the idea of 'border thinking' as an expression of a type of thinking that is born of colonial subaltern knowledge:

> Border thinking, from the perspective of colonial subalternity, is a type of thinking that cannot ignore the thinking of modernity, but that cannot subjugate to it neither, even if this modern thinking is left wing or progressive. Border thinking affirms the space where knowledge was denied by the type of thinking of modernity, from left or right wings (*My translation*. Mignolo, 2003, p. 51).

As will be maintained throughout the proposal at the end of this report, these 'border' or 'mestizo pedagogies' can constitute the base for incorporating into higher education settings traditional music expressions which are embedded in pedagogic programmes; these programmes attend not only to repertoires and techniques (explicit knowledge), but also – and especially – to the particular ways of learning that characterise these types of music and the tacit knowledge which they mediate. As will be shown, these types of border approaches coincide well with initiatives from other regions of South America and of the world that are finding zones of contact between formal and informal learning, or, in the terms of this project, between *closed and open systems of transmission*.

Coming up with this type of mestizo, or blended pedagogy, has involved the careful study of the process of translating the informal learning of the *cuatro* into its

formal learning in higher education by carefully examining learning experiences in formal, non-formal and informal settings. In this sense, I have explored three aspects: ways of learning, contents (e.g. techniques and repertoires) and musicians' perceptions.

I have found that *Cuatro* learning happens across a diverse range of contexts. While some of them have their own traits and particularities, in general terms there seems to be a 'borderline' between two distinct types of *cuatro* learning. This frontier separating the ways in which the instrument is learned is determined by the apparition of 'the class' as a central support for learning. In this sense, I will divide the learning contexts that were studied into two main groups: 1. *Class-centred* contexts (institutions and private lessons); 2. Contexts that are *not centred on the class* (family, friends, groups, social gatherings, festivals and self-directed learning). The first set of contexts is usually embedded in what I will refer to as *closed systems of transmission* and the second in *open systems of transmission*. I will sometimes use variations of these terms by referring to them as contexts of 'closed transmission' or 'open transmission'. Alternatively, I will simply abbreviate them by using the terms 'closed systems' and 'open systems'. On some occasions, I will refer to closed systems of transmission settings as 'academic' or 'institutional' contexts, signifying the type of structured and systematic knowledge that circulates within them. In the following section I will comment more in depth the particularities of each one of these transmission systems.

For the moment, I wish to comment that throughout my literature review and background research, I could see that the issue regarding the 'best' ways of transmitting traditional music in formal contexts is a recurrent concern within a world-wide diversity of contexts, which takes into account the limits and potential of both formal and informal types of learning. Moreover, I have realised that this concern relates, in a deeper sense, to an emerging tension between certain traits of modern education that are based on a systematic and scientificist type of rationality (closed systems of transmission), and other types of learning evidenced in constructivist views of pedagogy and in informal ways of transmission (open systems of transmission). Concretely, my perception is that, at the heart of this tension there is a question regarding those portions of reality and of musical experience that are not so easily 'captured' by the type of pedagogy that is embedded in the systematic paradigms

which predominate in formal contexts. In this sense, while certain aspects of transmission – e.g. techniques, repertoires or theoretical knowledge – are naturally objectified, isolated, fragmented and sequenced by this type of systematic pedagogy, other issues are more fussy and ungraspable, e.g. feel, celebration of music and relation between sound and cultural contexts. In light of this, the latter issues are sometimes rendered invisible within formal education. This is something which I suspect can also occur in relation to other genres, such as classical music. Interestingly, these aspects are reported by participants as being central to the experience of making music.

I wish to make it clear, from the start, that I do not wish to argue that those tacit and fussier aspects of transmission above mentioned, such as feel or celebration of music, are inexistent within formal contexts. This is a dichotomy that I wish to avoid because it is simply false. Rather, the point I wish to make is that, particularly in higher education settings, we might need to find mechanisms that allow us to keep track of the development of these aspects of transmission in finer, more visible and explicit ways, for example, through assessment strategies based on qualitative tools such as diaries, reflexive groups or personal binnacles. This implies using evaluative devices that are sustained throughout extended periods of time within learning processes and which can offer teachers intense and valuable insights into the subjective worlds of students and their affective relation to music. In this sense, I suggest that in some institutional contexts it might be useful to assess these tacit elements not only based on, for example, final exams or auditions (which tend to over estimate the assessment of the musical product) but also supported on what students report about how they feel and experience in psychological terms, along their personal learning processes.

In any case, throughout this report I will be describing the diverse nuances that emerge along the learning continuum of contrasting frames for the transmission of *cuatro*. I will reiteratively allude to the contact zone between these two types of approaches as a zone where paradigmatic and practical translations take place, with variable degrees of tension and intensity. These two perspectives are pertinent to the cultural standpoint of this project. I refer to Latin America, understood as a culturally diverse territory that is strongly characterised by symbolic hybridisation, where different views of the world have historically converged, producing a mestizo society which is still finding answers to the emerging tensions of colonial processes. Education

does not escape these questions, and local teachers and researchers are permanently in search of the particular identity of local music education. In this sense, there is growing pressure to find music pedagogies that can reflectively integrate modern rationality and traditional, aural/oral learning. Indeed, these could serve as a means by which to enhance more authentic, diverse, meaningful and celebratory processes of transmission embedded in pedagogic stances that reflect our cultural idiosyncrasies more organically in terms of curriculum and pedagogy. The present study offers a reflective exercise regarding those processes of translation that might underlie this pedagogic quest and some of the epistemological tensions that are attached to it, as well as some general lines for its implementation. Thus, I expect to contribute with the outcomes of my project to enrich local literature in music education devoted to post-colonial and decolonial enquiries with a support in situated empirical evidence of this type of epistemological clashes and possibilities in South America.

By other part, literature examining the ways of learning traditional instruments in higher education is scarce in South America and abroad; thus, with the present study, I also expect to fill part of this literature gap by exploring the pertinent means of teaching the *cuatro* in university contexts.

Another aim of this project, which offers pertinent scaffolding for analysis, is the study of relevant issues in relation to the evolution of *joropo* music and of the *cuatro*, including historical, sociocultural and musical issues. I mainly focus on *joropo*, because it is the type of traditional music played in the Colombian Llanos region, which is at the centre of my study. However, as will be seen further on, the *cuatro* is also present in other traditional rhythms of Venezuela and, more recently, has become part of a diverse range of genres which includes popular music from other countries of South America, such as jazz and classical music, among others.

In this same line, it is pertinent to mention, at this point, that although I have paid attention to Venezuelan contexts, research and practices, since the cuatro is a very popular and common instrument in that country, this thesis is specifically situated within Colombia and has relevance particularly for the development of a framework of cuatro pedagogy with Colombian Higher Education in mind. Of course, it is hoped that some of the findings and arguments will be pertinent in countries beyond Colombia, including Venezuela.

In relation to the long-term goals of the project, I genuinely expect to make a contribution to the inclusion of Colombian traditional and popular music in academic contexts. Indeed, I hope that the legitimation of the musical values of local cultures through universities will have an overall positive impact on the general social recognition of these cultural groups. The methods used and the project's concrete outcomes, expressed in the pedagogic proposal, are intended to point in this direction.

At the same time, I am sure that this exercise of inclusion will have interesting results for formal academic contexts, both aesthetically and pedagogically. It contributes aesthetically because it broadens the available referents within higher education music programmes in Colombia while including, with strength, local traditional music in the curriculum, in this case from the Llanos region. In terms of pedagogy, it brings forward alternative ways of learning that might also be pertinent to the learning of other instruments, for example classical or jazz. In this sense, it constructively challenges the dominant pedagogic paradigm of universities while inviting institutions to allow the intentional juxtaposition of its logics with alternative paradigms of transmission.

I also wish to mention that this project has presented me with an interesting opportunity for self-study; this has, in turn, allowed me to have vital contact not only with this amazing musical instrument, but also with the rich local cultural contexts and human beings that live behind the music. The findings of the study have also allowed me to broaden and decentre my pedagogic views while giving me a greater everyday awareness of the importance of seeking a type of music pedagogy whose main purpose is to enhance diversity, care and celebration.

Processes of translation of cuatro learning in open and closed systems of transmission

The *cuatro* is a plucked string instrument widely used in Colombian and Venezuelan traditional and popular music. However, its teaching in formal education contexts, especially at a higher level, is still rare.

There is, of course, no single definition of 'traditional music'. This paper will use the term to address mainly music which is usually passed aurally from generation to generation, is transmitted in collective, informal contexts, and is performed and

learned without notation. It may or not be anonymous and due to its aural type of transmission, it is fluid and open; in many cultures, it is closely linked to improvisation (Cohen, 2017; hAllmhuráin, 1998, p. 7). Traditional music is usually connected to a localised cultural frame in which it is produced and performed as part of communitarian practices or social rituals that consolidate its meaning (Vega, 2010, pp. 155-156). An alternative term for traditional music is 'folk' music, although I prefer to use 'traditional' because of its common use in local literature and academic circles focused on the type of music I intend to study. Another reason for this is that it expresses in itself a relation between music and a broader cultural tradition – a connection that is central within the findings of the research.

By 'popular music', on the other hand, I mean music with a broad dissemination through the mass media that has come to surpass the local contexts in which it is traditionally produced. The distribution of popular music has surged exponentially in recent decades thanks to new technologies such as cassettes, CDs, DVDs, and the internet. At the same time, its circulation has been accelerated by 'the effective compression of the world by intensified media networks, transport facilities, diasporas, and the globalization of capital' (Middleton & Manuel, 2017). This type of massive dissemination of popular music is bonded directly to 'its marketing and sale on a mass-commodity basis' (Middleton & Manuel, 2017).

Within this frame of ideas, during the present study I have observed, on the one hand, situated and local expressions of traditional *cuatro* music, which are both created and disseminated in particular cultural contexts, and which would thus fall under the definition of 'traditional music' as outlined above. On the other hand, I have also observed instances of this music which surpass these contexts by being massively disseminated through CDs, radio and TV broadcasting, and through the internet, among others. However, this 'traditional music', although now being disseminated in these ways, is still stylistically identical to the situated traditional music. Therefore, while the dissemination processes are different, the music itself, and the processes involved in its creation, are essentially the same. Nowadays, it would not be possible to separate out mass dissemination entirely from traditional music making; as such, I have included both forms within my definition of 'traditional music', making it clear which is being discussed as and when it becomes relevant.

By other part, throughout this report, I will refer to the process of learning as a shift in the learner's knowledge, attitudes, understanding or abilities (Swanwick, 1991; Green, 2012). In the case of music, this movement is strongly based on vivid experiences of rhythm and sounds (Hemsy, 2011b); it builds on previous knowledge, and implies a construction of meanings that is generally enhanced by social interaction. Even if an evident relation seems to exist between teaching and learning, learning can nevertheless occur without teaching; examples of this include when a musician learns from simply jamming with other musicians, or when a musician copies an audio track after listening to it. In the same sense, teaching can happen without learning; indeed, knowledge delivered by a teacher in a music classroom on a Monday morning may not be taken in by his or her distracted students (Green, 2008, pp. 15-16).

Based on this stance, in the present study I examine, in a crosscutting way, a diverse range of learning situations in which more-or-less conscious and systematic processes of transmission take place. In addition to this, I will explore the issue of teaching as a distinct aspect of transmission when analysing closed systems where the role of the teacher acquires a more central position and systematic character. The rigorous analysis of the actual impact of teaching procedures on the learning of students, however, is beyond the reach of this project.

I will now briefly describe the general traits of each of the two types of transmission that were found within the study. In general, terms, the traits of open systems of transmission and of closed systems of transmission fit well with the characterisation offered by authors of informal and formal learning. Even if they usually acquire more or less intensity in some settings, they can sometimes overlap in certain contexts. In this sense, and according to existing literature, relations between the realms of formal and informal learning are not exclusive, and the boundaries between them are sometimes vague. Consequently, they can be better understood as 'extremes existing at the two ends of a single pole' (Green, 2002, p. 6). In light of this, the categories that will be exposed are useful for the purposes of the present study, even if the realms of open and closed systems of transmission have, in 'real life', some kind of fluidity, and usually intertwine to some extent in almost any process of musical transmission.

I wish to emphasise the fact that these two systems of transmission are porous and overlap with one another. They are not binary opposites, but as in the formulation of formal and informal learning alluded to above, they are conceived as two ends of a pole along which they interact in a dialectical relationship. The use of the labels 'open' and 'closed' is merely a way of conceptualising the theoretical ends of the pole and clearly cannot signify a binarism, as the two transmission methods are continually identified throughout this thesis, I hope to show, as being entangled in complex ways within different transmission settings. This is specially the case of closed systems contexts such as institutions where at the same time open types of transmission practices take place. In some cases, this coexistence of systems can happen in the same physical space within an institution but at different moments, as for example when an university student learns in a very unsystematic way while playing with friends in the courtyard just before entering to his cuatro private lesson. In other cases, systematic and unsystematic practices can overlap instantly while implying fine processes of translation to which I will refer more in detail later on. As for example, when imitation - a typical trait of open systems - is used for transmission within a cuatro private lesson at university but in a fragmented, simple to complex sequence – which is a typical trait of closed systems -.

Throughout this report I use the terms open and closed systems of transmission instead of formal, non-formal and informal learning for two reasons: firstly, I have observed that learning approaches between formal and non-formal settings tend to have high levels of similarity. In this sense, throughout my analysis I have established a permanent comparison between two types of learning (not three) that emerge as contrasting in many aspects. In addition to this, I could have used the categories of formal and informal learning to refer to these two contrasting types of transmission, but I prefer to employ categories that explicitly include the term 'system' to signify the fact that learning does not occur by itself, in an isolated way. Instead, learning takes place in the frame of a wide set of relations (or systems) that connect it with overlapping realms: aesthetic, cultural, social, and political. These realms, in turn, are embedded in broader paradigms that are related to people´s views of life and of reality. Some authors have chosen to explore reality from a systemic stance, emphasising the fact that systems act as organic wholes whose study cannot be reduced to the study of their isolated components:

A system is a set of components and of relationships having properties that differ from those of its isolated components. Given this principle, it is reasonable to postulate that we should never start by analysing the parts, but by studying the whole. Consequently, the laws that govern the behaviour of the whole are of a primary order: the whole is more than the sum of its parts (*My translation*, Reynoso, 2008, p. 49).

At the same time, systems relate to other systems. Transmission is framed and actually affected by these dimensions and sets of relations. Thus, the notion of system will allow me to establish meaningful connections between transmission and other broader aspects, and realms of music and of social reality.

In open systems of transmission (i.e. family, friends, groups, social gatherings, festivals and self-directed learning), learning procedures are not linear and they draw learning paths that are essentially triggered by particular necessities, interests and desires of learners. Musicians can start and end at any point on these paths. They are not framed by a predetermined space or time and the learning referents or models are diverse and changing. There is a strong reliance on imitation rather than on notation, and a strong presence of collective learning. In this type of context, there is an important emphasis on 'making music' as a central source of motivation for learning. When it comes to informal learning, open systems of transmission tend to be relatively unstructured, non-institutionalised, learner-centred and holistic; as such, they are usually not based on explicit rules and traditional teaching methods and learning normally includes high levels of autonomy.

In a similar sense, Green (2008, p. 10) identifies five key traits of *informal learning* among popular musicians in the United Kingdom:

1. Learning music that students choose, like and identify with.
2. Learning by listening and copying recordings.
3. Learning alongside friends.
4. Learning in holistic, non-linear ways.
5.   Learning while maintaining closely integrated listening, performing, improvising and composing.

As will be seen, most of the learning traits that were found in *cuatro* learning in open systems of transmission correspond well with Green's findings. However, while Green examines popular music, I have chosen to investigate traditional music, which implies certain particularities in terms of learning. In this sense, while Green finds a prominence of peer learning in popular music in the UK, the present study reveals a prominent presence of adults as references embedded in active communities of practice.

In addition to this, learning in closed systems of transmission (i.e. institutions and private lessons) is more linear and structured. I refer to these systems as being 'closed' because their rationality is, in fact, based upon different types of closures on: time, space, knowledge, and content, among others. I wish to scaffold the description of this type of system while considering the epistemological stances that frame the transmission that is found within it. I argue that this type of learning is embedded in what I will refer to throughout this report as the modern pedagogic paradigm. I wish to build the description of this paradigm based on the ideas of Capra (1992), who offers a characterisation of the modern paradigm in western societies and explores its impact in areas such as medicine, economics, psychiatry and ecology. Capra states that the modern paradigm is strongly embedded in a mechanic view of the world, according to which reality (including social worlds) is understood as a mechanism through which laws can be 'disclosed'. The main purpose of modern science, embedded in mathematical thinking, is thus to understand these laws and be able to control and predict natural and social phenomena. In itself, this idea entails a deterministic view of reality, which understands phenomena as consequences of previous events that produce new events throughout a linear deployment of causes and effects that can eventually be predicted. The support for the modern scientific practices is analytic reasoning, which implies a reduction of reality into fragments that can be isolated to be studied separately and manipulated in order to exercise control over them. Rationality as a centre for this type of action implies a progressive exclusion or invisibility of other dimensions of human beings such as spirituality, affectivity and intuition. In the same sense, a binary separation between mind and body has been established.

In this regard, traces of these traits can be found in important parts of educational practices, including music education, in western modern societies up until the present day (Small, 1996). The paradigm subjacent to these practices evidences the following characteristics, which can be present with more or less intensity according to particular cultural and social settings:

- There is a presence of *fragmentation* of knowledge, the aim of which is to obtain some degree of control over it. Once knowledge is reduced to smaller components, these elements are isolated from their contexts, manipulated, and sequenced in logical and linear ways. This is evidenced, for example, by the construction of curricula that fragment knowledge in order to distribute it in separate areas and organise it in sequences and levels.

- This sequentiality implies a *rational, linear, deterministic and causal* view of time. It is assumed that, if a student moves along a curriculum or programme, franking the different levels with success, he or she will arrive at an ideal type of knowledge and abilities. Pedagogic intentions underlying formal processes aim to help students to evolve along this linear path.

- In order to fragment knowledge, it is first necessary to *objectify* it, and then make its components objects that can be named, labelled and organised. For example, in order to distribute a set of techniques in an instrument in a basic-complex range, we must first 'get hold' of them by naming or labelling them.

- Searching for control over learning, knowledge transmission is *isolated* in time and space. Formal programmes and classes usually have a specific duration in time: there is *a time for learning* (as there is also a time for playing, being with family, eating, etc.). Framed in that period of time, for example during a class, students are expected to work with a teacher in a predetermined, specific physical space, which is normally a classroom.

- Not every type of knowledge is delivered by every school. This is so not only because 'teaching every music' is impossible within a particular setting, but also because there normally exists a group of people who have the power to decide what knowledge is to be delivered.

- In this regard, there is, more often than not, a presence in the space of transmission of an expert within that particular set of knowledge: the *teacher*. This fact naturally puts the teacher in a role of authority and power.

- Along the learning path, *exams* are used as a means to obtain some type of 'objective' measure of the correspondence between the student and the 'norm'. This 'norm' reflects the ideal of what the student should know and be able to do at the different stages of his or her development. In some cases, the results of this measure can imply the actual expulsion of the system of those who do not correspond to the expected norm.

- As in many other areas of western social practices, *writing and literacy* tend to be central in this modern pedagogic paradigm. In the same sense, there is normally a development of complex levels of abstract thought and reflection signified in theories and codes.

The traits of this pedagogic paradigm transverse and affect educational realities in complex and subtle ways. For the purposes of this project, I will offer more than just a description and comparison of the different settings of *cuatro* learning that were studied. Indeed, I will also discuss evidence showing the presence of several of the influences of this pedagogic paradigm across my analysis, particularly within the closed systems of transmission that were studied. Throughout this report, I will try to evidence the potency of this type of approach to learning while simultaneously tackling some of the tensions that arise in relation to *cuatro* learning when the typical traits of this paradigm operate upon transmission. In this sense, I will emphasise certain questions regarding issues such as: parcels of musical knowledge that are rendered invisible by the objective and rational logics of closed systems settings, limits of notation and writing when representing *cuatro* music, exclusion of musical diversity and personal paths in canonical thinking, and disconnection between learning processes and traditional cultural contexts.

As will be seen, these traits are directly related to the type of closure found in the closed system of transmission. The main purpose of such a closure is to exert control over these aspects in order to enhance transmission. In this sense, during the learning process, a closed system of transmission usually takes place in the frame of a class or classes (closure of space); this is in stark contrast with open systems of transmission

learning, which usually develop in the frame of a music ecosystem comprising learning 'nodes' – e.g. family, groups or festivals – in which transmission takes place. Closed systems of transmission are made up of units of time that frame learning: a one-hour class, a one-week workshop, a five-year undergraduate programme (closure of time), and so on. These systems usually imply some kind of segmentation of knowledge; as I mentioned above, this is what Bourdieu (1995) calls the *cultural arbitrary* (closure of knowledge)*.* This refers to a certain segment of knowledge (e.g. repertoire, information, ability) that is chosen by a person or a group of people and becomes canonical for a certain field of transmission. This canon can be more or less flexible according to contexts. Finally, there is a closure on the models for transmission in the sense that the teacher becomes the central model for learning.

Following the ideas put forth by Deleuze and Guatari (1987), I wish to argue that an open system of transmission resembles a rhizome, in the sense that it has no pre-fixed linearity, and musicians move across personal paths that are deployed freely according to personal interests and desire: 'A rhizome is a subterranean stem… (it) assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers… any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 6-7). In contrast, and building on the same analogy, a closed system of transmission rather resembles a tree. In this sense, learning systems in closed systems of transmission are based on predetermined arborescent structures that include hierarchies (e.g. learning levels), with ramifications of knowledge that generate linear paths whose outcomes are carbon copies or tracings that the system is expected to 'produce', based upon ideal sets of knowledge. For example, the ideal of what a student who attends courses on a certain programme should be able 'to know and to do' is the basis for the production of tracings: reproductions of a certain type of ideal musician. However, the tracings are not just the products of the system; they are also the components of the structure, e.g. courses that offer standardised syllabuses to students while they advance through the different levels of a curriculum or academic grid. Deleuze and Guatari state that a tree 'consists of tracing, on the basis of an over coding structure or supporting axis, something that comes ready-made. The tree articulates and hierarchizes tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 12). These authors also point out that, since the illustration period, this arborescent structure has

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dominated western thought expressed in the type of rationalities in which the different fields of knowledge have been embedded (Ibid, p. 18).

I wish to close this section by introducing Christopher Smalls' critical view of the influence that the above-mentioned scientific paradigm, as expressed in arborescent types of thinking, has on educational settings. His position is finely developed in his book *Music, Society, and Education* (1996). To begin with, he comments on the artificial divisions of time, and isolation in terms of space and content in the school curriculum:

> We expect our children, at the sound of a bell... to forget their real lives and enter a world of isolated rooms in which in succession they study the various 'subjects', each subject and each child isolated from the others and from the total world in which he lives the rest of his life. Children live in school an abstract existence divorced from their natural experiential matrix (Small, 1996, p.143).

Concomitantly, the design of arborescent structures implies isolating, fragmenting and organizing the components of knowledge in a logical sequence with the purpose of controlling it. In this sense, Small (1996) perceives a standardized syllabus as a visible concretion of this isolation and fragmentation of knowledge, and is critical regarding the arbitrariness of its boundaries:

> The outward and visible sign of the subject is the syllabus, a table of contents, which lays down what the student is required to learn and on what he is to be examined. At least, that is what the syllabus purports to do; in practice it equally effectively cuts him off from learning, since everything lying outside the syllabus is not examinable and therefore not worth teaching. The syllabus narrows the student's vision of knowledge and cuts him off from precisely those fuzzy areas at the edges of subjects that are the most interesting and rewarding – if, in fact, he is allowed to become aware of their very existence (Small, 1996, p. 303).

Throughout this report I will be cautious to avoid being over-critical of the scientific paradigm in an absolute way, since it is clear that its application to educational processes does offer a particular control over knowledge that can be useful and should be taken into account within the transmission of music. But at the same time I wish to argue that this project has to do, precisely, with detecting those fuzzy areas between academic contexts and the diverse and spontaneous musical experiences that take place in the 'world of life'. It also has to do with studying how transmission paradigms shed more or less light on these hidden areas of musical experience.

An exercise of translation

Here it is interesting to discuss the notion of bringing the learning of music that is generally learned in open systems of transmission into closed systems of transmission settings, for instance into universities; indeed, this implies a process of translating approaches to learning. Notating music that is prominently transmitted in an aural way is a good example of this exercise of translation. However, learning practices, and not only sound, can also be 'translated'. An example of this would be a teacher transmitting a piece of music to his or her student through imitation, but also breaking it into fragments and manipulating its tempo to make it easier for the learner. I will now present a theoretical perspective related to this idea of 'translation', which offers a pertinent framework through which to consider the process and to guide it.

In his book *Una Epistemología del Sur* (2009)[1], Boaventura de Sousa presents this cultural translation as a path towards unfolding emergent knowledge embedded in cultures that have been marginalised by Eurocentric perspectives for centuries. This cultural translation must be based on answers to the following questions: What should be translated, when, how and by who? De Sousa frames any possible answer to these questions within the concept of a 'contact zone', meaning 'a social field where different worlds of normative life, practices and knowledge meet, clash and interact' (My translation; De Sousa, 2009, p. 144). According to De Sousa, there are two types of contact zones that emerge in modernity: an 'epistemological zone where modern science clashes with lay, traditional and rural knowledge', and a 'colonial zone where

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[1] English translation: *A Southern Epistemology.*

colonizer and colonized clash' (My translation; De Sousa, 2009, p. 144). These zones have been characterised by an extreme disparity between social realities and power relations. Within the theoretical frame of my project, the epistemological zone is related to the tensions that appear between the types of learning that are present within open and closed systems of music transmission. The colonial zone has to do with a hegemony that has lasted for more than a century of European repertoires and pedagogic strands in formal music education in Colombia since the apparition of the first conservatoire during the second half of the nineteenth century in Bogotá.

In addition, De Sousa suggests that the decision regarding which of the elements should be 'put into contact' is one which must be made by each culture (De Sousa Santos, 2009, p. 145). For this reason, the presence of the voices of traditional and popular musicians is essential to my project, since it allows for a deeper, context-based understanding of the essential aspects of the music I intend to study and its transmission. Moreover, according to De Sousa, my role as researcher is that of a 'cultural translator' who acts as a mediator between academic and lay knowledge.

From a broader perspective, the two crosscutting categories that I will use to explore the issue of translation are pedagogical methods and curriculum content. I build on Swanwick's (1991) adaptation to music education of Bernstein's categories of *framing*, which relate to the 'pedagogic dimension and teaching style' and *classification*, understood as the 'selection of contents for the curriculum' (Swanwick, 1991, p. 136). Even if I do tackle, to some extent, both dimensions of transmission in this report, I will nevertheless concentrate on the issue of framing, since the main concern of this research has to do, precisely, with how *cuatro* music is learned across diverse contexts. I will only refer to the most prominent elements of the content, and especially to the issue of tacit knowledge; indeed, I consider the latter an aspect of transmission that is sensitively at stake within the processes of translation which have been studied. A brief summary of the main techniques and repertoires that were found during the research is presented in Chapter 10.

In relation to the issue of tacit knowledge, I wish to refer immediately to *sabor*, a category that I associate with the notion of 'feel' and which is an issue that emerges strongly throughout my study. Literally, it can be translated as 'flavour' in the English language. This category will appear at different points of this report and will be approached in depth in Chapter 10, where I will discuss the ways in which it manifests

within the different learning contexts. I have assigned *sabor* an independent section within that chapter due to its prominence within testimonies, but also in response to the lack of available local literature related to the subject.

Most musicians mention *sabor* as a supreme quality: a musician can be 'technically very proficient but have no *sabor* at all'. I should say that this is an emergent category within discourses, but not within documents: syllabuses and programmes do not mention *sabor* explicitly. Moreover, this term does not emerge in a detailed way within my field notes either; this is because, even if most of the music that I could experience was filled up with *sabor*, I would not objectify it myself as I would objectify other transmission contents, e.g. techniques and repertoires. Such a situation has led me to explore this issue more in depth, and attempt to decipher its meanings while searching for some hints as to how to develop it within *cuatro* learning processes.

I should say that I did not come up with a unique definition of what *sabor* is, nor is there agreement among participants in relation to how it should be developed. On the other hand, I found very few documents within my literature review that commented on it in Spanish, and so I have built up my own descriptions based on participants' views in relation to the issue and on the views reported by certain authors concerning the Anglo-Saxon category of *feel* or *feeling*, which seems very close to *sabor* in its essence.

Some participants refer to *sabor* strictly in terms of musical elements, such as rhythm, accents or melodies. Other participants refer to *sabor* by bringing up non-musical aspects, such as emotions or relating it to socio-cultural contexts. In any case, however, all participants agree that *sabor* is something that is expressed *within* the music itself, even if it has to do with non-musical issues. In other words, there is no *sabor* if there is no music sounding. A musician's *sabor* is expressed in his or her music; it does not exist by itself in an abstract sense. In addition, the ideas regarding the pertinent ways in which *sabor* can be transmitted are very diverse, ranging from the pure imitation of sound, for example from recordings, to the actual experiencing of the cultural contexts in which music is embedded.

Research methods and data analysis

As mentioned above, I have analysed the process of *cuatro* transmission in the midst of the following contexts: family, friends, groups, social gatherings, festivals, schools, music academies, and universities. These learning environments have been classified into two broad categories, to which I have been referring as open and closed systems of transmission.

I have explored a reality that was not well known to me due to my formal classical training and general musical background. Thus, the exercise involved a flexible methodological approach that allowed me to observe practice while permitting the emergence of unexpected data, ideas and categories throughout the process. In this sense, a qualitative approach was employed which made it possible for the design to 'emerge and develop during data collection' (Robson, 2011, p. 131). On the other hand, my approach is more practical than descriptive, since it aims to arrive at a concrete proposal for the teaching of the *cuatro llanero* in formal undergraduate contexts. This purpose connects well with Green´s calls for grounded projects that examine the informal learning of music from practical perspectives: 'To me the point of doing research is not only to describe something that is worth describing, or that hasn't been described before. It is also to ask: what action is needed, and how can we do research which will inform action?' (Green, 2009, pp. 130-131).

The overall study is situated in the field of the sociology of music education. Methodologically, it involved an exercise of immersion 'in the practices in the empirical setting and sustained interaction with participants' (Dowling, 2010, p. 49) who are involved in a range of different contexts in which the teaching and learning of the *cuatro* take place. This was not a 'full' ethnography in the classic ethnomusicological or anthropological sense; the reason being that in order to address my research aims, I needed to gain a perspective crossing many different contexts. It would not have been possible, for example, to address my aims by immersing myself for a long period within one context such as the practice of a teacher, the musical life of a family, or of a village or other example; as that would not have allowed me to gain a general or comparable picture across a range of contexts. It is for this reason that, although it has many approaches and interests connected with ethnomusicology (as discussed throughout the thesis), my work sits more closely within the sociology of

music and of music education than ethnomusicology *per se*. Choosing an approach of this kind is in tune with similar studies which have focused on the informal learning of music within music education studies[2].

The multiple insights I have gained into my subject of study (observations, interviews and documentary analysis) have offered me an organic view of the situation and an understanding of its multiple layers: 'by taking various perspectives, the researcher can gain a more holistic view of the setting' (Sarantakos, Denzin & Lincoln, as in Feichas, 2010, p. 48).

The study included purposive sampling based on my 'own judgement as to typicality or interest' (Robson, 2011, p. 275). For data gathering, I used typical qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews that framed my dialogues with musicians, teachers and students. These conversations facilitated my data collection while at the same time allowing me to 'provide clarification, to probe and to prompt' (Dowling, 2010, p. 78). In addition to this, I also engaged with both participant and non-participant observations in the various types of settings in which *cuatro* learning takes place. Interviews were recorded on video, and observations were recorded in a diary.

I wish to point out the fact that a crucial component of this project is my own learning to play the *cuatro*. This experience certainly offered me a deeper understanding of the subject and fits well in the category of *insider* research, since it allowed me to establish an active and direct involvement with the research setting (Robson, 2011). Engaging in *cuatro* lessons as a participant observer allowed me to experience, at 'a bodily as well as an intellectual level, the vicissitudes of translation' (Clifford in Solís, 2004, p. 2) of *cuatro* learning between systems of transmission. As stated earlier, my background as a classical guitar player certainly facilitated my learning of the instrument, especially in relation to the use of the left hand, which is very similar with both instruments. The use of the right hand, in contrast, required a lot of work because of the particularities of its strumming and rhythmic effects. Two additional challenges which I encountered along the way were working by imitation with hardly any support on notation, and relying on harmonic intuition – two

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[2] Authors such as Green (2002, 2008), Feichas (2010) and Waldron (2008) report having used ethnographic approaches mainly based on in-depth interviews while studying the informal learning of music in the United Kingdom, Brazil and Canada respectively.

dimensions of performance that I did not develop in depth throughout my classical training.

In general terms, participant observations fit in well with the reflexive character suggested by Whitehead's (2004) methodologies for self-study and action research; these methodologies allow for 'acting and gathering data to make a judgment on the influence of actions; evaluating the influence of one's actions; modifying concerns, ideas and actions in the light of the evaluations; producing and sharing a validated explanation of educational influences in learning' (Whitehead, 2004, p. 205). This type of participation offered me a pertinent standpoint from which to observe my own learning of the instrument while enhancing an auto-reflexive and critical perspective on my own attitudes and actions as a musician.

Regarding the issue of my implication in the project as a participant observer, I wish to state that at several points of this report I will use some of my past and present subjective perceptions in relation to my own personal experiences of music to support some of my argumentations and conceptualisations. I frame this exercise partly within phenomenological practices of research that aim to recover the value of capturing 'as closely as possible the way in which the phenomenon is experienced within the context in which the experience takes place' (Giorgi as in Herbert, 2011, p.53). This offers me a privileged stance to build reflections based on first-hand information of the world through my own subjective experience 'rather than an indirect understanding mediated by abstract concepts and assumptions' (Herbert, 2011, p.53). In this sense, the reader will find some references to categories such as 'energy' or 'spirit of music' that might at first hand seem 'non-scientific' from a positivistic stance but that are however pertinent for naming the subjective experiences I will be describing at different moments of my discussion. Along the same lines, I will be also using some subjective perceptions in terms that were explicitly expressed by participants, as a foundation for some of my arguments, without necessarily building rational explanations about the personal experiences that are brought up by them. An example of this would include a musician commenting that he 'was taught how to play music by the land itself'. In this sense, I wish to accept the potential of these testimonies as being more than simple metaphors of life. One of my main foci in this thesis is the understandings and conceptualisations that are expressed by participants; therefore although it may not be possible to demonstrate empirically or scientifically

how 'the land' can teach someone to play music, what is of interest to me as a sociologist is the fact that someone *expresses* this conception. It is the expressed beliefs and values of the participants which take prime place. I thus find a value in phenomenology, and in taking seriously the expressed experiences and beliefs of participants concerning their emotional and psychological aspects of musical experience, as means for obtaining useful insights into some of the tacit facets of knowledge that will be discussed throughout this project.

Finally, on the one hand, the interpretation of data, in terms of the views and perceptions of teachers, students and musicians, was clearly affected by my own experiences and preconceptions. On the other hand, however, the interpretation dealt with the changing views of the participants who taught, learned and reflected on their own practices while my project developed (Green, 2008, p. 20). In this sense, I expect to have maintained the reliability and validity of my analysis based on the following issues:

1. The pertinence and diversity of data sources.
2. The pertinence of the analytical instruments used.
3. The capacity to maintain sincerity and perceptivity among the subjects of the research.
4. The rigor of the coding and triangulation of data.
5. The feedback from participants on data transcripts.

In addition to this, Whitehead (2004) suggests that a researcher should seek to have his or her results validated by peers; indeed, I attempted to achieve this by consulting local colleagues and researchers working in the field of traditional music.

Interviews and observations of learning situations took place within the following settings: festivals, private lessons, community learning (i.e. diploma, music academy and public system of orchestras), and universities. Throughout the process, additional musicians were contacted in an attempt to obtain complementary information.

Settings were chosen with a focus on searching for a contrast between learning experiences. Community learning settings were selected according to local relevance and years of experience. In addition to this, three higher education settings offering training in *cuatro* as the main instrument were studied: one conservatoire in

Venezuela and two universities in Colombia. The examination of universities also included documentary analysis of programmes and syllabuses.

In terms of geography, strong emphasis was placed on Colombia, my country of residence, and specifically on transmission of the *cuatro* in the cities of Bogota, Villavicencio (Meta), Maní and Yopal (Casanare) and Arauca (Arauca); indeed, these represent the regions of Colombian territory where the *cuatro* has had more presence in recent history. Moreover, due to the relevance of *cuatro* playing and its development in Venezuela, several musicians from that country were interviewed face-to-face, by email and via Skype.

A total of 44 musicians were interviewed. Senior musicians and teachers were selected in the hopes of finding a contrast within the following criteria: solid experience as *cuatro* players and good level of recognition in the local and international scene, evidenced by participation in festivals, contests, recordings, both as soloists and/or as members of well-known ensembles within different musical styles. Young musicians and students were selected according to age, musical background and level of musical development (See Table 1.1).

Table 1. 1 Data gathering

Context		Participant's name	Profile/Role	Type of interview or support and date	Type of observation
Festivals	Festival de la *Bandola* Criolla (Maní, Casanare)	Gregorio Amaya	*Cuatro* teacher: very active within festivals with outstanding results in local bandola contests.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) January 2015	-
		Carlos Aldana	Young *Cuatro* student and a bandola player who has recently started to take part in local festivals. He is also	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) January 2015	-

			interested in rock music.		
		Hollman Caicedo	Senior musician: He grew up in the countryside helping in field labours and learning the *tiple* with his father. He is actually retired from the local scene.	Semi-structured (Face-to face) January 2015	-
		Miguel Uva	Young *cuatro* student: who is recently making incursions in festivals as side musician of Carlos Aldana	Semi-structured (By telephone) January 2015	-
	Festival Internacional del *joropo* - Villavicencio	Cheo Hurtado	Venezuelan senior '*cuatro* soloist and teacher: probably the most important representative of the rasgapunteo playing style in Colombia and Venezuela.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) June 2015	-
		Nelson González	Venezuelan young *cuatro* soloist and teacher, who is an important figure in the new generation of *rasgapunteo* players	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) June 2015	-
Private Lessons		Juan Carlos Contreras	Outstanding young *cuatro* soloist and teacher of the *rasgapunteo*	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) July 2014	Participant

			style in Columbia. He has also made incursions in fusion and early music.		
		Andrés Samper	Classical guitar player, researcher and music educator: Recently interested in the learning of llanero music and *cuatro*.	Diary	Participant
Community Learning	Diploma in Traditional Plucked Strings Instruments - Universidad Javeriana	Cristóbal Reyes	Senior musician who has taught in public schools for several years: with a special emphasis on plucked strings and popular music. *Cuatro* student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) December 2014	Participant
		Iván Parra	Young artist, very active in the local scene of popular music in Colombia with ample experience in Andean plucked string instruments. *Cuatro* student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) December 2014	Participant
		Juan Camilo Aráoz	Young artist - an expert in early music. guitar, lute and theorbo player. He has made incursions in the fusion of early and South American	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) December 2014	Participant

			traditional music. *Cuatro* Student		
	Academia Llano y joropo	Fabio Martín	Amateur musician - Interested in learning the *cuatro* with her small daughter at this music academy	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Non-participant
		César Niño	Teenager interested in folk and traditional music. *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Non-participant
		Jorge Gómez	Teenager interested in folk and traditional music. *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Non-participant
		Juan Zambrano	Teenager interested in folk and traditional music. *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Non-participant
		Julián Niño	Teenager interested in folk and traditional music. *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Non-participant
		Hildo Aguirre	Senior harp player: has made an outstanding contribution to the development of música llanera in Bogota and its promotion in other countries. *Cuatro* Teacher and director of	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) March 2015	Non-participant

			Academia Llano y Joropo		
		Julián Crosswaithe	An outstanding figure of the young generation of cuatro players in Colombia in the *rasgapunteo* style; he is very active as well in the discographic industry as performer and producer. *Cuatro* Teacher at *Academia Llano y Joropo*	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) March 2015	Non-participant
	Sistema de Orquestas de Venezuela	Rafael Martínez	Senior cuatro player from Venezuela active within the actual scene of popular music. He is a c*uatro* teacher in *El Sistema* and has produced valuable pedagogic material for the teaching of the instrument	Structured (By email) September 2015	-
Universities	Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá - *ASAB*	Néstor Lambuley	Senior harpist and researcher, who has been very active in the study, performance and promotion of traditional music in Colombia. Founder and	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	-

			chair of the undergraduate programme of ASAB university in Bogotá		
		John Mendieta	Young student, starting an undergraduate programme in *cuatro* at ASAB University in Bogotá	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) February 2015	Non-participant
		Zahira Noguera	Young *cuatro* player almost finished her undergraduate cuatro programme at ASAB. She is already very active within the local scene of popular and traditional music both as a *cuatro* and as a *bandola* player, performing as soloist and as part of a diversity of local ensembles.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) March 2015	Non-participant
	Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta	Leonardo Lozano	Outstanding *cuatro* player and teacher. One of the most important representatives of the finger picking style in Venezuela, he has an ample production performing both classical and traditional music on the *cuatro*.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) February 2015	-

		Ángel Martínez	Senior *cuatro* player and teacher, active within the local scene of popular music in Venezuela	Structured (By email) October 2015	-
		Manuel Alcántara	Last semester *cuatro* student at the conservatoire in Caracas, who is trained as performer of popular and classical music	Semi-structured (By Skype) October 2015	-
		Abel González	*Cuatro* student at the conservatoire in Caracas who is trained as performer of popular and classical music	Structured (By email) October 2015	-
	Universidad de Cundinamarca	Juan Manuel Urrego	Guitar player, chair of programme at Universidad de Cundinamarca he has promoted the teaching of traditional music in academic contexts.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) July 2015	-
		Christian Guataquira	Another outstanding figure of the young generation of cuatro players in Colombia in the *rasgapunteo* style. He has been engaged in crossover	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	-

			exploration combining joropo music with other genres such as classical music and jazz. *Cuatro* and composition Student at ASAB University		42
		Sandra Londoño	Young student, actually initiating an undergraduate programme in *cuatro* at Universidad de Cundinamarca in Zipaquirá, Colombia	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) March 2015	Non-participant
Other musicians	Arauca	Adrián Peroza	Young active cuatro player and teacher from Arauca who has promoted the institutional teaching of *cuatro* in Arauca for several years	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Luis Carvajal	Senior musician and c*uatro* teacher. He has participated in a broad number of live and recorded musical projects and is a local reference in *joropo* accompaniment	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-

		Camilo Guerrero	Young musician and *cuatro* teacher who has also explored the fusion of joropo and protest rock music.	Semi-structured (Face-to face) August 2015	-
		John Jairo Torres	Young musician and *cuatro* teacher. Mostly known as a bassist, playing and recording with a broad number of groups in the local scene	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Marco Parales	Senior musician. Founder and cuatro player of the legendary ensemble *Los Copleros del Arauca,* since the early sixties *Cuatro* Teacher at the culture house of Arauca, Colombia	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Gerardo Blanco	Senior musician actually living in Arauca, where he takes part of the local scene as *harp* player, after having been displaced by violence from his original territory.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Pedro Herrera	Senior musician, probably the last performer	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-

			of *Bandolín* (a plucked string instrument similar to the mandolin) in Arauca	August 2015	
		Rafael Padilla	Senior cuatro player and singer who has also participated in cultural projects, such as films, that aim to make local *llanero* traditions more visible.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Raúl Colmenares	Senior musician who for many years has explored the playing of traditional joropo melodies on the acoustic guitar	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
		Uriel Blanco	Senior musician and brother of Gerardo Blanco: Both take part in the local scene in Arauca, Uriel plays and teaches the *cuatro*.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) August 2015	-
	Bogotá	Guillermo Díaz	Young musician trained as an electric guitar player. Guillermo also plays the *cuatro* and the *bandola*. He directs an ensemble of *música llanera*	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) April 2015	Participant

			at Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá and is the leader of a local band that integrates joropo music and rock.		
	Venezuela	Luis Pino	Venezuelan young *cuatro* soloist and teacher; Another outstanding figure in the new generation of *rasgapunteo* players	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) March 2012	Participant
	Villavicencio	Fabio Vega	Senior harp and *cuatro* player and teacher - He has produced valuable pedagogic material for the initiation of children to *joropo* music.	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) June 2015	-
		Isaac Tacha	Senior musician and *cuatro* teacher: Isaac is one of the first *cuatro* players in Colombia who developed an artistic project as a soloist. He also took part for several years of legendary group *Café y Petróleo.*	Semi-structured (Face-to-face) June 2015	-
		Alexander Romero	Young *cuatro* player and teacher - He has played for	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-

			several years with celebrated *joropo* singer Cholo Valderrama.	June 2015	

For a complete list of interviewees in alphabetical order, see Appendix 1.

Additionally, the following pedagogic resources were analysed:

Methods:

- Abreu, O. (n.d.) *Cuatro - Selección de canciones*. Various volumes.
- Delepiani, O. (n.d.) Manual del *Cuatro*. Curso Completo.
- Díaz, Beco (n.d.) *El ABC del Cuatro*.
- González, J. (n.d.) *Método de Cuatro*.
- Paredes, O. (2006) *El Cuatro Venezolano*.
- Ruda, T. (n.d.) El *Cuatro*.
- Silva, F. (n.d.) *Manual completo para cuatro venezolano*.
- Vega., F. (n.d.) *Método de Cuatro.*

Web pages:

- Online *cuatro* course: www.tucuatro.com

Further boundaries of the research

In parallel with the gathering of data through local fieldwork, I also looked into experiences in other regions of the world where traditional instruments are being taught in higher education contexts. I decided to do this due to the severe lack of literature focused on the pedagogic implications of the process of *translating* approaches to learning a specific traditional instrument into the logic of formal higher education settings. It is therefore important to take into account similar experiences of translation that have taken place around the world. This is part of the background

research of the present project. In some cases, I investigated experiences that are not visible in journals or databases, mainly focusing on South American and Colombian experiences, particularly with respect to academic training in plucked strings instruments; with this said, I also took into account some experiences from other parts of the world.

With this in mind, I contacted several higher education institutions that offer some type of professional training in traditional instruments in South America and abroad. Data was gathered through online surveys, emails, telephonic and face-to-face interviews. Institutions were contacted according to their diversity in terms of geography and instruments. The institutions contacted were as follows:

- Europe: *University of Limerick* (Ireland), *Birmingham Conservatoire* (UK), *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien* (Austria)
- Asia - Conservatoires: *Afghanistan National Institute of Music*
- North America**:** *Cape Breton University* (Canada)
- Colombia: *Academia Superior de Artes – ASAB, Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia, Universidad de Antioquia, Academia Luis A. Calvo, Unillano.*
- Elsewhere in South America*: Instituto Universitario Nacional de Arte (Argentina), Escuela Superior de Danzas Folclóricas* (Argentina)

This background research offered me valuable input regarding the types of reflections, experiences and questions that are emerging within higher education contexts where traditional music is being taught.

Data Analysis

The information gathered throughout this project, whether from literature, background research or fieldwork, was approached thematically while 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). This type of analysis was pertinent to the aims of my study because it offered me the chance to start out the process with some broad theoretical categories that were later nuanced subtly within a tree of categories that evolved flexibly throughout the project (Bazley,

2009, p. 6). As stated earlier, these few initial categories were built on Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing. In this sense, I began examining data with two primary questions in mind: *How is the cuatro learned* in each setting? What is the *content* of *cuatro* transmission? As I mentioned earlier, due to the limits of this piece of research in terms of time resources and extension of this final report, I have assigned more prominence to the analysis of data related to the issue of 'ways' of learning. In addition to this, I was also interested in studying musicians' *perceptions* in relation to content and transmission. Emergent themes allowed me to reach unfolding levels of complexity and to establish new categories that led me to characterise these cross-cutting aspects in a subtle and nuanced way while detecting recurrent patterns and connections that permitted the generation of theory related to the field of study.

I will now pinpoint certain crucial moments within this unfolding process of analysis and will briefly discuss some of the decisions that led me to alter the tree of categories in some way or another during the process.

Stage 1 of analysis

The first portion of data was organised within six distinct settings for *cuatro* learning: rural settings and *parrandos* (parties), family homes, festivals, groups and ensembles, community learning (music academies, private lessons, workshops), and universities. I also included self-directed learning at this point as a practice that overlaps the learning settings.

For each one of the settings, I organised data within three crosscutting categories: content, ways of transmission, and perceptions. Themes were organised within these three groups without any common characterisation in smaller categories across the settings. In addition to this, a more distinct difference started to emerge in terms of learning or teaching between settings in relation to the type of transmission that is more prevalent. In other words, in open systems of transmission settings, such as families, festivals or groups, themes are more related to learning than to teaching. In closed systems, such as academies or universities, teaching emerges with more intensity.

Additionally, the category 'profiles of teachers and students' emerged at this point, particularly in contexts where the learning process appears to be more structured, namely in community learning and at universities. Finally, at this stage I included a group of themes related to general aspects of the *cuatro* in terms of context, development and diffusion of the instrument and of its relation with other musical genres.

The following was the structure of categories on February, 2015:

- Rural settings and *Parrandos*
    - Contents
    - Transmission – learning
    - Perceptions
- Family-homes
    - Contents
    - Transmission – learning
    - Perceptions
- Festivals
    - Contents
    - Transmission – learning
    - Perceptions
- Groups and ensembles
    - Contents
    - Transmission – learning
    - Perceptions
- Community learning (music academies, private lessons, workshops)
    - Contents
    - Transmission – teaching and learning
    - Perceptions
    - Profiles of teachers and students
- Universities
    - Contents

- o Transmission – teaching and learning
- o Perceptions
- o Profiles of teachers and students
- Self-directed learning
  - o Contents
  - o Transmission – learning
  - o Perceptions
- *Cuatro* general issues
  - o Context
  - o Development and diffusion of the *cuatro*
  - o Relation with other musical genres

Stage 2 of analysis

At this stage, the same learning settings were maintained, although I separated community learning from private lessons. The former implies learning situations that take place in music academies or workshops; conversely, the latter refers to teaching practices that occur outside institutional frames such as, for example, in the private residencies of teachers or learners.

In addition to this, I came up with several cross-cutting sub-categories that allowed me to characterise, in a subtler way, the contents and ways of transmission that exist in each setting. These were the common axis that allowed a detailed comparison between contexts in terms of contents and ways of learning at a later stage of the project. These overarching categories were as follows in May, 2015:

- Ways of transmission
  - ▪ Acts and objects of transmission
  - ▪ Learning alone and with others
  - ▪ Creation
  - ▪ Enculturation
  - ▪ Teaching and learning strategies
  - ▪ Teachers and students' roles

- Contents of transmission
    - Socio cultural contexts of *joropo*
    - Knowledge of the instrument (history, organology, etc.)
    - Knowledge of *joropo* music
    - Creation
    - Deciphering notation and imitation abilities
    - *Sabor* and style
    - Use of the instrument (technical issues, roles, etc.)
    - Versatility of musicians (playing other instruments, accompanying dance, etc.)
- Repertoire
    - *Golpes*
    - Songs

It is worth noting that, at this point, the category of *sabor*, to which I have already referred, emerges. This issue quickly became a crucial aspect of my analysis since it signified and related to a broad set of 'invisible' pieces of content or tacit knowledge that, as will be noted, is not easily captured by the pedagogic paradigm of closed systems of transmission.

Finally, I also included a new category that regroups the data found within methods and other learning materials such as online *cuatro* courses. I analysed the set of data that was gathered from these pedagogic materials, as well as data sourced from self-directed learning, based on the same cross-cutting sub-categories that were established at this stage.

Stage 3 of analysis

At this stage, the categories are maintained in a rather stable state. With this said, however, I did introduce three small changes in relation to learning settings. First, I transformed the category 'rural settings and *parrandos*' into just '*parrandos*', because I found that rural contexts imply a grouping that is too broad and plagued by fussy limits. The *parrando*, in contrast, is a typical traditional party that can easily be framed

in terms of space and time. Second, I introduced the category 'learning with friends and with peers', which was previously associated with the category 'family and home'. Third, I generated a new category that I named 'learning in institutions', which incorporates schools, communitarian learning and universities, because of the similarities that are found in terms of learning and pedagogical framing among these contexts. At this point, I had seven learning settings; three of them were regrouped within the category of 'learning in institutions'. These categories, set on November, 2015, were as follows:

- Learning Settings
    - *Parrandos*
    - Private lessons
    - With friends and peers
    - Family – home
    - Festivals
    - Groups and ensembles
    - Institutions
        - Schools
        - Communitarian learning
        - Universities
- Self-directed learning
- Methods and pedagogic material
- General aspects of *cuatro*

Indeed, the categories of learning settings, self-directed learning and pedagogic material were compared in terms of the cross-cutting sub-categories that were built in stage 3 (e.g. learning alone and with others, creation, socio cultural contexts of *joropo*, deciphering notation and imitation abilities, use of the instrument, etc.).

Final stage of analysis

The last stage of the analysis involved assembling the learning settings into two broad groups: open systems of transmission and closed systems of transmission. This final

distribution is the product of the comparison between contexts, based on the cross-cutting sub-categories that had been chosen. The following is the final grouping of learning contexts:

- Learning contexts
  - Open systems of transmission
    - Home/family and relatives
    - Social gatherings
    - Groups and ensembles
    - Festivals and contexts
  - Closed systems of transmission
    - Private lessons
    - Institutions
      - Schools
      - Communitarian learning
      - Universities

Besides the category 'general aspects of *cuatro*', the last tree of categories of my project is a synthesis that brings together the data found within the different contexts in the cross-cutting sub-categories related to ways and contents of transmission. I associate 'methods and pedagogic material' with closed systems of transmission because of their structured type of rationality. In addition to this, I associate 'self-directed learning' with open systems of transmission due to its non-structured character. The final analytical exercise was a comparison between the ways in which these categories manifest in closed and open systems of transmission, while careful consideration was also given to the translation processes that take place across the learning spectrum. The following is the final hierarchy of categories that synthesise the traits of all the learning contexts:

- Ways of transmission
  - Between orality and literacy
  - Learning and playing alone and with others

- Performing and creating
- Teachers' styles and roles of learners
- Structuring the learning experience
- Contents of transmission
  - Use of the instrument
  - Versatility of musicians
  - Knowledge of music
  - Tacit Knowledge
  - Repertoires
- General aspects of the *cuatro*

Ethical and political Issues

The ethical and political issues of my project are related to four central aspects: the consent of participants, the validation of data transcripts, the personal bias, and the impact of research outcomes on local musicians and contexts.

In general terms, I have framed my project within the code of ethics of the British Educational Research Association (BERA), as suggested by the IOE[3], which is broad enough to cover the particularities of my study.

Regarding the issue of consent, I sought participants' approval on the basis of a transparent description, on my part, of the project's main objectives and expected results, the respondents' role in the study, and my ways of disseminating results. In terms of the issue of anonymity, I allowed participants to choose whether they wanted their identities to be revealed or not. Through this process of consent, I aimed to establish a more equal relationship with participants in order to promote deeper confidence and openness regarding the aspects of their practices that I planned to study (Crow et al., in Robson, 2011, p. 204).

In the case of the interviewees, consent was video recorded at the beginning of the interview sessions. I did not ask for written statements of consent because, according to my local experience in Colombia, this normally makes participants anxious and generates problems which prevent progress during the exercise. In addition to

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[3] http://www.ioe.ac.uk/about/policiesProcedures/41899.html

this, I personally feel that it interferes with the spontaneity of the experience. When interviewing students or learners under the age of 18, I sought consent from their parents. With participants who were approached through email, I sought written consent.

Regarding the process of validation used in my project, it was two-fold. On the one hand, I shared transcripts of interviews with participants in order to validate their accuracy. On the other hand, at different stages of the project I shared the development of my study with local musicians and colleagues, in an attempt to elicit context-based feedback regarding relevant aspects that may have been overlooked throughout the process. I gave participants (people and institutions) the option of receiving a copy of the final project once it was ready.

Projects such as this one, in which the researcher's personal interpretation of reality is central to the construction of theory, naturally imply a bias since they take place 'against a background of assumptions and pre-suppositions, beliefs and practices, of which the subjects and objects of research are never fully aware' (Usher, in Duncan, 2006, p. 15). It is thus necessary to be explicit about certain assumptions that might colour my interpretations (Duncan, 2006), such as the fact that I am a classical guitar player trained in an academic context; indeed, this affects the ways in which I will 'look' into the reality of *cuatro* learning and playing. On the other hand, I am passionate about traditional music and its inclusion in formal settings. Finally, I think that this exercise should take local contexts (not only musical ones) into account. All these subjacent values have emerged throughout my project and I have tried to be aware of them so as to avoid, as much as possible, unconscious bias or misinterpretations. Critical dialogues with colleagues have been very useful in this sense (Whitehead, 2007).

The general approach adopted in this study involves taking participants' personal conceptions of life, culture and music into account, and giving local voices an audible space throughout the process of enquiry. As a result, I expect the present project to offer these communities wider participation in its overall results and outreach, such as the social legitimacy of their culture, and the direct participation of local musicians in any possible implementation of my proposal.

Finally, I expect to disseminate the findings of this project through regional and international forums of music education such as FLADEM (*Foro Latinoamericano de*

Educación Musical) and IASPM (*International Association for the Study of Popular Music*). I also intend to share the results of the project with the art faculties of local universities, with agents in charge of the Ministry of Culture's public policies, and in the local community centres of the regions where my study took place.

What do we know about how traditional music is being learned in closed and open systems of transmission?

Detecting the gaps in literature

In order to make more fluent and meaningful the connection between previous theory and this project, I have avoided the presentation of a literature review and theoretical enquiry as separate sections of the document. Rather I have allowed detailed considerations of literature to interweave with my discussions throughout the report, at points where it becomes relevant. The present section, however aims to give a general overview of previous research related to my field, and the possible contributions of my study to it.

Almost two decades ago, Lucy Green's book *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2001) was published. As mentioned earlier, this publication involves a rigorous study of different aspects of informal learning which occur within popular music contexts in the UK. It is without doubt the first major work that studies this issue systematically and with a clear intention of applicability in formal contexts. Following on, in 2008 Green published *Music, Informal Learning and the School: A New Classroom Pedagogy*, in which she offers the results of a study that aimed, precisely, to bring the practices of informal learning of music that were detected in her previous project, into the school classroom.

Since then, literature has been evidencing a growing concern about the inclusion of music that is close to the everyday lives of students and communities in formal curricula. This trend has gradually led to a shift in the focus of research from formal to informal environments or, within the terminology of this project, from closed to open systems of transmission. This move has resulted in an increase in research based on the teaching of music that is more focused on students and their approaches to learning. Some authors, such as Everett (2008, p. 3), maintain that a shift has also taken place from descriptive research to empirical studies that are concerned not only with the social contexts of popular music but also with the way it is learned. This

practical trend in research has allowed for the emergence of innovative proposals for the application of informal learning approaches in formal contexts[4]. This shift from descriptive studies to more practical ones is encouraged by researchers such as Green (2009, pp. 130-131), who calls for studies that not only describe learning realities, but which also generate reflections that inform pedagogical action.

Besides the above-mentioned works by Green (2001,2008), several other publications also deal with the issue of urban musical genres and their incorporation in formal contexts. Krikun (2009), for example, discusses the presence of popular music in higher education in Memphis, Tennessee. This author calls out for a need in enhancing proficiency in popular music pedagogy in music educators and points out at the challenges of developing a rock music curriculum. From another stance, in the article *Garage band or GarageBand? Remixing musical futures*, Vakeva (2010) suggests that pedagogy of popular music can incorporate various modes of digital artistry such as remixing with software (e.g. Garageband) and developing online creative collaborations. In this sense, the author discuses that it is possible to expand the notion of conventional rock band practices (e.g. Garage Bands) that nowadays informs formal education while incorporating alternative contemporary practices closely attached to new technologies and online social media.

In South America, an important referent is Shapiro (2011), who explores, describes and analyses the unsystematic musical learning of young people playing in rock bands in Rosario, Argentina. The author tracks down the multiple transits of local players within local music ecosystems including bars, music schools, private lessons, rehearsal studios and analyses the types of learning that occurs in these settings, as well as the tensions that arise when this empirically trained musicians enter formal contexts. By other part, in the article *Music Appreciation for the Youth: Territories, Identity and Sense* (2010) I discuss the importance of allowing the entrance of cultural territories and musical aesthetics of young people into the music-appreciation classroom as a pedagogic strategy for constructing meaning, sense and identity. I build my reflections based on an experience that was developed with teenagers in the frame

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[4] The *Musical Futures* project, for example, is a practical initiative that builds on Lucy Green's research in the UK, which aims to enhance the use of informal ways of learning in formal school settings (https://www.musicalfutures.org).

of a music appreciation course at Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogotá, between 2002 and 2008.

Literature shows, however, that genres such as rock, blues, jazz, electronic and digital music have attracted most attention in recent years due to their manifest relevance to young people, especially in urban centres. In this sense, Folkestad (2005, p. 26) points out that only a small amount of research has focused on the issue of informal learning taking place in non-Anglophone popular and traditional music. This gap in relation to the study of how non-Anglophone music is learned has been gradually filled in recent years, with some studies examining the subject.

An important referent in this sense is the project *Growing into Music* (Baker et al., 2011) which enquiries into the learning and making music of children in Mali/Guinea, Cuba, Venezuela, North India, Rajasthan and Azerbaijan. Relevant similarities and contrasts in learning within these different cultures are brought up by the project. In this line, issues are discussed such as learning in family contexts and with peers, self-learning, imitation, immersion in repertoire, learning by osmosis, repetition, gender and choice of instruments, learning from recordings, and impact of technology and institutionalization on transmission.

More concretely, the conclusions of the *Growing into music* project in relation to how children learn in the llanos region of Venezuela are coincident with several of the findings of this project, as for example: Senior musicians report a centrality of early musical enculturation in learning, within family contexts and social gatherings; they also frequently point out at a close relation between the land (e.g. nature and everyday labours) and music transmission. These are however issues that have been changing recently due to social and technological changes, including urbanization and institutionalization (e.g. springing of music academies and houses of culture). By other part, the study points out at self-directed learning as a way of transmission that still prevails in the *llanos* region. Finally, *Growing into music* points out at the emergence of a new type of 'bilingual' musician in Venezuela who is able to learn and play by ear but who has also developed the capacity to read music, an aspect that has been particularly enhanced by the national presence of *El Sistema* and its standardized focus on classical repertoires and music reading. By contrast, in Colombia, the learning of music in most part of Culture houses is still based on imitation and uses notation only in a subsidiary way (e.g. using tablatures).

In spite of these valuable initiatives, however, there is still a need to keep on broadening the scope and deepening our understanding of the particular qualities of learning styles that are embedded in those musical cultures that have not yet been studied in depth. Whilst there are general features of open systems such as aural/oral transmission and collective learning, there are important differences between specific cultures (Green, 2009, 2012; Clements, 2008). For example, while peer learning among youngsters is a predominant trait in Anglophone popular music, most informal learning of traditional music in South America involves an adult community. As stated by Green in *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2001), the relative lack of involvement of an adult community of practice is one of the distinctive features of popular music learning, as opposed to traditional music and, to some extent, jazz. This contrast has been evident within the findings of the present study.

In addition to this, most studies examining the ways of learning traditional music and its impact in institutional contexts have dealt mainly with teaching in schools, whilst only a few have dealt with higher education, which is the focus of this project. I wish to briefly mention, however, some relevant pieces of literature that do focus on this issue within higher education settings in diverse regions of the world; indeed, these pieces of literature will occasionally emerge throughout this report in connection to some of my findings. Yang (2011), for example, looks at the teaching of traditional singing in Chinese higher education. Gullberg (2006) and Karlsen (2010) refer to the inclusion of informal practices in a post-compulsory music education programme in Sweden. Waldron (2008a, 2008b) analyses a couple of cases of teaching and learning traditional Irish music in informal and formal contexts and the outreach of its transmission within virtual platforms. Moreover, in Spain, Vilar (2006) reflects on the limits regarding the inclusion of folk instruments in Catalonia in the formal system of music education; finally, Jordán (2009) puts forth a similar reflection in higher education institutions in Chile. In addition to this, in the field of ethnomusicology, some interesting reflections emerge regarding the type of informal learning that takes place in popular and non-English traditional music, such as the publication *Performing Ethnomusicology* (Solís, 2004), in which several authors express critical views on the practice of global musical ensembles in academic contexts.

In Colombia, authors such as Arenas (2009) offer valuable insights into the types of meanings and knowledge that are built within the experience of empirical musicians and the epistemological challenges of these alternative transmission paradigms for the academic world. From another standpoint, some research into traditional and popular music with pedagogic aims has been mainly focused on the systematisation of repertoires and techniques (Rojas, 2004; Ochoa, 2013; Cultura, n.d.) – an exercise that offers valuable pedagogic material but which does not provide an explicit analysis of particular approaches to learning. In addition to this, there is a growing though still limited number of studies that analyse the learning of specific traditional instruments in informal contexts while enquiring about the impact of this learning in formal settings (Miñana, 1987; Convers & Ochoa, 2007, 2009; Rendón & Tobón, 2012; Vidal et al., 2014; Miranda, 2015; Yepes, 2015; Vidal & Tobón, 2015; Olarte, 2016). Other research studies mainly deal with the musicological analysis of Colombian traditional musicians' styles (Lambuley, 2008), and the systematisation of techniques, as well as rhythmic and harmonic systems (Sosa, 1988; Bedoya, 2010); in contrast, the informal literature includes mainly methods and songbooks (Paredes, 2006; Silva, n.d.; Delepiani, n.d.; Método de *Cuatro*, n.d.; Borrero, n.d.; Díaz, n.d.). Certain other studies concerning the relation between informal learning and higher education in South America have enquired about students' perceptions and learning experiences in both formal and informal settings (Zapata, 2005; Feichas, 2010; Narita, 2014).

From another stance, this project also aims to enrich literature in South America dealing with the issue of decoloniality and music education based on formal studies, which is still scarce, especially in relation to higher education. In this sense, it is worth mentioning Guillermo Rosabal Coto's (2016) work *Music learning in Costa Rica: A postcolonial institutional ethnography,* a study aiming to unveil colonial traces on the subjectivities of music teachers through autobiographical accounts. This author discusses the impact of these traces in terms of aspects such as disregard of learners' human and cultural individualities within academic contexts, emotional consequences of assessment rituals, effects of canonical perspectives on the bodies of learners and the use of psychological violence within transmission, among others. It is also an interesting referent in terms of methodology, since it offers a mixture of ethnographic approaches and postcolonial theory that can be used within other projects with similar aims. By other part, the *Revista Internacional de Educación Musical* has published a

special issue on 2017 on music education and decoloniality. It brings forward rich discussions and research findings from different countries in South America including the relation between colonialism/decolonialism and issues such as indigenous and popular music, the training of music teachers in conservatories or the teaching of musical notation, theory and analysis in institutional contexts (Shifres, F. & Rosabal, G., 2017; Caravetta, S., 2017). By other part, some of the articles offer interesting methodological approaches, as for example auto ethnographic practices that are used in the same line as Rosabal's narrative approach to participants' subjectivities (Tobías, 2017).

Finally, in Colombia, Ochoa's (2011) study *The "common practice" as the least common of the practices: a critical look at the assumptions that shape higher music education in Colombia* brings up a critical look at Eurocentric approaches in local universities. The project takes as its object of study three undergraduate programs in Colombia, and it tries to unveil the ideological assumptions that are common to the teachers of the different programs, while discussing the epistemological frameworks that support their attitudes and perceptions. Some of Ochoa's views will be brought throughout the discussion of my findings.

The learning of traditional music and of the cuatro in higher education in Colombia

In this section, I wish to refer briefly to some pertinent historical issues in relation to the teaching of traditional music at universities in Colombia, based on my literature review, my background research and the comments of participants. I intend to show that this contextual landscape offers additional arguments for the pertinence of this study in terms of its contributions to the local field of music education.

One of the questions which I asked participants during the interviews, and an issue that I bore in mind throughout my literature review, relates to the reasons behind the exclusion of traditional music from formal curricula in higher education in my country for so many decades. Some people refer to broader cultural issues, which are ampler than music, and which are related to the colonial dynamics of modern history in Latin America. These dynamics have installed hierarchies between cultural expressions, such as music, in which Modern-European expressions have been

considered more relevant within educational systems in relation to local indigenous, Afro-American and mestizo cultural knowledge (Hernández, 2009; Ochoa, 2011; Samper, 2011; Arenas, 2015). In line with this situation, authors report a rationality that has been installed for decades and that offers a set of criteria for the judgment of the superiority of classical music based on issues such as universality, complexity, originality and autonomy (Green, 2003, pp. 266-267); indeed, this is in contrast with popular music, the latter of which is considered 'ephemeral, trivial, derivative or commercial' (Green, 2003, p. 264) and only valuable within the circumstantial rituals in which it is performed (Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 1). Some participants feel that this cultural exclusion is still evidenced nowadays in the form of elitist prejudices within some local social sectors towards popular and traditional music, its musicians, and their ways of life.

In more concrete and pragmatic terms, some other participants report that, in the 80s, they were not accepted in conservatoires because 'there were no teachers available to teach traditional instruments'. In this sense, the existence of a vicious circle was evident, in the sense that traditional music students were not allowed to enter the system; as such, it was impossible to train future musicians and teachers in traditional music.

Other views on the subject allude to the lack of systematisation of folk and traditional music in terms of the production of organised materials including taxonomies of repertoires, techniques and playing styles susceptible to being used in academic contexts with pedagogic purposes. In this respect, it is important to mention that existing systematisation has been more frequent in relation to Andean plucked string instruments such as the *tiple*[5] and *bandola*[6] than in relation to the *harp* and *cuatro*, which are from the llanos region. This can perhaps be explained by looking at historical factors, since the music of these Andean instruments has been represented in formal notation for decades probably because of their closer proximity to the social establishment and white elites in Colombia, both geographically and culturally. This difference might explain the fact that Andean instruments have permeated universities and conservatoires with more strength in recent decades, particularly

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[5] The Colombian *tiple* is a typical instrument from the Andes region, similar in appearance to the guitar though slightly smaller, with four triple courses of strings.
[6] The *bandola* is another typical instrument from the Andes region in Colombia. It usually has 6 courses with 12 to 18 strings in total. It is normally plucked with a pick.

when compared to instruments from other regions where music is not commonly notated.

It is important to mention, however, that this situation of exclusion has changed throughout the last two decades in Colombia. On the one hand, this change has been motivated by a growing global interest in local cultures, which is accelerated by the intense expansion and development of mass media and of the Internet. In addition to this, national constitutions in several countries of South America have recently opened important spaces for the visibility and preservation of local cultural diversity and ethnic minorities. As a consequence, a series of public policies have been triggered in several countries of the region oriented towards the protection and visibility of local cultures.

A word on public policy

At this point, I wish to briefly mention some issues regarding public policies aimed to promote cultural diversity and traditional music in Colombia as well as Venezuela. The Colombian Ministry of Culture, to start, has been implementing policies in the following fields since 1997: Immaterial cultural patrimony, cultural diversity, ethno linguistic diversity and houses of culture. In the field of music, it has deployed a series of actions through its *Plan Nacional de Música para la Convivencia,* which seeks to promote the development of social values through music while at the same time arguing the importance of promoting and legitimating cultural diversity. This program has the following components: music education, provision of musical instruments and materials, research, creation, entrepreneurship, circulation of musical products and artistic management. One of the core projects of the ministry's music area is supporting over 1.400 music schools throughout the country where a diversity of musical genres and styles are being taught. The ministry is also developing several projects aimed to enhance learning within collective musical practices in formal and informal settings. In this frame of actions, by other part, a structured programme for the diffusion and learning of traditional music throughout the regions of Colombia has been set in place. This programme includes the production of pedagogic material that supports the learning of folk and traditional repertoires in music schools throughout the country (Cultura, 2016).

In Venezuela the *Ministerio del Poder Popular para la Cultura,* created in 2005, directs several of its projects and actions towards the promotion of cultural diversity as well. One of these projects is the *Sistema Nacional de las Culturas Populares,* initiated by Hugo Chávez in 2011 with the purpose of 'intensely promoting, disseminating and projecting, through its artists, the set of traditional and popular cultural manifestations (of Venezuela)'(Cultura, 2018). It has also sponsored some local traditional music independent networks and institutions. An outstanding example of these non-governmental initiatives is the *Fundación para las orquestas típicas de Venezuela,* which actually supports 26 centres for the transmission of Venezuelan traditional and popular music and 18 *orquestas típicas* in 17 states of Venezuela (Orquestas Típicas, 2018).

Fundamusical, worldwide known as *El Sistema,* is directly appointed to the President's office, through the *Ministerio del Poder Popular del Despacho de la Presidencia y Seguimiento de la Gestión de Gobierno. Fundamusical* is a music education project oriented towards social development that is mainly focussed on the transmission of classical music. In terms of coverage, official statistics of *El Sistema* speak of 1.681 orchestras and around 900.000 students throughout the country. However, some authors such as Baker (2015) point out at possible inconsistencies between official numbers and reality.

Probably as a response to local critical voices that point out at the Eurocentric views of the model, no more than a decade ago *El Sistema* initiates a program for the transmission of traditional music called *Alma LLanera*. The aim of the program is to promote "the initiation, development and deepening of the study, as well as the diffusion of Venezuelan folk music, through a pedagogical and artistic structure that copies the academic and philosophical model of El Sistema" (Sistema, 2018). *Alma LLanera* also seeks to recover instruments that are in danger of extinction and to systematise oral repertoire by transcribing it. Official statistics mention a potential access to traditional music to this program in every centre of El Sistema, including the learning of instruments such as cuatro, harp, guitar and bandola; and support to over 73 typical groups and ensembles. Even if systematising and transcribing music seems to be one of the aims of the project, the fact of inviting local teachers to take part of the project apparently allows certain flexibility in terms of pedagogy. For example, one of the participants of my research who teaches in *Alma Llanera* described the use of

personal teaching methods that not necessarily imply the reading of music as a central tool. For a critical discussion regarding the asymmetries between classical and traditional music in terms of public investment in Venezuela and the possible impact of systematization in the transmission of traditional music in relation to *Alma Llanera*, I suggest seeing Baker (2015, p.p.253-260).

The offer of traditional music in Colombian universities

In the case of Colombia, during the last two decades young people have been turning their eyes with growing interest towards traditional music in urban centres, especially towards music from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts. This drive is probably enhanced by growing public support to traditional music and accentuation of circulation of traditional music and 'fusion' projects in the mass media. This interest has led to a higher level of demand for these repertoires within academic settings, such as universities. In fact, several local undergraduate programmes have actually implemented curricula for the teaching of traditional instruments as a direct result of the interest of particular students. Juan Manuel Urrego, chair of the music programme at Universidad de Cundinamarca comments:

> *Juan Manuel Urrego*: We had a student who was interested in playing the *cuatro llanero*… so we started off a programme in *cuatro llanero*. We are building a curriculum and we expect to attract the interest of more people in this type of instrument.

With every passing day, traditional music ensembles are becoming increasingly common at universities and several undergraduate programmes in Colombia now offer specialities in the performance of traditional instruments; two of these specialities teach the *cuatro* as the main instrument. Teachers are also directing their interest towards these repertoires and their contexts. Indeed, universities are opening an increasing number of research lines within this area.

An interesting example in terms of this academic offering of traditional music in higher education over recent years in Colombia is the *Academia Superior de Bellas Artes de Bogotá, ASAB.* This institution has built a curriculum that permits

specialisation in traditional instruments, based on a consistent process of research in relation to local music that nourishes the educational programmes:

> The inclusion of this instrument in a higher education programme results from the aims of our curricular projects that are directed towards the construction of knowledge and to the systematic and interdisciplinary study of local instruments and musical practices. The programme seeks to offer an alternative for professionalisation that incorporates these practices in an active way as part of the professional projection of our students (*My translation*, *Cuatro* Syllabi, *ASAB*).

Several authors, however, point out at that this recent interest in traditional music has not yet been explored in depth by scholars in terms of looking at how these repertoires *are transmitted*, both in folk and academic contexts. Convers and Ochoa comment:

> There is evidence now to suggest that since late last century, and especially since the new century, there is a will and a more positive concept in both formal and non-formal music education, in relation to the inclusion of repertoires of popular and traditional music in curricula. However, methods of musical pedagogy that have been used for the transmission of western music, are still used to teach popular and traditional music (*My translation*, Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 2).

Within this frame of ideas, I hope that the present study will contribute to filling the gap in academic literature in South America; indeed, there is a high likelihood that this will be the case, since this study's main aim is to address not only the inclusion of repertoires and techniques of *cuatro* music in formal contexts but, especially, the most pertinent forms for their transmission. This includes ways of learning that take into account western pedagogic stances on dialogue with aural/oral ways, such as those that are found in local traditional contexts.

Chapter 3

Socio – historical context of the *cuatro* and *joropo* music

Throughout this chapter I will discuss some significant issues relating to the evolution of *joropo* music and of the *cuatro*, including historical, sociocultural and musical issues. As previously mentioned, even if the *cuatro* is present in a wide diversity of traditional rhythms of Venezuela and in other genres such as jazz and classical music, I will mainly focus on *joropo*, because it is the traditional music associated with the portion of Colombian territory which I studied within my project – the Llanos region.

Joropo Music

Joropo llanero is a generic term that is used to designate musical, dancing and literary popular forms that 'incarnate the feelings and expressions of the Llanos population' within the wide region of the Orinoco basin in Colombia and Venezuela (Lambuley, 2014, p. 235) (see map 3.1)[7]. More specifically, it refers to social gatherings, such as *parrandos* or dancing parties, the traditional musical rhythm of the Llanos region, labour songs, and music that is used within religious celebrations (Lambuley, 2008, p. 7). As an expression of popular art, it is in a state of permanent evolution due to its improvisatory character (Calderón, 1997).

Geographically speaking, and as shown in Map 3.1, *joropo llanero* is played within the Llanos region which starts at the eastern foothills of the Colombian Andes; it includes the states of Meta, Vichada, Casanare and Arauca in Colombia, as well as the states of Apure, Guárico, Cojedes, Barinas and Portuguesa in Venezuela (Calderón, 1997).

Several authors allude to the music from the west coast of Africa when discussing the musical origins of *joropo* (Ruiz, 2011; Salazar, 2014). More specifically, the ternary *fandango* rhythm is found at the origin not only of *joropo*, but also of many

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[7] Besides *joropo llanero*, other types of *joropo* are found in Venezuela, which imply musical differences that in some cases can be notable. The instruments that are used can also vary between the different genres. Some of these alternative expressions of *joropo* in Venezuela include: *joropo oriental, joropo central, joropo occidental, joropo guayanés and joropo andino* (Salazar, 2014).

other dances across Latin America that share its 2-3 polyrhythmic structure. With regard to the term *fandango*, its etymological roots may well be traced back to a number of African words associated with certain cultural practices and celebrations, such as *tanga, tienga* or *tenge*, which may have derived from fan-*tango* and fan-*dango* (Goldberg, 2014). Salazar (2014) maintains that the Spanish fandango actually developed in southern Spain based on the African dances and music that were brought back to Europe from the new colonies by sailors and returning soldiers. Enriched by the Arab music of Al Andalus in Spain, fandango came back to the new world and continued its dissemination across the different regions of the conquered territories through a very rich process of creolisation that blended white European, black and indigenous sounds. In fact, several authors find connections between *joropo* music and dancing with southern Spain's flamenco, particularly in relation to *zapateado* – a type of energetic and percussive foot tapping that is common in both genres.

Map 3. 1 Llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela (Lambuley, 2008, p. 8)

In relation to the etymology of the word *joropo*, several authors associate it with the Arab word *xarop*, which stands for syrup (Abadía, 1996; Martín, 2011; Salazar, 2014). Other authors maintain that it rather has an indigenous root, close to the word *soropo*,

which designates the housing of marginal *llanero* people (Martín, 2011). In addition to this, Hollman Caicedo, one of the senior musicians interviewed for this project, refers to an expression used by Guajibo Indians to designate the gallop of a horse:

> *Hollman Caicedo*: ... the Guajibos Indians arrived saying '*joropo, joropo, joropo, joropo, joropo*' and hence was born the (word) '*joropo*'. They didn't even know what *joropo* was... They just liked it. What was *joropo*? *Joropo* was galloping (gesture) ... they said '*joropo, joropo, joropo*' and they liked more that kind of 'galloping' music, '*joropo, joropo*', so *joropo* was logically born at that point...

Three groups were responsible for the expansion of the music that was arriving from Africa and from Europe to the new colonies: soldiers, traders and religious communities. In particular, the Jesuit missions played a very important role in the process of cultural dissemination in the Llanos region. Jesuits integrated indigenous people into their missions and, besides religion, they also introduced local inhabitants to issues such as agriculture, handcrafts, stockbreeding and music (Lambuley, 2014; Baquero, 1990; Martín, 2011). To this day, stockbreeding remains a central aspect of *llanero* socioeconomic activities and music has developed strong links with everyday work in relation to cattle raising.

Map 3.2 represents the two axis of development of Jesuit communities across the Llanos region: the foothills of the Andes region and the Orinoco Basin. This is an important issue because, as we will see, the Colombian Andean foothills of the Llanos region (*piedemonte llanero*), which are represented within the cluster of figures on the left side of the map, experienced a particular type of musical blend that implied late contact with *joropo*.

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REDUCCIONES Y HACIENDAS JESUÍTICAS EN CASANARE,
META Y ORINOCO - SIGLO XVIII
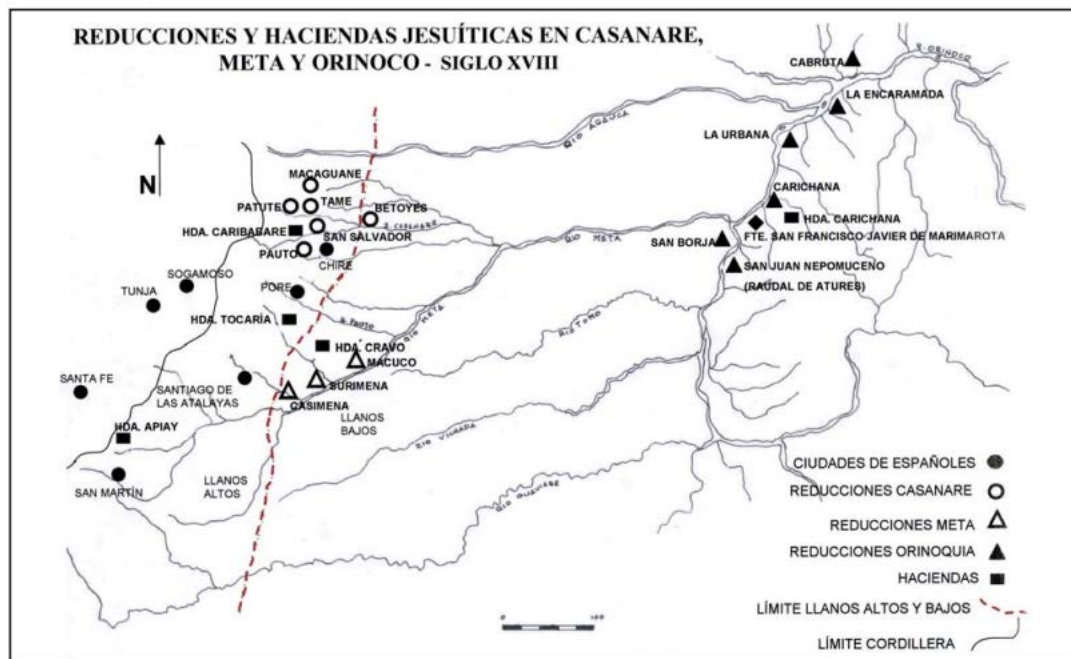
Reducciones y haciendas jesuíticas en el Casanare, Meta y Orinoco. Siglo XVIII.

Map 3. 2 Axis of development of Jesuit communities across the Llanos region (González, 2003, p. 112)

According to literature and to the testimonies of participants, *joropo llanero* seemed to have developed initially in the Llanos region of Venezuela and, to some extent, in the Colombian frontier zone, especially in the state of Arauca. Inhabitants of the Llanos region of Colombia, and mainly those in the states of Meta and Casanare whose populations are concentrated in the Andean foothills, lived basically within an Andean musical culture. This culture was expressed in terms of the practice of Andean typical rhythms such as *Bambuco* and *Pasillo*, and the use of Andean instruments such as the *tiple*, *guitar* and *bandola*[8]. *Cuatro* player Isaac Tacha comments on the musical life within which he grew up in Villavicencio, capital of the Meta state.

> *Isaac Tacha*: What was known at that time was simply the *requinto*, the *tiple*,
>
> and the *guitar*, the instruments that were played in the Andean region.

Joropo music was introduced in the Colombian Andean *piedemonte* initially by peasants who transported cattle from the northern region of Colombia and Venezuela

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[8] While the Andean *bandola* usually has six double courses of strings, the *bandola* from the llanos region only has four single strings.

to the southern territories. This influence was enhanced by the acceleration of transport means throughout the 20th century. Isaac Tacha, again, comments:

> *Isaac Tacha*: Now, what happens with our *joropo*? There is a Venezuelan influence through Arauca and instruments arrive through flights. But before that moment, it arrived through cowboys who came on foot herding cattle. They brought their coplas. Our city becomes a receptacle of all those cultures that seem not to be too different but in reality they are. A new music starts to appear.

For many decades, Andean Music coexisted with *joropo* within the *piedemonte* region. In some cases, important sociocultural frontiers emerged and stood between both types of music. In Arauca, for example, *joropo* was relegated to the marginal quarters of the state's capital. Miguel A. Martin, celebrated composer and folklorist, comments on his youth experiences in the early 40s:

> (During our) adolescence, when we began to feel attracted by girls with tousled hair, easy smiles and knowing winks ... they drove us to offer them friendly serenades. They were not *joropo*s, they were songs that were played on the *big guitar*, *tiple* and *bandolita* (lira). *Bambuco*s, dances, pasillos and boleros ... The *joropo* was the party of slums inhabited by natives who also had the same musical instruments. Some of them only had *guitarros*[9] (*My translation*, Martín, 2011, p. 20).

As can be seen, *joropo* was initially performed in these regions with instruments that are more typically from the Andes region, different from the traditional *harp*, *cuatro* and *maracas* format of the Venezuelan *joropo*. A similar blend is found in Casanare, another *piedemonte* state that links with Arauca in the North, where *joropo* is, even today, performed with Andean instruments such as the *requinto*, *tiple* and *guitar*. Colombian researcher Samuel Bedoya (n.d.) refers to this blend as a transitional

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[9] The *tiple* is sometimes called *guitarro* in the llanos region.

type of music, which originated at the border zone between the Andes and the Llanos region and which implies particular formats as well as a specific musical idiosyncrasy.

Before referring to the musical aspects of *joropo*, it is important to mention that this is a genre with very important literary imprints. Even nowadays, *joropo* lyrics usually evidence a strong connection with local cultural ecosystems. Indeed, very common are references to local fauna, flora, everyday labour and political issues, including a recurrent use of native vocabulary.

Musical aspects of joropo llanero

The instruments most commonly used in traditional *joropo* music in the Llanos region include: *voice*, *harp*, *bandola*, *bandolín*[10] and, in some cases, the *tiple* and *requinto*[11], for the melodic parts. In addition to this, the *cuatro*, *guitar* and *tiple* are used in accompaniment, as are the *furruco*[12], or electric bass (recently added), and the *maracas*.

Joropo music is very rarely written and its transmission, for decades, has implied aural/oral means of learning, in which adults play an important role as reference within active communities of practice. Generally speaking, musical enculturation plays a very important part in *joropo* learning; it is associated with social practices such as everyday labour, parties, dancing and religious celebrations.

In general terms, two polyrhythmic prototypes are found in *joropo llanero* music; these are also found within a very wide variety of rhythms throughout Latin America which apparently derive from the fandango musical structure referred to above. These two rhythmic prototypes or metric regimes are: *por corrido* and *por derecho*[13]. Both patterns are based on a 2-3 juxtaposition (3/4 – 6/8 measures) whereby what changes is basically the accentuation of certain figures of the measure and the place of the bar where the bass usually executes its motifs.

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[10] The *bandolín* is an instrument with four double courses of strings, similar to the mandolin.

[11] The *tiple requinto* is smaller than a standard Andean *tiple*, and is sometimes shaped like a *violin* or like a small *guitar*. Like the *tiple*, it also has 12 strings.

[12] The *furruco* is a friction drum that was used for decades as a bass instrument for *joropo* music in the llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela.

[13] In Venezuela, these two types of matrices are sometimes referred to differently. *Joropo en tres* will stand for *joropo por corrido*, and *joropo en seis* will stand for *joropo por derecho*.

The basic rhythmic pattern for *por corrido* is the following:

Figure 3.1 Basic rhythmic pattern for *por corrido*

Usually, the 6/8 line (System 1) will be executed using the *cuatro* and the *maracas*. The symbol ➤ stands for a timbral accent that occurs on the 3rd and 6th eighth notes. In the case of the *cuatro*, this accent is produced by a muting strum on the right hand.

In addition to this, the 3/4 part (System 2) is performed by the bass instrument that normally plays on the 3rd and 1st beats of the bar. The leading instruments, such as the *voice*, the *harp* and the *bandola*, will normally alternate both patterns.

The basic rhythmic pattern for *por derecho* is as follows:

Figure 3.2 Basic rhythmic pattern for *por derecho*.

The difference here is that the timbral accent is executed on the 1st and 4th eighth notes (System 1) and the bass (System 2) usually plays on the 2nd and 3rd beats of the bar.

Joropo llanero comprises *golpes*, which are harmonic sequences that work as the basis for a series of melodies with idiosyncratic traits. These sequences of chords rarely change and, together with their associated melodies and formal structures, they determine each specific *golpe*'s name. For example, a *golpe* of *Gaván* will always have the following harmonic structure, which can be executed in a major or minor key:
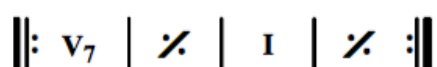
In Chapter 10, there is a detailed characterisation of the *golpes* that were found during the fieldwork of this project.

In some cases, *golpes* with differing rhythmic patterns might be played one after the other in a common practice called *entreverao*. In this case, a sudden change from *corrido* to *derecho* (or vice versa) can be produced, which implies the addition or subtraction of one beat of the bar, as follows:

From *corrido* to *derecho*. One beat is added by introducing a 1/4 bar between the two *golpes*:

Figure 3.3a Transition pattern from *por corrido* to *por derecho*

From *derecho* to *corrido*. One beat is subtracted by changing one of the 3/4 measures into a 2/4 measure:

Figure 3.3b Transition pattern from *por derecho* to *por corrido*.

This procedure permits a change within the accentuation of the polyrhythms without stopping the flow of the music. In other words, the rhythmic groups continue to be the same (e.g. three eighth notes), but the place where the timbral accents occur, or where the bass performs the two quarter notes, is displaced within the measure.

At this point I wish to discuss the possibility of understanding traditional music that is performed using the *cuatro* as part of broader musical matrices that are deployed across Latin America. I bring this up because of its pedagogic relevance in terms of transference of knowledge, and because it can offer pertinent conceptual frames for further research which chooses to examine traditional music with pedagogic aims. This broad framework is expressed in terms of the grouping that is possible between, for example, traditional rhythms from diverse regions of Colombia. This grouping assembles contrasting musical expressions according to their common traits in terms of issues such as meters or accents within polyrhythms. This is an important issue since, as I mentioned earlier, polyrhythms (especially 2 versus 3) form the base of a very wide range of traditional genres in Latin America. This typical polyrhythmic structure is clearly found in a broad variety of dances throughout Latin America, e.g. in: *huapango* (México and Ecuador), *bambuco* and *pasillo* (Colombia and Ecuador), *samba cueca* (Chile), and *chacarera* (Argentina). In the case of *joropo* music, these polyrhythmic matrices are expressed in terms of *por corrido* and *por derecho golpes*, which find their musical correlate in other 'brother' rhythms throughout South America. For example, *Bambuco*, a typical dance from the Colombian Andes Region, shares several musical traits with *joropo por derecho*, in particular a typical high-

pitched accent on the 1st and 4th eighth notes of the bar. In the case of *joropo*, this binary grouping is performed using the *cuatro*. In *Bambuco*, it is usually performed using the *tiple*:
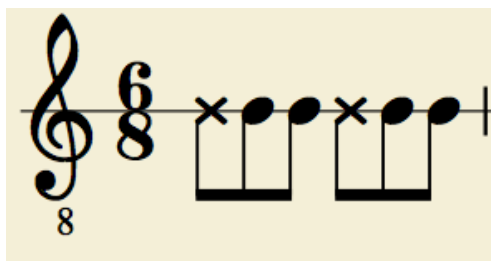
Figure 3.4 Timbral sequence for *tiple* and *cuatro* in *joropo por derecho* and *bambuco.*

Both in *joropo* and *bambuco*, the polyrhythm is completed by the bass, which usually executes ternary lines that accentuate the 2nd and 3rd fourth notes of the bar:
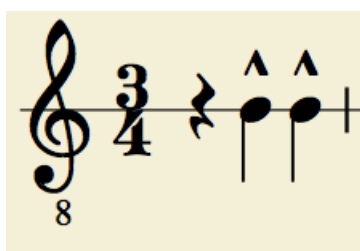
Figure 3.5 Bass notes in *joropo por derecho* and *bambuco*

Understanding these overarching musical characteristics, both conceptually and practically, offers students pertinent tools with which to transfer knowledge between musical contexts. It enhances a faster and more natural incorporation of other types of genres and rhythms from Latin America that share these common structures, thus fostering autonomy and opening up possibilities for students in terms of interregional aesthetical dialogues.

I wish to finish this section by mentioning that, in recent years, *joropo* has experienced transformations due to its diffusion into mass media, which has altered some of its musical traits. In many cases, this process has involved a progressive homogenisation in terms of sound and formats (Lambuley, 2014). Throughout this report, I will refer, in more detail, to the corresponding transformations that *cuatro* styles have experienced in relation to this issue. In addition to this, I will also refer to the fusions of *joropo* with other genres, such as classical music, jazz and rock.

Historical background of the cuatro

Most of the literature dealing with the historical aspects of the *cuatro* points out that the *renaissance guitar* was the early predecessor of the *cuatro* (Figure 3.3). This was the instrument that most commonly travelled with the first missionaries (Figure 3.4), sailors and soldiers who settled in the new colonies (Martín, 2011; Díaz, n.d.; Lozano, n.d.). This small four-course guitar, sometimes referred to as a *guitarrilla,* was very popular at that time in Spain and was easily transportable (Lambuley, 2014; Martín, 2011; Ruz, 2011). Interestingly, a wide variety of plucked string instruments found across Latin America maintain a similar small size, with all of them very probably derived from the same *renaissance guitar* (Turnbull, 2016). Examples of these instruments are: the *cuatro* (Venezuela and Colombia), *tiple* (Colombia), *charango* (Ecuador, Bolivia and Perú), *guitarrilla* (Bolivia, Perú) and *jarana* (México), among several others.

PL. 2.1. A typical four-course guitar illustrated on the title page
of Guillaume Morlaye, *Le premier livre . . .* (Paris, 1552)

Figure 3. 6 Four-course *renaissance guitar* (Paris, 1552)

Indio sáliva ejecutando el "cuatro" en una reducción jesuita.
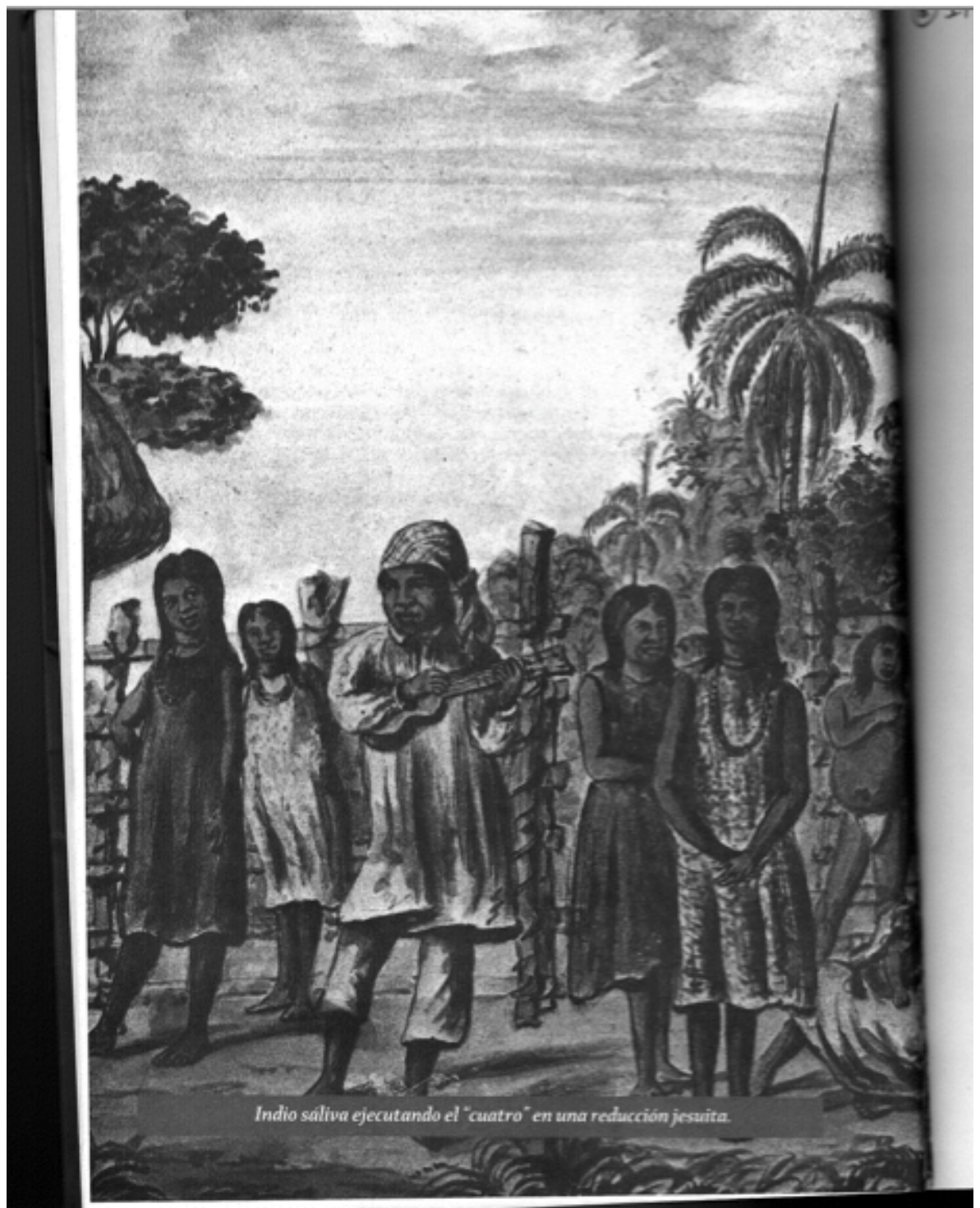
Figure 3. 7 A *saliva* Indian playing a small four-string guitar in a Jesuit reduction (Martín, 2011, p. 16)

In addition to this, the *cuatro*'s tuning is very similar to one of the tunings suggested by some authors in relation to renaissance methods for the guitar. More specifically, Bermudo suggests, in 1555, two *temples*, namely 'a los nuevos' (new tuning) and 'a los viejos' (old tuning), for the double-course *renaissance guitar*:

Figure 3. 8 Juan Bermudo's guitar tunings (Tyler & Sparks, 2002, p. 6)

The *cuatro's* most common tuning corresponds exactly to the first tuning 'a los nuevos', but one tone above: a-d-f#-b. The b of the first string is tuned an octave lower, probably due to the fact that this lower pitch results in less tension, and thus the strings break less frequently.

In other cases, the tuning proposed by early authors was more similar to the *cuatro* in terms of pitches, though with a difference in the first interval. In 1601, for example, Italian author Cerreto (Turnbull, 2016) suggests the following tuning for the same instrument: g/g – d/d – f#/f# - b (versus the a-d-f#-b of *cuatro*). Tyler and Sparks (2002) also refer to this tuning and state that it was used in the 16th century. It corresponds to Bermudo's 'temple a los viejos', but one tone higher. It also corresponds to certain *cuatro* tunings found in Casanare, Colombia, called '*cuatro* con quinta en sol' (*cuatro* with the fifth string in G) or 'temple del diablo' (the devil's tuning) (Díaz, 1998).

Other researchers see the *vihuela* as another plausible ancestor of the *cuatro* (Lozano, n.d.; Díaz, 1998). They pinpoint the fact that it was also an easily

transportable instrument brought by conquerors to the new territories and mention the similarities in tuning: even if the *vihuela* has five or six courses, the tuning of its central strings corresponds to the same tuning of the guitar and both match the *cuatro* tuning exactly (Díaz, 1998). In fact, Bermudo comments in one of his treatise:

> . . . If you want to convert the *vihuela* into a guitar of the new way, remove its 1st and 6th strings [i.e., courses]. And if you want the guitar to be a *vihuela*, put on the 6th and 1st [courses] (as in Fink, 2007, p. 3).

The common tuning of the *vihuela* was: g-c-f-a-d-g:
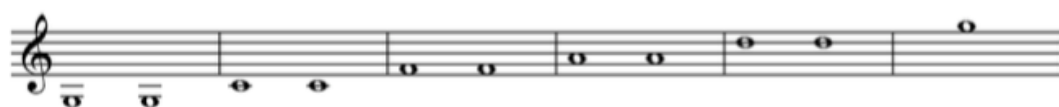
Figure 3. 9 Common tuning of the *vihuela*
(Fink, 2007, p. 5)

As can be seen, if the 1st and 6th courses are removed, the result is: c-f-a-d. This implies the same intervals as the above-mentioned temple 'a los nuevos' and of the *cuatro* nowadays. Another tuning suggested by Díaz (1998) for the five-course *vihuela* is: e-a-d-f#-b. In this case, if the 6th course is removed, the tuning is exactly the same as the *cuatro*.

In any case, it should be noted that several authors mention the fact that the tuning of these instruments was not necessarily standardised at that time. This means that tunings could actually change according to contextual requirements (e.g. playing with instruments that had other tunings) and to the physical characteristics of the instrument and of the strings. Grifith comments:

> Milan's advice on stringing suggests that the true pitch of the *vihuela*, its *verdadera entonación*, was determined empirically according to the size of the instrument. His advice to novices is to choose a 1st string according to the size of the instrument… This string is raised below its breaking point, 'as high as it can bear', and the other strings are tuned from it (Griffiths, 1999, p. 170).

Within this frame of ideas, what is relevant in relation to the *cuatro* is not the exact pitching – since in any case it appears to be variable – but rather the disposition of intervals, which is very similar to the 4th course of a *guitar* and to the tuning of the *vihuela*'s middle strings.

As can be seen, the issue of the organological origins of the *cuatro* is not a clear-cut one. Synthesising these points, the following are the two recurrent hypotheses that are brought up by authors:

The first hypothesis states that the *cuatro* derives from the four-string *renaissance guitar*, also called a *guitarrilla*. This seems to be the most plausible hypothesis, due to the fact that it was apparently the most common instrument brought by sailors, soldiers and missionaries to the new world since its dimensions made the transport easier and it was an 'instrument of the people'. Puerta comments that this instrument was:

Brought and played, not by eminent musicians with high academic training, but by soldiers, second-class crew and subordinates, impoverished farmers in barren plots of Andalusia and Extremadura, who yearn to find fortune in the generosity of our soil (*My translation*, Puerta in Lozano, n.d., p. 100).

In addition to this, the tuning of the four-course *guitar* is very similar in terms of intervals to that of the *cuatro*. Finally, the *renaissance guitar* was mainly used for harmonic accompaniment; different types of strumming were executed, which are also used by *cuatro* players nowadays with impressive levels of resemblance (Lozano, n.d., pp. 121-137). I will examine this coincidence between *cuatro* playing and early music in Chapter 10.

The second hypothesis states that the *vihuela* is the predecessor of the *cuatro*, with the former being altered in terms of its use and its number of strings. Indeed, the *vihuela* was normally used to produce polyphony with more delicate types of playing, while the *cuatro* is traditionally used rather for accompaniment with strumming. In addition to this, the *vihuela* was an aristocratic instrument; this means that the *guitar* was very probably spread more widely than the *vihuela* across the new territories in

the hands of colonials, soldiers, missionaries and traders. Finally, the usual tuning of the *vihuela* was one octave lower than that of the *renaissance guitar* and of the *cuatro*.

In this sense, the origins of the *cuatro* are perhaps related to both instruments. However, the arguments discussed above seem to point, with more consistency, towards the *renaissance guitar* as the direct ancestor of the *cuatro*. It should be noted, in any case, that both denominations, the *vihuela* and the *guitar*, were sometimes used without distinction to refer to the same instrument in the new colonies (Lozano, n.d.).

In any case, by 1846, a small four-string *rustic guitar* was alluded to by a number of travellers as part of the local instruments in the Llanos region (Bolívar, as in Díaz, 1998, p. 19). However, some of the first mentions of the word *cuatro* are only found in literature within a set of poems by Venezuelan Manuel V. Romero in 1890:

De noche cojo mi *cuatro*
Y le saco muchos versos
Y ella paga mi cariño
con un enjambre de besos

(At night I take my cuatro
and I bring out from it many verses
and she pays my love
with a swarm of kisses)

Y no anden haciendo bulla
Con un *cuatro* destempla'o
Porque pueden encontrarse
Con un ñaure encabulla'o

And do not walk around making a racket
with a cuatro that is out of tune
because you might run into

a ñaure encabulla'o[14]

(*My translation* Díaz, 1998, p. 21)

In other similar writings from the same period, the same instrument was referred to as *guitarrita* or *guitarrilla*, a term that is still used nowadays by some senior musicians in certain regions of the Llanos (Díaz, 1998, p. 22).

During the 20th century, the instrument has continued to develop in terms of construction. The *cuatro*'s actual morphology remains pretty much unchanged (See Figure 3.7 and Figure 3.8); it is similar to that of the modern guitar, but smaller, with its normal size varying between 70cm and 82cm. Traditionally it had 15 frets, although nowadays it is very common to find instruments with 16, 17 and 18 frets (Díaz, 1998, p. 16). The acoustic box was once made of tattoo carapace, dried gourd or oilcan. Nowadays, it is commonly made out of wood. Some decades ago, *cuatro* craftsmen would cut the wood during waning, when the tree is less active and thus is less humid inside; however, this is no longer a common practice (Díaz, 1998, p. 36).

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[14] A *Ñaure encbulla'o* is a thick walking stick with a cord attached to it.

Figure 3. 10 15-fret *cuatro* - Alfonso Sandoval, Venezuela.
(Sandoval, 2016)

Figure 3. 11 *Cuatro* detail - Leandro Violini, Argentina.
(Violini, 2016)

Figure 3.12 Olimpo Díaz's workshop. Villavicencio, Colombia.

In addition to this, the most common tuning in the Llanos region is a-d-f#-b, where the b of the first string is lower than the f# of the second string, as previously mentioned. This means that melodies are usually executed on the second string and not on the first, as with the *guitar*. This tuning is commonly referred to as *cam-bur-pin-tón*, especially in Venezuela – a mnemonic that helps people recall the intervals between the strings. Literally, *cambur pinton* means 'ripe banana'.

In relation to technique and styles of playing, the instrument has clearly experienced a significant development over recent decades. Besides being used in traditional contexts within a purely accompaniment role, the *cuatro* began to be used, during the second half of the 20th century, as a solo instrument as well. This development implied the emergence of two type of styles. The first of these is the 'rasgapunteo' style, which involves a type of playing that combines harmony, melody and strumming. Some of the most relevant precursors of this style are Hernán Gamboa and Cheo Hurtado, both of whom are from Venezuela. In addition, the second type of playing style was inspired by the classical guitar technique developed by Venezuelan Freddy Reina, who started using finger picking to perform original compositions, arrangements and classical repertoires (e.g. baroque) on the *cuatro*. Reyna introduced

a new tuning for the instrument that involved raising the first string an octave, and producing the same disposition of intervals as in the first four strings of the modern guitar, but a fifth above. The type of tuning of this *cuatro* is popularly referred to as *cam-bur-pin-tín*, in contrast with the traditional *cam-bur-pin-tón* referred to above. The development of the soloist *cuatro* has naturally given rise to new enquiries regarding the part played by constructors in the use of materials and designs in search of better balance, sound projection, colour and quality of tuning.

There are other variants of the instrument in Venezuela, all of which differ in size, facture and tuning from the *cuatro llanero*; these include: the *cuatro y medio*, which has an extra string that acts as an open bourdon, the *cinco*, which is bigger in size and has five strings, the *cinco y medio*, which is a *cinco* with an extra open string, the *seis*, with six strings, the *octavo*, with four double courses of strings, and the *cuatro monterol,* which is a small instrument with five strings.

In terms of musical genres, both in Colombia and in Venezuela, the *cuatro* has developed, in recent years, a very fertile dialogue with a wide diversity of styles, including: other repertoires from Latin America, rock, pop, jazz, blues, early and contemporary academic music and world music, among others. The internet has certainly played a crucial role in the diffusion of the *cuatro*, its learning and its inclusion in other genres.

Finally, and as I will discuss in depth throughout this report, the *cuatro* is rarely notated; indeed, most of its transmission is based on imitation. This implies emulating models in person, such as peers or advanced players, or copying audio recordings and videos. Notation, when used, essentially implies the use of basic chord symbols or tablatures, and generally plays a subsidiary role.

The cuatro in Colombia

Several authors point out that the *cuatro* was first developed in Venezuela and then moved, with its actual characteristics, into Colombian territory. Possible evidence of this is the existence of a wide diversity of *cuatro*s in Venezuela, of which the *cuatro llanero* is just one type; conversely, in Colombia, the only type of *cuatro* used is the

cuatro llanero, which is shared between both countries in the Llanos region (See Map 3.1 above).

Interestingly, the Jesuit missions introduced the *renaissance guitar* into Venezuelan territory through the Orinoco river and into the Colombian Llanos region of *piedemonte* through the Andes (See Map 3.2 above). However, according to literature and the testimonies of the participants, there is no evidence of a massive presence of the *cuatro* before the second half of the 20th century in Colombian territory. In Meta and Casanare, the southern states of the Llanos region, the instrument is not reported before the 1970s and in Arauca, which borders Venezuela, don Marcos Parales, 80 years old, comments that when he was young, the *cuatro* was not yet common in the region. Apparently, it was only with the expansion of festivals, radio broadcasting and recordings in the second half of the 20th century that the *cuatro* started to have a more prominent presence in the *piedemonte* region of the Colombian Llanos (Lambuley, 2014).

Several participants comment on the fact that, before the 60s, the culture of the *piedemonte* in Colombia tended to be more of the Andean type. In fact, *joropo* music, which seems to have arrived with commerce and cattle movements from Venezuela several decades earlier, was performed with Andean instruments such as the *guitar*, *tiple* (which was called a *guitarro*) and *bandola*, before being performed with the *harp* and *cuatro*, as in Venezuela. This musical blend is still present in some areas of the *piedemonte*, such as in the region of Maní, in Casanare. It is, however, being quickly replaced by the dominant *harp*, *cuatro*, *maracas* and *bass guitar*, which nowadays are hegemonic within mass media (Lambuley, 2014).

It should be said, in any case, that historical documents sometimes refer to instruments that bear similar characteristics to the *cuatro* in Colombian territory. For example, the *tiple*, which is a Colombian instrument from the Andes which now has four triple courses of strings, is described in some narrations as having the same aspects and size as the *cuatro*, and the same number of strings, though not the same tuning (Díaz, 1998). This is not surprising if we accept that the *renaissance guitar* is at the base of a very wide number of South American plucked string instruments that followed independent and diverse routes of organological evolution. In other words, throughout its evolution in Colombian territory, the *tiple* might have gone through a phase in which it was still very similar to the *renaissance guitar*, and thus similar to the

cuatro, before evolving into the actual 12-string instrument. Another interesting similarity between the *tiple* and *cuatro*, which is not found in local guitar playing, is the use of upper strokes with the right hand while muting the strings. This is also a typical right-hand technique used with the *cuatro*.

In addition to this, certain other authors, such as Martin (2011), refer to a small Colombian instrument in the northern Llanos region of Arauca, Colombia, which was similar to the *cuatro* but which was referred to initially as *guitarra llanera,* and subsequently as *cuatro*. This means that, in the limit zones with Venezuela, a similar four-string instrument was traditionally used but referred to using another name.

Over the last two decades, the *cuatro* has expanded from a soloist instrument, and is now used in accompaniment with other instruments throughout several regions of Colombia, especially in the llanos region and in Bogotá. However, its use in Colombia is not as widespread as it is in Venezuela.

Recent cultural, economic and technological changes in the llanos region and their impact on transmission

Joropo music and the contexts in which it is transmitted have been touched by important economical, technological and cultural dynamics throughout the last five or six decades. The ways in which joropo is transmitted have also been transformed, to some extent, as a consequence of these broader societal changes.

In the case of the Colombian *llanos* region that was studied in this project, one aspect of these changes has to do with the development of communication technologies and mass media, starting with radio and TV broadcasting with their correlates in the development of the record industry during the 50's and 60's. These were channels of circulation that made possible a rapid entrance of new musical styles, often bringing with them new instruments in local territories. For example, in the region of Meta and Casanare, harp and bandola were only discovered during these two decades within Venezuelan discography and in festivals, which were starting to appear around that time (Lambuley R. , 2014, pp. 233, 256, 262). In addition, this growing music industry set a fertile frame for the professionalization of joropo playing and also for the standardisation of certain playing styles which appeared to be increasinly

virtuoso; and of the classical *llanero* format of harp, cuatro, maracas, bass and singing (Lambuley N. , 2008, pp. 36,69).

Along the same lines, the recent development of the Internet has enhanced the circulation of music with very important effects on transmission, in terms of the democratisation of knowledge and of access to a multiplicity of techniques and repertoires frequently delivered within very systematic frames for learning. Several testimonies of participants within this study refer to videos on the Internet (e.g. Youtube) as a rich source of learning material. The Internet has also accelerated the access of joropo players to an infinite array of styles and musical genres and in the same way, it has facilitated the possibility for worldwide diffusion of local joropo musics.

However, the critical aspect of this reality is the asymmetry within this musical offer. In this sense, it is clear that there are local and international commercial dynamics that transverse this type of massive circulation of music, which tend to privilege the standardisation of certain types of aesthetics, normally those that are more spectacular in terms of technical output, in detriment to others, which apparently are less 'appealable' within the market logics for the public. Referring to joropo music, Lambuley (2014) comments:

> This "virtuosic" and "spectacular" trend of life and the arts throughout the world also drags and enhances the possibility of stereotyping the music of joropo, as it represents an immense offer for potential consumers. Hence, the sound trend of urban joropo, of spectacle, of juggling for dance, ends up imposing the 'virtuoso touch', which essentially requires the duplication of tempi and speeds in interpretation, the incorporation of "universal" aesthetic languages such as jazz, modern ballad, mixtures and fusions of a timbral order that globalize the regional sonority; sharpening and brilliance of the records and acoustic timbres, a joropo of "experts", or better of "virtuosos", almost of laboratory, that needs for its dissemination more than the "human energy" the "electrical energy" (Lambuley R. , 2014, pp. 244,284).

In this same respect, throughout this thesis I will pinpoint several perceptions of participants related to the musical implications of this type of standardisation,

especially of fast and 'clean' playing in relation to concepts of feel and sabor. By contrast, I will also bring up several testimonies referring to the actual possibilities for musical growth and learning as part of the benefits of technological development.

The above-mentioned changes in music coincide well with Turino's (2008, pp. 20-24; pp.60-61) discussion about how sound is affected by the transformations of the social practices that embed musical production. Concretely, he argues that the *object of music* can be affected within cultures as a result of shifts from participatory performances, where music tends to be more repetitive and basic in terms of its intrinsic elements and structure so as to enhance collective participation, to presentational performances where an artist presents a musical product to an audience. In the former, musical objects remain simpler because the focus is social interaction while in the latter, musical products tend to be more sophisticated in terms of harmony, form and contrasts so as to provoke interest in the audience.

Besides the development of mass media and of the discographic industry, another important change in the *llanos* region that has affected culture and music is the gradual shift in the second half of the 20th century from cattle raising as the central labour activity to other types of economic projects such as oil exploitation and palm sowing for biodiesel (Romero as cited in Cultura, 2012b, 23"10). At the same time, agriculture and cattle raising activities still persisting is the subject of an increasing technification.

These changes have implied migrations towards big cities in the *llanos* region and a gradual disappearance of the cultural and musical 'rituals' attached to field labours. One of the most clear impacts in this sense has to do with the vanishing of work songs or *cantos de trabajo* that are performed by countrymen while herding and milking cows. Nowadays, these activities frequently exclude the participation of humans as they are often performed with the help of vehicles or milking machines (Cultura, 2012). Local people, in this sense, observe a connexion between modern perceptions about development, which are strongly mediated by ideas of efficiency and productivity, and the disappearance of situated cultural customs. Traditional singer Hermes Romero comments in this respect:

> Customs have changed so much... the celebrated idea of 'development' that
> has reached our llanos region has displaced our culture ... the fight against

time that we all have leads us to make things move quickly... and nobody remembers today to sing to a cow. (Romero as in Cultura, 2012b, 21"34)

In terms of transmission, it is clear that a thorough analysis regarding how the above-mentioned changes have impacted the learning of music would certainly imply new pieces of research. However, I do wish to bring up some ideas in this respect based on my literature review, my own experience as a local musician learning the cuatro and the findings of this study.

To start, I wish to say that most parts of the contexts and frames for transmission have been for decades and continue to be the same: family, friends, music groups, social gatherings, festivals and self-directed learning. What has changed, on one hand, is the physical setting where some of these contexts are situated: for example, social gatherings have shifted from the countryside to urban spaces. On the other hand, some of these contexts are more recent than are others, as in the case of festivals. Some of them are nowadays more intense than what they were before as, for example, self-directed learning which is much more common and efficient today as a result of the development of new technologies (E.g. easy access to material on the web).

As I have stated earlier, one of these shifts is the movement from the countryside to the city. Within the testimonies of senior musicians, many of them – now living in cities – alluded to their initial music learning of cuatro and joropo as strongly associated to everyday life in the countryside, frequently connected to family, close relatives and friends. In this sense, as in the case of the *cantos de trabajo* mentioned earlier, issues linked to early enculturation in the countryside such as labour activities or sustained contact with nature are now sporadic for those people who have moved to the cities.

Perhaps for similar reasons, several participants comment that parrandos (i.e. parties), which usually took place in the countryside, no longer last for several days as in the old days, and are now more occasional. People recall these social gatherings as community rituals where music, food and drinking summed up as a very rich frame for intense musical experiences and cultural transmission. Another learning context that has almost completely disappeared is religious celebrations. As I will comment in the chapter related to enculturation and cuatro learning, this vanishing has to do with

major shifts in the ways that local cultures relate to the cosmos and to the world, which are strongly embedded in the influence of modern rationality and materialism.

In terms of learning contexts, another recent change has been the appearance of local formal and non-formal institutions in the llanos regions, such as culture houses and music academies, where *música llanera* and other styles and genres are being taught. From my stance, this situation, which is also connected to a growing exposure of local musicians to formal settings of transmission such as universities, has implied a gradual entrance of modern pedagogic paradigms into the ways that music is taught. I refer to a paradigm that normally implies isolating musical knowledge, fragmenting it and sequencing it within simple to complex sequences with pedagogic intentionality. These are systematic actions that, as we will see, are much less common within non-institutional settings. My perception is that musicians who have been exposed to the systematic ways of teaching that are dominant in institutional contexts, will naturally start to use these structured teaching strategies themselves, independently of the transmission context in which they are immersed. Future research will have to confirm this assumption.

A very concrete, evident alteration in transmission connected to broader views of society, has to do with physical treatment. If the experience of actually being beaten by close relatives was reported by some senior musicians while referring to early learning experiences, particularly in the countryside, none of the young participants reported any type of physical abuse whatsoever.

However, perhaps the most prominent change in terms of transmission has to do with the exponential increase in access to musical knowledge brought up by the new technologies and festivals in recent years. As will be seen throughout this thesis, despite the critical stances in terms of homogenisation brought up earlier on in this section, CDs, radio, TV and the internet are reported by almost all the participants of this study as very important sources of musical and technical information for cuatro learning. This unfolding source of knowledge, which is often delivered within very systematic frames of transmission (e.g. YouTube tutorials or cuatro online courses), heralded an increase in autonomy for musicians in terms of their personal processes of exploration and learning. Festivals, by contrast, are a recent local phenomenon that has also enhanced the access of learners to a diversity of high-level musical and technical offers.

In a similar vein, the possibility to use audio and video recorders to fix musical knowledge with the subsequent potential of these recordings to be manipulated at will by learners by fragmenting, pausing or repeating sections, certainly enhances this autonomy of musicians. If musicians were once obliged to observe during a concert or a parrando what they wished to learn (e.g. a tune or a technical issue) and then go home and repeat it by heart to practice it, they now have the possibility of using technological devices to 'capture' these musical models and to manipulate them with freedom and in a self-directed form. Future research could enquire into the ways in which this transformation has actually impacted the ability of musicians to copy in real time or to memorise portions or complete pieces of music.

To finish this section, I wish to comment that even if these cultural and contextual changes in the *llanos* region and their impact on teaching and learning are clear, many aspects of transmission do remain stable. One of them, in the case of musicians who were born in the *llanos*, is early enculturation. Even nowadays, learners are naturally exposed since they are very young to traditional music in family gatherings, through radio and TV local broadcasting or in festivals. As I could experience myself, it is still common to listen to *música llanera* 'sounding in the air' even within modern developing cities of the *llanos* region. The thing is that, as we have seen, what is broadcasted is not necessarily the most traditional music; in any case, early enculturation into the some of the main *golpes* and rhythmic matrices of the *llanos'* music is – for the moment - still there, subjacent to commercial joropo.

Another central element of transmission that has been present in the learning of cuatro and joropo for decades, and still prevails, is imitation. As I will argue, it is a musical practice that was and still is at the heart of learning, from informal environments of transmission, such as learning in families, to formal contexts such as universities. Watching and listening to musical models and then copying them is still a crosscutting aspect of cuatro learning nowadays. As will be seen, however, the modes of approaching imitation have changed in terms of systematicity and sequentiality within private lessons and institutional contexts.

Chapter 4

Learning paths and plateaus of transmission

In general terms, *cuatro* learning takes place along personal paths within what I wish to call 'learning ecosystems'. This is an abstraction I built based on the descriptions of participants' personal learning paths. At a later stage, I will discuss the category 'ecosystem' and its pertinence to the purposes of this project in more detail. For the moment, I simply want to refer to this conceptualisation of these paths in order to maintain integrity concerning my use of the term throughout the thesis. The conceptualisation of a 'learning ecosystem' is specific to each player's particular situation and is generally determined by intrinsic motivations such as a personal interest in musical development or in external aspects such as working issues (e.g. being required to play with a certain group in a series of concerts). The general motivation, however, which tends to mark each individual's learning trajectory, is a personal drive to develop further as a musician. On one hand, the learning ecosystems in which musicians develop frame the different learning contexts that were observed: family, friends, groups, social gatherings, festivals, private lessons and institutions (e.g. schools, music academies, universities). On the other hand, self-directed learning is an intersecting category in the sense that *cuatro* learners are usually working in autonomous ways while connecting the different points or learning settings of the ecosystem[15].

At the same time, these learning ecosystems are embedded in broader musical and cultural systems that, as will be seen, relate directly to several of the transmission procedures of the *cuatro* and to the actual contents of transmission. As I will show, in many respects this systemic relation is crucial to *cuatro* learning.

The types of paths that are designed by musicians correspond well, as stated earlier in this report, to Deleuze and Guatari's (1987) idea of rhizome. One of the images of a rhizome which is alluded to by these authors is that of the bulb or a tuber:

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[15] For discussions regarding learning and musical paths within circuits and cultural ecosystems in other parts of the world: For the US see Becker (1991, pp. 104-108). For Buenos Aires see Shapiro (2011, pp. 5, 71, 80, 112, 115, 116). For Colombia see: Vidal et al. (2014, pp. 16-18), Bernal (2013, p. 52), Vidal & Tobón (2015, p. 7), Mora (2015, p. 163), Zapata et al. (2015).

the grass is a rhizome. Rhizomes are made up of lines that connect points. In the case of this project, the learning paths of musicians are made up of 'lines' between learning contexts: 'any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be. This is very different from the tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7). In this sense, there is no predetermined entrance or exit to a learning path as occurs within an arborescent type of structure such as, for example, a traditional university curriculum. Each learning process is specific to the particular learning and musical situation, needs and interests of musicians. On the other hand, these learning paths and lines can be interrupted at any point and then continued at any other point: 'A rhizome may be broken, shattered at a given spot, but it will start up again on one of its old lines, or on new lines' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9).

These rhizomatic movements, which in many cases relate directly to the actual artistic experiences of musicians (e.g. learning while playing in groups, or participating in festivals), correspond well to Ruth Finnegan's idea of 'musical paths'. Finnegan describes the use of this metaphor while emphasising its dynamic, active and collective nature:

> No term is perfect, but I think that the idea of 'paths' captures and summarizes best aspects of musical practice overlooked in other approaches. Such 'paths' coincide more-or-less with the varied musical 'worlds'…, provided that we avoid the connotations of concretion, stability, comprehensiveness and totality that are associated with the term 'world'... The permanence of these paths is not dependent on the existence of particular 'musical works' in some abstract sphere but on the active and collective practice of concrete people in the field (Finnegan, 2007, pp. 448-449, 471).

In the case of *cuatro* learning, these learning and musical paths usually start very early; they are embedded in rich musical environments and are then deployed across the diverse settings of transmission. Within this rhizomatic space for learning, it is possible to find some nodes or *plateaus* of intensity within learning. These *plateaus* are the learning settings where *cuatro* transmission takes place: family, friends, groups, social gatherings, festivals, and institutions. Deleuze and Guatari describe a plateau in the following way:

A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word 'plateau' to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 21-22).

Indeed, musicians move along these learning rhizomes and 'inhabit' one plateau or another for periods of time that can vary from a few minutes (e.g. playing a song with a friend) to several years (e.g. attending an undergraduate programme at a university). But even while attending long duration courses, several *cuatro* players report that they continue to be actively involved in other musical settings in which learning is produced. For example, Zahira Noguera states that an important component of her learning as a *cuatro* player has been playing in 'asaderos' or popular restaurants with live music:

> *Zahira Noguera*: Another school that seems very important to me was the asadero. For two years I worked with Juan Carlos (her teacher) in places where I was called to participate as a *cuatro* player... for me it was a school because you play a lot of repertoires there, you approach different styles and periods.

However, besides attending classes at university and playing on certain occasions at these restaurants, Zahira also offers concerts as a soloist, takes part in contests at festivals, and plays actively with several groups with which she performs on a regular basis and records. As is the case with Zahira, most of the *cuatro* professional players who took part in this study present a very diverse and dynamic musical path along their biography, which cuts across the different learning settings at different moments of their lives. I did not find any professional *cuatro* player who pointed out a specific person or institution as his or her sole instance or reference for learning.

In addition to this, musical paths are also characterised by emerging 'lines of flight', which allow the *cuatro* learner to 'exit' a certain region of the music ecosystem's spectrum in which he normally moves in order to explore new learning

spaces, repertoires or territories: an example of this would be a *cuatro* player from a small village in Colombia who decides to travel to the capital, in order to attend university, or a musician who has mainly performed traditional music but decides to start a project playing early music. Deleuze and Guatari explain this in the following way:

> Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9).

In other words, musical paths tend to be rhizomatic and are made up of segmentary lines between learning and musical plateaus that occasionally change into 'lines of flight' generating 'leaps' into new learning and aesthetic territories. In the following section, I will briefly describe each one of the learning settings or plateaus of *cuatro* learning that emerged in this project.

Rhizomatic learning

Family and friends

As stated in a previous section, the learning of the *cuatro*, especially in traditional contexts, involves the presence of an adult community of practice in which active learning is embedded. The first natural place where this adult community appears is at home, surrounded by family, relatives and friends. This situation is common in the learning of other types of popular and traditional music[16]. As will be seen in the following chapter, early processes of intense enculturation are directly linked to this type of familiar context.

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[16] For some discussions regarding the presence of family in early learning: For Africa, see Kwami (1989, p. 99). For the US see Mills (2009). For Colombia see Vidal et al. (2014, pp. 41-42); Vidal & Tobón (2015, pp. 6-7), León (2015, pp. 103, 105-106), Betancur (2015, p. 157), Mora (2015, p. 163), Convers & Ochoa (2007, p. 3; 2009, pp. 2,4,5) and Velásquez and Quibdó (2012, p. 112). For a cross-cultural study see Turino (2008, pp. 19,29, 48).

Social gatherings are recurrently referred to by participants as important spaces for *cuatro* learning. Generally speaking, intense music making experiences take place at these gatherings, which I perceive as social rituals that mobilise celebratory relations through the experience of performing music together. The music that is performed is normally not predetermined; rather, it is selected according to the mood of the moment. Besides music, there is often also plenty of conversation, eating, drinking and dancing. These social gatherings normally occur in family contexts and offer an opportunity for students to get in touch with the advanced musicians who form part of the community of practice which frames learning. It is also a moment which showcases the versatility of musicians and their ability to perform on diverse instruments[17].

A *parrando,* which is a traditional gathering or party that usually takes place in rural areas of the Llanos region, can last for several days. Issac Tacha shares his memories about these types of meetings:

> *Isaac Tacha*: I remember the farm of Pedro Joy. A *parrando* with seven mamonas[18], plenty of food … there were *parrandos* that lasted three days, four days… when one would party at Pedro's place. You stopped partying when you fell asleep, and again you woke up, you fed on another aguardiente[19] and kept on partying… it was three days of parranda...

Social gatherings frequently act as a space for musical celebration and shared joy. There is a particular motivation or emotional drive that is activated by the energy of these social rituals, of which music is an essential component. John Jairo Torres narrates his experience at a *parrando* when he was young, in the company of adults:

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[17] For some pertinent discussions regarding social gatherings as a frame for learning traditional music in other cultures: For Irish music see Downey (2009, pp. 50, 59). For bluegrass in the US see Mills (2009). In Colombia: For music from the Andes region see Vidal & Tobón (2015, pp. 6-7), León (pp. 103-104); for music from the Caribbean coast see Convers & Ochoa (2007, p. 4).

[18] *Mamona* is the roasted meat of a calf, a very typical dish of the llanos region.

[19] *Aguardiente* is a sugar cane alcoholic beverage typical of Colombia and Venezuela.

> *John Jairo Torres*: I took part in *parrandos* with them until 8 am without drinking at all because I was a child of 11 or 12 years, but they did drink all night long. I felt very sleepy but I was also very passionate about it. My hands burned, my fingers burned... I would even bleed sometimes... but I kept on playing.

In addition to this, music-making in rural areas is organically connected to other issues such as landscape and nature. *Parrandos* are frequently associated with the idea of savannah, recalling the ample extensions of plain land that are found in the Llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela. In this sense, Colombian harp player Mario Tineo states that his 'teachers were the *parrandos* and the savannah' (Lambuley, 2008, p. 71). From my point of view, this comment is not a simple 'metaphor'; this musician actually learned *something* from the savannah in which he grew up. This *something* is perhaps difficult to 'name' or 'label' in terms of a particular knowledge or ability that can be objectified, fragmented and sequenced. However, this 'something' is real, even if we cannot easily 'grasp' it and label it within the rationality and codes of our western, modern pedagogic paradigms. Later on, I will refer back to the implications of this type of connection between music and territory for the transmission of issues such as *sabor*, and feeling in *cuatro* playing.

Groups

As in many other popular and traditional musical contexts, *cuatro* learning also occurs in the frame of groups and ensembles[20]. These groups can be autonomous initiatives from musicians who start up a musical project with colleagues, or can be an extension of another learning context. For example, I found several cases of families who had their own musical groups in which parents, children, relatives and friends played. On the other hand, all of the music academies that were visited had their own groups, which actively took part in the local musical ecosystem by participating at festivals and contests. In some cases, groups deriving from institutional settings develop, at the

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[20] For discussions related to learning in groups or ensembles in other musical styles and cultures: For music in the UK see Green (2012, pp. 76-83), and Finnegan (2007, p. 248). For popular music in Buenos Aires see Shapiro (2011, pp. 73, 79, 115). For traditional music on the Colombian Pacific coast see Convers & Ochoa (2007, p. 7).

same time, an active career in the scene of *cuatro* music. Christian Guataquira, former student at *ASAB* University in Bogotá, narrates how the locally well-known *Cuatro cuerdas ensamble* was born as an initiative of his teacher:

> *Christian Guataquira*: The ensemble began with a study group... when our teacher, Juan Carlos, decided to start a study group with all the *cuatro* guys... an ensemble... he wanted to pass on his knowledge to us. So the group started there.

Due to the fact that *cuatro* learning is embedded in an active adult community of practice, it is very common to find groups in which advanced musicians take the role of leaders and act as referents for their group mates. This situation contrasts with what is reported by authors such as Green (2012) and Shapiro (2011) in relation to the learning of popular music where peer learning is dominant. However, groups that have been set up by friends or mates are also found in *cuatro* transmission, where peer learning, shared experimentation and reflexive discussions are evident.

Very frequently, *cuatro* players will take part in several groups at the same time, investing variable periods of time according to the specific artistic and working under the circumstances of each group. Sometimes, the musical trends will be very different between ensembles. Indeed, the learning and musical path of one of the participants in Figure 4.1 is evidence of this type of learning and musical diversity.

In fact, for several participants, groups are one of the spaces in which their aesthetic knowledge can be broadened based upon playing, research and experimentation. In this sense, and in relation to his experience with *Como era en un principio,* an ensemble that performs early music from Spain and South America using European and local traditional instruments, Juan Carlos Contreras comments:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: This group has allowed me to learn a lot about the music that was played in those days... folk, traditional music… and about similar things that have been done by Venezuelan, Peruvian, and Spanish groups.

Juan Carlos also reports that these alternative spaces are an opportunity for

personal exploration and creativity – a freedom that is more possible when the musical canon of folk and traditional music is less present.

Festivals and contests

Festivals are another type of setting that are recurrently alluded to by participants as important frames for *cuatro* learning. Over several days, local musicians and artists from abroad will take part in an intense schedule of concerts and shows in local towns, villages and cities. In the case of *joropo* music, festivals will generally include dance as part of the event. Moreover, they will almost always include some type of contest in which high levels of performance in singing, improvising and dancing will be displayed. In some cases, there will also be a beauty contest included in the schedule. Crowds of people will come together and celebrate their shared identities with music at the centre. There will be food and drinking while, eventually, more intimate sessions will take place when musicians informally gather to make music in the streets of the host village or city, in private residences or in the hotels where tourists and musicians are lodging[21]. In Chapter 6 I will return to the issue of festivals as important 'bridges' between institutional learning and local contexts with an interesting pedagogic potential. For the moment, however, I will just offer a succinct characterisation of festivals and discuss some of the tensions that emerged during the project in relation to this learning setting.

Some decades ago, festivals and contests would be small and of a 'domestic' and private type, taking place directly at a local resident's home. However, festivals have grown in diversity, number and dimension throughout the last four or five decades. For example, in the Llanos region of Colombia, more than 20 important festivals take place throughout the year, in mid-size cities and large towns. Many other smaller towns and villages of the region make their own offerings of minor festivals and contests. Some of these festivals are open to visitors from other countries, regions, and villages, while some are more closed. For example, some of them take place at schools and only local students are expected to participate.

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[21] For discussions regarding festivals as part of transmission in other musical cultures: For traditional folk songs in China see Yang (2011, p. 216). For some types of music in the UK see Finnegan (2007, p. 331). For several traditional types of music in Colombia see Mora (2013, p. 33), Vidal et al. (2014, pp. 133-138), Vidal & Tobón (2015, p. 172), Ochoa & Convers SEM (2009, pp. 5-6).

Festivals, in general, are important spaces for the circulation of knowledge, musicians and instruments. Holman Caicedo reports that he was actually introduced to the *cuatro* during a festival in the 80s in Maní, Casanare, his native village. This is because, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, the *cuatro* was not part of the typical formats of local music in that region; rather, it arrived in Maní as part of ensembles coming from other areas of Colombia and Venezuela:

> *Hollman Caicedo*: The *cuatro*... In 80, 82... I'm not sure ... Our regional festival of *Bandola* of Casanare founded by Tirso Caicedo, Jorge Bernal and Germán Tovar, (inaudible). The *cuatro* arrived at that time. And we learned to play it.

This frame of circulation is also a platform for the visibility of musicians, several of whom will see festivals and contests as an important part of their career as performers. Some of the institutions studied in this research actively participate in festivals as a means of providing learning experiences to students but also as a means of obtaining recognition in the local scene.

Different types of learning take place at festivals. On the one hand, they are an important source of high-level references in relation to technical and musical aspects. I myself have experienced the impressive amount of diverse information that is available at festivals from both listening to concerts and playing informally with musicians. But I was also very impressed by that other 'something' that is learned when actively taking part in the cultural warp in which music is framed. I can clearly recall the intensity of the collective energy that was produced at several of the concerts of *joropo* music. This is an energy whose source is in music and that is enhanced by the *sabor* or 'feel' of the players and the shared sense of identity that it produces. That 'something' is certainly a part of my *cuatro* playing now in a way I cannot easily verbalise. I can only attest to the impact of that energy on my body and on my emotions; it certainly affects my actual way of listening to and playing *joropo* music. Something similar happened in relation to other cultural (non-musical) issues that were highlighted during my visit to festivals (e.g. climate, landscapes, food, dance, local history, people's conception of time). Could it be that these types of experiences are as important as, or perhaps even more important than the actual knowledge of

repertoire and the development of technical abilities when learning a musical instrument such as the *cuatro*? The more I advanced my research, the more I became interested in these issues as crucial aspects of transmission that are rendered invisible by the 'regimes of light' of modern pedagogic paradigms. I will develop these ideas further on in later chapters of this report, while speaking about enculturation, imitation and tacit knowledge.

Festivals are seen by many participants as important spaces for the potentiation of learning, the visibility of artists, and as opportunities for broadening aesthetic references and repertoires. At the same time, however, several participants and local authors refer to certain emerging tensions in relation to festivals, and specifically to contests of traditional music.

One of these tensions has to do with playing styles. Several of the comments made relate to the emphasis on technical virtuosity, harmonic saturation or excessive incorporation of musical elements from other genres, sometimes with 'spectacular' purposes. These participants detect, in some modern-day performances, which are evidenced in contests, a certain distancing from traditional styles and *sabor*. In reference to the modern-day performance of instruments in contests, Cheo Hurtado comments:

Cheo Hurtado: We have to be a little careful... It can be a positive added value or something that can fall into a distortion… when they begin to fuse things, to put them in the genre, you neglect the essence. It seems to me that the arrangement can be 'dressed' ... the musical theme or the genre can be 'dressed', you can 'dress' the form - in the case of música *llanera* -, but in such a way that when you take off the dress, the base is what it is.

When you see so many proposals, so many things… for example, harpists are doing many epileptic (mimic) things ... ' wait a minute ... '. You can do that at a certain moment, but you have to manage it very well.

Some authors actually see in contests an expression of a 'competitive dynamic that is typical of the educational model that has been imposed by western traditions' (Vidal et al., 2014, p. 136). In connection with this, several authors also detect a

possible risk in relation to the homogenisation of music, since certain types of repertoires and ways of performing (that correspond better to this 'competitive' and 'spectacular' dynamic) start to circulate, to the detriment of other repertoires and approaches. It is certainly possible to confirm the emergence in festivals of playing styles that privilege fast playing and cleanness; indeed, this is indicated by the above-mentioned comment made by Cheo Hurtado. The presence of this type of playing in contests usually favours their impact as spectacles that are part of the type of performance expected by audiences nowadays.

Interestingly enough, however, I also confirmed that within festivals, contests are not the most popular part of the schedule. The most attractive component (i.e. with more people watching) is the participation of commercially well-known groups. Even if most of them are deeply embedded in traditional music, they offer in general a language that is more developed harmonically and instrumentally, where singing (associated with the 'figure' of a well-known individual artist) is predominant. It was rare to find the presence of local musicians with traditional artistic offers in these massive spaces; indeed, these spaces were more 'essentially' grounded in the traditional musical values and roots in a stricter sense (e.g. respecting the use of acoustic formats, simple harmonies and so on).

In such a frame of ideas, some local authors maintain that this process is actually modifying local aesthetics, since young musicians seem to be attracted naturally by the cultural world that is built around those 'music stars' whose artistic proposal is privileged by social media and in festivals (Rendón & Tobón, 2012, p. 33; Vidal et al., 2014, p. 136; Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 6). With a critical emphasis, Mora states that:

> Technique should be at the service of the musical and aesthetic requirements of composers and performers, and its development should open its doors to all types of exploration, hybridization, dialogue and syncretism. Festivals should be at the service of music. It is thus necessary to subvert their machiavellian intentions and undermine the power that we have awarded to them. Festivals should be spaces for meetings, never for oppression and hegemony (Vidal & Tobón, 2015, p. 172).

At this point, I want to briefly establish a parallel between festivals and contests, and the modern pedagogic paradigm to which I referred earlier, based upon two ideas. In the first place, I want to argue that in both cases (contests and formal pedagogy), there seems to be a tension between assessing those portions of the musical object that can be more easily observed, compared and objectified, and having some type of judgement with respect to other aspects of music experience that are more tacit. In a musical contest, for example, special attention will be paid to issues such as technical cleanness, virtuosity, respect for the musical text, and style. Other issues will be less visible or more problematic when assessing them, in the sense that they are more subjective, difficult to name and to compare. I refer to issues such as feeling or *sabor* in performance and expression. In contests, the line between these two issues is not clear-cut, and both types of issues will certainly be given some degree of relevance. In any case, it is important to ask if those aspects that can be more easily objectified, observed, and sometimes even measured in quantitative terms, are privileged in some way over those that are more subjective and difficult to grasp. Could it be that the tool we are using to organise and assess learning processes is leading us, to some extent, to prioritise certain aspects of musical reality and experience over others?

Furthermore, there is a deep dimension of music which I find even more problematic, and that is its capacity in a given particular situation to produce, with some level of intensity, an aesthetic experience and celebration of music both in performers and in the public. Since this side of experience is extremely personal and variable between people according to personal biographies and to the particular conditions in which music is performed, it is extremely difficult to objectify it and, even more, to compare experiences between them. However, from my point of view, it is exactly here where music accomplishes its main purpose. Thus, from my stance, contests do not actually give an account of what is really precious and necessary for society through music. In fact, they can, on many occasions, actually distort this central element by leading our attention to other aspects of music that are just a media and not an end (e.g. virtuosity, cleanness, volume, etc.).

On the other hand, I personally find that canonical postures in contests can be very problematic. In contests, as in many educational contexts, there is usually a natural consensus or agreement between a group of 'experts' who decide on the specific set of repertoires and the 'correct' ways of performing them as criteria for

determining the extent to which a musician is a 'good' or a 'not so good' performer. From this point of view, there is a social legitimation of certain contents and ways of playing that are 'better' than others (since they are more valued by the field's sanctioning apparatus). The bitter part of this situation is not only the exclusion of a diverse and ample universe of aesthetic proposals, but also the negative traces that it leaves in many individuals who build up deep frustrations and wounds when they are, from afar or from close by, excluded from this canonical pyramid.

It is interesting to observe that these two tensions (invisibility of musical elements and canonical thought) are evidenced, in this case, in the frame of an open system of transmission context: festivals. This situation has led me to think that the modern pedagogic paradigm's rationality is also present in some dimensions of learning in open systems of transmission and not just in closed systems of transmission, as I had initially supposed.

Arborescent learning

In closed systems of transmission, *cuatro* learning takes place in two types of settings: private lessons and in institutions. As I mentioned earlier, and following Deleuze and Guatari's ideas, learning in closed systems of transmission resembles a tree, as opposed to the rhizomatic type of learning that is found in open systems. In this sense, learning in closed systems of transmission is based on predetermined arborescent structures that include hierarchies (e.g. learning levels) with ramifications of knowledge, in which linear paths are typical. Outcomes tend to be carbon copies or tracings that the system is expected to 'produce', based upon ideal sets of technical and musical abilities, and theoretical knowledge.

Private Lessons

Private *cuatro* lessons are frequent. Some of them last for several months and others for shorter periods of time; in other cases, they are sporadic. Some lessons can be very structured; others are freer in their approach. An example of the first type, the structured one, is my own private *cuatro* lessons that lasted for several months. There was no predetermined programme for the overall process; rather, we worked on the

repertoire that was 'negotiated' between the teacher and myself. There was, however, an evident subjacent *structure* in the classes and in the teacher's conception of teaching. Within the class sessions, in this sense, the teacher tended to always be in charge of the organisation of the activities, which began with strumming exercises or harmonic cycles that were well known to me. Following this came the introduction of a new technique or rhythmic/harmonic pattern. The session normally closed with work on some of the solo pieces. Whilst the course programme is not necessarily expressed in formal written documents or in a syllabus, the learning situation does, however, evidence some type of pedagogic intentionality.

Some participants recall these long-term private lessons as spaces in which freedom was possible with respect to the teacher's choices in terms of contents and pedagogy. In this sense, high levels of autonomy are possible for the teacher within this transmission space in terms of issues such as selection of contents and learning rhythms. Leonardo Lozano remembers his first *cuatro* lessons, which took place in the backyard of his home, under a mango tree:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: … There was a conservatory under the mango trees. It was a very sincere experience. And as I say, he (the teacher) didn't have to report to anyone, not even my father. My dad did not ask him how he was going to teach me, no. He had all the freedom. And with that freedom he taught me many things.

Other private lessons take place more sporadically; for example, when in the midst of a learning path, a musician may decide to attend a couple of sessions with an advanced *cuatro* player in order to receive concrete advice on a particular subject.

Institutions

Schools and community learning

For some *cuatro* players, learning starts or is complemented at school when the instrument is part of the music curriculum. In addition to this, community-learning contexts are very common for *cuatro* learning. These include: music academies,

houses of culture, workshops, and extension courses of universities or within public educational programmes such as 'El Sistema' in Venezuela. These courses can have a short duration, as in the case of workshops, which can last for just a couple of days. Others can have a duration of several months or even years. As stated earlier, it is common to find in these contexts different types of 'closures'. In relation to time, courses might not have a specific overall duration but they will have a pre-determined frequency (e.g. one hour class per week) and calendar (e.g. a music academy that offers *cuatro* lessons for six months and then closes for vacation). There can also be a closure in knowledge, since very frequently the teacher who is hired will work with the repertoires that he or she knows well and that normally match well with the purposes of the hiring institution. Finally, there might be a closure in space, since lessons normally take place in a specific classroom, and in a particular building or physical setting where the teacher and students meet.

The academic offer of the institution may or may not include supplementary spaces for learning and practice such as, for example, ensembles or theoretical lectures where historical and cultural issues related to the contexts of *cuatro* music are approached. As stated earlier, several of these institutions have established an active relation with local music ecosystems by participating in their groups at festivals and in other activities of the local scene.

The profiles of students who attend courses in these types of settings are very diverse, from small children aged four or five years who are enrolled by their families in music academies, to mature adults who have a personal interest in learning the instrument. In the case of workshops and extension courses at universities, it is common to find musicians with a rich artistic background who are interested in deepening their knowledge of *cuatro* music. Some students will work harder than others according to their personal occupations and teachers will cope with these variable levels of performance and practice using different strategies.

I wish to point out that I found evidence of high levels of motivation among participants in these courses. Some are happy to broaden their artistic and pedagogic references, while others find in *cuatro* playing a space for personal expression. Juan Gómez, a young teenager who is a student at one of the music academies that I studied, comments:

Andrés: What do you like the most about *cuatro* playing?

Juan Gómez: To innovate, to feel free and creative. Because with the *cuatro* one can vent. And play what one imagines. That's cool because it sounds nice and people like it.

In regard to pedagogy, within closed systems of transmission there seems to be evidence in several teachers' testimonies of reflexivity and educational intentionality in terms of which teaching procedures work better in order to obtain specific learning outcomes. In some cases, these teaching strategies and pedagogic postures are intentionally adopted by the institution where the teachers work. Rafael Martinez, who teaches *cuatro* at 'El Sistema' in Venezuela, comments:

Rafael Martinez: Recently, 'El Sistema' decided to use my methodology because of the practical efficiency of the class… in 'El Sistema' the approach is very practical and what is sought is efficiency in the shortest possible time.

This example shows us that *cuatro* transmission in closed systems of transmission is sometimes also determined by institutional practical needs and not only by teachers' personal pedagogic postures. I wish to argue that, in some cases, closed systems of transmission impose not only canonical sets of repertoires and techniques but also canonical sets of teaching strategies and methods. This raises a tension between institutional necessities and diversity in teaching. Further exploring this tension (between canonical postures and diversity in learning and teaching) in massive music education programmes is beyond the scope of this research. However, it is certainly a pertinent focus for further local research if one takes into account that these types of public music education agendas are expanding quickly in several countries across South America.

Universities

This project studied three universities in which *cuatro* is taught as a main instrument within undergraduate programmes, namely Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá –

ASAB (Bogotá, Colombia), Universidad de Cundinamarca (Zipaquirá, Colombia), and Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta (Caracas, Venezuela). I interviewed four teachers and six students, equating to almost the entire population of *cuatro* undergraduate students in the institutions that were approached.

The first two institutions offer a programme that is mainly based on popular and traditional repertoires. In addition, the conservatoire in Caracas offers a programme that combines traditional music with classical repertoires, mainly early music written for plucked string instruments such as the *renaissance guitar* and *baroque guitar*.

As is the case with most music programmes at universities, *cuatro* learners receive an education that is intended to be integral, though fragmentised; besides their individual *cuatro* lessons, which normally take place once per week, they also attend core courses such as: Music Theory, Music History and Solfeggio. They also have the opportunity to take part in ensembles whereby they perform traditional music from different regions of Colombia and Venezuela, and from other genres such as contemporary music and jazz.

Knowledge is clearly organised in a formal curriculum that is made up of level-based syllabuses for each one of the courses. The *cuatro* course also has its own syllabus, which specifies the main abilities, knowledge and repertoires that are prescribed for each semester. Some of these contents will be negotiated occasionally with each student and their sequence will be more or less adapted to specific situations, although in general processes are deployed within a fixed corps of knowledge.

One important issue to mention at this point is that it is clearly within university contexts where I was able to find the most detailed and specific delimitation (in time and in levels) of the issues that should be learned or incorporated throughout *cuatro* learning. This corpus of learning contents and outcomes was available to me in the discourses of directors and teachers, and they were especially detailed in written institutional documents that included aspects related to skills, theoretical knowledge, abilities, techniques, and repertoires. The syllabuses also mention issues related to physical and material resources including descriptions of the type of space and elements that are required for the *cuatro* lessons, such as: size of the classroom, acoustic isolation, ventilation, mirror, and music stands. Some of these documents also referred, in a general way, to other issues such as autonomy, responsibility and

proactivity as attitudes expected from students during the process. Judging from the available observations and from teachers' discourses, I can state that, in general terms, what is taught coincides with what appears in documents in terms of repertoire and sequence. Of course, a closer look may reveal some type of distance between what is stated in documents and what occurs in everyday curricula.

Regarding students' motivation and expectations, most of them enter university because of the chance it offers them to deepen their knowledge of *cuatro* music and improve their ability to play the instrument; they are also seeking to broaden their aesthetic referents and enrich their theoretical tools. There seems to be a general appeal towards the expanding technical possibilities that *cuatro* is offering today, enhanced by its emergent colour that now dialogues with other musical genres, from early music, to traditional music from other regions in South America, as well as contemporary music and jazz. Certain students have a very rich musical background; others are just starting to play the instrument. Some of the students, and especially those who already have a rich musical experience before entering the programmes, continue to be very active in the local music ecosystem by performing at concerts, festivals and restaurants, recording, taking part in contests, teaching and broadcasting. This active connection with the local scene is sometimes an autonomous decision made by students, while other times it is directly encouraged by the *cuatro* teacher.

There is usually an entrance exam to universities, based upon certain selection criteria which are related to basic musical and theoretical abilities. Exams continue to be present across the process periodically as moments for validation of musical development and feedback on students' progress. There seems to be a consensus among teachers regarding the type of professional integral profile that should ideally be developed: a performer who can play as a soloist, and who can also perform accompaniments (e.g. with voice or dancing) or actively take part in an ensemble. Some differences in relation to repertoires can be found between institutions, but all the teachers agree that traditional music is an essential part of the preparation of any professional *cuatro* player.

Finally, I can state that, of the closed systems of transmission contexts studied in this project, universities are the settings where the modern pedagogic paradigm traits are present in a more consistent way: objectification and fragmentation of knowledge that is organised linearly based upon a deterministic rationality (e.g. programmes

organised in levels), isolation and closure in terms of canonical sets of knowledge (e.g. syllabuses), space (e.g. a classroom within a building) and time (e.g. one hour sessions per week, academic semesters, etc.), a prominent role of the teacher, writing as a support for transmission in all areas except for the *cuatro* (e.g. music scores for the study of harmony or text books in history courses) and exams as validation of academic processes (i.e. entrance exams, periodical exams, graduation exams).

At the same time, interesting 'lines of flight' were detected within these same structures, mainly related to imitation and to interaction with local music ecosystems. I will refer to these two issues in more detail in later chapters.

To close this chapter, I present a graphic representation (Figure 4.1) of the learning path of Juan Carlos Contreras, one of the Colombian *cuatro* players interviewed. The diagram shows the different learning settings through which Juan Carlos moves through his musical biography. It offers a good example of the diversity of settings and activities that are connected with the experiences of learning for *cuatro* players. The path starts in Juan Carlos' family context and then moves across a variety of settings and activities that include: a family group with which he plays concerts at schools, social gatherings, and universities in different regions of Colombia; lessons in a music programme for young people at a university and at a popular music school in the city of Tunja; visits to old musicians in rural, traditional settings in the area of Maní, Casanare; participation in festivals as part of the audience and as a performer with different types of ensembles; playing and exploring music with his brother; taking part in workshops delivered by musicians from Colombia and Venezuela; participating in recordings and performances at concert halls, universities, restaurants and other venues in Colombia and abroad.

As can be seen, the range of musical genres in which Juan Carlos is involved is very diverse. Some of these ensembles perform traditional music from the Llanos region, and are led by outstanding figures of the local scene; other groups perform traditional music from other regions of Colombia and South America, early music, or explore fusions of traditional music with genres such as jazz. In these projects, Juan Carlos has played the *cuatro*, the *bandola* and the bass guitar. Finally, he has also attended, as a student, an undergraduate programme at *ASAB* University in Bogotá. This entire route is embedded in a constant practice of self-directed learning.
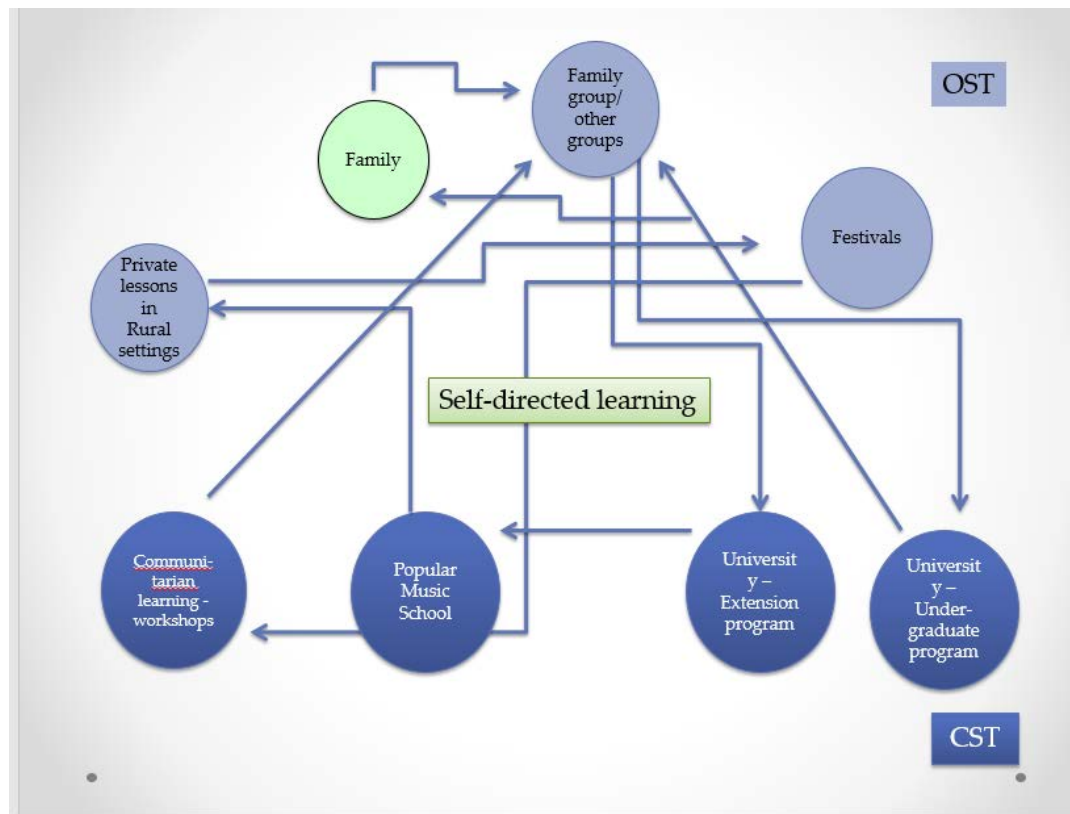
Figure 4. 1 Juan Carlos Contreras' personal learning path

This is the music path that frames Juan Carlos' particular learning experiences and development as a *cuatro* player and as a musician. However, each one of the musicians who were interviewed has his or her own personal path that is unique and that responds to his or her particular personal interests, expectations and practical needs. The general coincidence between these paths is, in any case, the active movement between diverse settings. In general terms, *cuatro* musicians learn throughout these complex trails and very rarely within one single or specific setting; this is what Lucy Green describes as the 'continued journey along exploratory lines' of popular musicians (Green, 2008, p. 22).

From another stance, Alicia Shapiro comments on the ways in which young people learn 'how to be' popular musicians in Argentina, precisely in connection to their understanding of the codes and relations that exist within and between the different nodes and actors of these local music ecosystems:

Learning to be a musician means learning not only to play or sing, but to integrate into a culture, an environment where you need to understand

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different codes within the musical language. It means learning the relationships between musicians, between them and the social environment in which they move; the relationship with music education institutions, with record producers; and many more subtle and complex relationships (Shapiro, 2011, p. 110).

I allude to this fact because I will come back to it when I present some 'key' lines for a proposal for *cuatro* learning in university settings. I will focus on the possibility of explicitly allowing, generating and enhancing these trails and their free movement between programmes at universities and the learning settings and music worlds that are embedded in local cultural ecosystems. Indeed, I will argue that all of these represent a key aspect of *cuatro* learning. In fact, my personal experience has shown me that these types of paths already exist, with different levels of 'intensity', within the learning experiences of musicians (not only of *cuatro* players) at universities; however, they are generally rendered invisible, and are not supported explicitly in systematic and reflexive ways by institutions. The modern pedagogic paradigm tends to make these paths invisible because it is trapped in the closure that is imposed by its own rationality. From a critical stance, Arenas describes this situation as a 'double life' of students, pointing out at the risk of rendering academic knowledge less meaningful when it is disconnected from students' vital music experiences:

Silvia Carabetta in Argentina and research group Cuestionarte in Colombia, have shown how students live a hidden curriculum, a double life. That of academic requirements, seen by many as arid, decontextualised, partial and dogmatic; and the life of efforts, outside the university, where they build their own musical identity, where their personal interests are at stake, implementing their vital bets and trying to make synthesis of their various learnings (*My translation*. Arenas, 2015, p. 8).

By rendering these 'external' practices invisible, academic programmes subtract value from the learning experiences that take place at the borders of institutional programmes; at the same time, they miss important opportunities to enhance learning and, above all, to accompany students in the essential process of discovering and

potentiating their own personal musical paths and artistic voices. Dealing reflexively and sensibly with the accompaniment of students' construction of personal artistic projects for life as a key aspect of professional preparation is, from my point of view, an ethical issue. Moreover, it is also a process that cannot be attained without an active and 'real-time' imbrication with local musical and cultural ecosystems.

Chapter 5

Learning as part of cultural and musical ecosystems

Throughout this chapter, I will offer a description of the ways in which the different learning settings that were studied interact with the cultural contexts or 'ecosystems' in which they are embedded. I will single out learning, musical and cultural ecosystems as three layers that permanently juxtapose throughout the process of transmission. We will see that this occurs in diverse ways in terms of intensity and intentionality, and in accordance with the particularities of the different settings.

For this purpose, I will use the idea of 'ecosystem' as a metaphor; indeed, this is useful when it comes to representing certain traits of these cultural, musical and learning 'warps', such as connectedness (relations between components), equilibrium, resistance, and adaptability (Picket & Cadenasso, 2002). In further sections, I will also allude to certain elements that are studied as components of ecosystems which form ecological trends, such as: sustainability, energy, holism and basin. These will be used as analogies to refer to certain dynamics of musical and learning processes in reference to broader universes of relations and productions of meanings.

Cultural ecosystems

The process of *cuatro* learning is always embedded in some type of cultural ecosystem, since it has to do with music as a human expression within some type of social group. Musicians can normally move between different types of cultural contexts and the process of learning the instrument is rooted, at the same time, in the transmission of some type of 'understandings' or meanings typical to those particular groups or cultures:

> A culture is, then, an abstraction: it is the type toward which the meanings that the same act or object has for the different members of the society tend to conform. The meanings are expressed in action and in the results of action, from which we infer them (Becker, 1991, p. 80).

Examining learning and music making as social acts, which express identity meanings, implies looking into the cultural context that frames them so as to be able to 'read' the ways in which these meanings determine music and are determined by it. In other words, understanding the relations between music, learning and culture might help us understand the power of transmission when it is embedded in rich cultural contexts. This is so, I will argue, because certain essential contents of transmission, such as *sabor* and the possibility of enhancing the actual celebration of music, are directly related to the vital experience of the contexts.

From a similar stance, and recognising the potency of context-based educational practices for music learning, Stauffer argues that 'educational acts in and through music should be 'fluid, dynamic, and contextual... and recognize the need for continual examination of the intersections of people, place, and practice'' (Benedict & Schmidt, 2014, p. 91)[22].

I must mention, at this point, that the issue of *cuatro* transmission in reference to cultural contexts emerged with more strength throughout the project in relation to traditional music. More specifically, this enhanced strength was related to cultural frames for the transmission of *joropo* music from the Colombian Llanos region, which I examined. References to cultural framings of other styles that are learned (e.g. early music or jazz), especially in closed systems of transmission, were scarcer and were usually addressed theoretically or abstractly within courses such as musical appreciation or music history sessions. This is explained by the fact that *joropo* traditional music is a living practice (embedded in living cultural contexts) with which the musicians that were interviewed have had, or can have, real-time and direct contact.

Expressions of *joropo* music can be found in very diverse styles of social contexts, such as: festivals, concerts, parties, religious celebrations, and with dancing. This implies that the music is related to complex productions of individual and collective identities and social meanings in connection with varied dimensions of human experience:

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[22] For discussions regarding music transmission of traditional music in formal settings but framed in cultural contexts see: For traditional singing in Chinese Higher Education see Yang (2011, pp. 219, 221-222). For Bluegrass Music in schools see Mills (2009).

Aural music from the Llanos region in the great Orinoco basin, like many other local music of Latin America, is interwoven, overlapping magically with the body, celebrations, dancing, remembrance, invocation. This is what *joropo* represents and therefore it needs to be understood in its emic dimension, ethic and aesthetic, that is, from the complexity with which each subject adopts this music as part of the shaping of his or her identities, tastes, ethnic, aesthetic and territorial interests, among others (Lambuley, 2014, p. 12).

Throughout my work, I was not trying to intentionally verify these different dimensions; I was, however, able to evidence them because they naturally emerged as recurrent issues of *cuatro* learning across the testimonies of musicians.

Music enculturation

Several other authors have approached the discussion regarding the relation between social and cultural contexts with performance and reception of music[23]. For the purpose of this study, and in order to discuss the relationships between learning and cultural contexts or ecosystems, I will use the category of music enculturation which, as will be seen, can acquire different types of expressions according to particular contexts. I will also use, as a standing point, a particular view put forth by anthropological studies on enculturation, which states that it is 'focused on the acquisition of interwoven social, cultural, and personal dimensions of identity, and of their meanings in the context of socio-cultural understanding and action' (Porter, 2005, p. 831). From this stance, the idea of enculturation is key to understanding the process of immersion which is embedded in the learning of most musicians who I interviewed for this project. Referring concretely to music enculturation, Green states:

The concept of musical enculturation refers to the acquisition of musical skills and knowledge by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of

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[23] For a general discussion regarding music and territory see Deleuze & Guattari (1987). For a discussion regarding the relation between performance and place, see Stokes (1994), and for a discussion about music, context and education, see Green (2008, 2013).

one's social context. Almost everyone in any social context is musically encultured. It cannot be avoided because we cannot shut our ears, and we therefore come into contact with the music that is around us, not only by choice but by default (Green, 2012, p. 22).

The skills and knowledge that are developed throughout this process of enculturation pertain to the development of perceptual processing, which is related to pitch and rhythmic structures of musical systems, understanding of aesthetic and expressive norms, and the use of music in diverse social situations (Tarinor in Savage, 2013, pp. 5-6). As will be seen, enculturation may also be related to the experiencing of music in connection with aspects that are broader than the social sphere, such as territory, animals, landscapes or rivers. This is a type of experience which, as I will argue, is directly related with the way music is lived and performed. In this sense, I will show some important bonds between this organic experience and the category of *sabor*.

I will now present the different types of musical enculturation that I found throughout the learning contexts that were studied. I will concentrate mainly on enculturation in relation to the learning of *joropo* music since, as I mentioned earlier, it was in relation to this style that I could find more evident links between learning and cultural contexts among participants. Thus, I have a large amount of rich data which will allow me to dive into a deep and subtle analysis of the types of relations that are at stake. Other pieces of research can surely offer a more in-depth look at the way music enculturation takes place in relation to genres such as music from other countries in South America, jazz or early music.

To start, I should say that I found two main types of music enculturation. In the first place, there is a *primary type of enculturation*, which occurs when the learner is involved in direct, in-person experiences within the diverse social and cultural practices of the original territory where the music is produced such as: family gatherings, religious celebrations, parties, festivals, labour activities and so on. This exposure to music within social practices usually takes place early in life, during childhood and early adolescence, and continues to develop throughout the years. These early experiences normally have an intense quality, since it is at that moment of

life that musical meanings in relation to cultural settings are constructed with a deeper level of incorporation (Porter, 2005).

On the other hand, I found evidence of what I will refer to as a *secondary type of enculturation* (Miranda, 2015). This sort implies having late or virtual contact with traditional music and its cultural contexts. I understand 'virtual' as 'very close to being something without actually being it' or 'existing or occurring on computers or on the Internet' (Merriam-Webster, 2016).

Within secondary enculturation, we can find two sorts of experiences. With regard to the first of these, late, in-person contact is established with local contexts for more or less extended periods of time. An example of this type is when an adult musician who was born in a region that is different from the traditional music's original context, decides to visit that local context in order to attend a festival and have contact with local people, their customs, and with the natural environment. On the other hand, it can also include virtual experiences such as when audio-visual tools are used to study explicit links between music and the social practices embedded within it; for example, when a teacher uses a video of a *joropo* ensemble that plays music for a religious celebration or as accompaniment for dancers. I will also include in this virtual secondary type of enculturation the active or passive exposure to music, since listening to and playing music is a cultural practice in itself; an example of this would be jamming with traditional musicians or listening to music (live or recorded) in a foreign cultural context. The situations which fall under the first sort (*on place* secondary enculturation) tend to have a more intense quality than those of the second sort (*virtual* secondary enculturation) because they imply a direct exposure to and interaction with local cultural and social realities.

In the following chart, I condense these different 'layers' of enculturation:
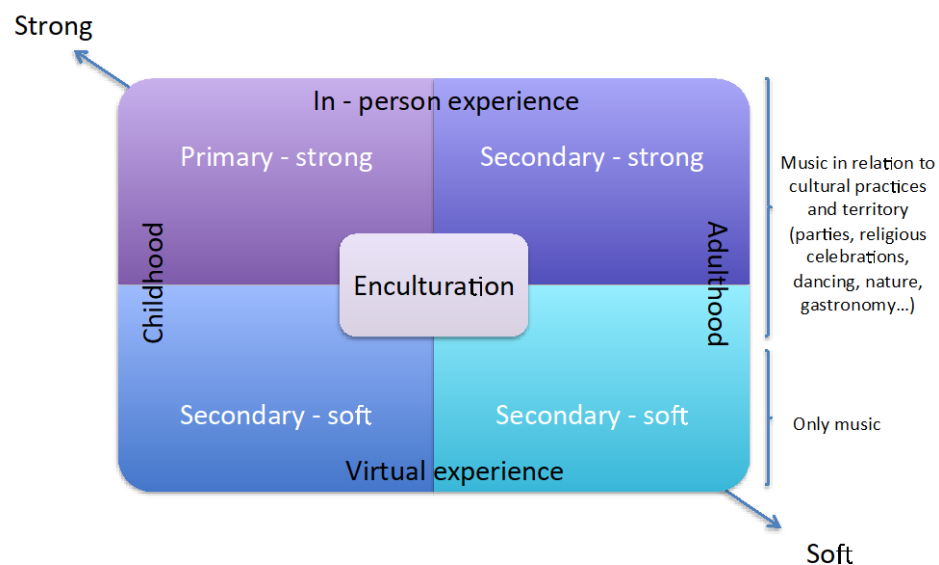
Figure 5. 1 Types of enculturation in *cuatro* learning

As can be noticed, the chart offers a characterisation of enculturation experiences in relation to two variables: age (horizontal axis) and type of contact with cultural contexts (vertical axis). A third (diagonal) axis signifies how intense a particular experience is. In this sense, an early experience that implies direct and in-person contact with the original context or territory and with its cultural practices is a *primary-strong enculturation*. An experience that implies late, though direct contact with the context and some of its musical traits is a *secondary-strong enculturation*. On the other hand, a virtual experience that implies indirect contact with the territory, for example through videos, is a *soft secondary enculturation*. From this stance, just listening to music would imply the softest type of enculturation.

I will argue that, in some cases, secondary enculturation can be understood as a 'translation' of primary enculturation. Both types of enculturation are present in closed systems of transmission and open systems of transmission contexts. However, early primary enculturation is much more present in open systems of transmission. On

the other hand, virtual enculturation appears in a more specialised and structured way along settings in closed systems of transmission. This means that primary enculturation, which tends to be more free and organic in open systems, is *translated* into an experience that is isolated and can be fragmented with some type of pedagogic intentionality, as in the example of the video.

In this sense, and from a pedagogical perspective, an interesting intersection can be established between the above-mentioned characterisation and Green's (2008, 2013) ideas in relation to the *celebratory experience* of music; indeed, this celebratory experience is possible when there is an adequate mixture of understanding meanings related, on the one hand, to the *inter-sonic elements of music* (e.g. form, harmony, rhythm, style) and its *delineations* (i.e. contexts of production and reception of music). Exploring educational strategies which intentionally move along the above-mentioned axis and looking for closer contact with the cultural contexts embedded in music, might offer pertinent insights into the pedagogic conditions that can favour this type of celebratory experience of music.

I will now present the different types of musical enculturation that I found throughout the learning contexts that were studied. I will start by offering some examples of the way in which musicians are encultured in contexts such as family, social gatherings and groups (open systems of transmission settings) and will then refer to private lessons and institutions (closed systems of transmission settings) in an attempt to decipher how enculturation occurs across the learning spectrum.

Systems of transmission and types of enculturation

Open systems of transmission and primary enculturation

Throughout the first section of this chapter I will be referring to the role of enculturation in the process of transmission of music within open systems. As will be seen, this process of incorporation of music is strongly embedded in natural, social and cultural frames that include: family, friends, territory, nature, labour, parties and religious gatherings. I will argue that the implicit connections between musical practice and these natural and socio-cultural contexts are a crucial aspect of the quality of transmission.

Listening to music and playing in everyday life with family and friends

The most typical situations of musical enculturation for *cuatro* musicians take place when they are young, in the frame of everyday life experiences[24]. Several authors agree that enculturation is a complex matter in the sense that it involves not only social and cultural structures in which individuals are embedded but is also determined by personal biographies and situations that imply intricate and diverse ways of subjectification that can vary between individuals of the same cultural group. However, they also agree that childhood is an essential moment for the incorporation of cultural meanings, even if these are transformed later on:

> Cultural understanding and social competence, and the relevant senses of personal identity, however they may be subsequently transformed, first begin to be acquired, organized, made personally significant, and put to social use in the early interactions in which children engage and in the 'societies' and 'cultures' that they construct for themselves both seriously and playfully (Porter, 2005, p. 841).

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[24] Some examples of early enculturation with families in traditional music from the Pacific coast in Colombia can be found in Convers & Ochoa (2009).

These early experiences, especially in the case of traditional music, occur in a very rich environment whose main actors are family, relatives, neighbours and friends. Music is part of the social weave of life, and exposition to it is almost an inevitable circumstance:

> *Andrés*: Do you mean that you generally start playing the *cuatro* at home, in a family context?
>
> *Luis Pino*:   It's most likely or almost certain. If nobody in your family plays the *cuatro*, there is usually somebody else… a close relative, a neighbour or a friend who comes and makes the parranda. And the child looks at him, he can feel attracted and starts off…

In terms of *cuatro* learning, these experiences are related to domestic situations and conditions of the environment; this environment can take various forms, from instruments hanging on the wall, to social gatherings where music is present as a central component. Hollman Caicedo, a musician from the region of Casanare in Colombia, offers us the following narration of a scene in which his father plays at home with one of his employees at the end of a work day, while Hollman assists as a 'listener':

> *Hollman Caicedo*: ... to listen, and when I was about 8 years old, he tuned the bass, the big *guitarro*. There was a man called Miguel Güina who played with my dad and I ... they were heavy smokers, my mom said ... "bring more coffee, bring more coffee" until 9 or 10 at night playing at home and Miguel lived ... he was hired by my dad at our farm, he was one of those who did the work.

The cultural, social and natural environments act as an organic web in which interests in music, people and everyday elements interact. The following is a touching testimony from one of the participants who was raised in the countryside. He describes his first desires to play music and the way in which his father responded to them by looking for guidance but also by constructing for him a home-made

instrument:

> *Luis Carvajal*: In the same farm in the savannah I had a teacher ... my dad could see that I liked the music of the Llanos very much because of the environment that framed it; in that time they sold boxes of oil that were used in the farms ... they were like cans, so he built a *cuatro* for me with one of those cans. He stuck to it a wooden fret board and made a little hole, and then he put some strings on it so I could strum it.

Almost naturally, early enculturation implies the exploration of sound and music, using the voice, musical instruments and other objects (Green, 2012, p. 22). Outstanding Venezuelan *cuatro* player Cheo Hurtado offers a description of the type of environment in which he grew up playing, surrounded by musical instruments and musicians. So natural was this type of learning that he cannot remember exactly when he started to learn the instrument and at what precise moment he was able to play music on it. Learning just happened:

> *Cheo Hurtado*: My musical training is domestic, totally. I come from a musical family. My dad is a guitarist, he plays the *cuatro*, and he played some accordion ... he composed *joropo* music with the guitar. He had no academic study. When I show up I find that there ... I lived within *cuatro*s, mandolins, meetings of musicians... I grew up playing among musicians. He realised it when ... my sister Teresa says that I was playing inside a drum, singing, hitting it with a knife. Maybe I sang so bad ... and my dad told me 'Cheo, don't you want to learn how to play the *cuatro*? ' (Laughs). And he put the *cuatro* in my hands. I cannot tell you the exact date but I was about five and a half, or six years old ... I say it because at seven I already played... I played at my first radio programme...

In relation to this type of learning, which occurs in an almost invisible way, I should say that on several occasions musicians had a hard time trying to describe in detail the ways in which they had learned when they were young. Indeed, I liken this

to the difficulty that anybody would have when asked how they learned to speak or to walk. Luis Pino comments:

Luis Pino: ... I had no idea about how to teach the *cuatro*. I didn't remember how it had been for me as a child, I just feel that I have always played the *cuatro*: I grabbed a *cuatro*, I saw how the D chord was played, I played it and it was perfect, it was that simple. Nobody told me, 'you strum like this, the hand goes up and down and this sound is produced ... so...' Given this situation, I could hardly analyse how I learned to play the instrument.

Rich enculturation implies emotional bonds with people. It also permits strong experiences of celebration of music, joy and direct exposure to music as an actual social performance that is embedded within the act of collective playing. There is no doubt that these issues are hard to objectify and sequence within logical, lineal processes. In open systems of transmission, they just happen, suddenly, when the situation naturally emerges and makes it possible. Referring to one of his family friends who frequently visited his home, Leonardo Lozano comments:

Leonardo Lozano: He played the violin in an orchestra and he was a popular pianist. He still is a popular pianist. So he had all those skills of a popular musician: that grace, that ability to brighten the lives of people and make fun in a meeting. I captured those skills... the charisma of the popular musician was brought by Carlitos to our home. When he visited us I really got excited. I remember him playing Scott Joplin's Rag Time. I celebrated his playing, for me it was glory. Because he made these gestures, he was full of emotion ... all the music theatre, all the fun, all the excitement ... I caught it all. When he played the piano at home, it was like rain and I caught all that wonder.

Indeed, it can certainly be concluded that learning the *cuatro* and its music is not only a case of styles and techniques. It is also, and particularly, a case of developing a deep love and enthusiasm for music within rich and authentic aesthetic experiences. This dimension of learning may or may not occur in closed systems of transmission.

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The modern pedagogic paradigm, in any case, will not make it explicit within its rational frame: How could we develop a curriculum with sequential, linear stages or levels for the development of this type of celebration and emotion for and in music? This does not mean, evidently, that it cannot emerge within formal processes of transmission. Some contexts will be more or less sensitive to it according to their teaching philosophy and particularities. Regardless, it will tend to be more invisible or difficult to 'grasp' within programmes, levels, and exams than other contents of learning such as technical development or even playing 'in style'. This situation raises important questions and tensions, particularly for institutions such as universities where transmission presents higher levels of structure – in other words, where the modern pedagogic paradigm operates with more intensity: What happens, for example, if a student is deeply fond of music, experiences high levels of motivation when playing, develops profound aesthetic feelings towards performance and works hard to develop his instrumental abilities but his technical level does not correspond to what is expected according to the academic programme in which his process is framed? What happens when the contrary occurs: A very fine technical execution performed by a student who is highly unmotivated and experiences emotional blockages towards music? Do the formal assessment strategies that we use detect these situations? It may be possible that we are permanently dealing with deep dimensions of music that are rendered less visible or even less important because of the type of 'pedagogic lenses' that we are using… From another standpoint, what happens if this emotional drive is better expressed in certain repertoires than in others, or when they emerge more naturally for a particular student in composition and creation than in performance? To what extent can the modern pedagogic paradigm that is present in closed systems, especially in universities, become flexible enough so as to favour the inclusion of this type of diversity and to actually enhance it?

I continue by pointing out another interesting example of enculturation within domestic and rich musical environments in terms of affectivity. Learning within this type of context is frequently associated with the creation of significant emotional bonds between parents, children and music:

Luis Pino: This story is very pretty because it also has to do with religion. One Christmas, 24th of December, baby Jesus leaves me several instruments at

the age of 5 or 6 years... I started grabbing all these instruments; a drum, a *charraca*[25], *maracas*, and finally I grabbed the *cuatro* and since that moment I have never let it go. So for me to speak about the *cuatro* is completely linked to my emotions as a child, to my childhood that was a little wild, to my close relationship with my mom. I kept on growing... my mom taught me.

In a similar sense, this same participant emphasises the strong bonds that he built throughout his childhood between the instrument, music and his own personal identity:

Luis Pino: I never liked studying, I was very loose, I just wanted to play the *cuatro* ... I was very aggressive and the only thing that calmed me was to have a *cuatro* in my hands ... I had my classes and it was super exciting to have someone to teach me beyond what I could know... to help me understand the harmonic issues... I wanted to stay and live in that classroom. It was my own space, it was the natural space where I wanted to be, stay and develop.

This type of situation recalls Ken Robinson's (2004) idea of an individual's *element* serving as a meeting point between natural aptitudes and personal inclinations: 'When people are in their element they establish contact with something that is essential for their sense of identity, their objectives and their well-being' (*My translation*, Robinson, 2004, p. 21). In relation to this, I allude to certain interesting questions which require further examination: Does strong early music enculturation favour the possibility of an individual finding 'his or her element' in life through music and concretely, as in this case, through a particular instrument? Moreover, it appears to me that there are different types of possibilities within music for an individual to find his or her own 'musical element'. In other words, somebody might feel that music is the place where he or she feels more comfortable in life and this will choose it as a professional path; at the same time, however, there seem to be spaces within music

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[25] Noisemaker.

where there is a stronger bond between natural abilities and personal inclinations in terms of disciplinary areas (e.g. performance, composition) or repertoires. In this sense, the question is: Do closed systems of transmission favour, in some way, the possibility for an individual to explore and find this personal element within music? How do closed systems of transmission deal with the tension that arises between people's personal elements and the restrictions that are imposed by canonical education?

Once again, based on my own experience, I feel that the canonical view that is assumed by the modern pedagogic paradigm, especially at universities, can sometimes render invisible this other essential issue of transmission: the possibility to accompany individuals in the search for a personal path based upon the finding of their own 'musical element'. From an ethical stance, it is not acceptable to avoid this question, even if tackling it is a fussy, uncomfortable and uncertain exercise. It is an ethical issue, because it relates to the natural diversity of human beings and to their intrinsic potentialities. If the ultimate aim of educational processes is to enhance the deployment of this potentiality within diversity, how can this question be avoided? This will be one of the central aspects of the proposal that will be brought forward at the end of this report.

Another emergent trait of enculturation in family contexts is the fact that it is frequently related to everyday work labour. In the following two examples, enculturation in related to music that is playing on the radio while work tasks are being completed. The first of these has to do with music from the Llanos region. A *cuatro* player from Arauca, Colombia, which is a border region than Venezuela, shares the following testimony:

> *Luis Carvajal*: I am from Arauca, I grew up in the savannahs of Arauca on the farm of my father, since I was very small I was involved in the daily work with the cattle, with milking... When I was 5 years old I would wake up and work with my dad in the tying of calves. There was a radio station that sounded at the time... it was Venezuelan and there was a programme called 'Venezuelans first'. You could listen there to the latest *llanero* music hits. Then I just turned on the radio, we worked with the cows and we listened to the music. I had that musical ear as a small child and could hear

perfectly, I distinguished the instruments perfectly: the harp, the *cuatro* and the *maracas* ... it was very important to have heard such good music at the time, what was played at that time, it sounded great. My success is in having listened to a good accompaniment that we owe to musicians from Venezuela. So I had that *saborcito*, that little thing that people liked in Bogota.

The second testimony, below, evidences a musical enculturation which is related to music from another region of Latin America:

Juan Carlos Contreras: I lived with my grandparents when I was four, and my grandfather was a baker... he got up to bake the bread at 3 in the morning and listened to the station 'Radio Recuerdo'. And at that time you could listen on 'Radio Recuerdo' to boleros of *La Sonora Matancera*[26]; and this probably made an impact on me in my childhood. It stayed there in my memory and many years later, I became a fan of *boleros* ... so I started doing some research about the singers of the Sonora and I really got into *bolero*.

These two situations have something in common: the presence of music through a technological medium (i.e. the radio) in an everyday situation. The first is a primary type of enculturation since it has to do with music produced in the same context where it is being listened to (i.e. Llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela). The second is of a secondary type since it has to do with music from another geographical context (i.e. Cuba). As can be seen, in both cases there is a quotidian type of listening that takes place 'without a purpose' (Green, 2012). However, this is a listening experience with a deep impact on the musical lives of both musicians. In the first case, it works as a powerful 'ear training' experience that will be very useful for the participant's professional career, while in the second case, it acts as an emotional trigger in relation to a specific genre to which the participant will return further on in his or her musical path.

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[26] *La Sonora Matancera* is a legendary Cuban band that plays popular Latin American dance music.

Another important component of enculturation, as an extension of family, is related to friends. *Cuatro* learning, when embedded in the early processes of cultural immersion, is framed not only by family but also by a close network or ecosystem of relatives and friends who act as referents for young learners, enhancing an emotional outlining for learning. When learners are young, this circle of friends can sometimes be composed of other learners of the same age, although generally speaking, it mainly comprises adults. As stated earlier, this differs from the findings of Green (2008) and Shapiro (2011) in relation to learning in the world of popular music (mainly urban pop and rock), which occurs frequently within processes of peer learning between mates of similar ages. As a consequence, the choice of repertoires is not autonomous for learners, as in urban pop and rock learning, these are rather naturally selected by the surrounding environment.

In *cuatro* learning, friends and family form part of that rich musical ecosystem that is in itself embedded in a cultural life that, in some cases, tends to naturally 'impose' itself on everyday life. Luis Pino, referring to outstanding player Cheo Hurtado, his teacher, comments:

> *Luis Pino*: Cheo is what he is because he integrates a number of things: musical situations, experiential and spiritual issues, around an instrument like the *cuatro*. The importance of Cheo is not spending three minutes in a *repique*. That is amazing. But it is not the importance of Cheo. The essential thing is that he learned to play under a mango tree in the house of his father, and his father taught him. And there was a whole structure that allowed that. When he was seven or eight years old he wanted to go play ball but the gentlemen who were in the backyard playing instruments called him... but he wanted to play with the ball. He wanted to be a baseball player. Like any Venezuelan boy. When he was seven years old he won a *cuatro* contest at a festival in Ciudad Bolívar.

Interestingly, Pino refers to the type of environment in which Hurtado learned to play the *cuatro* – making music with friends, under a mango tree – to emphasise that 'other' aspect of performance which is far more important than actual technical proficiency. The more I dive into the analysis of my data, the more I become interested

in all these 'aspects' of learning that are difficult to 'grasp' and to describe in rational and concrete terms but that are, at the same time, pointed out by participants as *the* essential aspects of learning and performance. In the following sections, I will address some of these issues while analysing the relation between *cuatro* transmission and natural and cultural territories, social gatherings and religious celebrations. I will refer to aspects such as *sabor*, spirituality, feeling, energy of music, empathy and cosmogony, among others, as central dimensions of *cuatro* transmission, especially in relation to traditional music.

Musicking as part of Territory

At this point, I wish to introduce Christopher Small's concept of 'musicking', which was first alluded to in his work *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in African American Music* (1987). Years later, Small develops the concept more in depth in the book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (1998), where he comments: 'To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing' (Small, 1998, p. 9).

Making music, or musicking, has to do with relations – more specifically, interactions that generate conceptual and emotional meanings between people, and between musicians and the sounds that their instruments produce. However, the concept also has to do with relations of musicians with their contexts: historical, political, natural, spiritual. These relations can be embedded very deeply in people's identities and may express themselves during performance, even when a musician is playing alone, enjoying himself while participating in the act of music making. Christopher Small narrates the experience of a solitary flutist who is playing for himself:

> … he will be articulating not just his solitariness but his relationships with the entire population of his conceptual world. Although physically alone, he is surrounded as he plays by all the beings that inhabit that world, not only humans, animals and plants but also the land itself, the ancestors and the yet

unborn, and even the illimitable population of the spirit world; and through the sounds he makes he is exploring, affirming and celebrating the ways in which he relates to them (Small, 1998, p. 204).

Throughout this study, relations between music making and territory have emerged with venom. I understand territory as a space that embeds within itself a set of worlds of different orders. Traditional music appears as a 'mark' or *refrain* – as a particular set of sounds that is characteristic of that particular space and that produces some type of identity which is associated with that territory. According to Deleuze and Guatari:

> The role of the refrain has often been emphasized: it is territorial, a territorial assemblage. Bird songs: the bird sings to mark its territory. The Greek modes and Hindu rhythms are themselves territorial, provincial, regional. The refrain may assume other functions, amorous, professional or social, liturgical or cosmic: it always carries earth with it; it has a land (sometimes a spiritual land) as its concomitant (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 312).

In a similar sense, the idea of rhizome, which was discussed earlier, offers a pertinent conceptual framework through which to think about music and transmission in terms of something that articulates sound and learning with other types of elements, both human and non-human. At stake in a rhizome is a relation 'to the animal, the vegetable, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

Based on the comments of several participants, I will argue that the relation between these different dimensions or elements is not a metaphor, but rather a real connection (or connecting substance) that can be experienced in a concrete way by people, through music. Music is embedded in the flow of this 'substance' or 'energy' and is determined by it. At the same time, transmission occurs within the actual experience of that vital connection, and thus the deep power of direct enculturation. Guillermo Díaz offers a sensitive description of this type of connection:

Guillermo Díaz: (Learning) was concretised in the party. It became effective in the parranda. I think that the best course I ever had with my brother, on *joropo* music, was at a party in the house of a friend, on a farm in the savannah. With Argenis Sanchez, one of the most renowned singers of *joropo* at some point ... it was *the* course, because the guy was singing and you had to accompany him. And if you didn't know the *golpe*, then you had to listen to the melody and follow it. It was a very useful course, especially to understand something that is neither in the form of subdividing or in what you can hear on the recordings ... but of feeling what it means to play in the savannah. To feel that when you're playing that instrument in the Llanos, it sounds different. The same instrument tells you how to play it. The environment, the land, the landscape puts you to play with *sabor*. That's when you really understand what *joropo* is, how it sounds. Playing in the Llanos. In this parranda we were alone, just Andrés (his brother) and I, if we didn't find our way out... then there was no party.

Music, nature, labour

From another, more concrete stance, one of the most evident expressions of the connection between music and the local territory is related to the constant reference of lyrics to elements of the natural ecosystems. One of the participants of my background research comments that a distinctive trait of *joropo* music is the massive assistance from the public at the concerts of local musicians, which is not the case of other types of music in Colombia. According to the participant, this is, in fact, due to the constant referencing made by lyrics to elements that are familiar to local people, such as nature, love, landscapes, birds, and trees. *Joropo* lyrics are in themselves very rich oral sources of memory related to the particular names that are assigned to vegetables and animal species in the Llanos region[27].

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[27] A touching testimony of music in relation to nature and labour is the documentary *El Joropo está en la tierra* featuring celebrated Colombian artist Cholo Valderrama, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqohF6AqEEY, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxJkt2L0ZmY, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fUdcj9QPzIg

Furthermore, this relation is expressed not only in lyrics but also in the names that are assigned to the particular *golpes*. Holman Caicedo speaks about 'La Tirana', a traditional rhythm from the region of Casanare. I point out the 'tone' used by the interviewee, which is full of admiration for the animal that is described:

Hollman Caicedo: La Tirana, Tirana is a bird, it's a small bird, it's very cute. Do you know it?

Andrés: Is it a small one?

Hollman Caicedo: Not very small, it's very cute.

Andrés: But is it typical of the Llanos region?

Hollman Caicedo: Yes, of course, it is an animal that sings very beautifully and opens its wings like this and... like the peacock ... I would like to take you to my farm to see it. Always in the winter they take out their little eggs, their chicks. They are extremely elusive and if you go and see the eggs, they will not return. She will stay there looking at the eggs, but she will not brood them anymore. La Tirana, so that's the name of one of the *golpes*...

On other occasions, music and dance imitate the actual sounds of nature; for example, the sound of a galloping horse or the particular song of a bird:

Rafael Padilla: It's said that there are rhythms... that come from the work of the *llanero* man in his habitat, from the animals he listens to, as *chiricoca*. The *chiricoca* sings like this (he reproduces the singing of the bird)... it's the same rhythm of this dancing step (he demonstrates the step).

As mentioned earlier, enculturation is frequently embedded in everyday work. In rural areas of the Llanos region, these types of work are usually connected to the territory in a direct way. One of the activities that has developed with more intensity throughout the history of this territory is cattle raising. Looking after the animals, preparing the land for pasturage, taking care of drinking troughs, and milking the cows are all among the everyday work activities. Horses, on the other hand, have, for centuries, been the main means of transportation across the vast savannahs. Songs usually describe these everyday scenes. Countrymen frequently gather at the end of

the day to sing with the *cuatro*. On some occasions, music is part of the work in itself; indeed, the farmer may sing to his horse or to his cows in order to calm them down during displacements or while milking. Unfortunately, over the last few decades, industrialisation has progressively affected this direct contact of men with nature while labouring and has also transformed the role of music in everyday life.

Along these lines, several participants speak about the aforementioned labour activities in relation to *cuatro* music and transmission. Juan Carlos Contreras comments that there are certain things in relation to *cuatro* playing and *joropo* music that can only be learned in-place, by taking part in rural life, in its particularities, and listening to the stories that are rooted in the territory's history:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: There are things that cannot be learned but there, in the Llanos... while milking, listening to the songs of farmers while they milk the cows, 'smearing on cattle dung, etc' ... I remember Pedro Florez[28], who also told stories about when he was a guerrilla with Guadalupe Salcedo[29].

Parrandos and tertulias

Musical enculturation also takes place in the frame of social gatherings with family and friends, where there is a combination of musicking, dancing and drinking[30]. As mentioned earlier, *parrandos* and *tertulias* are words used in Spanish to refer to social gatherings that can take place as part of a celebration or special occasion (e.g. a birthday party). Such gatherings can be music festivals or spontaneous events just for the pleasure of gathering together to play music and to chat. The social ritual deployed within *parrandos*, where music is a central element, seems to be the moment that signifies learning and transmission – the moment where the real things are at stake, embedded in an environment of shared joy and enthusiasm. References to this type of spaces are very common among the testimonies that were gathered. In fact, these

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[28] Maestro Pedro Flórez was a celebrated *bandola* player from Maní, Casanare and one of the founders of the *Festival de la Bandola Criolla* that takes place every year in this village.

[29] Guadalupe Salcedo was a famous commander of liberal guerrillas in the llanos region between 1949 and 1953.

[30] See Convers and Ochoa (2009) for a discussion regarding music and social rituals in Colombian traditional music of the coasts.

social gatherings are one of the most referred to settings for learning. Cheo Hurtado comments:

> *Cheo Hurtado*:   ... traditional Venezuelan music itself, is created and re-created ... and it's produced in domestic meetings, in meetings, in homes, parties... Because I had no stage, because what I learned, there was no university that taught it, there isn't one yet. And what you learn in traditional music ... those music academies have not yet been invented, that system has not been invented and it should be ... and I always say, it must be done.

People with or without formal preparation bring along their instruments to these social gatherings and play together. What seems to be important is not necessarily the perfectibility of the music but its 'flavour':

> *Isaac Tacha*: Some types of very large *estudiantinas* [31] were formed. People came with violins, with trumpets, with *tiples*, with *guitars*, whatever, *carracas de burro* [32]... and everyone picked up an instrument and they would play... to be sincere, it sounded very *sabroso*. So that was the strong atmosphere that framed my beginnings...

Tertulias and *parrandos* occur naturally during festivals, as do 'off-programme' experiences which can sometimes have even more value than the concerts and the contests that constitute the festival's formal agenda. Guillermo Díaz shares an experience he had when he was young during a festival in the city of Villavicencio, where he met the members of *Bandolas de Venezuela* and *Ensamble Gurrufío*, two of the most representative ensembles of traditional music in Venezuela:

> Guillermo Díaz: I remember listening to these gentlemen, it was amazing... for me it was ... dressing rooms were shared, musicians played in the dressing

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[31] The term *estudiantina* generally refers to an ensemble that performs traditional music mainly from the Andes region. It comprises plucked string instruments with an occasional presence of winds or instruments from other families.

[32] The *Carraca de burro* is a donkey jawbone.

rooms, what was happening on stage was the least. What was worth was hanging out with the guys in the dressing rooms, in the *parrando*. So I have memories of being in pyjamas or in shorts, all playing, sitting on the beds of the hotel room. Having the chance of seeing first-hand this level of music was ... amazing...

Other types of social settings where music is performed include nightclubs and restaurants. In Bogotá, for example, it is possible to listen to *joropo* music in restaurants that present live shows and that offer typical dishes from the Llanos region. Several musicians have had, at some point in their career, the experience of taking part as musicians in these places. I mentioned earlier that, in some cases, students attending university programmes will have this practice, encouraged by teachers, as part of their actual learning process.

In addition to this, dancing will very often be an important component of these social gatherings and musicians will have to develop the ability to accompany it. Very usually, festivals, contests and other venues include dancing accompanied by live music as important components of the schedule. Musicians find a very important source of learning and of practice within the experience of playing for dancers, which implies resistance, strength in sound and velocity. It is also an opportunity to learn new *repiques* which match with the dancers' rhythms.

> *Camilo Guerrero*: (To accompany dance)... one has to learn to play with a lot of speed; and keeping the rhythm at that speed is hard, it's difficult. (You get) Lots of practice... mostly in terms of practice. Because when you accompany dance groups you play a lot of *Pajarillo* or *Seis por derecho*[33]. They will always perform the same rhythm because it's the same dance, everything is an exercise in percussion. All that experience enriches you; you can learn new *repiques* from it.

> *Andrés*: Have you had the experience of accompanying the dance? For example in *parrandos*?

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[33] *Pajarillo* and *Seis* are traditional *joropo golpes*, characterised by their high tempo.

Guillermo Díaz: Yes. It is very tough. You have to play completely different... you

      have to play harder, it's tighter.

Playing for dancing also means that performers must change their focus from sound to the movements of the dancers. At the same time, it makes it possible to explore connections and rhythmic possibilities within the performance:

Guillermo Díaz: One does not play for the audience, nor for oneself. Nor for the

      song. You play for the dancer. Usually, cool stuff happens when you're

      doing the same things as the dancer (e.g. *floreos*[34]). And these are things

      that happen thanks to listening, they result from communication between

      the participants of the experience. As when Herbie Hancock is

      accompanying a solo by x musician; he goes there with the soloist. He

      throws me an interesting rhythm, I support him. And I help him with it,

      and I help him to develop that motif and I go for it with him. With dancing

      it's the same thing, the dancer is doing a rhythm and we are there, with

      him.

Christian Guataquira: One can learn many things with dancing. I remember

      working once with a dancer, who would tell me, 'do this with the *cuatro*',

      he would perform a *zapateo*[35] with a lot of strength and I would perform a

      floreo that went along with it. Or I would ask him to do something with his

      feet. So there is a two–way feedback in the experience of accompanying

      the dance.

This implies the development of a particular sensitivity, which is aural and musical, but also visual, aesthetic and emotional:

      The accompanying instrumentalist has the need to 'commune' with

      those for whom he plays. This requires not only the use of the ears, as

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[34] The *floreo* or *repique* is a very fast execution of the right hand that produces several strums within a short lapse of time.

[35] *Zapateo* is a typical shoe tapping from the *joropo* dance.

we shall see. In the *tamunangue*[36] and in *joropo* dance, many factors are significant for accompanying: The movement of the dancers, sensuality of the hands in dancing, the graceful movement of the undulating dresses, the sound of shoes against the floor, the character of the lyrics of what is sung and the joyful expression of those who share their music. All this surely affects the sound of a sensitive accompanist (Lozano, n.d., pp. 211-212).

Lozano emphasises that it is not just a matter of 'playing in the beat' for dancers. He actually makes a call to a sensitive 'communion' between musicians and dancers – a posture that reinforces the idea of an invisible relation between music and other cultural elements that emerge, in this case, during the moment of musicking and dancing.

Music as energy

Returning to the idea of ecosystems as a metaphor for the framing of learning in my study, I will now briefly discuss the category of 'energy' as part of that broader metaphor. To start, I wish to state that, within the study of ecosystems, a central aspect of interest for researchers regarding relations between elements is, precisely, the issue of energy: defining it, understanding how it is produced, the sources and characteristics of its flows, the tracks that it follows, its intensity, how it is conserved, lost or transformed, its functions, and its feedback … (Odum, 2006, p. 11). In this frame, energy, whose main source is the sun, is actually measured in calories, offering quantitative data for the analysis of the processes in which it is involved.

For the purpose of this project, I will use the concept of energy analogically because I am aware that the type of energy I will refer to cannot be measured in a quantitative way. The analogy, however, offers a conceptual construct that is useful since, in both cases, it signifies the presence of something that cannot be 'seen' but that can be experienced through, for example heat in the case of ecology, and through the body and emotions in the case of music. On the other hand, and somewhat

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[36] *Tamunangue* is a folk dance typical of Lara State in Venezuela.

interestingly, several traits of energy that are similar to those mentioned above will be discussed based on participants' comments: what produces it, how it flows, its intensity, obstructions, and its feedback between actors in musical situations. From this standpoint, my interest in the category of energy in relation to music and transmission is neither an esoteric speculation nor some kind of *new age* caprice. It rather responds to the need for a conceptual framework to speak about an aspect of music and learning that is difficult to grasp with fineness using the categories of which I dispose within my pedagogic rationality. As in ecosystems (Odum, 2006, p. 7), I argue that energy embedded in music and performance is a central issue of musicking and of *cuatro* transmission.

Of particular interest here is displacing the focus from music understood as external objects which we produce as performers, to music as a flow of energy for which musicians and repertories are just a medium. Indeed, this is an essential issue when it comes to understanding transmission, which implies important ruptures in the way we generally understand music within academic structures. If this displacement is accepted as an important aspect of pedagogic reflection and research, the analogy between music and energy (embedded in the idea of cultural ecosystems) might offer useful hints for future studies regarding where and how to look for the properties, flows and obstructions of the energy of music[37].

In this frame of ideas, some authors have referred to performance situations as spaces where energy circulates within music. Small, for example, uses the category of energy to describe the actual creative role of listeners throughout a music performance:

…(The listeners) have an important and acknowledged creative role to play in the performance through the energy they feed (or fail to feed), selectively and with discrimination, back to the performers (Small, 1998, p. 8).

Furthermore, this same author comments on the potential effects of the dynamic circle of energetic feedback that occurs between listeners and performers within a musicking experience – a connection that can sometimes bring with it very

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[37] For other perspectives in relation to the idea of energy and music education see Schneiderman (2008, pp. 114-115) and De Gainza (2017, pp. 15-17).

high levels of intensity:

> …the back-and-forth passing of energy from performers to listeners and back again in mutual amplification can carry the musicking to a tremendous pitch of excitement that can approach and even cross the threshold of possession (Small, 1998, p. 197).

At this point, I wish to bridge the idea of energy with the issue of dance that was brought up earlier in this section, when I cited Leonardo Lozano referring to playing for dancing as an experience of 'communion'. One could posit that music produces or acts as a vehicle for a certain type of force that is both physical and emotional, which affects and connects bodies in particular ways. When dancing, the affected bodies transform this energy into movement, expressed within the context of this study in the particular form of *llanero* dancing. Here again, there is feedback between the actors of the experience, since the energy that is produced by dancers returns to musicians and affects their playing. This 'force' is real because people, in their feelings and in their bodies, experience it. We frequently experience it in situations when we sense our bodies responding to rhythm and when we feel a drive to dance. We also experience it when we are emotionally touched by music's energy, in more or less intense ways. Recalling an experience in the Llanos region of Colombia, a close relative comments that during a *parrando*, the musicians suddenly started to play and a man, driven by the energy of music, brought out his gun and started to shoot in the air. The thing is that, even if real, this 'force' cannot be objectified in terms of something that can be fragmented, organised and transmitted in a sequential way within the rationality of the modern pedagogic paradigm: it can only be experienced.

Alcohol as part of musicking

In relation to the cultural practices to which I have been referring in this chapter, I now wish to pinpoint the fact that, in several testimonies, alcohol (usually *aguardiente*, a

sugar cane drink typical in Colombia and Venezuela) is reported as an important component of social gatherings[38]:

> *John Jairo Torres*: When I started I assisted to all the *parrandos*. Here as a child in the savannah one goes freely everywhere ... parents are partying, drinking aguardiente everywhere... and I would pick up the cans of beer that people threw... I was there in every *parrando*, picking up my cans but I was very attentive to *joropo* ... who played, how he played ... sometimes I didn't collect cans but rather stood in front of the stage or in the corner where people were to see how it was, how did they play... it sounded really good. I liked it so much...

I bring up this issue of *aguardiente* not only because it is an emergent element in several testimonies as a component of these social experiences (together with music, dancing, food, etc.) but also because of the centrality that many musicians attribute to drinking as part of the musical experience. In addition, some musicians even feel that alcohol makes up part, in some cases, of an organic experience that has certain components and traits that affect not only the way in which music is experienced but also the way it actually sounds. Luis Pino refers to this issue and assesses the limits on the possibility of 'allowing' this type of experience in the frame of academic contexts:

> *Luis Pino*: Will the academy understand that *Golperos de don Pio Alvarado*[39] drank a bottle of Cocuy[40] at nine o'clock in the morning? Where does this fit into academicism?
>
> *Andrés*: And that is part of the experience ...
>
> *Luis Pino*: When that is part of the experience, and that's why it sounds the way it does...

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[38] For a discussion regarding the consumption of alcohol in connection to the performance of traditional music in Colombia see: Velásquez (2012, p. 116) and Quintana (2009, pp. 145-146).

[39] *Golperos de don Pío Alvarado* is a traditional ensemble from the region of Lara in Venezuela. The format of the group includes several cuatros, percussion and singing.

[40] The *cocuy* liquor is an alcoholic beverage produced by fermentation of the agave plant.

I have indeed witnessed the presence of alcohol in several music gatherings where the *cuatro* was present. It seemed to me that, in several cases, alcohol, in connection to the general social experience alongside which it appeared, helped something inside myself to connect to music (either listening to it or playing it) in a freer way; it was as if something was 'unblocked'.

In relation to this, it would be interesting to explore enculturation experiences in South American contexts where extended sessions of music making take place as part of social rituals. What are the elements that converge in these celebrations or social rituals that last two, three or four days? How is the consciousness of musicians and of participants affected, and what role do the different elements play in the process (e.g. playing, singing, dancing, drinking)? What type of effect do these intense-type of experiences have on the individuals who are being enculturated? What impact do they have on issues related to music performance such as feel, *sabor*, and on the capacity of people to enjoy music, or to experience social empathy within collective musicking?

Rationality is a central trait of the modern pedagogic paradigm, and is expressed with more or less levels of intensity within closed systems of transmission. Here is worth referring to examining situations which imply that the observation of how fissures that disrupt our rational control over reality affect our musical experience. Indeed, such an examination might offer interesting evidence for reflection and offer alternative ways in which these 'other aspects' of transmission that are less easily grasped and systematised can be tackled. At the very least, it should be possible to establish what hinders them and what unblocks them.

I am aware of the ethical and moral caution that should be adopted with regard to this issue when relating it to educational matters. However, I find that there is an interesting field of research related to the experience of learning and musicking in connection with contexts that imply extreme conditions for the body (e.g. having very few hours of sleep for several days) or where substances that alter consciousness are present. Concretely, I find pertinent connections between the experiences I have described above and Csikszentmihalyi's (1998) ideas of disappearance of self-consciousness and the distortion of the sense of clock-time within the category of flow. It is obviously not a matter of 'bringing' alcohol into the music classroom, nor a matter of developing artificial experiments in which alcohol or non-sleeping are

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introduced as part of learning experiences. Rather, it has to do with exploring people's testimonies so as to detect the type of inhibitions that are relaxed within experiences of this kind.

If issues such as enjoyment and flow are accepted as important issues in music making and its transmission, understanding from different stances what hinders their emergence is an important matter. In this sense, flow as an experience of consciousness in music making has been explored by authors such as Green (2008, pp. 56-59) within educational practices based on informal models of learning. Turino (2008; p.p. 30-31), by other part, brings up relevant examples of participatory performances where an adequate balance between challenges and abilities permits the emergence of flow experiences for musicians with different levels of proficiency within shared communitarian musical practices.

Religious gatherings

Another type of social gathering reported by *cuatro* players as an event where early enculturation takes place, is the religious celebration. In this case, the social ritual has a purpose that connects participants, once again with music at its centre, with a transcendent purpose. South America is a region that is strongly embedded in a recent cultural miscegenation in which social rituals that correspond to diverse types of religious views of the world coexist and frequently interact: mainly European (i.e. catholic), Indigenous and African. The extent to which these practices have or have not been emptied of their original aims and meanings is difficult to verify. Even if the most traditional practices are tending to disappear, several others are well alive.

Some religious customs that are still very present and that relate to *cuatro* playing are the singing of *aguinaldos or villancicos* in Colombia and in Venezuela; these are songs specially dedicated to celebrating Christ's nativity. These pieces are usually accompanied by the *cuatro*, among other instruments, and are frequently attached to some type of social gathering where prayers related to this biblical event are pronounced. Another traditional celebration that is very popular in Venezuela is the *Velorio de Cruz de Mayo*, which takes place in the month of May. It is a mestizo type of celebration in which a symbolic funeral is performed, with prayers said for good crops and for the protection of the sacred Virgin.

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Some other types of religious celebrations, typical of the Llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela are also reported. In contrast with the previous ones, these practices are rapidly disappearing. One particular celebratory musical expression which caught my attention was the *Cantos de Tono,* a type of music that is performed by singers accompanied by the *cuatro* and by other instruments during a religious service offered for the soul of a child who has passed away. Musicians normally play and sing until midnight in the frame of this service. Following this, a *parrando* usually starts with dancing, food and drinks. The gathering will last until the following day. Several musicians recall this type of religious ritual as part of their early musical experiences. John Jairo Torres comments:

> *John Jairo Torres*: I also played a lot ... I played el *tono*... 'let's play el *tono'*. At that time they would say 'Hey, let's play a *tono* for a child ... a child who died', new-borns who died ... the very small, la *Cifra de Angelitos*. Then one would go and play ... I remember a melody that is in a minor key, the *bandola* plays the melody ... (he sings the melody while accompanying with the *cuatro*). Almost always that tune ... you would finish just a bit of that rhythm with the *bandola* player and then three people would do the singing of the *tono*. They tied a rope to a tree and they clung to the rope. They sang something... like crying for the child, something like indigenous.... As a cry (He sings) 'from the distance comes my little boy who died...' and they wept there ... and then one would remain mum on the instrument and with the *bandola* ... they finished and we ... (he plays and sings the tune again) and so with that strumming ... and to vary the music a little bit, we would play a traditional pasaje to give another environment, and then we would return to the singing of the *tono*. Until the next day when they took the child in his coffin. The child would go first and we would play behind, with the group, walking down the path until we arrived ... The people were behind us, singing the same music. Relatives and people were there, behind the group.

As can be seen, this is a very strong experience of active enculturation in which the learner is making up part of a subtle cultural tissue that is directly permeating the

act of musicking, in this case in relation to a particular emotional wound that is experienced collectively. The harmonic structure of the repeated song is very simple, although what is at stake is something else, not precisely the complexity of the piece. From my point of view, what is at stake is the healing power of music in that moment.

A common trait of all these rituals is the collective component. Some of them directly incorporate an experience of material sharing as part of the experience between members of the community. Holman Caicedo describes a ritual of *San Pascual de Limosna*:

> *Hollman Caicedo*: I'll make a party, a *San Pascual de Limosna*. *De Limosna* means that everybody should bring an alms: 'Andrés: bring me a package of potatoes'. Somebody will bring a bottle of aguardiente. 'Julio, what will you bring to the *San Pascual*?'... 'I will bring a basket of beer'. 'I will bring the *lechona*[41]'... or 'I will bring a heifer ". 'I will bring the corn for the *chicha*, for the *guarapo*[42]'... all that stuff. Everybody contributed. It was called a 'dance of alms'. And that was the way we paid... we had to pay our promise.

Through *promesas* (i.e. promise), people will ask something of God, Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary or of a particular Saint (as in the case of *San Pascual*); they will ask, for example, for the healing of a close relative or for any other particular favour. In case the request is granted, the person will promise a particular action such as, for example, a pilgrimage to a sacred place or a particular ritual such as the one described above.

Modern rationality casts a great deal of doubt on the existence of these types of spiritual dimensions that are honoured by certain cultures and social groups as realms of life which are as real as all the others. It is from this positivist stance that most of the western disciplines observe and judge the type of situations that are described in this section, cataloguing them as collective suggestions or simply as ritual acts that

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[41] Roasted pig.

[42] *Chicha* and *guarapo* are beverages usually derived from corn that can be fermented or non-fermented.

offer some type of symbolic answer to collective questions in relation to life. This rational view of the world has permeated societies and has had an actual impact on the beliefs of local communities. Several participants point out that these rituals are being lost and that young people are gradually less attracted by them, perhaps because of the alternative spectacle that is being offered by the media or by a generalised loss of faith. Pedro Herrera, a senior musician from Arauca who took part in these rituals many times comments:

> *Andrés*: Why do you think that this tradition has been lost?
>
> *Pedro Herrera*: I do not know, boy, but as faith is lost ... and from the people who were from those times, few are left.

To conclude this section, I want to share some reflections that have been developing with increasing intensity throughout my process of analysis in relation to the following question: What is the 'connecting substance' that underlies the subtle tissue that is present within these social rituals (religious and non-religious)? What are the traces of that substance or energy on the musicians who are playing? Indeed, it is clear to me at this point that the young musician who is embedded in that experience is learning something else at that moment in relation to music that goes far beyond the technical and style properties of the musical object.

From this standpoint, my perception is that the act of learning 'objects' of music that are completely separated from their contexts, as normally happens in closed systems of transmission, can be limited. From a critical perspective, Ochoa refers to this issue:

> This decontextualised understanding of music is also present both in theory classes and in instrumental or collective practices. The usual practice is that the works are analysed (in theory classes) or performed (in practical classes) without mentioning the place, time, location, use and overall context in which they were composed, and for which they had an initial sense, nor the way in which these works can make sense in a current situation. Similar to the concert halls and museums, schools then acquire characteristics of a musical museum, where 'works of art' are displayed, analysed and reproduced separated from

their use and appreciated because of their form (*My translation*. Ochoa, 2016, p. 119).

In relation to traditional music, I want to argue that, as a result of this lack of explicit connection between the learning processes and the contexts that frame the production of music, we are missing the possibility of experiencing those invisible threads that connect music to other cultural expressions which are related to it and which can foster and deepen the musical and emotional meanings that we construct throughout transmission. Along these lines, I will argue in the proposal found at the end of this report that attending and taking active part in these living cultural contexts, when it is affordable in terms of resources, is an essential part of *cuatro* learning and a central experience for building meanings in relation to music.

Furthermore, I argue that what really is at stake in learning music and performance is precisely related to the vital understanding of those subjacent, emotional aspects of music, rather than with how perfect or imperfect the musical result or object is. This does not mean that the object should not be as perfect as possible, but that it should be a medium rather than an end. My perception is that an emotionally meaningful and celebratory experience of music naturally produces musical objects that are more authentic and of a better artistic quality. As suggested by Small (1998), this emotional quality of experience is related to an attitude of 'loving care' that is brought to detail in music in accordance with the capacities of the particular performer who is taking part in the experience of musicking:

> … the word *best* (performance) applies not only to technical skill but also to all other relationships of the performance, which is carried out with all the loving care and attention to detail that the performers can bring to it. Doing the best one can with what one has is a recipe, not, as may at first be thought, for smug mediocrity but for constant advance into new territory, since those who persist in doing the best they can with what they have will get better, will find new nuances of relationship, and new skills with which to articulate them. Indeed, it may be the only way in which balanced improvement in performance will take place, since it is clear that

concentration on the development of virtuoso technique will not of itself produce good performances (Small, 1998, p. 215).

The trouble is that we sometimes miss the importance of these 'inner issues' and relations of musical experiences, especially when we get trapped within those other things that *can* be 'named, fragmented, classified, organised, sequenced, etc.', and that usually correspond to the external, visible qualities of the musical objects such as: technique, harmony, texture, form, melody. As a consequence, we are frequently tempted to organise and attest learning processes under the assumption that these aspects and their external perfectibility represent the central aim of the pedagogic process.

Cuatro music and gender issues

At this point, I wish to briefly allude to the fact that I could observe an important predominance of male *cuatro* players within my study. Although the relation between gender and *cuatro* learning is not within the scope of this project, I do want to point out at some emergent aspects that connect well with observations and reflections brought up by other authors concerning the role of women in music, particularly in relation to traditional music. I wish to understand the issue of gender as an aspect of human beings, who have innate sexual attributes that are naturally attached to them but which are reinforced by cultural practices within societies (Green, 2013, p. 126; O'Shea, 2008, p. 62). Within this perspective, the relation between gender and music practices, including education, has been an issue of ample interest in recent decades and extensive literature is available on the subject[43].

To start, I want to mention that, of the 43 musicians in my sample, only 2 were female. The sample is representative of what can be observed in the musical scene of *cuatro* playing, including other instruments associated with the *cuatro*, such as the *harp*, *bandola*, *maracas* or *bass guitar*, where there is also a predominance of male

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[43] For a comprehensive work enquiring about the cultural construction of meaning in relation to gender and its connection to music education see *Music, gender, education* (Green, 1997). In addition, an historical account of gender studies in connection to music education can be found in *Los Estudios de Género en la Educación Musical. Revisión Crítica* (Loizaga, 2005).

performers; this situation is recurrent in the traditional music of other countries of South America and of many other regions around the world[44].

This situation can be partly explained by the culture which is embedded in traditional music in Colombia, which usually limits women's access to the public sphere while traditionally confining them to home-based work (O'Shea, 2008, p. 59; Velásquez, 2012, pp. 134-137; Flores, 2009, pp. 185-187). However, it is also related to broader cultural aspects, as mentioned by various authors, which pertain to gender, e.g. the stereotyping of femininity and the association of certain musical instruments or performance roles with cultural gender traits, including physical strength (Green, 2013, p. 127; Velásquez, 2012, pp. 110, 121; Quintana, 2009, p. 149; Flores, 2009, pp. 192-194). In this sense, and as occurs in other cultures, I was able to observe a more prominent presence of women dancing than playing musical instruments (Flores, 2009, p. 184; O'Shea, 2008, p. 63).

Within the scope of this project, festivals are a good example of public scenarios where the presence of women is very limited, except for dancing. Local authors such as Quintana (2009, pp.132, 148, 149) refer to festivals as public spaces where music tradition is intended to be 'preserved' while reproducing gender exclusion dynamics that are present in cultural tradition and enacted through music (Green, 2013, p. 137).

In addition, some authors also bring up the issue of potential physical aggressions toward women within public spaces, which is frequently associated with the consumption of alcohol among men (O'Shea, 2008, pp. 60-61; Flores, 2009, p. 193; Quintana, 2009, pp. 144-147; Velásquez, 2012, p. 116). Although I did not witness direct aggression toward women throughout my fieldwork, I did experience circumstances where heavy drinking took place. While travelling with my wife and daughters for this project I was always careful not to leave them alone within these types of situations.

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[44] In relation to traditional music, literature is less ample but it has been growing in recent decades. See: In Serbia (Nenic, 2013), in Greece (Hatzipetrou-Andronikou, 2011), in Botswana (Kgafela, 2009), in Ireland (O'Shea, 2008). In Latin America, authors have been dealing, on the one hand, with the historical exclusion of women from academic music: In Chile (Padilla, 2013) and, in Mexico (Dragan, 2014). On the other hand, authors have examined the rapports between cultural constructions of gender meanings and traditional and popular music practices: In relation to Bolero music (Tapia, 2007), in Chile (Becker, 2011), in Colombia (Quintana, 2009; Delgado & Gámez, 2015; Velásquez, 2012). For a compendium of literature relating to music and gender in Colombia, see Mujeres en la Música en Colombia: El género de los géneros (Millán & Quintana, 2012).

As I mentioned previously, gender in relation to *cuatro* playing was not a central question for this project. However, I find that it is a pertinent issue for future studies interested in examining the sociological and cultural threads that intertwine with *cuatro* learning or with other similar processes of traditional music transmission in Colombia. It would be interesting, first of all, to confirm the apparent exclusion of women from *cuatro* performances, particularly in public places, while also seeking contrasts, for example, between rural and urban contexts. In addition to this, it is necessary to look into the actual perceptions of women in relation to this apparent exclusion: How do they feel about it? When does it become a tension within themselves and in relation to their social contexts? What type of strategies are used by women to cope up with these limitations? From my point of view, what is truly important is not only the confirmation of a theory of gender exclusion in the field, but the interpretation of the actual impact of this exclusion on specific women´s life projects and subjectivities in relation to music. Generalisations should be avoided since many women from local traditional cultures accept home duties and family care – thus distancing themselves from the public sphere – without experiencing the type of suffering that modern western thinking would anticipate. In fact, in most of these local contexts women play a central role in the balance of social contexts as carriers of traditional knowledge that is vital for communities concerning issues such as healthcare, children education, nutrition and clothing, among others.

Closed systems of transmission and secondary enculturation

In this section I will discuss some of the strategies that are used to 'produce experiences of enculturation' in contexts of *cuatro* learning where closed systems of transmission can be found. I refer to settings such as private lessons, schools, music academies and universities. The question I intend to tackle in this section is the following: How do academic contexts deal with those aspects of enculturation that have not been experienced by students during the early stages of their learning?

To start, I wish to mention that I found that different types of strategies are used in these contexts, which are intended to be subsidiary of this early enculturation or, in other words, to provide students with a 'secondary' type of enculturation. As

discussed earlier in this chapter, enculturation of this type implies a more or less sporadic contact with traditional music in later moments of life (not in childhood) or *outside* of its original cultural contexts. It implies a direct experience of music with or without establishing explicit connections with other cultural manifestations from the traditional context. In this sense, I was able to find three types of strategies: one relating to direct, personal contact with traditional contexts, a second which implies the recurrent use of listening to music (live or virtual), and a third type that incorporates the use of dancing as an 'enculturating' strategy.

Whatever the strategies used, it was evident across the majority of the testimonies in closed systems of transmission settings that both teachers and students find that direct or indirect contact with the embedding cultural ecosystems of traditional music is an essential complement to transmission. In some cases, it is described not only as a complement but, in fact, as a central element for learning.

Before presenting the description of the different types of approaches that are used for secondary enculturation, it is important to mention that the strategies that lead to it are not only found in closed systems of transmission settings. In fact, they can be very common in open systems of transmission as well. For example, a musician who is born in Bogotá, away from the original traditional contexts of *joropo* music, might incorporate as part of his or her self-directed learning (open system), autonomous strategies for enhancing secondary enculturation such as travelling, visiting the original context, attending festivals, watching videos on the internet, and so on. Indeed, I experienced this type of exploration myself, as part of my own learning of *cuatro* music. The same type of experiences could also be found as part of the musical project of a group whose members were not raised up in the original context. The contrast might be found, however, in the fact that when occurring within closed systems of transmission, these experiences of secondary enculturation tend to be more systematic, structured, intentional and less random.

Connecting with the original contexts where cuatro music is produced

As I stated earlier, *cuatro* music is very vast and diverse. In the case of traditional *cuatro* music, when I questioned participants from institutional settings in relation to the issue of musical enculturation of people who were not raised up listening to this

type of music, almost all of them insist on the importance of providing some type of contact with the original contexts where it is produced. Some of the participants, however, recognise the institutional and practical limits facing some of these strategies and in several cases they do not apply themselves as much as they wished to.

As will be seen in the Chapter 10 in relation to repertoire, all of the learning contexts that were studied include traditional music as part of the music that is being transmitted. When participants refer to the importance of this type of experiential contact with original contexts, they do so because they believe that traditional music is a central part of *cuatro* learning and that the actual relations (social, cultural, musical, spiritual) that take place in music making in original traditional contexts are key issues in the understanding, living and performing of the *cuatro*.

Musicking in social gatherings as an extension of the classroom

The first types of relations that were found between closed settings and the cultural practices embedded in music were those that are established when learning contexts are directly embedded in the original territory or within the actual active musical ecosystem. Of course, these relations are very natural and emerge in many cases, quite spontaneously. In these types of situations, learning contexts (e.g. schools or music academies) are 'permeable' to the immediate musical practices of social contexts. This situation was evident, for example, when popular repertoires associated with children's social contexts were approached inside the music classroom (e.g. Christmas songs or *aguinaldos*). A different example of this 'bridging' is brought up by Camilo Guerrero, a musician from Arauca, who comments that several years ago (it is not the case nowadays), the learning of the *cuatro* was mandatory in elementary schools in his city. He states:

> *Camilo Guerrero*: At that time, in Arauca, when I was a student, everyone played the *cuatro*. It was great, because you could see all the students going to school with their *cuatro*. It was like a culture here in Arauca... even if you learned just one *golpe*, even if it was just a *gaván*, they could play it on the *cuatro*....

This type of *cuatro*-related 'cultural trend', which was enhanced by schools, certainly produces an enculturation framed by a musical ecosystem rich in information that favours learning both inside and outside the music classroom at school. Other situations imply a direct connection between the learning processes that take place within settings such as music academies, and what is taking place outside, at social gatherings and *parrandos*. In these cases, what happens in the classroom is a practical preparation, an actual rehearsal, for later performances. The teacher and students are involved in a shared experience of musicking that transcends the space of the classroom, moving into other spaces of social rituals:

> *Isaac Tacha*: The daily programme was to go to the *Academia de Música del Departamento del Meta* in the afternoon. We would rehearse there everything that would be played in the *parrando*. He (the teacher) ... always sat me next to him for the best guide because I was the student with the highest level of development within the group of *cuatro* players... so when the class finished, I would go with them to *Los Chaparrales* (a local tavern).

This is another good example of *cuatro* learning occurring within variable tracks that organically combine open and closed systems of transmission: rhizomatic paths that include arborescent structures within them. The learner travels throughout this track moved by a desire that is deeply embedded in the experience of 'making music', especially with others, inside and outside the classroom.

Another interesting testimony of this type of natural movement between 'class' spaces and the social practices embedded within them is brought up by Luis Pino, while narrating how his private classes with Cheo Hurtado connected naturally with social gatherings and other experiences:

> *Luis Pino*: Cheo 's birthday was like a national feast, everybody came: musicians, intellectuals, etc: *Gurrufío*[45], *El Cuarteto*[46], *Simón Díaz*[47]. And

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[45] *Ensamble Gurrufío* is a celebrated Venezuelan group founded in the early 80s by Luis Julio Toro (*flute*), Cristóbal Soto (*mandolin*), and Cheo Hurtado (*cuatro*).

Cheo would show us: 'My students now come'... because it was like a concert of 24 consecutive hours. For us it was a chance to perform, to show all these people what one could play. It was also a time of spiritual and intellectual strengthening, of endurance... of resisting playing in front of all these people... it is very important for an artist to measure for how long he can be on stage. Truly important things happened there; of course, all those were my 'nutritional' elements.

Clearly, the private lessons with Cheo were just one component of Luis' learning. What seems to emerge, rather, is a complex set of relations that produce an enriched overarching medium that enhances learning by offering substantial 'nutritional elements' which, in Luis' terms, are not only musical, but also social, intellectual and spiritual.

Playing in local establishments: invisible experiences for academic programmes

Other types of enculturation imply a relation between closed systems of transmission settings that are not so directly embedded in the cultural ecosystems that frame music production. One previously mentioned example of this is when university students in Bogota play with ensembles in establishments that offer food, live music and dance from the Llanos region. This practice, which is frequently enhanced by teachers, is seen as a vital type of experience for learning, even if it is not included within the formal academic demarche and no credits are awarded for it. Within the proposal of this project, I will posit that incorporating this type of informal practices within curricula, while also allowing students to continue to develop 'outside' of institutions, is a central aspect of a *cuatro* programme at universities. In the same vein, further pertinent local research could be developed which examines the possibility of enhancing, incorporating and validating, within higher education settings, practices that are held

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[46] *El Cuarteto* is another celebrated ensemble from Venezuela, founded in the late 70s by Miguel Delgado (*guitar* and *cuatro*), Raúl Delgado (*cuatro, guitar, tiple*), José Antonio Naranjo (*flute*) and Telésforo Naranjo (*double bass*).

[47] Simón Díaz is a Venezuelan singer and composer who made very important contributions to the development and international diffusion of the music from the llanos region, in particularly of the *Tonada Llanera*, a type of slow song associated with everyday rural work.

by students 'outside' of their academic paths within institutions, not only in traditional music, but also in jazz and classical programmes.

The correlate of this situation, and from the analytical perspective of this study, is that the modern pedagogic paradigm sheds light only upon those practical experiences that are framed *within* the formal curriculum. This means that it generally promotes, enhances and assesses those practical projects that fit in what the programme states. In the case of *cuatro* learning, besides the normal sessions of chamber music groups and popular ensembles that are prescribed by the curriculum, students engage in an overwhelming number of activities that are not clearly visible nor systematically promoted by institutions: playing in restaurants, festivals, and music halls, recording, and broadcasting for radio and TV, among others. Once again, an essential part of *cuatro* learning emerges within the zone of invisibility that is generated by the 'regimes of light' of the modern pedagogic paradigm: reality is broader than what we can see.

Festivals

Visiting festivals to participate in the scene as an artist or just to be a member of the audience, is also seen as an important chance to learn. Festivals offer not only the chance to listen to concerts, but also to meet local people, see them dancing, taste the local food, have some type of contact with the history of the contexts and with their landscapes. They also offer the possibility to actually engage in spontaneous playing with other musicians. One interviewee points out the musical value of these types of experiences, which also create emotional bonds with other participants:

> *Andrés*: Is it important for a *cuatro* student at university to have contact with festivals, with *parrandos*, to travel to the Llanos region? Do you think it can teach him or her something?
>
> *Christian Guataquira*: Yes, of course. It's very important. Not only in these types of festivals but in any festival. The more one listens to music... that's going to help a lot. But obviously... when one is at a festival, it is important because one is interacting with other musicians. So a *cuatro* player, even the youngest, can teach you things... there are *cuatro* players that are well

above your level, so you ask them to explain a little. How could I accompany certain types of songs or what types of exercises are suggested... techniques... they explain to you. You share with them. Not only on stage but a friendship is formed... a small *tertulia* (social gathering) starts off... Festivals always have *tertulias*... They are going to start playing so one has to be there. Looking... and listening... it helps a lot. You grow as a musician tremendously.

In one of the universities studied, a teacher intentionally promotes visits to festivals in the frame of one of the courses he offers; this is a space intended to make music students (not only *cuatro* players) familiar with Colombian traditional music. He is very aware of the richness of this type of enculturation, which seeks to produce musical meanings in connection to other local cultural expressions. In line with the characterisation discussed above, this type of experience fits well into a strong type of secondary enculturation:

> *Néstor Lambuley*: I do outings with students to the Llanos region, field trips ... I like more the empirical part of the course, to go there and see, to experience. I like San Martin[48] because there are some medieval games... where the Moors are represented, the *cachaceros* who were the blacks, and the Creoles. And all the horses, they do some ancestral games, but also the *coleos*[49]. There are streams where we go, I like it because we go with the students to see the festival but ultimately we will see the context as well. I tell them 'what you learn in one day in San Martin I can explain it for three semesters and you will not understand '. So I do this on my own initiative.

In this case, enculturation implies an active entanglement with the social practices that take place in original traditional contexts where different types of meanings are at stake. As stated a couple of times previously, experiencing this

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[48] San Martín is a town and municipality in the province of Meta, Colombia. It is the most ancient town of Meta, founded in 1585.
[49] *Coleo* is a traditional Venezuelan and Colombian sport, similar to a rodeo, where a cowboy on horseback pursues cattle through a narrow pathway in order to tumble them.

'cultural' localisation of music can help us to understand, at a deep level, that music is much more than an abstract object – that it is an actual action embedded in a wide web of relations, forces and energy.

Another participant establishes an interesting analogy between this type of contact with the living contexts where music is produced and the training of other professions, such as engineering:

> *Nelson González*: Because sometimes the routine of studying, learning, studying, learning is not everything. It is the case… I will use an analogy… there are engineers who devoted themselves to just that: go to college, study, home, study, home … from home to college and they read good books but then … now, that confrontation with the world … is not the same as if the engineer, in the middle of his training at university… if at that point he is already getting wet or getting his hands dirty in a construction, improvising, living, learning how to build (inaudible), checking out his knowledge, verifying reality. So using the analogy with respect to music, it is not the same if I say 'look, the music from the Llanos is played like this' in a room and I play for you a recording, or a video, there can be good progress but it is not the same as if you go to the festival at Villavicencio and listen and see people on stage singing and playing the *cuatro*… it is another thing. Direct contact is always important, the experience of festivals, contests.

This comment brings us back to Schön's (1983) discussion regarding the issue of reflectivity within professional preparation. Concretely, I refer to his proposal of generating practical spaces, *reflective practicum* in Schon's terms, where students are exposed to the messiness and uncertainty of 'real' professional life within an academic frame where the teacher is fostering reflection based on the emergence of concrete problems and questions. In other words, intentionally incorporating the musical activities of students that take place outside of curricula is not only a matter of legitimising their personal practices, but also an opportunity to enhance real-time laboratories that promote reflective learning.

Another strategy suggested by teachers for enhancing enculturation is actual fieldwork which, in the frame of research projects, can be useful in terms of providing the desired contact with traditional contexts. Leonardo Lozano, teacher at a Conservatoire in Caracas, speaks of the benefits of these practices based on his own experience and suggests that the teacher could himself be part of the process by travelling with the student. This is an aspect which, again, connects well with Schön's ideas about reflective practicum:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: Pushing him to do field research. Showing him, perhaps travelling with him. For my fieldwork I had to go and drink *cocuy* with the musicians. I'm not a drinker, but if I did not drink or pretended to have a drink with them, they would be offended. I got there and played with them, and recorded them. And I was one of the family for a few days. Then you learn that feeling. That is a higher level in the human aspect. That's a way of feeling the music ancestrally. They know how music engages in culture. It is not a radio that's switched on. It is a human being who turns on and who is part of a cultural event.

From a more concrete perspective, travelling and accomplishing fieldwork in the regions is also necessary when it comes to understanding techniques and style. Luis Pino places emphasis on this point:

> *Luis Pino*: If a university wants to open a programme on *cuatro*, you have to do fieldwork. You have to go to the regions. Because that's *cuatro*. The technique is quickly learned, what is complicated is knowing the right hand and to make it sound really like our western Llanos region, like *joropo* in Guyana, like *Gaita Zuliana*[50], the *merengue* of Caracas, the central parranda, that's the important thing. The other things, anyone can play them. The D major chord can be played by anyone, but the rhythm… How do we do it?

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[50] *Gaita* is a style of Venezuelan folk music from Maracaibo in Zulia State.

Teachers are aware, nevertheless, of the inevitable limitations on the full deployment of these types of strategies. On the one hand, and for obvious reasons, it is not possible to reach the entire extension of the national territories. In this sense, Leonardo argues that it is necessary to provide students with the pertinent technical abilities for *cuatro* playing and to develop in them an interest in research for further autonomous initiatives:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: ... for the individual who has a modest size, to have a mastery of what happens musically throughout the country is very difficult. But at least he has the technical tools and the interest to investigate… to go out and see how things are done and to do them himself. This capacity is developed by the student.

On the other hand, this same participant is also aware of the fact that secondary enculturation will not be as deep and meaningful as a primary type of contact with original cultures. It is very important, nevertheless, to inoculate consciousness about these realities and to help students to develop sensitivity to them:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: For example, a *Velorio de Cruz*[51], where the *cuatro* takes part ... you cannot ask (the student) to feel the same as somebody who has been participating in processions since he was born, singing to a saint, you can't ask your student to feel the same way. But it is necessary that the musician who is trained in Caracas becomes aware of the importance of these things. And somehow that he feels invited to live them, to feel them. And to know that they are part of our cultural richness.

Curiously, this same participant points out the pertinence of preserving cultural diversity within our countries by using the same analogy of ecosystems that I have been using until now within the conceptual frame of this project. He states that globalisation is threatening local music ecosystems, which he refers to as 'ethno

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[51] *Velorio de Cruz* is part of the Fiesta de las Cruces ('Festival of the Crosses') or Cruz de Mayo ('May Cross'), a holiday celebrated on the 3rd of May in Venezuela.

systems', by inoculating external musical expressions that endanger the sustainability of local musical manifestations:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: So that must be protected. Because the 'ethno system' or cultural ecosystem as you call it, like any ecosystem, is vulnerable. We need to let those things live. It is just that, to allow them to have a space to continue to exist … when an external agent arrives, it introduces itself and changes the life of everything and transforms it. And it turns it into something different … We must be vigilant about globalisation. When globalisation starts changing everything into one single thing… I like diversity. The Biodiversity…. Which is so important.

From this perspective, initiatives that make traditional cultures visible within South American higher education settings, such as the one presented by this project, are necessary because they contribute to socially legitimate subaltern knowledge that has been marginalised for decades within local universities. Referring to natural ecosystems, Odum and Warett comment that high levels of diversity are important in order 'to maintain redundancy and elasticity within the ecosystem; in other words, to protect it against periods of tension (for example storms, fires, sickness or changes in temperature)' (*My translation*. Odum, 2006, p. 38). From this standpoint, I wish to argue that making traditional knowledge visible is an ecological responsibility of universities in the sense that it contributes to preserving diversity as a means for sustainability of local cultural ecosystems in a globalised world.

Students, for their part, also share teachers' perspectives in relation to the central value of relations with local cultural contexts as part of *cuatro* learning. On the one hand, several students who were not born in the Llanos region of Colombia, express a strong desire to visit those contexts because they consider it a fundamental part of their learning process. On the other hand, these learners value enormously the fact that their teachers have had the chance to immerse themselves in traditional contexts. Iván Parra, one of the students of the diploma in traditional plucked strings that is offered by Universidad Javeriana in Bogota, brings up this issue regarding the language and codes that are being used by the teacher in relation to the pedagogic process. At the same time, he values positively the fact that the diploma offers

complementary spaces in which the music literature and contextual aspects of the *cuatro* are approached (i.e. soft secondary type of enculturation):

> *Iván Parra*: (The teacher) always placed an emphasis on all the names and terms, as a dialect, as a language that exists around the instrument. And it is obviously a language that he has acquired within the fieldwork he has done for several years, going into the Llanos region, talking to farmers, seeing the sunset. As if all these seemingly extra-musical elements... I think that these things contribute to the way in which his *cuatro* sounds, and to the concern he has about the fidelity of the sound of his students, approaching as much as possible the sound of the instrument.... and not only the sound of the instrument itself, but of the context that is embedded in the instrument... the cultural context; because the *cuatro*, I believe, goes beyond the instrument itself. The *cuatro* speaks of an idiosyncrasy, a culture that we also dealt with in the diploma during the first classes. This issue also seems to me a very important aspect of the diploma: we listened to a lot of music, in preparation for that first contact with the instrument.

As we can see, students have strong intuitions regarding the value of experiencing connections between cultural and natural aspects of the original territories and music, as an essential part of *cuatro* learning. These perceptions are well in line with teachers' interest in promoting these connections, to some extent, within their classes.

Dancing

Some of the teachers report an explicit use of dance as a means by which to offer a deeper understanding of traditional music, and specifically of *joropo* music. However, although an important portion of the interviewees speak at some point about the importance of exposure to dancing as part of *cuatro* training, few of those working in academic contexts use it explicitly as a teaching strategy. One of the teachers, who does use it, states:

Isaac Tacha: But we started with dancing.... they had to learn to dance *joropo*, to develop gross motor skills, feel it. Because the other things were very simple but to reach it we had to internalise the structure, the atmosphere, the rhythm, a motivation that made it feel like *joropo*. Because perhaps teaching *joropo* in Villavicencio is different from teaching *joropo* in Bogota. But when we started the double strum (index descends – thumb descends – upper muting) ... then people began to fall too much in the *bambuco* style... Then to teach it there, it is quite different from teaching it here (in Villavicencio)... it is sustained by the way in which people have been culturally 'acclimated'.

This participant refers to an issue of musical style, pointing out that people from the central region of Colombia who are learning how to play *cuatro*, easily fall into a '*Bambuco*' style, which is a musical genre typical of the Colombian Andes and not from the Llanos region. We can see how the participant points out a musical issue (style) when speaking about the effects of the absence of contact with a wider cultural reality that in this case he intends to 'resolve' through dancing. In a similar sense, another teacher has used dancing to help students understand not only style and *sabor*, but also *joropo*'s main rhythmical structures:

Guillermo Díaz: ... I realised how necessary it was to understand dancing. Not only for *sabor* but to understand the subdivisions as well. To understand the rhythmic variations in the *cuatro* and in the *bandola*. The games between 3/4 and 4/4, 6/8 ... Transcribing the pace of zapateos ... and dividing the right foot and left foot into separate systems. And after that, putting them back together to understand the composite rhythm. It helped my students to understand. They have understood how it works rhythmically, the full range of combinations of eighth notes, starting with the feet. From the feeling of dancing.

Interestingly, this teacher uses dance in a very systematic way, transcribing rhythmic patterns and structures to help students develop a better understanding of music. At the same time, he invites them to actively dance so as to facilitate an incorporated comprehension of the different rhythms. I want to draw particular attention to this situation, in which I find a type of 'translation' that has two 'levels' to it. First, there is a translation that uses notation systematically to represent, in an abstract way, the essence of the rhythmic matrices. A second level relates to the actual experience of dancing, which is not abstract but which does imply a translation in the sense that it happens in an 'isolated' way, outside of its original context. Both strategies (notation and dancing as exercise) are signs of the influence of the rationality of the modern pedagogic paradigm expressed in abstraction (through writing) and isolation. However, at the same time, dancing is in itself a 'line of flight' or a fissure within the formal contexts where it takes place in the sense that it is not so common to dance as part of learning in higher education contexts. This does not mean that dancing *never* happens in higher education academic contexts, but, according to my experience, it is rare. As we will see with imitation, dancing here seems to occur within a border zone where certain cultural or musical elements from the original cultural context emerge but under the influence of the typical traits of the new setting, in this case, a closed systems of transmission context. At the same time, different layers of translation overlap.

Listening to music

Live Music

Generally speaking, participants also refer to listening to music as a central part of enculturation, as a means to make contact, be permeated by and be able to assimilate those aspects of *sabor* and 'feeling' that can be experienced in live music as a social practice. *Academia Llano y Joropo*, for example, enhances live music by developing a periodical music calendar that includes live concerts in which important artists of the *cuatro* scene take part. The same institution usually asks students (children and youngsters) to play with the invited artists during these concerts. In this case, music is 'lived' in the frame of a real-time experience but in a context which differs from its

original one: it takes place in another physical space, within a classroom or a small concert hall, etc.

The other institutions investigated during this project do not promote so explicitly these types of activities (i.e. visiting festivals and organising live concerts), despite the fact that the interviewees see these experiences as central to the understanding of *cuatro* music. This is due, in my opinion, to two factors: first, it is not a common practice in academic institutions such as universities to organise trips to original contexts as part of music curricula. From this perspective, the issue of enculturation could be another of the aspects of transmission that is rendered 'invisible' by formal structures, especially in higher education settings, where the rationality of the modern pedagogic paradigm usually tends to keep transmission embedded in closed settings that allow for higher levels of control over isolated knowledge. On the other hand, in some of the learning contexts that were approached, especially at universities, the teachers in charge might feel that students have taken and/or are already taking part in original musical contexts. This is the case for *ASAB*, where three students were interviewed. The three of them had an important degree of enculturation in traditional *cuatro* playing and are indeed very actively involved in the musical scene while still attending university. In this case, directives and teachers might simply not consider contact with local ecosystems to be an urgent matter, since students are already involved in an active relation with the cultural contexts.

I wish to mention a particular type of enculturation through music that I observed, which took place in the frame of a *cuatro* lesson in a music academy. A young couple had brought their daughter, aged less than one year, with them to the class session. The baby was sitting inside her chariot, playing with some *maracas* while she watched and listened to her parents who played with the rest of the group. She participated in the session by rattling the *maracas* and moving with the music while the others played the *cuatro*. She observed with full attention, absorbing everything that was taking place around her.

As will be seen in Chapter 7 in relation to imitation, recordings are a central element of *cuatro* learning. They are a source of technical, musical and expressive knowledge. All of the interviewees report using recordings at some point throughout their teaching and learning process. Most of the teachers use recordings to support their teaching. At the same time, listening to recordings is an important strategy for musical enculturation, given its corresponding positive effects on the development of *sabor* and 'style'; in fact, enculturation and acquisition of *sabor* are issues that emerge closely together throughout my analysis. Teachers invite students to listen to *cuatro* music and to explore discography through whatever medium is available:

> *Andrés*: How do you do to, let's say, 'contaminate' students with style? Besides the playing... What strategies do you use to help them to enter in the style and *sabor* of the music from the llanos?
>
> *Ricardo Zapata*: Well, you have to encourage them, motivate them to listen to the music from the llanos... today it is easy because there are many tools, there is YouTube, CDs, the discography... encourage them towards that approach to music through the experience of playing, not only of playing but also of knowing the discography, the audios, the videos and the scarce written documents that we have about this type of music.

Some of the teachers speak about recordings, especially video recordings, as a privileged way to develop a traditional musical language without having experienced the enculturation inside the traditional contexts:

> *Guillermo Díaz*:   ... it would be like a new aural tradition. A new transmission of knowledge through the audio-visual experience. Through sensorial experience, rather than a theoretical experience or from notation. For me, it is the only way to learn a folk musical language without having to be living in the original context and living with the idiosyncrasies of the llanos, for example.

It is interesting to observe that, in some cases, participants associate enculturation with cultural frames (e.g. travelling to festivals) and in others, it is connected to the musical experience itself, produced by listening and playing. A similar discussion will be initiated later on when I will refer to the issue of *sabor*. I will show that, for some participants, *sabor* and feel are aspects of music that can be transmitted by extended exposure to music while, for others, only direct and experiential contact with original contexts permits its learning.

In concluding this chapter, I wish to point out the fact that enculturation is certainly a central component of *cuatro* learning. In the frame of contexts where aural/oral learning is common (mainly open systems of transmission), it is a process that is framed by a cultural context, which relates at the same time to emotions and to the formal aspects of sound and music. In the case of closed systems of transmission, it could well be said that teachers and learners are aware of the potency of enculturation. In order to enhance it in the midst of learning processes with students who have not been exposed to the music that is performed with the *cuatro* (*joropo* music in the case of Colombia), teachers use different strategies that are intended to produce what I have referred to as 'secondary enculturation'. These strategies are related to promoting vital experiences in the original contexts, virtually establishing links between music and other cultural dimensions, and exposing students to dancing and live or recorded music.

In addition to this, although there is a manifest interest among interviewees regarding the importance of enculturation and of contact with traditional contexts, I found few explicit activities directed to propitiate this experience. I can thus conclude that, in the case of enculturation, when transmission takes place in closed systems of transmission, there seems to be a tacit interest in promoting contact with original contexts, and hence produce some type of enculturation. This interest, however, is not a permanent part of explicit strategies. I have argued that this happens because the modern pedagogic paradigm, which is in itself based on learning experiences that are disconnected from musical contexts, does not usually offer the possibility to make these types of enculturation experiences a central part of the learning process. I do not mean that these experiences do not exist at all in academic contexts, but particularly in the case of the universities that were studied, they are scarce and in any case, not central to the learning experience. As I will discuss in Chapter 11, in order to assign a

central role to enculturation at universities (in relation to traditional music), we would need an alternative paradigm to consider and build the curriculum. We would need structures that are more open in their paths and that can allow, for example, travelling throughout diverse cultural contexts as a central part of learning. In *Performing Ethnomusicology,* Vetter brings up this idea of enculturation by establishing a parallel with the learning of language, and points out the tension it generates within academic contexts[52]:

> Few would disagree with the idea that the most effective means of acquiring fluency in a language system, whether spoken or musical, is to grow up with it as your first language, and that the ideal method by which to achieve foreign language fluency is through prolonged and preferably total immersion. The more completely one is forced to operate and interact exclusively in a foreign spoken or musical language environment (that is, live that language rather than study it), the more quickly one will achieve fluency in it. Unfortunately, the structure of the academy does not allow this sort of approach to foreign language and music acquisition (Vetter, 2004, p. 119).

Secondary enculturation is also a process of translation. In this case, a learning process that occurs through everyday immersion is *translated* in several settings into a more or less artificial process of partial immersion in culture (by travelling or virtually) or in music (by playing or listening). This translation provides an answer to a tension that arises between the potency of early enculturation (as perceived by musicians and teachers) and the typical isolation of the modern pedagogic paradigm. Research into the impact of this type of translation on learning is to be further developed. What is won? What are its limits? In the case of 'virtual' enculturation, is something 'lost in translation' when the gateway to music is just sound (or just sound and image, in the case of video) and not the original cultural contexts that frame these musical practices?

To partially answer some of these questions regarding the impact of 'secondary

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[52] For a discussion regarding enculturation in relation to non-formal and formal learning contexts see: Shapiro (2011) for pop and rock music in Argentina and Kwami (1989) for traditional music in Ghana and Nigeria.

enculturation' (on place and virtual) on learning, I want to share a few ideas regarding my own experience as a *cuatro* learner who was not encultured in its original cultural frames. I can say that both experiences have been important for my process: listening permanently to music has helped me not only to understand technical and style issues, but has also led me to build musical bonds and meanings in relation to *cuatro* music. At the same time, and in the case of folk *cuatro* music, travelling to the original cultural contexts where it is produced has potentiated enormously my vital experience in relation to music. It has given me a taste of the essential connections between sound, territory and human beings that are difficult to put into words. I can only explain it by saying that travelling to these original cultural contexts has allowed me to actually experience the connecting energy between all the threads of what I like to describe as a 'vital tissue': music, plains, climate, people, rivers, trees, food, dance, drinks, ways of speaking, landscapes, stories, myths, politics, villages, and so on… Threads that can be artificially brought outside the tissue to be studied but that seem to acquire a deeper and more organic meaning when experienced from within the 'vital tissue' itself.

Chapter 7

Between aurality/orality and literacy

Andrés: Do you think there is a common way in which *cuatro* is transmitted?

Luis Pino: Yes, it is through aurality. As my mother taught me, they surely saw their grandparents, their uncles, their parents or people who were near...

Before I undertake a detailed description of the ways in which aurality/orality and literacy emerge throughout the different learning contexts, I will briefly allude to certain general aspects related to these two contrasting ways of cultural deployment and transmission that are pertinent to my research project and to the discussion of my findings.

The first thing to be said is that literacy is one of the central supporting elements of the modern enlightened paradigm which embeds the modern pedagogic paradigm to which I have been referring in this report. One could say that the key traits of modern rationality, such as objectifying and reducing reality into small components that can be studied and controlled, are in fact possible because they can actually be expressed within a certain type of 'objective' and 'abstract' language, which can be orally expressed but which is usually written. For example, in the case of music, curricula are usually organised based on elements such as knowledge or abilities that are objectified and organised throughout logical levels of development (normally from less to more complex) and expressed in written syllabuses. It is a type of language that is instrumental, abstract and rational. One could thus state that reductive-objective thinking and instrumental writing are the two sides of the same coin. This instrumental language is used to 'capture' what are considered to be the key aspects of *cuatro* learning and is mainly centred on those issues of transmission that can be objectified and fit into logical sequences. Thus, it mainly deals with aspects such as theoretical knowledge, techniques and repertoires.

As I have maintained, however, that there are other aspects of learning such as feeling and joy, or even musical style, that are not so easily 'objectified'. This means that they cannot be 'captured' by instrumental language in the form of linear, progressive objectives expressed in programmes and syllabuses. In other words, what cannot be objectified in a rational way and organised in a logical sequence, cannot be 'written' in the type of writing used for programmes and syllabuses. I have also maintained that the fact that these elements are less easily objectified tends to make them invisible and, in some cases, secondary, throughout musical instruction in academic contexts.

Something similar happens with musical notation. As a fixed form of media, music notation is an abstract representation of music and sound. As such, it can only 'capture' a portion of music, leaving out important musical aspects that are more tacit. Important questions emerged throughout my research in relation to this issue, which I will share in this chapter.

Illiteracy as a source of cultural exclusion

Discussion regarding the supremacy attributed by western cultures to literacy is a key issue when it comes to understanding the exclusion of certain types of cultures and music from formal curricula both in Europe and in its former colonies. This refers to types of music which are based on aural/oral methods of transmission, which is the case with *cuatro* learning and playing in most of the contexts that I was able to study.

It is interesting to frame this discussion in the wider context of history. Indeed, although it is very natural in our western way of understanding and relating to the world, literacy is a rather narrow paradigm of thought and expression. On the one hand, it is narrow in terms of historical chronology: 'Human society first formed itself with the aid of oral speech, becoming literate very late in its history, and at first only in certain groups. Homo sapiens have been in existence for between 30,000 and 50,000 years. The earliest script dates from only 6000 years ago' (Ong, 2002, p. 2). On the other hand, in relation to music, it is also narrow if we accept the fact that almost three quarters of music in the world is not written (Arenas, 2015).

The process of cultural exclusion deployed as a correlate to European expansion is manifold and social scientists have come up with different theories with which they

tackle this process of historical segregation. At this point, however, I intend to address concretely the issue of literacy versus orality as a source of cultural segregation.

In this sense, De Sousa (2009), among other authors, maintains that this cultural exclusion not only took place in European colonies, but also inside Europe itself where popular music, folk music, and orally transmitted cultures, were also excluded from formal curricula. A binary type of thinking enhanced by the enlightened paradigm, includes, as part of its rationality, a hierarchic distinction between orality and literacy that contributed throughout the colonial period, and even nowadays in certain circles, to the construction of an idea of an 'other' culture which was considered to be different and inferior. Illiteracy, as a result of oral traditions, was part of this binary type of thinking:

> Almost unconsciously we associate modernity with development and (oral) tradition with backwardness, civilization with progress and oral tradition with illiteracy. We move on the rational model of the Enlightenment, where binarisms and separations such as mind-body, nature-culture, and popular-scholarly appear as components of social classification that enhance a distance with the other: epistemic, social, economic (Lambuley, 2014, p. 23).

From this standpoint, writing and literacy in music represent key elements which have been used by elites in European colonies to justify the idea of progress that separates aural/oral traditions from literate ones. In this sense, while examining the relation between the power of dominant groups of societies and education, Apple (2004) reflects on the way in which the curriculum is used as a means by which to naturalise the ideology of these dominant groups among other sectors of society. Apple understands ideology as a system of 'ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitments, or values about social reality' (Apple, 2004, p. 18) that become hegemonic, precisely, throughout this process of naturalisation operated in educational contexts. In this sense, the idea of literacy has, for decades, been at the centre of a dispositif that enhances control and naturalises certain ways of teaching and learning contents; this allows the groups who have the power over writing to decide what music is to be taught, what the best techniques are, and how music is to be taught and in what

order. Indeed, this is a form of control, finally, not only over canonical decisions but also over learning experiences, attitudes and values:

> Writing, from this imaginary, is the exercise that makes it possible to sort and establish the logic that characterises the civilizational project of the elites. Writing in music allows the creation of laws and regulations, the designing of homogeneous programmes by cutting out the differences, making grammars and manuals, designing technical and instrumental patterns that regulate the conduct to be followed, that model the body and subject it to a normative discipline called 'the technique' and prescribe how the musician should behave in front of certain sonic situations (*My translation*. Arenas, 2015, p. 29).

This idea has led important portions of society throughout the modern history of western culture to naturally accept that to be able to read and write music means to be musical. Once again, and from another standpoint, Kwami (1989) brings up this idea in relation to what is considered a 'high' and a 'low' culture. This author maintains that while in African cultures every person is considered to be naturally musical: '…in the west, it appears that musical literacy – the ability to read and write music – sometimes gains one a licence to a modicum of musicality; this seems to create an artificial division between a 'high' and 'low' culture and is sometimes used to identify 'real' musicians' (Kwami, 1989, pp. 97-98).

This natural paradigm, of course, has not only been present throughout the thinking and acting of elites in European colonies, but has also permeated the thinking of led people. In fact, and paradoxically speaking, it is actually present in the imaginary of many local traditional musicians. One of the musicians interviewed for this project in Colombia, who is an academic and a researcher, reports that he once travelled to a region in the Andes of Colombia to deliver some workshops to traditional musicians who had an outstanding musical level. In a casual conversation, the participants expressed that they were happy to have a 'real' musician visiting them: according to their own ideas, they were not 'real musicians' because they were not able to read and write music. I have experienced similar situations myself while speaking to empirical musicians in my country.

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This naturally accepted centrality of writing and music notation in western culture is a key aspect of understanding several of the tensions which emerged throughout this project, in literature, within background research and in fieldwork.

Orality as a view of the world

Several authors agree that orality is much more than an absence of writing. Its intrinsic nature implies alternative ways of thinking, building social relations and meanings, keeping a record of tradition and relating to reality (Ong, 2002). In this sense, some authors understand orality as 'an epistemology, an explaining force of life' (Lambuley, 2014).

From a musicological stance, some authors, such as Blacking (2006) and Shepherd (1981), maintain that musical styles and structures express an inherent social significance that is determined by the situated cultural realities embedded within these musical practices (Shepherd, 1981, p. 115). In a similar sense, I want to pinpoint the fact that the 'ways of learning' music which I am examining throughout this research are in themselves 'signs of' or 'windows into' worlds of cultural significance that constitute contrasting ways of seeing and relating to reality. Hence, to some extent, incorporating these ways of transmission into academic contexts is not only a matter of enriching pedagogy, for example, with aural/oral components in terms of methodologies and teaching strategies; indeed, it is also an opportunity to broaden our views of the world and to enrich our relation with reality.

I will begin this section by briefly discussing some of the issues that characterise orality. However, before starting, I wish to comment on the fact that an important portion of the learning experiences observed throughout my study took place in musically aural/oral contexts, where there is a very scarce presence of writing 'about' music (e.g. theory) and writing 'representing' music (i.e. notation). Furthermore, this type of aural/oral transmission is also very present in the frame of academic contexts where the use of notation is common, as in academies and universities. As will be shown, *cuatro* music seems to 'resist' being written. This overlapping presence of orality is an emergent aspect of *cuatro* learning that I intend to discuss in this section.

In the first place, and because of its very nature, orality implies a type of knowledge that is produced and re-signified with a permanent proximity to reality. In

the absence of a written language that supports elaborate analytic categories, orality relies on 'close reference to the human life world, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings' (Ong, 2002, p. 42). This situation explains the actual absence of the use of musical abstract categories in contexts where music is transmitted orally and where there is a very rare use of writing related to music. For example, it is rare to find musicians who have been trained through aural/oral means referring to harmonic systems and codes, even if they are able to play complex harmonic structures. In some cases, not even the names of the chords are used. In the same sense, sound and music are not lived through abstract categories, as can happen in academic contexts, for example in the frame of theory courses. Music is rather enacted in specific situated contexts and is related not only with sound but also with gestures, body expressions and with the human, existential setting in which musicking takes place.

In tune with the preceding ideas, aural learning is also related to a close and intimate experience of the 'object' that is being learned. This central aspect of learning contrasts with the personal distancing that appears between the knower and the known in learning contexts where there is a recurrent mediation of notation or of writing (Ong, 2002). Writing and notation contribute to constructing the notion of music as an objective reality that is outside that of the learner. As discussed earlier, this objectifying of music, which is typical of the modern pedagogic paradigm, is very powerful because it allows us to control and organise knowledge with pedagogic purposes. On the other hand, however, it might also render invisible certain aspects of the musical experience that are not easily objectified in the same instrumental way (e.g. style, celebration of music, bliss, etc.).

In this frame of ideas, learning happens more through 'apprenticeship' than through 'study'. Ong comments that people who are immersed in oral contexts (in this case in aural musical contexts) 'learn a great deal and possess and practice great wisdom, but they do not 'study'. They learn by apprenticeship... by listening, by repeating what they hear...' (Ong, 2002, p. 8). In the case of the *cuatro*, this apprenticeship usually finds its fuel and source of motivation in the act of playing – by ear – at social gatherings, festivals, and contests. Interestingly, some authors find that this type of performance, based upon spontaneous playing and without the support of notation, is in fact an outset of aural transmission which, on many occasions, is missing

as a product of academic training. In this vein, Eliécer Arenas states that there is empirical evidence which shows that aural learning is a type of learning that 'makes a difference in terms of the type of skills required in the various practices where the literate - enlightened - theorist musician usually appears to be, paradoxically, limited in terms of resources' (Arenas, 2015, p. 7). Indeed, I can bring up evidence myself of this situation based upon the difficulties I have encountered when actively participating and playing music by ear with other musicians and *cuatro* players during this research. In a certain way, it has meant for me not only the development of a specific ability (to play by ear) but also a shift in my relation to music that has led me to free something inside and to let myself be guided by the flow and joy of the moment when musicking with others[53]. These were not necessarily the types of situations and experiences toward which I was normally driven throughout my learning process as a classical guitar player in formal contexts.

Imitation

One of the most prominent ways of *cuatro* learning across the learning contexts that were studied is, without doubt, the use of imitation as a central method of transmission. As I already mentioned, even in academic contexts such as universities, the teaching and learning of the instrument relies very little on notation and mainly on imitation. *Cuatro* music is still very scarcely written, due very probably in part to the complexity of its right-hand technique. It is actually an instrument that, for decades (perhaps centuries), has been learned through aural means in traditional contexts.

Imitation, of course, is a type of learning that is present in traditional types of knowledge transmission, not only of music, across cultures. As we have seen, when there is an absence of literacy, learning is usually related to 'achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known 'getting with it'' (Havelock in Ong, 2002, pp. 145-6). This type of learning would contrast with the type of transmission that is mediated by writing, which brings up a certain type of 'objectivity', 'in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing' (Ong, 2002, p. 45). This strong reliance on the direct experience of what is being learned implies the development of

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[53] For a similar discussion regarding the role of playing by ear and aural transmission of traditional music in formal settings in Africa see Kwami (1989).

a tacit type of knowledge. This is knowledge which is not easily verbalised because it has to do with a complex set of relations that integrate into real-time technical, musical and emotional elements that acquire sense *precisely* when they are put together into action. In other words, 'the creative energy or spirit embedded in tacit knowledge can only be caught and not taught' (Polanyi, in Smilde, 2005, p. 68). Tacit knowledge, of course, is not just present in oral contexts: its modelling can be found both in informal and in formal contexts, even in those where notation plays a central role (e.g. universities). The performance of the teacher or of the musician, who plays the role of modelling knowledge, continues to be a central issue for the transmission of tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is incorporated into the body, which is the immediate and inevitable media for transmission of this type of knowledge, since we 'incorporate it in our body – or extend our body to include it – so that we come to dwell on it' (Smilde, 2005, p. 16).

I will now describe the types of imitation that were found in the different contexts, and will try to show how it happens, what contents it usually mediates, and what the types of referents or models for imitation are. I will also show how the process of imitation is translated when it takes place in closed systems of transmission contexts.

Imitation in Open Systems of Transmission: Composing a jigsaw puzzle that is never finished

As mentioned earlier, learning in open systems of transmission is rhizomatic, in the sense that each learner builds his or her own path, usually moved by personal drive or necessity. Within this path musicians are, through imitation, continuously building by chunks parts of a jigsaw puzzle (musicianship) that is never completed; indeed, this is because the drive to learn new techniques, musical styles and languages, never stops.

Imitation as a holistic process

Learning by imitation in open systems of transmission is not linear, it is random and it is, by nature, profoundly diverse since there are as many learning paths with imitation at their centre as *cuatro* musicians exist. This is so because personal drives are

different, but also, and even though some common places can be found, because the learning models that are available (family, friends, peers) offer a diverse variety of ways of playing, use of techniques, musical interests and affinity with genres and sub genres that are copied by learners at different points of their paths.

Cuatro musicians who start learning within open systems usually do so by imitating a member of the family, a neighbour or a close friend. This first approach to the instrument is normally based on the learning of a few chords (no melodic playing yet). This is so because the *cuatro*'s most common role is to accompany singing. In some cases, there is also some modelling of the strumming with the right hand which, as mentioned earlier, is perhaps the most defying technical aspect of *cuatro* playing. These are the first 'chunks' of learning that will set the basis for the development of further musicianship and mastery of the instrument.

An individual process of learning develops following this initial contact. The additional inputs that this process will generate will be very varied and in line with the personal interests and quests of the musicians. These inputs will also come from a variety of sources scattered across the learning ecosystems to which I referred in the previous chapter. Frequently, there is some type of sudden sparkle that ignites a desire to learn something new. Camilo Guerrero narrates the drive he had to visit an old musician of his city after having been deeply struck by the soloist type of playing of one of his friends:

> *Camilo Guerrero*: Then I saw a guy playing *Fiesta en Elorza*[54], and I said 'hey, show me that, I have to know that'. So I went to visit a teacher named Marcos Parales here in Arauca. And I said, 'Sir, how is it that they do that?' He taught me something about diminished chords, which is an easy way to move up and down on the *cuatro*. One can replace a natural chord with a diminished one in the *cuatro* and I don't know why, but it sounds well, it works...

Incorporating 'new chunks' of knowledge will sometimes be articulated through personal processes of self-directed learning that intentionally use new knowledge in

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[54] *Fiesta en Elorza* is a song composed by Venezuelan Eneas Perdomo.

more or less systematic ways. The following testimony offers an example of how these inputs are looked for and the type of contexts where they can be found:

> *Camilo Guerrero*: … once with a teacher named Angoleta … We were one day in a *parrando*, I went and told him 'Sir, I want to learn how to play *Los diamantes*[55]' which is a rhythm of *música llanera* … it has a harmonic circle that goes almost through the whole scale … it moves from the sixth grade to the first, using dominants. Almost the entire scale. So I told myself: 'if I learn *Los diamantes*, in all the keys … I would actually get to know the *cuatro* almost completely'. In relation to harmony … and so he taught me *Los diamantes* in D major, as it goes for accompanying the *harp*. I remember that there was a song by composer Rummy Olivo called *Ojos color de los pozos*. It uses the same harmony as *Los diamantes*, and I liked that song; well, the teacher taught it to me and then I transposed it to the other tones. So I started having a broader knowledge.

As seen in these two examples, in some cases imitating other musicians will provide knowledge that is radically new. In other cases, it will rather offer inputs that complement musicians' knowledge, or that offer them clues to set up 'adjustments' to specific techniques. Some of these portions of knowledge are actually understood as 'secrets' that are preserved more or less hermetically by musicians. Frequently, and according to my experience, especially regarding issues with the right hand, these 'secrets' can only be absorbed through face-to-face contact with a musician who can demonstrate them. As will be seen further on, however, inputs of new knowledge will come not only from face-to-face experiences, but also from audio and video recordings.

Holistic experience also has to do with experimentation. The following narration offers an interesting example of the way in which chunks of knowledge, which are gradually discovered, begin technical development:

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[55] *Diamantes* is a traditional *golpe* from the llanos region. It has the same harmony as a famous piece of music with the same name, composed by Venezuelan Ignacio 'Indio' Figueredo.

Julián Crosswaithe: At that time you didn't have the access to the internet that there is today. We shared music tapes between musicians, one begins to make bonds with other musicians. 'Listen to this tape of Cheo Hurtado' … To me, Cheo Hurtado is like the father of this type of style. 'Listen to this tape of Cheo Hurtado' … I would listen to it and I couldn't copy anything at all, I did not have the capacity, I felt frustrated. Later on, one recognises a *floreo* that one knows, which Cheo plays on the recording. You go and listen to it and you imitate it. Then one begins to perfect the technique because you realise that it sounds differently from how you play it, you realise that you need more strength in the *cacheteo*[56] … training is constant … all the time, because one has personal techniques … because when one begins to play by oneself, the technique is built by oneself, one seeks the way to produce a sound that is as similar as possible to…

This type of learning, reported by Green (2012) as typical of informal transmission, tends to happen in non-linear ways: it rather develops from the parts to the whole and from the whole to the parts without a logical sequence to it. Imitation procedures are random and structure themselves according to musicians' necessities. One common element seems to appear, however, between this diversity of learning procedures: desire. The desire to solve a technical issue, for example, is usually ignited by the desire to be able to play a certain type of music or song, or to play like a musician who one admires. This situation contrasts with a common practice in closed systems of transmission were we frequently find a vast repertoire of techniques 'that should be learned in case they are needed'. In this type of systematic practice, technique is approached in a rather 'neutral' way and the emotional drive to practice it, according to my personal experience, is sometimes diluted. This apparent 'neutrality' of knowledge that is susceptible to being applied in a more or less 'universal' musical context, is another trait of the modern pedagogic paradigm that characterises the closed systems of transmission that I have studied throughout this project. Some of its limits, in the case of *cuatro* learning in institutional contexts, will be exposed further on.

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[56] *Cacheteo* is a downward strum which implies a whip-type of attack on the strings.

At this point, it is important to discuss an issue which complements the description I have just presented regarding the general aspects of imitation in open systems of transmission contexts: playing with others is central to *cuatro* learning (in all contexts). Making music with others at social gatherings, festivals or in a family setting is constantly alluded to and is often reported as the moment in which learning acquires its true meaning. But playing 'with others' can also happen virtually, when playing on top of a CD recording, a YouTube video or a radio station. While playing, musicians are watching and listening to what other musicians do, their style, techniques and expression. Imitation is then taking place in 'real time' and tacit knowledge is being delivered as part of the energy that is shared in the act of musicking. I will refer to the experience of 'playing with others' in more detail in Chapter 8.

Face-to-face imitation

Face-to-face imitation in open systems of transmission happens 'in the moment', when no recording device is available; it implies a particular state of awareness to be able to 'grasp' what another musician is doing. It can happen during a public performance or while playing together in a 'domestic' situation. The learner may or may not have a *cuatro* available to try out what he or she has just seen in his or her own instrument. Very usually he or she must wait until he or she returns home and then try to reproduce by heart what he or she saw and listened to. In these types of situations, imitation is unstructured. The learner might be looking at a specific technical issue, for example, and concentrate on how the advanced musician executes it; alternatively he or she might just be there 'watching', letting him or herself be permeated by the sound and the gestures of the performance. Most of the musicians who were musically raised in this type of context are not able to explain in detail how they learned. The most common answer is: 'I watched and I learned'.

On the other hand, copying music in real-time situation implies the development of a particular type of fast, concentrated, intense observation, especially when recording devices are not available to register the actual performance that is taking place. This sharp sense of observation is, at the same time, an inevitable tool for

learning: once the moment of performance is gone, the possibility to acquire new knowledge is gone as well.

In some cases, explanations are used as a subsidiary complement to imitation. In other cases, they are simply absent. Juan Carlos Contreras refers to this type of imitation while learning traditional music with old folks in the Llanos region, pointing out that there is usually an absence of words and explanations:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: Because, obviously, traditional musicians from the Llanos don't have a methodology nor do they know how to teach … and you almost never have a teacher who sits down with you and says 'hey, this is done like this' or 'put your finger here…' almost everything has to do with watching … what one can grab there, what one can see, so you start to learn how to … develop that sense of watching and playing. That was like the way I learned. Very few told me 'you have to do this', 'the *floreo* is like this', 'this is called *cacheteo*', 'this is called *floreo*'.

At this point I wish to share another moving testimony, this time coming from another context in Colombia. Victor Banguera, a musician from the Pacific Coast tells of how he learned to play by secretly watching some of his family members play at home:

> I hid under the house, I made a hole in the floor and I looked through it: how the *bombo*[57] was played, the marimba, how women played the *guasás*[58] and everything, and there I learned: watching and then practicing (Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 3).

Directly derived from copying is, of course, the development of the ability to *play by ear*; this means being able to reproduce music that has been aurally learned. Most *cuatro* playing, including at universities, involves performing music by ear. In line with this, besides the ability to copy and play by ear, another important aspect of imitation is *intuition*. On the one hand, intuition works as a tool for learning. Here, I

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[57] The *bombo* is a traditional bass drum typical of the Pacific coast of Colombia.
[58] *Guasá* is a seed instrument, typical of the Pacific coast of Colombia.

refer to an instinct or innate sense for resolving a technical problem, for example, without having access to specific instructions or recommendations about how to do it. When asked if somebody had taught him how to perform *floreos* or *repiques*, a technical gesture of the right hand that embellishes strumming, Camilo Guerrero states:

> *Camilo Guerrero*: No. It was by listening how they did it and through intuition ... I played it based on what I had heard but I never had someone tell me how to produce a *repique*.

In the same vein, an important ability that is developed through imitation and is very present in playing by ear is *harmonic intuition*. This is the innate ability to 'sense' or 'predict' the correct chord or harmony that will come in the instant immediately before it happens. More often than not, I was very surprised by the amazing capacity of *cuatro* musicians to perform complex accompaniments in real time. In one of my diary entries which I logged while taking part as a student in a diploma in traditional plucked string instruments from Colombia, I write:

> *Andrés*: We made a review of part B of the waltz that we are learning. Juan Carlos (The teacher) tries to find the chords and asks us to play the section once so he can remember the harmony. He manages to accompany the section until the end without mistakes. Interestingly, playing at the same time with the melody allows JC to remember the accompaniment. It is as if his harmonic memory was activated by the process of making music, of accompanying while listening to the melody.

Depending on the type of musical and learning experiences of musicians, they will have a corresponding harmonic map in their heads which is more or less conscious and which can be 'translated' to formal codes with more or less ease and punctuality according to each player's personal training in theoretical aspects of music. However, judging from my observations, I can state that a rich exposure to this type of intellectual training does not necessarily signify a higher or more complex level of practical ability regarding real-time harmonisation.

Face-to-face imitation in open transmission contexts very rarely includes notation, especially when it takes place in family contexts and with young learners[59]. Very often, it also fails to include the use of names of notes and chords. I did find, however, an interesting alternative to the use of chord names and notation. In many contexts, and especially in the countryside, musicians use everyday life images (e.g. from nature) to 'name' certain *cuatro* chords. These images can be of common use in some regions or simply 'emerge' according to the necessity of naming things:

> *John Jairo Torres*: In the savannah one bothers with the notes when one goes to a note but doesn't know its name, so one associates it with an animal. They would tell me 'play a *pata 'e grillo*' (cricket´s leg). The *pata 'e grillo* (he demonstrates an A7 chord and then a diminished chord in the same position) and so you learned and everything was laugh and joke ...

The following are some other chord names based on images of nature: 'el cangrejo' (*the crab*), 'la cola 'e mico' (*monkey's tail*), 'la Huella 'e perro' (*dog's footprint*), 'pateperro' (*dog's leg*), 'peine' (*comb*), and 'pategarza' (*heron's leg*). This common use of everyday life images coincides with Ong's reflection regarding conceptualisation and verbalisation in oral cultures:

> In the absence of elaborate analytic categories that depend on writing to structure knowledge at a distance from lived experience, oral cultures must conceptualize and verbalize all their knowledge with more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings (Ong, 2002, p. 42).

Interestingly, I find that the use of this type of everyday image can certainly serve as a pertinent and attractive tool when it comes to working with children who are learning the *cuatro*. It is not only useful as a tool for communicating, but is also an interesting source for creative explorations related to instrumental and musical language.

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[59] For a discussion regarding the role of notation in domestic environments where the learning of plucked string instruments from the Andes region in Colombia takes place, see León (2015, p. 105).

Copying recordings by ear

The use of recordings is a crossover issue of *cuatro* learning. It is, in fact, a very recurrent learning strategy and practice among popular and traditional musicians in many cultures[60]. In the case of *cuatro* learning, it is occasionally part of learning experiences in open systems of transmission, but can also take place, as will be seen further on, in the frame of closed transmission processes that are more structured and intentional. In this section, I will concentrate on the way in which imitation or copying recordings occur when framed in open transmission contexts of *cuatro* learning.

There are two important advantages of recordings. In the first place, they can help us to 'bring back home' a performance model, for example from a concert, in order to 'study' it at ease. Secondly, they offer us the chance to manipulate the musical source with a learning intention, especially with the help of new technological devices. As will be shown in more detail, this implies isolating elements (sections, instruments, etc.), repeating them, and slowing down the tempo, among other actions. This type of manipulation is found when copying recordings both in open and closed systems.

Contexts for Copying Recordings

Cuatro learning from recordings is usually an important component of self-directed processes. At the same time, it emerges in connection with different types of learning contexts. For example, it can occur when working with the recording of a previous moment in which an experienced musician showed something to the learner or from the recording of a concert in which the learner took part as an audience member. Juan Carlos Contreras tells of his experiences when travelling across the Llanos region. He always took his recording machine with him in case he needed to record any important musical referent:

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[60] For a discussion regarding the use of recordings for learning in other musical contexts see: For United Kingdom (Finnegan, 2007, p. 251; Green, 2008, pp. 60-76). For Ireland (Downey, 2009, p. 52). For Argentina (Shapiro, 2011, pp. 65, 71, 85, 105, 110, 114). For Colombia (Vidal & Tobón, 2015, p. 7; León, 2015, p. 7; Lambuley, 2008, p. 71; Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 6).

Juan Carlos Contreras: Many years later, like four or five years later, I returned there with some friends... to the farm of Pedro Flórez and I was privileged to learn all the old, traditional *golpes.* I always carried a tape recorder, and with that recorder I ... because at that time there was still no internet or cell phones or video cameras or anything like that, I was always recording ... then I listened to it and reproduced it but in my own way.

In other cases, recordings are the best way to prepare for a gig, where musicians will be performing music that is unknown to them. The following testimony from Hildo Aguirre, who is a *harp* and *cuatro* player, offers a good example of this type of situation. As can be noted, playing by ear is once again the main media for learning and the process implies the memorisation of an enormous amount of music. In a later section, I will refer in more detail to the issue of memory in relation to ear playing and imitation:

Hildo Aguirre: In my case, when I played in places where they had weekend shows... every weekend they had a different singer as a guest: this week it would be Aries Vigoth, the next one it would be the Cholo Valderrama, Juan Farfán, Dumar Aljure. I would get my LPS. I would listen to them... and by the weekend I would have learned 20 or 25 songs. All by ear...

As stated earlier in Chapter 6 regarding enculturation, several participants report having been raised up in a rich musical environment at home. Musical instruments and recordings were part of everyday life, both as objects (e.g. a *cuatro* hanging on the wall or an available collection of LPs) and as music that impregnated homes' environments. In family contexts, recordings frequently work as an integrator element between enculturation and learning from a family member. In the following segments, Julián Crosswaithe tells us how he used to work with records that were available as objects in his home setting. Further on, he tells us how he used one of those same records as part of a more intentional learning process with his father:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: I would choose tunes that I found in my grandparents' old records. I started my training on the *cuatro*, which they had offered me as a gift. There was this record... and my dad asked me to check out a song ... we started to work on it, I started working on it, almost 15 days trying...

This use of recordings, framed in a father-to-son transmission process, probably involved moments where both of them sat down to listen to the recording in order to copy it while developing some type of analysis of its components. This means that imitation processes from recordings can take place individually or collectively. The following example lets us see once again a collective process of copying, this time between peers. It is more explicit in terms of the level of analysis that it involves:

> *Luis Carvajal*: We began to see that the *cuatro* played the accompaniment but according to what the *harp* played, there were moments when I had to do something on the *cuatro*. Not all the time ... this issue has already been studied, but at that time it was almost a contest to see who would put in the biggest number of things. *Floreos* everywhere.... but everything has its place and we analysed that a lot with Abdul (Farfán). Where there is room, the *cuatro* comes in, because *cuatro* is for accompaniment, the major instrument is the *harp*.

Copying recordings sometimes involves the development of very fine abilities, for example the capacity to recognise subtle differences between tunings:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: I would find the key and say 'ah... ok, this is on this key'... at that time recordings would be on tape, sometimes it came not on 440 (Hz for the A) but on 443 or 438, so you would have to bring up or down the tuning of the *cuatro* slightly ... all this was so tentative (points to his ear) but one was getting trained, getting trained.... because afterwards you just say 'ah, this is too low, or this is too high...'.

In self-directed learning experiences, some musicians report using recordings in a more sophisticated way by, for example, employing *pro tools* software to mute

channels in order to listen more attentively to a specific instrument or to be able to play with the whole ensemble in a 'minus –one' type of experience.

Before moving on to the relation between music styles and the exercise of copying recordings, I wish to mention that, in several testimonies I could sense high levels of motivation in connection with this exercise of imitation. This motivation was expressed in the important amounts of time that were invested in the process and in the ways participants related to the recordings, sometimes almost intimately:

Nelson González: I had a cassette player... and I slept with it every night ... I listened and listened to cassettes of x music ... I slept with that ... I would play it back and put the speaker right here (near to the ear), listening to the *cuatro*, listening to every detail and I would learn it...

This same musician, who was a former student of famous *cuatro* player Cheo Hurtado, admits that he did not actually receive private lessons from his teacher. He simply met with him occasionally. His real teacher, in his own words, was the recorded music: 'My real teacher was the CD'.

The autonomy that is offered by recordings as a learning tool is without doubt one of its richest attributes. This autonomy is expressed in terms of selection of repertoire, learning rhythm and free manipulation of the musical material (fragmenting, repeating, etc.). I have myself experienced this usefulness of recordings as a *guitar* and *cuatro* learner. I have also gone through those sudden emotional drives to learn a particular song or technique; indeed, these have led me to spend hours and hours surfing through YouTube, and watching videos that can help me resolve the problem at hand.

Music Styles and Recordings

Copying recordings enhances learning of the *cuatro*; not only the learning of techniques and repertoires, but also of its particular styles and of its expressive traits. These styles are often associated with specific musicians or musical groups who have developed a particular approach to *cuatro* playing. In some cases, certain recordings might even become iconic pieces or obligatory references for *cuatro* learning:

> *Luis Pino*: For my style of playing, for example, the recording *Compadre Pancho*
> (by Cheo Hurtado) is like the bible of *cuatro*. I mean, if you want to play
> that style and do not know that music, I will offer it to you as a gift. And
> we will meet again in six months. It's that simple.

As can be seen, the actual exercise which Luis Pino invites *cuatro* players to undertake is to learn *by heart* the complete recording before even starting to attempt to develop a certain style. The object 'recording', in this case, replaces the object 'music score' that sometimes serves as the central support for formal learning. This, of course, has important effects. An example of such an effect is the fact that the actual object acquires a *concrete sound*; it is no longer a Beethoven's piano sonata which is the object of study (as an abstract object represented in a music score), but the way it sounds when performed by a specific performer. In the case of Cheo Hurtado's CD, what is at stake is, on the one hand, his approach to playing covers in terms of style (combining melody, chords and right-hand effects) and, on the other, his particular sound or *sabor*. From this standpoint, the best way to make contact with *sabor*, when cultural contexts are not available, is music itself. Notation by itself cannot transmit the intrinsic qualities of expression and *sabor* which can only be found in a particular performer's way of playing that music; indeed, this creates an insoluble unity with the intersonic properties of music. Small expresses it in the following way:

> There is no such thing as music. Music is not a thing at all but an activity,
> something that people do. The apparent thing of 'music' is a figment, an
> abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at all
> closely (Small, 1998, p. 2).

Further on, I will discuss the fact that, in some cases, the centrality of the written object (i.e. music score) as a result of the literate paradigm of the modern pedagogic paradigm, what Said (in Ochoa, 2016) calls 'textualism', can be at the base of the invisibility of essential contents of *cuatro* learning; indeed, examples of this include *sabor* or 'style' in closed systems of transmission. For the time being, I wish to argue that the use of recordings for learning (which replace, in many cases, the actual

writing of music) implies not only a pertinent tool when working with people who are musically illiterate. Indeed, it also signifies an essential support for a particular way of transmission (i.e. through imitation) which permits a close engagement with music at a level that enriches learning because of its potential to produce exposure to aspects of performance that are usually absent or limited in music notation. It is interesting to observe that the potential of multimedia support is valued in other fields of knowledge as well. For example, and from a very different standpoint, Whitehead (2004) refers to the actual 'epistemological significance' of narratives that are delivered through videos instead of traditional propositional narratives as part of self-study projects. In this case, Whitehead accepts the pertinence of this type of media to 'communicate meanings of embodied expressions of energy-flowing ontological values' (Whitehead, 2004, pp. 204-205). It thus seems that the limits of written support, when we come to deal with aspects of human experience that are not easily verbalised or fixed in systematic or instrumental language, are shared across different domains of knowledge.

Models for imitation: Family, friends and advanced players as models for learning

After having approached the ways and contexts in which imitation occurs in open systems of transmission of *cuatro* learning and the main contents which make up this learning, I will now describe the types of referents or models for imitation that emerge across these types of settings. In this respect, and as mentioned earlier, *cuatro* learning contrasts with Green's (2008) findings regarding how popular musicians learn in the United Kingdom, where transmission is strongly embedded in peer contexts[61]. In the case of *cuatro* learning, as in many other traditional contexts, learning can also involve peer learning, but it is centrally embedded in active communities of practice where the model of advanced players, mainly adults, is determined. These adult models can be family members, advanced players of the community or high prestige performers who can be available as a music source in live situations (e.g. in concerts or in casual teaching sessions) or in recordings.

Most of the testimonies that were gathered refer to family members as important referents for *cuatro* learning, especially at initial stages: parents, brothers

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[61] For examples of peer learning in pop music in Argentina see Shapiro (2011, pp. 85-86, 113-114).

and sisters, uncles, godfathers, cousins. The list of family models for learning is varied and can be extended to also include neighbours, friends, and boyfriends. This diversity of close referents tells us something about the way in which the *cuatro* is embedded in the affective environment of learners and is surely a component that enhances enculturation and transmission.

Several authors who have discussed the issue in research reports and in academic events bring up the centrality of family members as referents for learning traditional music in Colombia[62]. Convers and Ochoa (2009) conduct a study regarding ways of learning marimba music on the Colombian Pacific Coast, and also class close relatives as models for musical and cultural transmission. As discussed earlier, the process of learning is sometimes so natural and embedded in everyday life that it is not seen as such:

> Despite the fact that they do not consider these experiences as part of learning, most of the interviewed musicians describe how their father, their grandfather, their mother, or some other close relative 'showed' them how to play, taught them how to dance, encouraged them to sing or led them to participate in rituals where music was an important part (My translation. Convers & Ochoa, 2009, p. 3).

Generally speaking, the model for learning is one of the parents, normally the father. This is at the base of another common fact emerging from testimonies: families can act as actual 'lines of transmission' of music and *cuatro* across several generations. One of the elder musicians interviewed makes a comment in relation to a certain musical knowledge: 'my father once told me that my grandfather told him that my father's great grandfather told him that…'. In fact, continuing with the musical tradition of a certain family's 'linage' is seen by some musicians as a means to honour those who preceded them. In the same sense, parents will often feel proud of their children when they carry on their musical legacy. I will return to the idea of aural/oral

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[62] For a discussion regarding family as a model for learning in other traditional music contexts in Colombia see: Vidal & Tobón (2015, pp. 6-7), León (2015, pp. 103, 105, 106), Vidal et al. (2014, p. 41), Betancur (2015, p. 157), and Mora (2015, p. 163).

preservation of knowledge among social groups in the following section, where I will discuss the issue of memory in open transmission contexts.

If the musical model is not a close relative or a friend, it might be an advanced player from the community or a famous musician whose playing is witnessed by the learner at social gatherings, in rural settings, or at festivals, parties, concerts or recordings. This could also take place during an informal apprenticeship process[63]. Such a process might involve passive observation by the learner or active participation in musicking with advanced players from the local context or with other musicians and groups.

I frequently found situations in which overlaps occurred between family models and advanced players with a certain degree of recognition in the scene. Guillermo Díaz, a young musician from Bogotá, speaks about his admiration when listening to a tape in which his father (famous Colombian *cuatro* player Beco Diaz) plays the *cuatro* with a number of other important local artists. Some of the original pieces included in this recording had been composed by one of Guillermo's cousins:

> *Guillermo Díaz*: One of the tapes I liked the most, which my dad had given me, was *Ensemble Cimarron*. The group at that time was integrated by Ricardo Zapata on the *bass*, Carlos 'Cuco' Rojas on the *harp* and conduction, my dad on the *cuatro*, William León on *maracas* and the singers were Javier Manchego, Raúl González and Elda Flórez. There were some tunes by Cachi Ortegón, who is my cousin... so it was nice to see that there was a legal, white record, with a cover and which had national distribution, where my dad had participated and in which several tunes had been composed by a cousin.

It is interesting to note that the process of imitation based on advanced players, their recordings and their live performances, is also connected to 'lines of transmission'. Venezuelan *cuatro* player Cheo Hurtado, who was mentioned above as a model for several outstanding *cuatro* players in Venezuela and Colombia who have

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[63] For other experiences of apprenticeship in music see: In Africa (Kwami, 1989, pp. 88,98), in Ireland Downey (2009, p. 50).

copied his playing style, mentions his own musical model (who was also a close relative):

> *Cheo Hurtado:* The reference for the style in which I play is Hernán Gamboa, no doubt. He's my godfather... at the baptismal font. Godfather. His father was buddy of my dad. *Compadres*. His dad's name was Carmito Gamboa.

As mentioned in Chapter 3 while referring to the historical aspects of the *cuatro*, Hernán Gamboa appears in several testimonies, to be the precursor of a particular style of playing the *cuatro* that blends melody, harmony and rhythm and which is at the base of the development of the *cuatro* as a soloist instrument. Cheo Hurtado developed this playing technique even further by broadening the technical and musical possibilities of the style. Another of the musicians whom I interviewed was Luis Pino, a direct student of Cheo Hurtado. Indeed, Luis Pino, in turn, has his own students and followers… and so on.

Another 'line of transmission' starts with Freddy Reina, who was also mentioned in the historical chapter of this report. Reina has started a very different school based on the type of finger picking that is typically used with the *classical guitar*. While keeping an active interest in traditional music, Reina and his followers also explore other repertoires, such as ancient music. The use of notation, as will be seen, is much more recurrent among this group of players. Leonardo Lozano, another of my interviewees, plays in the style of Reina, and he also has his own students who are inheriting this type of playing.

These transmission lines have been developing further over the years, both in Colombia and in Venezuela. However, these two styles only relate to the *cuatro* as a solo instrument. This is because, in relation to traditional playing – which happens mainly in ensembles – the lines of transmission are almost infinitely diverse, and each local cultural context has its own playing tradition (that includes particular styles and techniques), which can be very different from the playing styles found in other regions. This issue will be further discussed when I refer to the diversity of techniques and styles in *cuatro* transmission in Chapter 10. In this sense, the question which I will tackle is the following: Is there such thing as a '*cuatro* technique and playing style' or

shall we rather speak of a 'plurality of techniques and styles' as a basis for a formal programme of the *cuatro*?

In any case, the fact that there is a very scarce body of written material available in relation to these musical styles, especially for the most traditional ones, implies that musicians should inevitably rely on aural/oral models (face-to-face or in recordings) for learning. Learning from this 'aural/oral sources' is seen by several colleagues as a means to enrich one's own process as a musician but also as an important way to preserve the diversity of musical traditions. From another standpoint, referring to learning processes in the plucked strings tradition of the Andes region in Colombia, Vidal and Tobón state:

> We used to imitate them... 'Let's play like Ernesto 'el pato' Sánchez', and that meant we had to play with chords. 'Now we will play as Diego Estrada' ... And that is perhaps what is missing, because behind these imitations you learned what each of these performers hid in his execution: a tapestry that had been weaved throughout history. We should discuss this issue, because it is from there that homogenisation can be neutralised (My translation. Vidal & Tobón, 2015, p. 171).

Finally, and in addition to family, friends and advanced players as models, peer learning is also found in *cuatro* learning, though with less intensity. Some musicians report experiences in which practice took place with brothers or friends with a similar level of development. At this point I can speak of my own experience learning the *cuatro*, which has included practice with other colleagues of a similar level to me, with whom I have shared questions and discoveries related to *cuatro* techniques and music. These types of sessions with peers can be very rich in terms of exploration and are frequently impregnated with a particular sense of freedom, confidence and shared enthusiasm.

Memory: the body as canvas of knowledge and tradition

To conclude this section regarding imitation in open systems of transmission contexts of *cuatro* learning, I will take some space to deal with the issue of memory, as a central

issue related to learning through imitation. I will refer to memory as an ability but also as a resource for the preservation of knowledge, especially among traditional cultural contexts where music literacy and recording technology are rare.

Willems (in Shapiro, 2011) suggests that musical memory is related to four other types of memories: physiological or muscular, affective, melodic and mental. These types of memories will then be synthesised in a fifth type of memory: intuitive memory. 'When all these memories have been worked, they can be 'forgotten' within the synthesis of intuitive or expressive memory, in the act of making music' (Shapiro, 2011, p. 88). These memories are usually 'worked' all together at the same time during the process of learning. In academic contexts, these memories can sometimes be approached separately. An example of this would be playing a certain fragment while concentrating explicitly on the physical sensation of a technical gesture or by isolating the melody and playing it separately. In open systems of transmission contexts, however, the working on the different memories happens simultaneously. There may be some sporadic separations, but they rather tend to unfold together, shaping into the intuitive memory that Shapiro suggests in more organic ways.

I want to note, on the other hand, an issue which struck me regarding memory in relation to the preservation of music and knowledge in contexts where notation is very rare or even absent. Since there is no written record of music, the only way in which it is preserved is in musicians' bodies, minds and emotions. It is a type of knowledge which is passed along through imitation from generation to generation. The amount of sensible and technical information that can be orally 'registered' in this way can be astonishing. Hollman Caicedo, one of the interviewees from Maní, Casanare, states that he had no trouble in playing a whole night through, for instance during a party, without repeating a song. He knew a vast number of songs that he had learned from his father, who was able to play by heart more than 300 songs[64].

Referring to this type of embedded knowledge within traditions, Wendell Berry, a writer and farmer from the US, refers touchingly to the type of tacit knowledge (and tacit notion of knowledge's value) that is transmitted in this oral way from one generation to another. He refers to his own experience as part of a family with a

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[64] For some discussion on the relation between orality and musical memory in other contexts see: In Africa (Kwami, 1989, p. 99), in China (Yang, 2011, pp. 219-220).

farming tradition, pointing out the fragility of knowledge that is passed on in what he describes as a 'living procession':

> It is increasingly plain to me that the meaning, the cultural significance, even the practical value of this sort of family procession across a landscape can be known but not told… This living procession through time in a place is the record by which such knowledge survives and is conveyed. When the procession ends, so does the knowledge (Berry, 2000, p. 97).

The type of 'risk' that is taken when memory is embedded in living sources (and not recorded or written) is clarified by several testimonies, with musicians stating that with the death of one of the elder *cuatro* players, something would be lost: a certain type of technique, a certain type of *sabor* or even a complete musical expression of a certain region. I personally feel compelled by these testimonies to recover this knowledge, not only by recording it on audio and video tapes, or by trying to write it down, but by actually participating in its cultural embodiment. In this sense, examining the way in which this knowledge is conveyed and transmitted (which is the objective of this research project) seems to be a pertinent way of 'opening doors' into this cultural 'procession'. Taking part of this process with our bodies and our souls can help to extend, in some way, the path of this cultural wisdom and with it, to make visible alternative and diverse ways of seeing the world. Indeed, to me this means an ethical commitment, in a world that is signed by an accelerated cultural homogenisation on which contemporary neo-liberalism happily feeds.

Imitation in Closed Systems of Transmission: Reducing and manipulating music as a path to technical and musical development

I have already mentioned that imitation is a learning practice that is found across all contexts of *cuatro* transmission. The use of notation is subsidiary even in contexts where music literacy is naturalised as part of learning processes, for example in universities. However, imitation seems to acquire a new way of expressing itself in this type of context (i.e. private lessons, schools, academies, universities). I maintain that its procedures, within these contexts, are permeated by some of the traits that are

characteristic of what I have referred to as the modern pedagogic paradigm. Indeed, by examining issues such as isolation, fragmentation and manipulation of (musical) knowledge and elements, it is possible to understand them and control them better. What is dominant in closed systems of transmission contexts is the presence of *the teacher* as a central model for learning through direct demonstration[65]. Thus, in relation to imitation, it will be the teacher who is in charge of conducting this manipulation of musical elements with a concrete underlying intentionality. In this sense, in closed systems of transmission there is a presence of linearity and rational sequences in learning, while knowledge is organised in response to the teacher's pedagogic purposes.

It is important to recall the fact that *cuatro* learning in closed systems of transmission contexts usually takes place in the midst of a musical and learning ecosystem as well. Thus, a *cuatro* learner is moving between closed systems of transmission and open systems of transmission synchronically: e.g. a student who attends private lessons once per week (closed systems of transmission) but at the same time occasionally gathers with a group of peers to practice (open systems of transmission). However, this can also happen *diachronically*: e.g. a young *cuatro* player who learned music at home (open systems of transmission) and then attends courses at a music academy with a teacher (closed systems of transmission). I wish to restate that, in any case, the 'fuel' that musicians often use to move across these ecosystems is mainly desire, which can be esthetical, technical or even practical (e.g. preparing for a job or obtaining a formal certificate from an institution).

In relation to this issue of personal motivation, I point out that, as was reported in open systems of transmission experiences, some participants recall those first moments of contact with their *cuatro* teacher as instances of astonishment and joy. Leonardo Lozano offers the following testimony in which he tells us what he felt when he listened to his first teacher (who was introduced to him by one of his neighbours) playing in front of him for the first time:

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[65] For a discussion regarding the role of the teacher and demonstration in non-formal learning of Japanese traditional music see Mok (2011, pp. 13-14).

> *Leonardo Lozano*: The teacher had finished the class, but he took out the instrument again. He sat down again and began to play for me. That was the first concert I heard. I was facing a concert player and the concert was for me. That was the first musical impact I had and the first act of generosity from a teacher to me. I was in love with what he did. My impression at the time is perhaps one of the biggest impressions I've had in my life. I told him 'I want you to come home and play for my parents. Because I want to take classes with you'.

I will now describe the main ways in which imitation occurs in the closed systems of transmission contexts which I examined.

Structuring imitation

In terms of the most outstanding types of teaching strategies observed in closed systems of transmission contexts, these were as follows: fragmentation, isolation, manipulation of musical and technical elements with pedagogic purposes, sequentiality and repetition. Imitation is still central to learning, as it is in open systems of transmission, but it now occurs in a far more structured and intentional way. What is normally holistic and random in open systems of transmission is now permeated by ways of transmission that are typical of the modern pedagogic paradigm. The first and most frequent expression of this aspect is the breaking down of music and technical gestures into parts. Early uses of this reductive teaching strategy can be tracked down in testimonies referring to *cuatro* workshops at music academies and universities taking place a couple of decades ago:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: After that, when we had a workshop with Cheo Hurtado, he started teaching us but only step by step: the chords, the use of the wrist, the *floreos*, how he made them…

This *breaking down into parts* can occur in different ways. Decomposing the elements of a technical gesture, for example a certain type of strum, is done in order to achieve mastery of its components. It also occurs when learning and practicing

songs by sections, or when isolating difficult technical elements in a song in order to work them out. The following fragment of a testimony evidences the way in which one of the *cuatro* players interviewed approaches the teaching of the *golpe* (i.e. right-hand strumming) to his students. The *golpe* is a combination of open and muted strums. Here, Camilo explains how he separates both elements to facilitate learning:

Andrés   Where do you start with them?

Camilo Guerrero With the *golpe*.

Andrés   With open strings …

Camilo Guerrero Yes, with open strings.

Andrés   Do you start right away with the muting strum?

Camilo Guerrero First the pulse without muting. The mutings I teach separately. A class only for the downwards muting and another class for the upwards one. Practice and practice until both sound equally good.

As we can see, there are several 'levels' or 'steps' within the process of reduction and isolation. In this case, Camilo starts working with just one hand and with no chords performed by the left hand (i.e. open strings). The *golpe* is normally composed of a rhythmic sequence that includes strumming and *apagado*, which is a percussive effect of the right hand when it hits the strings while muting them. The teacher works the strumming separately from the percussive effect. Then he brings them together.

Thus, with fragmentation, there comes *sequence*. As will be seen, sequencing used to organise musical knowledge with some type of pedagogic purpose, normally according to level of difficulty, is present at a micro level, as in the precedent fragment. However, it is also at a macro level, for example, in university programmes where the repertoire is organised by semester. Logical sequencing and linearity is another typical trait of most pedagogies within closed systems of transmission. As seen earlier, linearity (with a subjacent sense of evolution) is another aspect of the modern type of rationality in western societies (Capra, 1992).

Fragmentation and sequencing are evidenced not only in the learning of a specific technique, but for the actual process of learning a new piece. Since there is practically no use of notation, the *cuatro* player in closed systems of transmission

contexts will learn a new piece by directly observing and imitating the teacher. The first two or four measures of the music piece will be isolated. The teacher will demonstrate them a couple of times, then the student will try to reproduce them. After having repeated the section several times, the next section will be learned separately. The following step will be to unite the two sections, and so on, until the complete piece has been learned. When a technical problem appears, it is, in turn, isolated, deconstructed and resolved.

In addition to this, there is an evident subjacent *sequence* or *structure in the classes* and in teachers' conceptions of teaching. Within the class sessions, the teachers tend to be constantly in charge of the activities: for example, a teacher will begin with strumming exercises or harmonic cycles that are well known to the student. Following this, a new technique or rhythmic/harmonic pattern is introduced. The session will finish with work on some of the solo pieces. Even when the programmes are not expressed in written documents such as academic syllabuses, the actual organisation of classes does express some type of pedagogic intentionality and order.

Another important issue related to manipulation of musical elements has to do with *intentional changes in tempo*. Very frequently, the teacher slows down music in order to explain and practice a certain technical element. Once the student masters the section or gesture at a slow tempo, he or she starts to increase the speed gradually. In some cases, he or she uses the metronome to help with this gradual increase of tempo. As Cheo Hurtado puts it, playing slowly is the 'secret' to playing fast:

> *Cheo Hurtado:* And I always explain to them ... because they want to fly ... 'the slower you play a scale, the faster you get to do it', that's for sure.

In the same sense, another less frequent practice involves the use of certain technical devices to manipulate specific elements of music for pedagogic purposes. An example of this would be *changing the key* of the pieces with the help of the *Garage Band* in order to enhance the ability to transpose accompaniment; *altering the format of music* with pro tools in order to give more or less prominence to certain instruments by muting the *cuatro* part in a traditional ensemble in order to play along

with the recording; or by muting all the parts except the bass line in order to understand the harmony better.

The last type of manipulation of musical elements which was observed by interviewees relates to *exercises disconnected from any concrete musical context*. With these exercises, the teacher seeks to develop proficiency in an 'abstract' way by, for example, playing a certain type of strum with open strings or by performing exercises with the left hand in order to obtain elasticity. This latter example is clearly an import from current practices in other types of string instruments, such as classical or electric guitar, which have been developed within processes of systematisation for pedagogic purposes.

Correlative to fragmentation and manipulation of music are *verbal explanations* immersed in idiosyncratic discourses, which can sometimes be highly codified. Most of the time, teachers in closed systems of transmission contexts use speaking as a means to explain what they intend to transmit. Such explanations rely on the pedagogical discourse about the instrument which has been developed in recent decades. While describing the process of becoming a *cuatro* player, one of the interviewees addresses this issue:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: Very few people told me 'you have to do this', 'this is called a *floreo*'[66] or 'this is a *cacheteo*'[67]. These things began to develop further on… and I started to incorporate them with academic people such as Beco Díaz… he was one of those who organised the terminology of the *cuatro* here in Colombia.

In this case, the process of translating learning modes from open to closed systems of transmission implies using a particular discourse to name technical gestures and musical elements. In some cases, terms come from other genres or instruments that use similar elements: for instance, the term *floreo* comes from flamenco, and in other cases terms are invented, e.g. *cacheteo*. This does not mean, of

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[66] The *floreo* is a typical right-hand gesture used in *cuatro* playing as an embellishment or ornamentation of chords.
[67] The *Cacheteo* is a fast strum produced by the right hand 'hitting' the strings. This generates a percussive effect or accent.

course, that in open systems of transmission no type of terminology to address knowledge is found. The difference relies on the fact that, in closed systems of transmission, where knowledge is objectified in a more complex and detailed manner, a correlative sophisticated vocabulary is necessary in order to adequately address the components and subcomponents of the knowledge that is being transmitted.

To conclude this section, I would like to say that I can, myself, attest to the benefits of turning this type of 'translation' of imitation into a more structured process. I felt that my learning process was facilitated when dealing with elements that were presented in an ordered and isolated way. I also felt I was moving in a comfortable or familiar pedagogic zone, similar to the usual 'step by step' type of learning I was used to experiencing as a *classical guitar* student. At the same time, I was aware of the benefits of imitation. Some of the *cuatro* pieces that I learned with my teacher were similar to certain other pieces that I once learned on guitar while playing in a music score. This new experience was interesting since it allowed me to confirm that complex music can also be learned through imitation and that the level of incorporation can be very deep. From a similar perspective, one of the interviewees, who is also a classical guitar player and who participated in one of the *cuatro* courses that I observed, states:

> *Juan Camilo Araoz*: ... seeing what happened with Juan Carlos I remembered that sort of thing because usually when there's a guitar and someone says, 'play, play something you know how to play'.... when you are a guitarist you study a repertoire so hard that you keep it for a while, you can play it perfectly for a concert, for an exam, and two months later you no longer remember anything, it's gone. It must be studied again from zero. It takes less time but it's lost. But when someone asks me to play something, I always play the same pieces... a couple of waltzes from Lauro, a dance from Brower, things like that: These are things I learned when I was just beginning with the *classical guitar* and which I learned like this, by imitation and because the teacher told me: 'this fragment goes like this, repeat it'... and gradually one has the piece from the beginning to the end. Well, that way sometimes generates other problems, for example, sometimes you play something without understanding the rhythm, the

harmony, but I do think the general reflection is that there are methods or systems that can help to generate many good things for learning. For example, imitation, for example this way of learning by ear...

Using recordings as a support for teaching

The prominent use of audio and video recordings to teach and learn the *cuatro* is a natural consequence of the scarce amount of written music for this instrument. As is the case in open systems of transmission, in closed systems of transmission the use of recordings is also central to the transmission process. Recordings work as a methodological support for learning; indeed, an example of this would be when the teachers' performances are recorded during the class for later use. Recordings are also an important source for the familiarisation and imitation of technical and musical styles throughout the learning process. Recordings are the basis for a 'second-order' type of orality, as one of the interviewees calls it. Decades ago, in musical aural/oral contexts, music was preserved through performance, embedded in the bodies of musicians; it was kept alive throughout the different situations of musicking. But the emergence of recording has opened a whole new dimension for preserving musical memory and for enhancing learning.

Most of the participants agree on the importance of using recordings, especially video, as support for learning. Some of them find that the learning of the right-hand technique, particularly, is only possible with a visual referent, both in teacher-led processes and in methods or virtual platforms for *cuatro* learning. In this sense, participants suggest that the quality of visual recording is very important, including the possibility to work with several cameras in order to offer contrasting angles of a performance. Luis Pino brings up the idea of collaborative work with specialists throughout the process of producing these videos:

> *Luis Pino*: I have always thought that *cuatro* methods, as well as methods of *flamenco guitar*, methods of *charango*, or *cavaquinho*, everything that has to do with strumming, must be recorded. It has to be filmed from different angles. And there must be people who are specialised in audio-visual

recording when making such videos. Because the audio-visual expert has the ability to reflect and project what the performer is doing.

Luis goes even further, suggesting the possibility of training *cuatro* players at universities in audio-visual techniques as an important component of professional preparation.

Recordings as an extension of the class session

Due to the fact that learners do not normally have scores available with the music that is being worked on in the class, teachers generally record what has been worked on during the session so the learner can use it at home. The teacher will normally take a couple of minutes at the end of the class to record, very frequently with the student's cell phone, the piece(s), section(s) or exercise(s) that he or she wants the student to work on as preparation for the next class:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: ... not all (students) have the discipline to get home and review what was done in class. Usually the guy gets home a little tired... a couple of days later he might take the *cuatro* and remember half of it. When I evaluate them next week in class, what I have taught is not complete; they arrive with things poorly learned. The cell phone is an important tool, although not everybody has access to it. I will record the homework and they will study it at home. The boys will come back the following week with things better learned.

Video recordings capture the teacher's model so that imitation can continue for students at home. It is interesting to observe that the way recordings are approached reflects the same type of imitation that occurs during the class, which is determined by the isolation, fragmentation and manipulation of elements. For example, in many cases, the teacher records a separate section (fragmentation) of a musical piece at a slower tempo (manipulation of musical elements). On the other hand, the learner will use the video player at home to decompose the recording and manipulate it as well. The way the learner approaches musical materials with some degree of intentionality

reflects the way in which the teacher does it in the classes. The following is one of my diary entries in which I comment on this issue:

> It's very useful for me because I can manipulate the video by stopping it, jumping back and forward, etc. All this aids me to learn the piece.

> (*Diary entry – my cuatro private lessons*)

Very frequently, the recording will be accompanied by some type of verbal explanation from the teacher regarding the technical and musical elements that appear throughout the section or exercise.

In some cases, the teacher will record just one part of the music so that the student can 'play along' with the recording at home. For example, he or she might record the melodic part of the *bandola* so that the student can practice the accompaniment section at home with the *cuatro*. Alternatively, he or she may record the harmonic part of a certain piece in which the student performs the melodic part, with the same purpose[68].

Recordings as 'aural literature'

In academic contexts, at especially at universities, it is very common to have a body of musical literature that is available as aural and written content for practical and theoretical courses. In the case of the *cuatro*, participants refer to a similar corpus of material as reference for learning which is mainly aural. In some cases, this corpus is used randomly and according to the particular needs and interests of teachers and students. Some participants, however, have worked in rational systematisations of these aural materials with pedagogic purposes, specifically at universities. In this sense, Carlos Rojas describes the criteria (i.e. chronology and style) that were used for

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[68] For an interesting proposal of audio and video support for the learning of traditional music from the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of Colombia see *Gaiteros y tamboleros: material para abordar el estudio de la música de gaitas de San Jacinto, Bolívar* (Convers & Ochoa, 2007) and *Arrullos y currulaos: material para abordar el estudio de la música tradicional del Pacífico sur Colombiano* (Convers et al., 2014). Material available at: http://arrullosycurrulaos.tumblr.com/.

ordering this type of recordings-based literature for the *cuatro* programme (which has not yet been implemented) of *Universidad de los Llanos.*

> *Carlos Rojas*: For the *Universidad de los Llanos* I designed a programme that, first of all, begins by establishing a kind of order in the music literature concerning the *cuatro*. I started, based on my experience, by organising the great *cuatro* instrumentalists in chronological order. I know the vast majority of their recordings, and so I prepared a specific arrangement of these materials with the understanding that there are two main styles of *cuatro* execution[69].

Students are expected not only to analyse these recorded references but also to 'reproduce' them in order to understand, in an experiential and practical way, the main stylistic trends and techniques throughout the history of the *cuatro*. The basis for and the natural learning outcome that is expected from this type of approach is, of course, an acute sense of audition and of imitation. The participant alluded to above is critical of the fact that students are usually exposed to a unique model of technique and style when working with a particular teacher. He prefers to understand performance as a broader paradigm that has both a historical development and a plurality of styles and approaches that must be reflexively studied (and imitated) throughout the learning process.

Recordings as aural literature of the *cuatro* are also models for concrete versions of songs, and not only for general styles of playing. I will return to this aspect in Chapter 9 when referring to creativity. For the moment, I simply want to point out the fact that in *cuatro* playing, as in many other expressions of traditional and popular music, different 'versions' of the same song can be found. *Cuatro* players very often choose the version of another musician as a starting point for the building of their own version. Versions of other musicians are usually available in recordings, not in music scores.

Finally, recordings also offer the possibility to imitate, as a complement to learning in the class, those aspects that transcend technique, such as style, feeling and

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[69] These two styles are: soloist and accompaniment.

sabor. As mentioned above in relation to the issue of enculturation, and as will be mentioned later on in Chapter 10 when speaking about *sabor* as a 'hidden' content of *cuatro* transmission, participants find that one of the key strategies for learning the *cuatro* is being exposed to and imitating music in recordings. One of the teacher comments:

> *Andrés:* Many of the children are not born in the Llanos region, but here in Bogotá. How do you work with them so as to introduce them to *sabor* and put them in touch with the essence of music from the llanos?
>
> *Julián Crosswaithe*: As the teacher Hildo did with me. He made me listen to things. I tell them, 'Look, today there are musicians that sound great, that play tight with one another... Venezuelans.... who have a good level'. They have recorded a lot and they play simple things that one can play. I give them links to study, songs, for example 'listen to this song of the group *La Maquinaria*' – it is a very stable group in its speed and its execution ... and we study the issue of speed in accompaniment. How to make the traditional part of *música llanera* come out... One invites them to listen to a certain *cuatro* player, one of the first, who has a very stable base, a very nice execution... I tell them 'Play with him...'. I think that is one of the most important methods ... the accompaniment of recordings.

In this case, recordings are an alternative way of enculturating students in a type of music in which they were not enculturated when they were young. At the same time, it is accepted as a powerful way in which to develop and make contact with traits of music that are not easily delivered through notation, because they are rather tacit and difficult to objectify. In connection to this issue, I wish to argue that the prominence of tacit knowledge in the transmission of music explains why, in almost every type of music learning, there is usually a presence of some type of external human model that acts as a referent of all those subtle relations (e.g. physical, emotional, musical, spiritual) that are at stake in a musical performance. This fact reinforces the idea of notation and written music as being just a tool for the transmission of instrumental and musical knowledge. This occurs even in academic contexts where notation is central to the process of learning such as, for example, in

the learning of classical instruments at universities. In the type of interconnected society in which we live nowadays, it is indeed very difficult to think about a musician who has learned to play an instrument without any type of model at all coming from another musician.

Imitation of methods and virtual platforms

As stated earlier, methods and online courses are a common complement to the learning that takes place both in open and closed systems of transmission contexts. However, their logic usually corresponds well to the type of pedagogic rationality found in academic contexts in the sense that knowledge is objectified, fragmented and organised in logical sequences to enhance learning. It also uses verbal explanations (written or spoken) as an important component of transmission.

In the following section, I will refer to some issues related to notation in these methods and virtual platforms. For the time being, and I wish to comment that imitation is found in these types of materials as well. In written methods, this is evidenced in the use of images as a reference for the reader (e.g. for posture or fingerings). On online platforms, it is evidenced in the use of videos in which particular techniques, rhythmic patterns or pieces are included. The technological tools and interconnecting possibilities available on the internet offer an interesting environment for learning and for the 'second-order' type of orality that was referred to above.

Notation

An important emerging aspect of *cuatro* learning across contexts, both in open and closed systems of transmission, is the subsidiary role of notation. Several authors address this aspect as an emerging component of learning in different types of popular and traditional music contexts[70]. Several musicians who were interviewed as part of my background research point to this subsidiary role of notation as well, in the frame

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[70] Green (2008) points out the subsidiary role played by notation in the process of learning of popular musicians in the UK. Indeed, Finnegan (2007) does the same when contrasting the learning experiences of classical and popular musicians in her book *The Hidden Musicians*. For similar discussions see: For popular music in Buenos Aires (Shapiro, 2011) and for traditional music in Colombia (Rendón & Tobón, 2012; Vidal et al., 2014; Vidal & Tobón, 2015; Miñana, 1987; Convers & Ochoa, 2007, 2009).

of different cultures and popular music expressions. The interesting aspect of *cuatro* learning, however, is that it is a rare example of a musical instrument that is learned mainly through imitation, not only in traditional settings but also in very formal contexts such as universities. This practice is unusual in traditional western formal pedagogies, especially if we recall the fact that the *cuatro* is accepted on university programmes where it is taught as a soloist instrument and not only for accompaniment. Despite the naturalised use of notation in many academic settings, *cuatro* learning seems to avoid this capture. The tensions that arise in relation to this issue in closed systems of transmission contexts have not been strong enough to block the central practice of imitation in *cuatro* learning, even in settings where the current practice of instrumental teaching uses notation as a primary vehicle of transmission. The possible reasons behind this 'line of flight' of the *cuatro* from the corset of academic notation will be brought up later on.

As a result of this reflection, in the present chapter I will not separate the two types of contexts – open and closed systems of transmission – for the discussion of my findings. Some particularities in the use of notation across the learning settings will be mentioned, but as will be seen, these differences are subtle and do not introduce essential contrasts between both types of learning systems. I will start by discussing some of the positive impacts of notation on music learning as reported by participants and by the literature. In addition to this, I will also evidence some of the outstanding tensions that arise in relation to the issue.

Potencies and limitations of notation

Several interviewees and local authors agree that, however limited, notation is an important asset for music and for learning. Some of the participants point out that it is an important tool for analytical comprehension:

> *Carlos Rojas*: (Notation) is a very limited approach but still very useful for its
> ability to 'freeze' the sound. It opens up many possibilities for the study
> and understanding from an analytical stance, from a musical level.

From the learning point of view, several interviewees basically agree that the ability to read music is a natural and pertinent complement to the development and mastery of practical knowledge – not only as a means for understanding music and its intrinsic relations, but also because of the possibility it offers to establish contact with alternative or unfamiliar aesthetic expressions. It is also found pertinent for more pragmatic reasons, such as being able to play with other musicians who use written music as a resource for playing. This last aspect is related to other professional situations such as, for example, when *cuatro* players are asked to participate in last-minute recordings or concerts where an unknown repertoire is performed and where notation can play a useful role. From another point of view, several authors agree that the potency of notation, in the case of traditional music in particular, has to do with the opportunity for diffusion of local expressions into broader public spaces (Rendón & Tobón, 2012).

Even if a large portion of musicians are aware of this positive impact, the learning of the *cuatro* does not rely on notation as a central tool. As will be seen, in fact, when notation is used it is mainly used to represent chords and harmonies. Tablatures are sometimes used, but music scores are almost non-existent. General diagrams to indicate right-hand gestures are also used. In the case of *cuatro* learning, I perceive that the resistance to use sophisticated notation (such as music scores and very detailed representation of musical and technical gestures) does not necessarily derive from some type of political or philosophical decision on the part of musicians. It rather has to do with practical issues, especially in relation to the right-hand techniques; indeed, writing down the execution of a piece is not only very difficult in terms of rhythmical and gestural accuracy. Indeed, it can also be impractical for the 'reader', who can easily become lost in the saturated set of visual symbols that results from writing down the complex rhythms and ornamentations produced by the right hand. In one of my diary entries while attending a *cuatro* session of the diploma that I observed for this research, I comment:

> *Andrés*: Juan Carlos (the teacher) says he could write on the blackboard many things but that it would be a waste time ... It seems to be not only a matter related to the limits of notation... it also has to do with slowing down the flow of the process ... and there is little time!!!

As stated by Convers and Ochoa (2009), the discussion regarding the presence of notation in academic contexts does not have to do with whether or not it should be included as part of learning, but rather with its pertinence and with the way it is used. From my point of view, these Why? and How? questions are directly related to the particularities of the instrument and the musical knowledge that is transmitted. As discussed above in the case of the *cuatro*, when notation turns out to be impractical to represent the sounds and technical gestures of the instrument's techniques, we can always make use of other types of devices such as audio and video recordings. This, in itself, is an important field of research related not only to the formal teaching of traditional instruments, but also to the teaching of classical and jazz instruments, especially in higher education where literature on the subject is scarce.

Even if the common practice found in institutional contexts of *cuatro* learning is imitation, some participants do report a certain tacit institutional demand on teachers to write things down and to systematise the *cuatro*'s music and technique using notation as a support. Juan Carlos Contreras, *cuatro* teacher at *ASAB* (*Universidad Distrital*) in Bogotá, comments:

> *Andrés*: And speaking specifically of work at university ... Do you feel that there has been any difficulties or tensions between your ways of teaching the *cuatro* and what formal settings demand? Have you felt those kinds of tensions?
>
> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: Yes, of course, because at meetings we have spoken about those things, right? And obviously... I have made the transcripts, I have written exercises, I have codified all the chords, so that they can be taught.... but orality is central.

As mentioned earlier, in some cases the lack of sufficient notation and systematisation has been one of the obstacles hindering the incorporation of traditional expressions in formal music curricula. As a consequence, several local popular music schools and projects have had to legitimate their status in front of institutional authorities by systematising popular and traditional knowledge through writing: '[...] popular music schools have been pushed into having to justify to the

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education authorities, exclusively in terms of the literate culture that excluded them' (Ochoa, in Arenas, 2015) .

Framed in this 'to write or not to write' paradigmatic tension, local academics and musicians have spent the last two or three decades discussing the issue of notation of traditional music and its impact on learning and aesthetic expressions. This discussion has raised several important questions. One of these issues has to do with practicality, as mentioned above: Are we sure that it is useful and pertinent for pedagogic purposes to write down the music that is performed by traditional instruments? In the case of the *cuatro*, the technical execution of the right hand, which produces its percussive and unique colour, is frequently as important, or even more important, than the actual melodic or harmonic text. However, its abstract representation can be so sophisticated and dense that it becomes impractical.

Another tension places notation between diversity and homogenisation. This issue has to do with diversity of styles and techniques and with creative diversity. Notation is a capturing dispositif. It allows us to freeze, in a more or less abstract language, some components of music, though not all of them. One of the components that is fixed throughout this process is technical style. However, in the case of the *cuatro*, I have been able to witness an infinite variety of ways of performing the right-hand technique. 'Writing down' any one of these particular ways of performing, for example, a '*floreo*', will signify that this particular technical style is to be 'selected' for diffusion. This natural selection will automatically 'exclude' all the other ways of performing that specific technical gesture. This could also happen, of course, if we work with video, in the sense that we will always have to select some particular elements, technical or musical, as part of the objectification of knowledge for transmission. The question here is whether, and to what extent, audio-visual support can offer us some type of extra value. From my point of view, the answer is yes, since videos, in particular, can offer us more practical and direct possibilities so as to model different types of 'answers' for a particular technical demand.

Regarding the issue of creativity, several musicians consider that this 'capture' of sound imposed by notation does, in itself, limit the improvisation and development of personal versions of songs[71]. Daniel Saboya, who is in charge of a traditional music

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[71] For a discussion regarding notation and personal versions of popular songs in Argentina, see Shapiro (2011, p. 90).

ensemble at *Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Tunja*, brings up the following comment while addressing this issue. He states that string music from the Colombian Andes has been notated much more than other traditional types of music in Colombia. This has opened a door into academic contexts; but at the same time, he argues, its dependence on notation has set limits in terms of its actual creative expansion regarding improvisation:

> *Andrés*: It's true. Perhaps this explains the fact that Andean music may have entered more easily into academies and universities ...
>
> *Daniel*: Yeah, it surely has to do with that, because it is the music that has moved closer to such procedures; it has got so close, that it has lost things such as improvisation... which I feel is not as strong in Andean music, because from the beginning it was very close to the schemes and procedures of the academic world.

At the same time, authors and musicians agree that there are two possible alternatives regarding the risk of normalisation through notation. On the one hand, music scores should be considered only as tools for transmission, and not as music itself. This means, to a certain extent, escaping from what Said calls *textualism* in modern western societies. Bridging this concept of the hegemony of text with the role of notation in music education, Ochoa (2016) comments:

> For Said, with textualism 'the underlying idea is that men, places and experiences can always be described in a book, in such a way that the book (or text) acquires an authority and even a greater use than the reality that it is describing'. This is what often occurs in music education: scores acquire an authority and greater use than the music they are describing (My translation. Ochoa, 2016, p. 116).

On the other hand, it is necessary to develop 'living systems' of notation that are dynamic and adjustable, in terms of their form and contents, to particular styles, techniques and musical versions. This implies a more democratic vision of notation, as a means to represent a diverse world of musical possibilities and not to impose

prescriptively a monolithic vision of music and technique that is decided by those who occupy power positions within the musical establishment.

In addition to this, another 'risk' that is brought up by some musicians in regard to an excessive centrality of notation is that it might render less visible the social and situated character of music. This hegemony of the musical text, which can exist distanced in time and in space, separated from the original social context where it is produced, strengthens the idea of music as being an entity that can exist separated from social realities. Eliécer Arenas (2015) makes the following comment in relation to Ong's ideas about situated knowledge in oral cultures, while he also refers to the intrinsic notion of superiority that is attributed to textual production in some literate cultures:

> As a proof of the superiority of written musical culture – generically called 'cultured' – some bring up the fact that the written speech will eventually present a more elaborate and fixed grammar, because to produce meaning it depends more on its internal structure and on the characteristics of its discursive development, since it lacks the normal full existential contexts surrounding the aural (musical) speech that helps determine its meaning, in an independent way from grammar (My translation. Arenas, Eliécer, 2015, p. 10).

In relation to the transmission of the *cuatro*, however, it is difficult to evidence the impact of this issue on learning because, as I have already said, notation is very absent.

Finally, I wish to come back to the issue regarding the limits on what can actually be represented by notation[72]. On the one hand, I refer to technical and mechanic issues: a music score can tell me *what* to play but can't tell me *how* to play it. Juan Carlos Contreras explains this with the following example:

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[72] For some discussion regarding the limits of written representation of music see: Downey (2009, pp. 49-50) for Irish music; or see Shapiro (2011, pp. 90,94) for popular music in Argentina.

Juan Carlos Contreras: For example, if I'm going to teach how to play a *pasillo*[73] to a student I can't just tell him 'look, the pasillo, you read it like this' (pointing at an imaginary score)... no, no, no ... I should rather *show* him 'the *pasillo* is played like this, put your hand here' (he mimics the situation).

In a similar vein, several participants report that the representation of certain elements of music, such as rhythm or timbre, is a mere approximation of what they actually sound like. The first issue is the written code that represents a certain rhythmic grouping, while another issue is the way in which this grouping or pattern is normally executed: some figures might be slightly shorter or longer in duration that the others, but not enough to warrant the use of a different rhythmic figure to represent them. Néstor Lambuley, former chair of one of the university programmes that was studied, refers to the importance of having a corresponding inner 'sound image' of rhythmic or timbric gestures as a necessary complement to the abstract symbols that are being used for representation. I pinpoint the emphasis which this participant places on the issue of timbre, since it is clear that the *cuatro*'s particular colour is, in great part, determined by the right-hand execution and all its subtle rhythmic and timbral variations:

Néstor Lambuley: You can write certain effects, certain categories but ultimately if the issue of performance is not there and the student approaches the sound... writing does not solve the problem of learning how to play the instrument. This is one of the factors. If you do not have the sound image of the instrument's timbres... In popular instruments if one has not internalised the timbric discourse.... I insist that the timbric aspect is very important in these instruments. That is, in these popular instruments, from my point of view, I think that the timbric issues have even more weight than the melodic and harmonic aspects. The timbric issue in these instruments is important, and these things are often not written.

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[73] *Pasillo* is a typical dance from the Andean region of Colombia.

In addition to this, and in relation to the limits of notation, I want to refer to those other issues that I have been alluding to throughout this report, and which have to do, in a more direct and profound way, with style, feel and expression. Of course, we can use signs and codes to try to 'capture' expression and stylistic elements such as character indications (e.g. *Allegro*, *Molto Agitato*, etc.) or dynamic symbols (e.g. Crescendo, diminuendo). However, I am thinking about other aspects of expression that are not so easily represented and that are only rendered evident in the experience of music itself; this refers to seeing, listening or playing with musicians whose performances contain these elements. In this direction, Arenas not only points out the limits of musical notation, but also argues that the music that is represented is actually transformed by the written codes that are used. These codes are, in themselves, carriers of particular ways of reflecting about music:

> The belief that by changing the sound code into marks on a music sheet an equivalence is produced, makes us a little perceptive of the fact that writing only captures certain properties of sound. More than a transcript of the same elements, it implies a profound transformation of them. In fact, it can sometimes blur the objective that we have as a model and becomes the new reference for our listening of the original sound flow. All the interesting features of popular music remain hidden; they lose visibility and become opaque when we begin to hear the music and to reflect upon it, using the logic of the written code that initially presumably reflected, as in a mirror, the nature of the musical object (My translation. Arenas & Eliécer, 2015, p. 9).

Some of these codes can, in fact, be 'audible' in music since they affect elements such as rhythm, duration of notes, intensity, timbre, etc. However, they are also directly related with musicians' inner experience of feeling or *sabor*, celebration of music and empathy with other musicians while playing. I have previously referred to music as an energy that flows through its objects (musical pieces performed by people) and that touches the bodies and emotions of audiences. Music scores and even music pieces are, from this point of view, just a medium for this flow of energy. In this case, the essential aspect of a musical performance is not the perfectibility of the musical object: instead, the essence of a good musical experience should be that this current

of physical and emotional energy circulates without obstruction. The problematic aspect of notation, from this perspective, is when it leads us to focus our attention exclusively on the perfectibility of the musical object that it represents.

The impossibility of representing essential aspects of performance that dwell not only on technical issues but also on deeper levels of expression and emotions, among other aspects, puts us once again in front of the natural limits of the literate rationality of closed systems of transmission. While tackling this issue, one can thus suppose that the teacher, in his or her classroom, usually compensates in some way or another for the invisibility of that un-representable portion of knowledge. Pertinent questions for further research concerned with more thoroughly exploring the impact of the modern pedagogic paradigm on learning could include: How do teachers 'compensate' for the limits of notation? What type of 'emphasis' and to what extent do they prioritise those hidden aspects of transmission? Do we sometimes get 'trapped' in those aspects that the modern pedagogic paradigm makes visible through documents, notation and discourse (e.g. primacy of the musical and technical result over the actual engagement and celebration of musical experience)? Does we sometimes start forgetting or giving less relevance to aspects of music such as 'feeling' and enjoyment because academic contexts lead us more naturally to deal with those aspects of learning that are easily objectified, organised and systematised? Does this situation 'block' the circulating energy in some way? What are the effects of this process of invisibility on learning and on the actual aesthetic experience of music making and on learning? What alternative ways of transmission can render these 'other' elements more visible and prominent throughout the learning process?

My perception is that the answers to these questions are not clear-cut and that they can vary greatly between contexts and individuals. I can only affirm that, from my own experience as a classical guitar student and teacher, I have often times sensed among institutions and teachers a stronger concern for the perfectibility of the musical result or object (i.e. cleanness, ability to play in a certain style, accuracy of the reproduction of the musical text) than for less explicit issues regarding, for example, how much a student is motivated by musical performance and to what extent he or she is, or is not, celebrating the musical experience in which he or she is immersed. In this vein, I will maintain, later on, that there are two types of knowledge that can be rendered invisible by the type of rationality that is present in formal contexts. The first

of these is knowledge related to the actual way in which music sounds, such as expression and *sabor*. The second comprises those issues that rather relate to the inner experience of musicians, such as aesthetic experience and celebration, throughout the acts of music making or musicking. I argue that both dimensions are closely interrelated and, even more, that adequate attention to the inner experience of musicians and learners can in fact enhance the quality of the external and sonic outcomes of performance. Difficulties start to emerge, however, when we intend to 'fix' these dimensions within the fragmentary and linear structures of the modern pedagogic paradigm. This is why any pedagogic proposal that seriously takes these issues into account must involve strategies derived from an alternative educational paradigm, which is more flexible and systemic in its functioning. This must be a paradigm that, ultimately, reflects an epistemological posture that transcends the modern rationality (based on objectification, fragmentation, etc.) of western society that has captured social disciplines, including education, and which, very frequently, also impregnates the way in which we relate to our everyday lives.

Types of notation that are used in cuatro learning

Different types of notation were found in this study across the different contexts of *cuatro* learning, from very simple diagrams, to sophisticated types of notation that combine music scores with complicated symbols to designate particular gestures of *cuatro* execution. Two things are, however, clear: the use of notation tends to be subsidiary and the most recurrent type of written music that is used is chord symbols. This is natural, since the *cuatro*'s main role is a harmonic one. I will now present briefly the different types of notations that were found.

Chord symbols

For many participants, and especially those from a previous generation of *cuatro* players, chord symbols came late in their careers and their learning came from a pragmatic necessity of playing with other musicians or for teaching. Even some of the most prominent *cuatro* players, such as Venezuelan Cheo Hurtado, started using notation several years after they had learned to play the *cuatro*. Nowadays Cheo, for

example, uses notation only occasionally, when playing with other musicians. Most of the time, however, he plays by ear.

Chord symbols are used in methods when indicating progressions of traditional *golpes* or together with lyrics to indicate the harmony of the songs. Teachers will use them in their classes for similar purposes and mainly as an aid for memory. They will write chord sequences in a notebook or on the blackboard and add some type of codes to represent rhythm, usually conventional rhythmic figures. The following is a typical representation of a chord sequence for a traditional *golpe*:
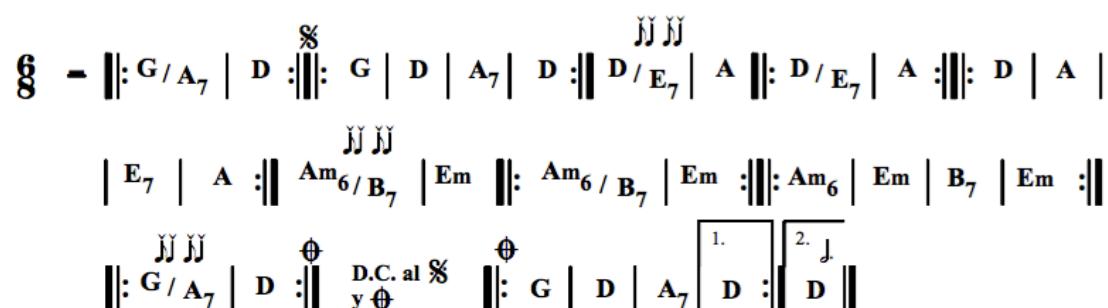
Tablatures, maps and prototypes

Probably inspired by the notation systems of other plucked string instruments such as the *guitar*, several authors of *cuatro* methods and musicians use tablatures as graphic representations of the instrument's frets and strings, where the different chord positions are marked. Some of these representations are very concrete, in the sense that they just offer the 'visual' reference of the fingering without using any type of abstract codes as numbers or letters. The following fragment of one of the songbooks that was analysed offers a good example of this:

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AL POETA
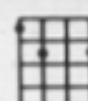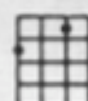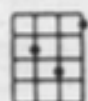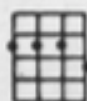Exito de Jesús Sevillano
Vals
Tono: Em

Poe   ...ta   usted que sabe hacer más bello el arco iris, usted que crea
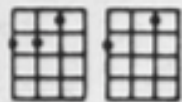
colores en las flores, a la luna siempre hermosa le prodiga un lucero
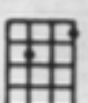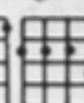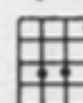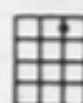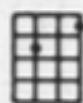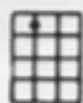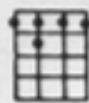
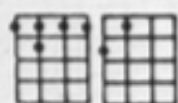solitario que en la noche cuán brillante corretea en el inmenso

infi... nito.

Figure 7. 2 Chords and lyrics for *El Poeta*
(Abreu, n.d., p. 3)

Other tablatures incorporate the use of numbers that stand for the fingers of the left hand:
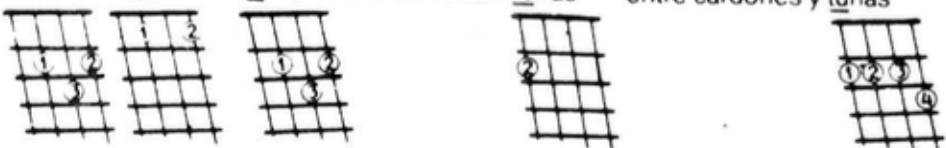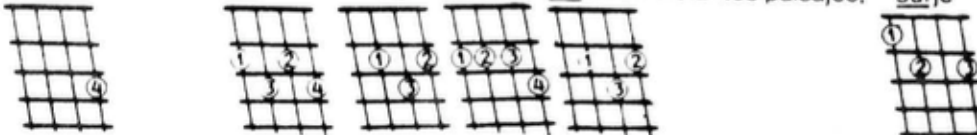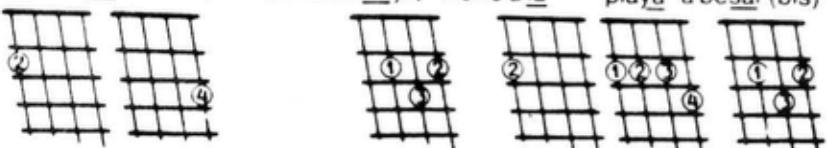
The next fragment shows diagrams of positions that represent chords which use numbers for the fingering, but which add the actual names of the chords:
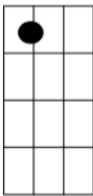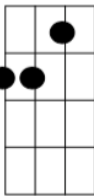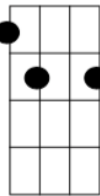
Figure 7. 4 Chord sequence in Bm
(Paredes, 2006, p. 12)

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The following example gives us another illustration of chordal prototypes, this time offering, at the same time, a 'translation' of the tablature into a music score:
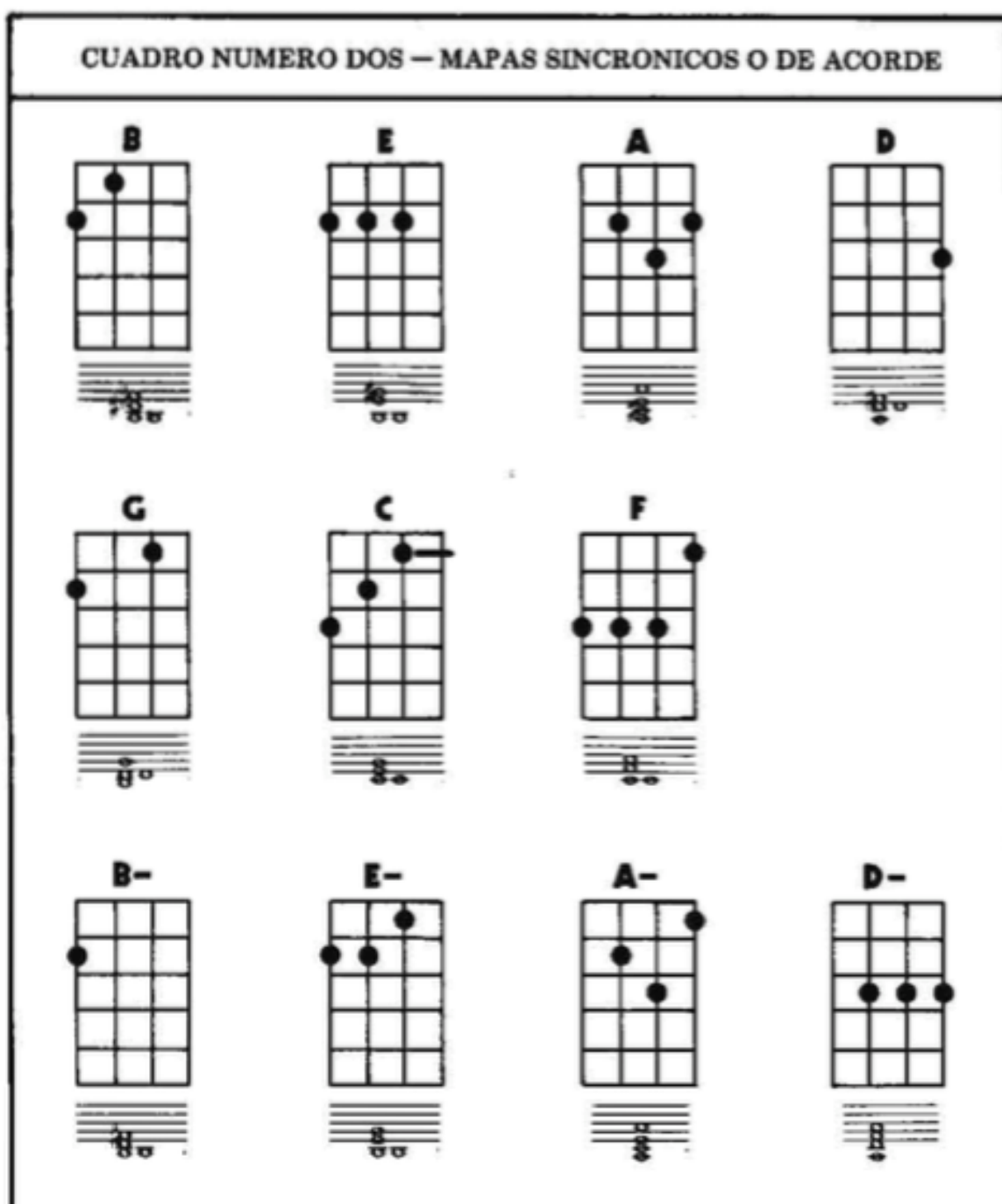
Figure 7. 5 Chord maps and music scores (Sosa, 1988, p. 41)

Some local researchers have worked, with pedagogic goals, on a more formal systematisation of chord prototypes or 'maps' that can be performed in the positions of the instrument's fingerboard without losing their harmonic traits. This type of

resource for transportation is, of course, available for any string instrument. The following manuscript shows an example of Samuel Bedoya's (n.d.) systematisation, which is very sophisticated in terms of coding, of the different fingerings or prototypes of major triads, and their transposition across the fingerboard:
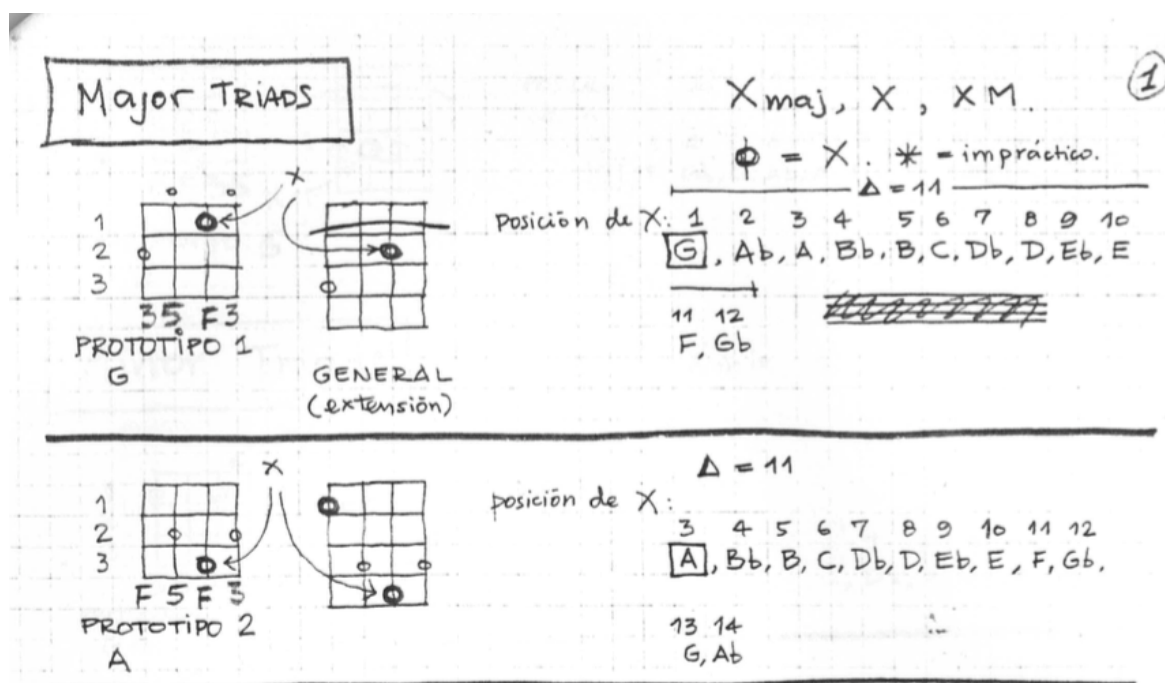
Figure 7.6 Prototypes and transposition of chords (Bedoya, n.d., p. 2)

One final example of the use of tablature was found at *Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta* in Caracas, where early music is also performed with the *cuatro*. Students at this institution are expected be able to decipher tablatures in Italian, French and Spanish styles of renascent and baroque music.

Music scores

The use of music scores is rare. They are mainly found in university contexts and in a few *cuatro* methods. Additionally, besides standard conventions such as pitch, rhythmic figures, repetition bars, expressive signs, and so on, *cuatro* music scores have also incorporated codes that are typical of *classical guitar* systems such as, for example, numbers representing fingers on the left hand or letters for fingering on the

right hand, slurs, etc. Some of these music scores also include particular codes which represent technical mechanisms that are particular to *cuatro* playing. However, there is not, as yet, a standardised set of codes for these types of techniques. I will return to this issue in the following section.

Academic pieces are still very scarce in the instrument's literature; an indication of the lack of standardised conventions is the fact that academic composers usually have to turn directly to performers in order to receive information regarding particular codes for representing certain mechanisms. The composer usually ends up agreeing on the coding that will represent gestures and techniques directly with the performer who will play the piece. Another sign of this absence of systematisation is the fact that two of the three *cuatro* undergraduate students interviewed for this project, and who are about to finish their degrees, have chosen to develop a system for writing down the technical execution of the instrument as part of their graduation thesis.

The main limits pointed out by participants regarding music scores are related, on the one hand, to complexity, as stated earlier. Musicians find that writing down in detail all the effects that embellish harmony and rhythm is a complicated exercise and its reading is problematic. The actual result is a saturated set of symbols that can be messy and hard to decipher. Some of the musicians end up choosing alternative ways to write music scores that allow them to give an accurate representation of the core structure of the piece but without getting into all the technical and harmonic details. For example, some of them will just write down the notes of the melody and use symbols for the chords as to avoid writing down the complete harmony. Some extra codes will be added to symbolise the particular effects.

On the other hand, and in the same sense as previous comments, musicians also feel that the music score cannot deliver the actual *sabor* that should dye performance. The familiarity of the performer with the original style will be, in this case, an asset for performance:

> *Christian Guataquira*: Well, if you're addressing people from the llanos, you write '*Gaván*'. Say there is a mandatory solo, and I want the *cuatro* player who will read it to perform it like this (he plays a fragment of *Gaván*)... I write down the notes but I also write '*Gaván*' on top of it, then he knows that it is a *golpe* of *Gaván* and that he has to play it like this (he plays it

slowly). It's like a scheme because all... I mean, because on the score you deliver a scheme because it's the musician who will add the *sabor* to it. Everyone plays his or her own way. That is the melodic script. You have to respect that but if you can do more stuff, cool.

Though aware of the limits of music scores and notation, teachers are also aware of their benefits, both in terms of diffusion and pedagogy. Some of them insist that university programmes should have a balance between playing by ear and reading music. They comment that the type of notation used should answer the particular musical needs of the moment. Nelson González states:

Andrés: What role does notation play there? At a university level, do you think that the *cuatro* should also be taught using music scores... written? ... How does that balance work for you?

Nelson González: Yes, you can teach it that way, but it depends on the compositions. But obviously you have to reach the musical knowledge of the nomenclature. But in relation to solo playing, it is much more complex to make a score. But yes, the curriculum has to include all that... The nomenclature... perhaps there are very polyphonic compositions that imply an ability to read when you learn them...

In this vein, even if imitation and playing by ear are the most recurrent practices for teaching the *cuatro*, several teachers, especially at universities, will use the music score to write down music as part of the transmission process. For example, they will ask students to write down the notes of a certain chord in the music score and also to represent it with its symbol (e.g. C, D7, G9th) and in a tablature. Some kind of level of familiarity or mastery using the current codes of music scores seems to be an important issue for several teachers at universities.

Diversity of coding

Cuatro players have developed a diversity of codes to represent the effects that are achieved when playing the instrument, and particularly those that are performed with

the right hand and that give the *cuatro* its particular colour: *floreos, cacheteos, trémolos*. Each one of these effects is a universe in itself. A very diverse array of possibilities of execution are present and can change from one *cuatro* player to another, form one geographic region to another.

Some of these codes come from other instruments, for example from the popular *guitar*. One of the most common conventions is using arrows to represent the direction in which strumming should be executed (downwards or upwards):
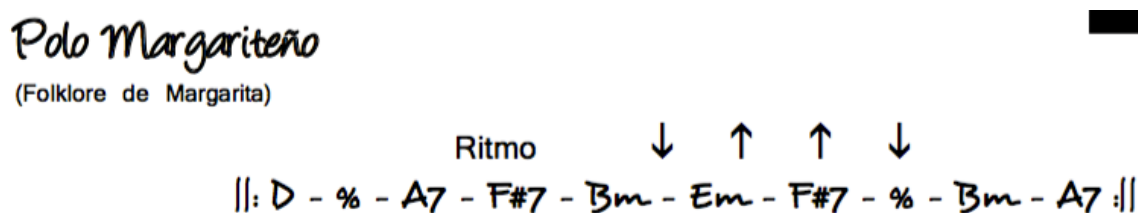
Figure 7. 7 Arrows representing direction of strumming
(Paredes, 2006, p. 13)

Besides direction, these arrows will sometimes show a particular type of strumming called 'apagado', which produces a muting of the strings. In this case, 'apagado ' is represented by the symbol ‡ which is the same arrow but with a double-crossing bar.
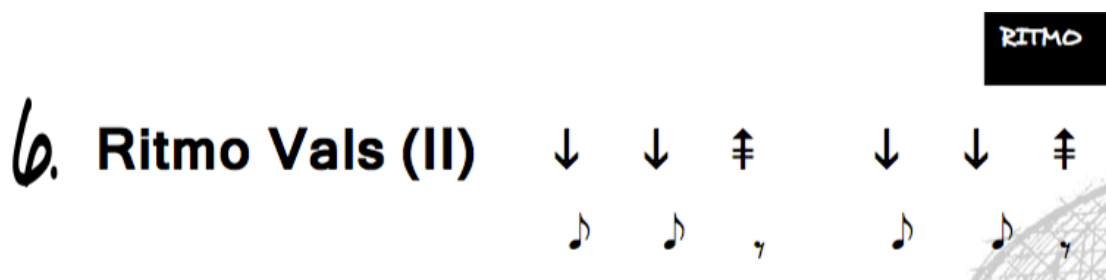
Figure 7. 8 Arrows and symbols for open and muted strums
(Paredes, 2006, p. 16)

This double crossing bar, for example, will be used in other methods to designate a completely different type of effect. In the following fragment, it is used to designate a '*floreo*', an embellishment composed of four 16th notes that are performed very quickly by the right hand:
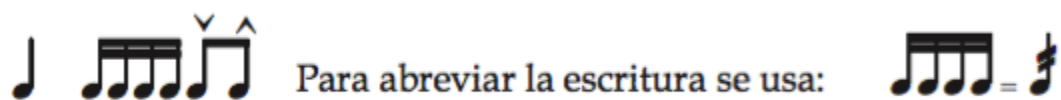
The technical possibilities and 'ways' of performing all these effects are very diverse, while equally diverse, naturally, are the ways of representing them. Performers are aware of this diversity of executing possibilities. Leonardo Lozano comments on this issue while describing the type of systematisation he has developed for *cuatro* writing with one of his students in Venezuela. He explicitly accepts, however, the limits of the exercise on behalf of the existent diversity of technical performances:

Leonardo Lozano: We work with a type of notation that I developed with Andrés Trujillo, in the frame of a thesis called 'Development of technical and expressive possibilities of the Venezuelan *cuatro*'. We developed an integral notation. On the one hand, notes and heights are represented, while on the other hand, rhythmic issues and directionality of the hand when strumming are represented. Everything you do with your hands is perfectly translatable into musical nomenclature. We use a specific sign for each type of strumming. I do not use all the strums because in terms of technical resources each *cuatro* player is different. What I did was collect my own occurrences and those of some other musicians who are close to me.

Some systems are, however less complex. When playing together and in cases when it is necessary, musicians will simply use codes made up of letters and numbers to represent certain types of embellishments on which they agree before the performance takes place.

Luis Carvajal: ... once we did something with the Philharmonic Orchestra. I had great friends, William Leon played the *maracas* with us, with him we

also wrote... we used codes such as 1A, 1B, 1C; so I looked at him and made a signal and we managed to combine our playing... I knew what *repique* was coming and we did it at the same time. We had a code and we did it exactly together. It sounded very nice.

Notation as a problematic aspect of translation

In concluding this section on notation, I want to say that the written representation of *cuatro* music is still problematic, especially in its more sophisticated device: the music score. As stated earlier, notation and literacy are natural traits of the modern pedagogic paradigm. However, the 'capture' it exerts on transmission seems to be, until now, timid. I found no clear signs of a radical difference in the way notation is used in transmission processes between open and closed systems of transmission. All across the learning spectrum, notation plays a subsidiary role and when it appears it does so mainly as a harmonic reference. In other words, I could not observe an evident 'translation' between contexts relating to the way in which the memory of music is preserved. In open systems of transmission, music is registered in the bodies of musicians and is rendered present through performance (live or virtual). This 'memory device' is by no means 'replaced' or translated into a written support for music when *cuatro* learning occurs in academic contexts, where the use of notation is central and usually more natural.

This situation, as argued throughout the present chapter, might be explained by the fact that imitation has been, in itself, the current practice for *cuatro* learning for decades, perhaps centuries. Secondly, its writing, and especially that of right-hand effects, is complex and its reading can turn out to be unnecessarily demanding, which places us in front of a pragmatic issue: in general terms it is more practical to deliver *cuatro* music through imitation than through a written piece.

Thirdly, *cuatro* playing is very diverse. In this sense, deciding which techniques and ways of execution should be used as 'references' for *cuatro* learning, and choosing an adequate coding for them, seems to be a very difficult – if not impossible – task. On the other hand, selecting a unique set of codes and techniques to be systematised involves the risk of normalising and homogenising the instrument's execution; at the same time, this could render invisible a wide and diverse variety of performance

expressions that constitute one of the *cuatro*'s main attributes. These are a diverse range of expressions that are alive and changing permanently. As such, for the moment, it is perhaps desirable to rather speak about the 'notations' of the *cuatro* – in plural – and not about one single set of normalised norms for writing its music and techniques.

Finally, I have brought up some arguments related to the fact that notation can only capture certain elements of *cuatro* playing. In this sense, written representation is merely an approximation of how music can sound. However, the 'complete' product is subject to many other elements related to the performers' previous, situated experiences that give them additional knowledge (frequently tacit) in relation to, for example, style and *sabor*. Some may argue that this is not only an issue pertaining to the *cuatro*. In fact, one could put forth a similar idea regarding the performance of any other musical instrument, popular or classical. I agree with this stance. What is interesting and particular about the *cuatro*, however, is that it is being learned in both closed and open systems with imitation as a central way of learning. In universities, undergraduate *cuatro* programmes working with a soloist repertoire are being developed mainly based upon playing by ear and, most interesting of all, they are producing outstanding outcomes in terms of technique and musicality.

Chapter 8

Musicking alone and with others

Learning while playing with others is an outstanding trait of popular and traditional music in a wide diversity of cultures around the world. In connection to social learning, several authors also report high levels of enthusiasm and celebration as part of music making. This situation naturally leads the focus of our attention towards the social character of music:

> That being so, a musical performance is a much richer and more complex affair than is allowed by those who concentrate their attention exclusively on the musical work and on its effect on an individual listener. If we widen the circle of our attention to take in the entire set of relationships that constitute a performance, we shall see that music's primary meanings are not individual at all, but social. Those social meanings are not to be hived off into something called a 'sociology' of music that is separate from the meaning of the sounds but are fundamental to an understanding of the activity that is called music (Small, 1998, p. 8).

From this standpoint, throughout this chapter I will try to explore the different ways in which the experience of playing and learning in collective contexts manifests itself in closed and open systems of transmission. I will discuss the emerging relations between the action of musicking and the action of individual or collective practice. I wish to mention that I have witnessed a high degree of versatility among *cuatro* players. On the one hand, I found a generalised capacity to play more than one instrument. On the other hand, I also found a common ability to play in more than one musical role, especially within closed systems of transmission. This means being able to play the role of accompaniment as part of an ensemble or as a soloist.

Throughout this chapter, I will also try to pinpoint some of those social meanings that are built in relation to music learning and that are, in many cases, central for transmission. In line with Small's ideas, my intention is to displace my view from the

musical objects (e.g. detecting repertoires, techniques) and from the more visible side of transmission (e.g. simply describing the types of activities that involve social learning from a formal and external perspective) into those structuring elements that function as hidden impulses for collective practices. In this sense, I will place emphasis on certain emotional issues such as social empathy and collective celebration of music, as constituting aspects of the social learning of the *cuatro*.

Musicking in open systems of transmission

Playing with others is a central part of *cuatro* learning in open systems of transmission. Practicing and rehearsing, alone and with others, usually finds its final meaning in the act of making music, which is generally a socially shared experience. However, preparation is usually an act of musicking in itself: *cuatro* players 'musick' in preparation for musicking. *Cuatro* solo players do exist but even then, they will very frequently count on others to back them up during performances.

Besides taking place in domestic settings, collective playing also takes place at concert halls, contests, festivals, restaurants, bars, *parrandos*, schools, culture houses, for recordings, radio and TV broadcastings, and at other venues. This collective production of music, as mentioned earlier, corresponds well to the typical empathetic and communal identification that oral cultures have with knowledge (Ong, 2002). As I will show, throughout the experience of musicking with others, different types of learning are taking place, within a variety of contexts and activities. What will be described in detail throughout this chapter coincides well with Green's findings regarding the types of learning adopted by popular musicians:

> Learning from each other in pairs and groups, through casual encounters and organized sessions, both aside from and during music making. Through such interaction they copy and exchange ideas, knowledge and techniques, learn to play together, including making covers, improvisations and compositions, of original music (Green, 2002 p. 97)[74].

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[74] Shapiro (2011, pp. 70, 72, 76, 79, 81-82, 86, 91, 106) discusses the role of social learning and music making in rock bands in Argentina. In addition to this, Downey (2009, p. 50) discusses the role of sessions in the process of learning traditional Irish music.

On the other hand, most of these processes are framed in strong emotional experiences between people: family bonds, friendship, admiration between musicians, motivation to learn ignited by desire to master repertoires and techniques. Indeed, these are some of the emerging issues in participants' testimonies.

Music making implies a direct contact with the experience of sound, and its deep meaning and substance. A substance is related to a rich variety of elements or layers of experience that can, to some extent, be approached in isolated manners (e.g. playing a fragment of the song, repeating a technical gesture, analysing a rhythmic section) but that only acquire their complete meaning through the act of musicking. Using once again the category of energy, Smilde comments:

> Through our direct engagement with music, through really getting on the inside of musical experience, we internalise the collective energy of the music making, we absorb the subtle nuances of the music and we feel the music through our whole being (Smilde, 2005, p. 6).

As stated in a previous chapter, a recurrent niche for social learning of the *cuatro* music is family, especially in the case of traditional music. Very commonly, learning in family contexts is attached not only to casual moments of music making at home, but also to actual 'family ensembles' that actively participate in local music ecosystems. An outstanding example of this situation is the case of Marcos Parales, who started a traditional music group with his brothers called 'Copleros del Arauca' when he was very young. Their ensemble was active for several years, touring and playing throughout several regions of Colombia:

> *Marcos Parales*: ... we went out and we rehearsed ... they called us for supper but we didn't stop playing... we played and played and played until at 12 we left. David (my brother) was 12 years old. We went to El Meta and Socorro, Santander[75].

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[75] Meta and Santander are two Colombian provinces from the llanos and Andean region respectively.

Several musicians bring up this type of intense emotional drive to learn that is described by Marcos, in several testimonies, as part of their personal process. The fact that the learners actually share the same living space allows, without doubt, a particular active immersion in practicing and playing that is not normally found in other musical contexts. Within a similar situation, Juan Carlos Contreras offers a fine description of his experiences while touring with his dad and his uncle, playing since very early within a very diverse variety of musical settings:

Juan Carlos Contreras: I started to like the *cuatro* very much and when I was 11 I told him (his father) that I wanted to learn how to play the instrument, so he gave me the first classes... one month later I went out with him and with my uncle to offer the first serenade. And so I started my musical life ... in the literary centres at schools, I always played the *cuatro* and I sang. And then we started touring around in villages and playing in schools, in universities, we toured Boyacá[76] and Santander.

Normally, each member of the family ensemble specialises in playing one instrument, but rotation is very common.

As in Marco and Juan Carlos' experiences, several other participants also report having started very quickly to actively take part with their families or relatives in live music performances. This is, without doubt, a very important trigger for learning, since proficiency has to be acquired rapidly and in response to the particular demands of the emerging artistic engagements, which frequently involve, at the same time, a working alternative for the family group. The following testimony gives us a taste of how quickly a learning process can be unleashed. In this particular case, the participant also reports a very intense motivation towards music, even if the process is not precisely embedded in what we would consider a 'positive emotional environment':

John Jairo Torres: (My uncle) ... used to beat me when he taught me, he scolded me... 'Learn!!! I remember that I learned to play a *gaván* in one afternoon. In one afternoon I learned to play *cuatro*. He told me, 'It's like this' ... (he

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[76] Boyacá is an Andean province in Colombia.

demonstrates the *golpe* with open strings)... I would say, 'Uncle, but how is it?'. He would say, 'Come on, learn!!!'... My uncle was a little bit crazy. I tried very hard.... I already knew how to play *gaván*. About four days before a *parrando* in the savannah he told me, 'let's play at the *parrando*' and I said, 'What are we going to play if I do not know anything yet?'. He said, 'What I taught you...we will play the *gaván*, the *periquera* and the *guacharaca* ... with that we can spend the whole night partying'.

This was not the only case in which physical or psychological mistreatment was reported in relation to learning. In fact, several musicians who were raised up in traditional rural environments allude to this.

At a certain moment along their learning path, *cuatro* players start taking part in ensembles with other musicians, different from family and relatives. These groups normally include colleagues with of a similar age or level of development and advanced artists. In some cases, friends start up an ensemble that will play at local venues, with a special interest in contests that are, as stated earlier, an important platform for the visibility of young artists. In some cases, ensemble activities will also include travelling and recording.

In addition to this, making music with others frequently involves performing with advanced players – a practice that is inspiring for young musicians who report high levels of learning in this sort of situation. Julián Croswaithe comments on his experience playing with famous harpist Abdul Farfán. Julián points out the valuable things he learned from Abdul in relation to style, thanks to his musical example and his advice:

Julián Crosswaithe: In my case, I worked with Abdul Farfán ... we worked in a restaurant for almost a year. We had a very cool group here in Bogotá. It helped me to strengthen my playing, he's a musician who has recorded a lot, he knows what is missing, what's spare, and he's a good critique. He said, 'Watch out, move this here because it sounds too hard, or too soft ...', you begin to balance ... to worry about that ... and I think it is the traditional part of *cuatro*, everything is there.

In this same sense, live performances, especially when playing with advanced musicians, are experiences that enhance the development of particular and necessary abilities in *cuatro* playing. Examples of this include the improvement of harmonic intuition and the ability to play by ear. Christian Guataquira alludes to his experiences while playing with advanced musicians in serenades when he was starting to play the *cuatro*. He was simply 'pushed into the water' by a senior musician so as to force him to find his own way out:

> *Christian Guataquira*: At that time Ricardo, my former teacher, called me and asked me if I wanted to play with him. I said that I certainly did. It was for serenades … With him I also learned a lot because he pushed me to excel beyond. Then it was no longer working with chord symbols, teaching was different … it was 'as it is'. We would be in a serenade and he would say, 'We´ll play on D, you will decide when to enter'. He would begin playing and one would have to see if it was the fourth degree, or the fifth … or the first. That was a really cool study.

This is a good example of a type of learning that is not 'linear' in the sense that it does not involve a simple to complex predetermined structure in which, for example, particular proficiencies are developed in learners *before* musicians are allowed to engage in real life experiences where these abilities will be required. On the contrary, the on-the-spot experiences actually operate as an emotional trigger to develop those proficiencies.

Before referring to the emotional aspects that are at stake in collective learning, I want to conclude this section by mentioning that, during a performance, a wide diversity of actors and elements (musical and non-musical) take part in an interplay of relations within the social ritual of musicking and contribute to the quality of the general experience. Christopher Small comments in relation to the term *musicking*:

> To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing. We might at times even extend its meaning to what the person is doing who takes the tickets at

the door or the hefty men who shift the piano and the drums or the roadies who set up the instruments and carry out the sound checks or the cleaners who clean up after everyone else has gone. They, too, are all contributing to the nature of the event that is a musical performance (Small, 1998, p. 9).

From this stance, learning that occurs within the act of musicking with others involves not only a comprehension of issues related to the instrument, but also with a variety of other dimensions, such as: relations with sound and with other musicians, and the emotional meanings of music. However, it is also related to other apparently more 'pragmatic' issues in which other people, besides musicians, have played a part at some point in the process, such as the disposition of elements in space, amplification, lights, accommodation, etc. Based on this posture, if the *cuatro* was to be learned *exclusively* within a music classroom (individually or collectively), the process would be missing important elements of transmission that only emerge within the actual enactment of the social ritual of music making; indeed, this point builds on Small's ideas. As will be discussed in the proposal of the present project, this aspect contributes to strengthening the idea of explicitly enhancing the active participation of students within local music ecosystems as a central component of *cuatro* learning.

The emotional dimension of playing with others

Several researchers, who have studied how popular musicians learn in a variety of contexts, have pointed out at the emotional dimension of collective learning as an important aspect of the experience. This is especially the case when playing involves friendship relations between mates; indeed, in this regard, authors pinpoint the emergence of emotional issues and values such as: shared enjoyment, tolerance, shared taste, commitment, responsibility and collective support (Shapiro, 2011; Downey, 2009; Green, 2002, 2008).

Similar emotional traits have been found throughout this study. Strong emotional bonds arise between musicians within *cuatro* contexts, and in many cases, making music together is a natural part of friendship. Some of these shared experiences between friends and mates end up in situations that actually involve living together as part of learning for a more or less extended period of time. Isaac Tacha,

founder of Colombian celebrated group *Café y Petróleo*, narrates a situation of this type where sharing knowledge and the emotional drive toward music are at the centre of the learning experience:

> *Isaac Tacha*: When we founded the group Café y Petróleo... we all lived together in an apartment. I had my wife, and I left her aside ... I changed her for these musicians and for music ... We got up, had breakfast, grabbed the instruments and started rehearsing. It was eight o'clock at night and we were still playing ... sometimes we didn't even have time for lunch. First, there was not much for lunch and second, there was a lot to learn. So it was a total dedication, total concentration ... a total immersion in the world of knowledge.

Some musicians are grateful to their mates for the received learning and will refer to them as 'brothers'. In line with this, admiration for other musicians' capacities within groups also emerges as part of several testimonies:

> *Alex Romero:* ... we have also been contesting with the group, we have toured outside the country. With Cholo Valderrama we have been playing for about three, four years... it is a wonderful experience because it is an excellent group, with excellent harpists… Juan Pablo, the harpist, is an excellent musician. D' Artagnan, the guitarist, he has a quite renowned musical history.

Practicing, playing, rehearsing

Preparing for a performance with or in front of others can include personal practice. Sometimes there is no preparation at all. Shared exploration and copying recordings are central parts of practice. The idea of personal, individual 'study' emerges from the testimonies of some of the young *cuatro* players, especially those who are developing a professional career. In older musicians it is rarer. This coincides with Ochoa and Convers's (Convers & Ochoa, 2009) findings in relation to the notion of 'study' among young musicians in the traditional music of the Colombian Pacific Coast, which tends to

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be more common among new generations of musicians than in elder ones. This phenomenon might be associated, in some cases, with the increasing technical demands that are imposed by festivals and contests. This does not mean, of course, that *cuatro* players in general, do not practice. In fact, they practice all the time. The difference between the categories 'study' and 'practice' is subtle and, to some extent, both issues can easily overlap within the different testimonies. From my point view, study can happen with or without any relation to an external event or performance; in this sense, it is sometimes rather understood as an isolated routine that keeps the performer in 'good shape'. Practice, on the other hand, usually involves some type of preparation of repertoire, for example, for a particular event or music session. However, again, the difference is not clear-cut and musicians will use one term or the other in a variable way. In this vein, those *cuatro* players who report study as part of their personal work, understand it as an action that is necessary and that should be sustained. Julián Crosswaithe, for example, comments:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: I was very concentrated on the *cuatro* and each day I realised that further study was necessary, I did not want to neglect the *cuatro*.

In other cases, musicians see personal practice as a means by which to improve technical abilities. One of the *cuatro* players recalls the moments of personal practice as 'study' of particular technical elements:

> *Alex Romero*: ... instead of going out to play, what I did was to take the *cuatro* and study, study the chords and the traditional *golpes* of *música llanera*.

The idea of personal study that occurs within a prefixed 'number of daily hours' is non-existent in open systems of transmission. Once again, personal practice seems to derive more from a personal drive or impulse towards the achievement of certain technical abilities or the learning of certain repertoires. Luis Pino, for example, comments that he would spend hours and hours studying the *cuatro* moved by an evident intrinsic motivation to learn the instrument, in a moment in life when he decided that music was his main aspiration:

Luis Pino: At that time, I went with my family to Maracaibo and decided that I did not want to study high school formally, I did not want to spend time on that, but to study the *cuatro*. I learned all the records of *Gurrufío*, I studied *cuatro* eight or nine hours a day.

Practice also happens collectively, as when musicians share time exploring techniques and repertoires. Interestingly, most of the testimonies reporting group practice, which is not the same as a formal rehearsal, include experiences within family contexts that permit the deployment of a particular type of 'domestic' expression of practice that just 'happens' throughout daily life. In the following testimony, the participant's personal drive towards music is shared with his brother and is, again, reflected in hours and hours of practice, embedded in intrinsic motivation:

Juan Carlos Contreras: … since I woke up I put a cassette on and I started to play *maracas* or I started to play *cuatro*, I played *bandola* all day, with my brother we spent our days playing *música llanera...*

In other cases, the presence of advanced players within the family niche offers the possibility for learners to have support in the development of their musical abilities. Carlos Aldana reports the benefits for his stability in meter when his dad played the *cuatro* while he practiced the *bandola*. I write in my field notes:

Carlos Aldana comments that his dad played the *cuatro* at home to help him. It helped him not to abandon the meter of what the *cuatro* was performing. He adds, 'but I felt it was something I had known since long ago' ... adapting to the *cuatro* was natural, the issue of meter was learned fluently.

(*Field notes, Maní Casanare*).

Carlos' comment about his sensation of familiarity with music as something that had been instilled in him a long time ago allows us to connect this testimony with the

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issue of early enculturation. Carlos' father is a professional musician; his family lived within an active and rich music environment that impacted Carlos' early experiences in a positive way. Interestingly, this impact was not only expressed in a sense of emotional closeness to music but also in the actual development of a concrete musical ability: the capacity to play within a particular meter. This is concrete evidence of the influence of early enculturation on the development of musical proficiencies that are enhanced through unconscious listening that can be transferred into concrete, practical abilities later on.

Other testimonies of group practice evidence approaches that are more systematic. These include, for example, intentional transport of music so as to develop instrumental proficiency within diverse harmonic structures and a broader knowledge of the *cuatro*'s fingerboard, or explicit changes in the velocity of repertoires for practice.

Finally, another type of collective practice is, of course, formal rehearsals. Stable groups will often have rehearsals which are usually very intense and frequent when a concert is approaching. Some musicians, including those belonging to very professional ensembles, place a very high value on this type of practice:

> *Luis Carvajal*: (Cholo Valderrama) always liked good performances, his shows were very professional, and wherever we were we rehearsed, it's important not to improvise. And you can see where Cholo is nowadays. He has always wanted to have behind him a good group, a good musical backing.

Peer-directed learning and group learning

Within most of the group experiences described above, different types of collective learning can be detected. On the one hand, peer-directed learning is evident in several situations. This is a type of learning that 'involves the conscious sharing of knowledge and skills, through, for example, demonstration' (Green, 2010, p. 23). As mentioned earlier in relation to practice, peer-directed *cuatro* learning can occur in a more or less systematic way. It frequently occurs as part of a natural exchange between musicians of a similar musical level. Young *cuatro* player Miguel Uva comments:

Andrés: Do you play with young colleagues who are learning the *cuatro* as well? Do you gather to explore things together?

Miguel Uva: Yes, exactly ... with a friend ... he ... I could see that he could play the *cuatro* using notes, inversions, and I became more interested. Right? In relation to inversions... so we would exchange ideas ... he taught me, I taught him ... the few things I knew...

Conscious exchanges between peers can also take place framed in the actual exercise of a music ensemble. Connected to the exercise of performing a certain repertoire, a musician will become interested in a particular technique of another member of the group, for example, and will ask him or her for guidance. *Harp* player Hildo Aguirre tells of how he enriched his *cuatro* technical tools and his style by constantly examining other musicians' ways of performing things:

Hildo Aguirre: I started to play with great *cuatro* players. That influenced my learning; I played with Beco Dáaz, Carlos Flórez, another great artist ... when they accompanied me they began to teach me things. They began to harmonise certain songs that were quite simple. I would be playing and listening to them. I would say, 'Hey. What did you play there?'. They would go, 'I'm just doing this or that...'. I would play with Juan Carlos Contreras, with my brother ... Various *cuatro* players. Every weekend I played with a different *cuatro* player and each one brought his contribution to my process. I was used to a certain sound... when someone did something different I would ask, 'Hey, what are you doing there...?' and I started analysing why this one note sounded good here, etc ... So I started to enrich what I already did. Or if someone executed a *floreo*... I would ask myself, 'Hey, how does he perform that *floreo?'*... So I would learn a new *floreo* from somebody and started to apply it...

This is another good example of how *cuatro* learning in open systems of transmission takes place in rhizomatic, non-linear ways. Musicians fill out an on-going jigsaw puzzle with chunks of knowledge that are gradually incorporated into their own

repertoire of abilities to perform the instrument. There is no linearity here, and no simple-to-complex structure, since knowledge is not pre-organised; it rather 'arrives' and is captured by the learner's particular interest and desire and is incorporated holistically through peer exchange and self-reflection.

In other cases, peer-directed learning occurs within formal ensembles when one of the members shares a particular strength or knowledge with the rest of the group as part of collective exploration. Referring to his experience playing with Sinsonte, an ensemble that fuses traditional music, jazz and other genres, Juan Carlos Contreras comments:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: ... there is the guy from the coast that brings us stuff such as *porros*[77], all those possibilities help you to approach... we started out a group to play *porro* with the *cuatro* and it sounds very traditional. Right?

Besides peer-directed learning, group learning is permanently taking place during the informal practice sessions, rehearsals and performances to which I referred in the previous section. The group learning which was observed involves situations 'where there is no conscious demonstration or teaching as such, but learning takes place through watching and imitation during music making; as well as talking endlessly about music during and outside of rehearsals' (Green, 2010, p. 23). I will come back to similar experiences of peer-directed and group learning within closed systems of transmission spaces in the next section.

Making music with others in closed systems of transmission

As open systems of transmission, making music is also an important part of learning within the private lessons and institutional settings that were studied. In the same vein, there is also a very strong presence of collective spaces within lessons and concert activities. The main differences between both types of settings (open and closed systems of transmission) are, on one hand, that the act of musicking is now attached to the learning processes that take place within '*cuatro* lessons', where it is

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[77] The *porro* is a musical style and dance from the Caribbean region of Colombia.

permeated, to some extent, by the modern pedagogic paradigm rationality in terms of fragmentation, isolation and sequentiality. On the other hand, the idea of 'individual practice' is much more explicit in closed systems of transmission.

Individual lessons – group lessons

In closed systems of transmission both individual and group lessons are imparted, according to the context. Private lessons can be individual or collective; academies usually deliver group lessons and all three of the universities that were studied offer individual *cuatro* lessons as a central support for learning, though in connection with complementary collective spaces.

Lessons usually happen once or twice per week and are often assigned to a teacher who is in charge of the learning process of the students. They normally have a predetermined duration that is commonly between one and several hours per week. Individual lessons might alternate with other spaces in which collective practice or learning occurs. For example, besides individual spaces, some universities will also offer spaces where the teacher meets with all the *cuatro* students in order to work collectively on technical and musical issues; alternatively, students are offered the possibility to play in chamber music groups and ensembles.

Collective sessions might be more or less structured. Sometimes they happen in a quite informal way within private lessons. In this case, they offer learners a practical experience in which they are motivated by peers' playing. In general terms, teachers value group sessions in a positive way. Even when individual spaces are opened to work with particular cases and according to particular levels, there is very usually some type of collective space that is offered in parallel. Rafael Martínez refers to this 'balance' between both types of formats while stressing the possibilities for exchange between participants that are offered by collective sessions:

Rafael Martínez: I have done both type of classes; as the level rises, I work with them individually, to better focus on the technical details, however, I never stop doing group classes even with students that have a high performance. (With group classes) a better environment for sharing experiences is generated.

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In this same vein, teachers point out that music academies offer a clear advantage over private lessons because they offer an environment that enhances learning through permanent group learning. Hildo Aguirre, director of the music academy *Llano y Joropo* in Bogotá, pinpoints the benefits of playing with other musicians in 'real' experiences that offer defying experiences for learners:

> *Hildo Aguirre*: That is a disadvantage that some of the students who receive private lessons at home might experience, they have no chance to play in a group, with a *cuatro* player. Something else, when accompanying a singer, they also feel clueless. It not only happens here with *cuatro* players but also with harpists, you can learn a song and play it with a *cuatro* player but when you play with the singer you do not know how to do it, what the right speed for accompaniment is, or how many repetitions it has; you might finish the song at the middle because you are not aware of the form. In my case it's one of the things that I emphasise the most in the academy, that they learn how to accompany.

In some settings, interesting combinations occur between individual and group lessons:

> In Julian's class there are four students. All are teenagers, between 14 and 17 years old, approximately. While he is working with them individually in sessions of 5 to 10 minutes, others are practicing at the same time in the room next door.
>
> (*Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo*).

In this case, students rotate and at the end of the session, the teacher gathers the group in order to practice some of the shared pieces. In this same academy, I observed another interesting session in which students of very diverse musical levels and ages participated:

The class takes place in a classroom where the teacher works simultaneously with Julian, 14 years old, who has the more advanced level of the group. Julián is already playing a solo repertoire that he studies with another teacher (Julian Croswaithe). Two adults, around 45 to 50 years, a woman and a man, are also taking part in the class. They have a more basic level than Julian. Later, a young man and a lady of about 20 years, also with a basic level, join the group. They come with a baby in a carriage.

(*Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo*).

This teacher works within the same classroom with all the students simultaneously, but addresses each one of them individually. At a certain point, he plays the same song with all the students. I want to mention that I was struck at this point by the amazing amount of noise that came from inside the room while all of the students practiced their parts. Participants, however, managed to keep on working on their personal practice without losing concentration.

Different types of learning situations emerge within collective contexts in which students are models for one another. These relations can be more or less intentional, according to the concrete situation. They can involve direct, explicit questioning by a student to his or her neighbour on a particular matter.

As in some open systems of transmission experiences, teachers will sometimes make use of electronic devices in order to enrich students' learning processes by, for example, bringing pre-recorded sessions of the repertoire in which other instruments, different from the *cuatro*, are included. In this way, they can recreate, to some extent, playing with 'real life' formats and they manipulate parts in order to pinpoint certain musical elements:

Rafael Martínez: With respect to recordings, I use a PC with the music written in Guitar Pro (*cuatro*, *bass* and *maracas* or percussion). The *cuatro* player should get used to hearing the *bass* to fully understand the harmonic concepts. The *cuatro*, due to its tuning and number of strings, doesn't define harmony very clearly. So the *bass* is fundamental.

In terms of values, some teachers see the class session as an opportunity to work on the issue of discipline and containment within the group. Luis Pino points out this aspect as a necessary condition for building adequate frames for learning and, at the same time, he refers to it as an important asset for professional life:

> *Luis Pino*: In a sound test you must have discipline, I place a lot of emphasis on those things: the seriousness with which you assume the instrument, if it is a large group or a small group, with two or three musicians ... each one has his turn: 'Let´s hear what your doubt is' and everyone is silent and listening. Because others can learn from your doubt as well, you have to see why that person brings up that question, even if you have already resolved it.

Finally, I want to point out at the issue of balance between individual and collective spaces in closed systems of transmission, which in the case of universities is expressed in terms of academic credits within institutional discourse. Néstor Lambuley, former director of the undergraduate programme at *ASAB* University in Bogota, comments:

> *Néstor Lambuley*: In the appropriation of the instrument, the instrument has seven credits, represented in two class hours, and the rest in cooperative and personal study hours.

Similar information can be found within this university's institutional documents. Interestingly, a similar type of rationality is used to fix the teaching conditions in terms of time and format of the lessons (i.e. individual or collective) for all the instruments within the performance emphasis of this programme, independently from instruments' particularities and from particular students' needs. In relation to time, these conditions are expressed in a quantitative way; this means they are expressed through a credit system that establishes an *a priori* naturally accepted proportion of 'contact hours' and other types of autonomous work. This is evidence of the influence of the modern pedagogic paradigm's view, which normally understands learning as a

linear and causal process expressed in abstract conditions that apply to every instrument and every student in the same terms. The modern pedagogic paradigm's logic is based on the idea that if x student goes through x number of levels playing x type of repertoire within certain types of conditions (i.e. the duration and format of his or her lessons), he or she will attain the ideal profile of a professional musician. This abstract and ideal curriculum will apply to all students, independent of their learning rhythms and artistic necessities or interests. The implementation of this type of curriculum implies, however, subtle negotiations that take place between personal interests, abilities and requirements and this 'ideal' programme. For example, a student might extend his or her undergraduate process a couple of semesters because his or her process is slower than those of other students, or he or she might be able to negotiate the repertoire with his or her teacher according to his or her personal interests.

The degree of flexibility of this negotiation depends on the particularity of universities and teachers, but its complex nuances escape the reach of this study. However, based on my own experience and on the findings of this project, I can state that universities tend to have high levels of rigidity that emerge as a correlate of a strong drive toward control of the learning process (e.g. what to learn, when, for how long, with whom, and so on). Some students adapt better to this type of structure, both in terms of contents and learning approaches; others adapt less easily. When negotiation reaches its limits for institutions, students are excluded from the system through a process of examination and subsequent sanction. This rationality is strongly embedded in universities' general paradigms and expressed in a pedagogic discourse that is naturally shared by most of the academic communities and supported by institutional documents.

Musicking within modern pedagogic paradigm rationality

In almost all the class sessions which I attended or that I was able to observe, teachers continuously play with students. As we will see, playing in these types of settings is sometimes free and fluid, while in other cases it occurs in a fragmented way within situations that offer teachers higher levels of control over the learning process through

actions such as manipulation of musical elements (e.g. changes in tempo) or intentional sequentiality.

The exercise of playing together normally involves teachers and students assuming different types of roles that vary according to the particular pedagogic and musical needs of each situation. Sometimes teachers perform accompaniments while students perform the solo parts; other times the students accompany their teachers. Within bigger ensembles, the teacher actually performs the role of arranger and director, while assigning parts to small groups of students within the adapted repertoire.

Performing the musical piece that is being studied with the accompaniment of the teacher offers the student, first of all, a consistent rhythmic base that guides him or her and helps him or her to develop a good sense of pulse. At the same time, the teacher's performance is a model for style and technical issues. It also permits expressive interactions. Based on one of the observations, I comment in my field notes:

> Playing the piece with the accompaniment of Juan Carlos gives the student a rhythmic structure and also a musical context. There is an expressive interaction. Juan Carlos varies the accompaniment, enriching it with *floreos*, harmonic changes, and some timbral effects...

> (*Field notes, ASAB University*).

In addition to this, an important trait of most *cuatro* teachers is an outstanding capacity to play different instruments. Very commonly, they will take advantage of this proficiency in order to enrich the experience of musicking within sessions. Playing in class with other instruments such as *maracas*, *bandola*, *guitar* or *bass* is not only an opportunity for students to develop specific musical abilities, but also enhances motivation. Christian Guataquira points out the importance of being able to perform other instruments as an important tool for teaching. More specifically, in relation to traditional *cuatro* music, Christian comments on the pertinence of using the *bandola* to perform the melodies while the student performs the accompaniment on the *cuatro*:

Christian Guataquira: I ... play the *maracas*, the basics. I play the *bandola*. I think that as a *cuatro* player, it is important for teaching. Because if you are going to teach a Quitapesares[78], well, there are audios available, but it's cool if the student can play the Quitapesares with the teacher ... it is very important. I tell the student, 'Well, let's play a *Gaván*' ... (he mimics playing and hums the melody of *Gaván*) by then the boy is excited ... 'Ah, cool ' and at the same time they are learning how an ensemble is formed. Because they can play the *Gaván* but when the melody sounds they get all mixed up, they get nervous ... 'Where do I come in? ...' So it is also important to be able to play the melody as part of teaching...

In general terms, I found evidence within testimonies of high levels of enjoyment attached to the experience of playing with other students and with the teacher. Leonardo Lozano narrates with passion how the experience of musicking with his *cuatro* teacher when he was young had a strong emotional impact on him. At the same time, he describes an interesting state in which he forgets his musical individuality as he dives into the shared performance as a unit:

Leonardo Lozano: Since childhood I was doing 'chamber music'[79], because while he played the melodies in the *cuatro* I would accompany him. We always played together. As a child I did not realise what I was learning of all that beauty, he embellished music with arpeggios, with dissonances, he embellished everything he played. And one would feel part of that entire marvel. At some point I would forget that it was him who was doing all that. Then, of course, playing with him was a complete celebration.

In relation to traditional music, students see the opportunity of musicking with other traditional instruments as a chance to have a taste, to some extent, of the

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[78] *Quitapesares* is a traditional *golpe* from the llanos region.
[79] In Spanish, the use of the term 'chamber music' is sometimes associated with small music formats, which do not necessarily perform classical music.

traditional contexts of *cuatro* music. Iván Parra, one of the students of the *cuatro* diploma, comments:

> *Iván Parra*: And there was obviously the experience of the final concert: with somebody who played the *maracas*, with the *bass*. That makes you feel more in the context, more inside that wonderful world that is the *música llanera*.

I would like to make a link, at this point, between the experience of playing traditional music that is described by this participant and the different levels of enculturation that were brought up in Chapter 6. I pointed out that secondary enculturation implies late or virtual contact with traditional music and the contexts where it is produced. In the case of people who were not raised in the original contexts, I referred to listening to music on CDs, for example, as a 'softer' type of late enculturation than the one that takes place when people attend festivals. The experience of playing with other traditional instruments, such as the one described by Iván, would also be of a 'secondary' type, but it would be stronger than listening to CDs, since it implies direct and experiential contact with some of the instruments which are normally involved in music in local contexts. In both cases, there is a relation to music outside the original contexts without any explicit connection to other contextual issues. However, the active contact with other instruments involves a deeper level of proximity with the original contexts than the virtual experience of just listening to the recorded music. Once again, it can be noted that the process of enculturation has different levels of nuances according to the degree of closeness that the learning situation has with the experience of making or listening to music within the original contexts in which it is produced. Consciousness of these diverse levels of intensity in terms of enculturation might offer pertinent clues for the selection of pedagogical strategies aiming to trigger meaningful learning in connection to music.

Iván, who is also a music teacher, points out the high value of actively making music within this type of course. He considers it a good example of how instruments should be taught to children and young people:

Iván Parra: But from the first moment, we were always making music, and I see its value not only for me, but for a common student, for a teenager, or a child… the first thing this student wants to do when having an instrument in his hands is: making it sound, producing music.

Finally, Iván states that important feelings and values are enhanced within the experience of making music with others in a class. From his point of view, playing in an ensemble makes one feel important and part of the group. At the same time, it leads one to feel responsible for the general musical result:

Andrés: What do you think about working in collective sessions and not in individual classes? What differences do you see between these two types of class formats?

Iván Parra: I think that the group experience will always be more valuable because when you feel as part of the mass, of the group, of the band… it makes you feel important and makes you feel the responsibility that you have, that your role is as important as that of others and you have that pressure… you can't fail.

Interestingly, emotions and values emerging in institutional contexts in relation to making music with others in general terms coincide with those brought up by participants within open systems of transmission contexts. Issues such as motivation, enjoyment, cooperation and responsibility are referred to in both types of settings as an important part of collective musicking within learning processes. Further local research could examine, in a more systematic way, subtler nuances in relation to the emotional effects of collective practices and music making in *cuatro* learning. An example of this could be comparing the degrees of motivation and enjoyment that emerge between individual sessions and group sessions, or between group sessions that include only *cuatro* playing and those that incorporate other instruments. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate these issues while comparing those moments of sessions that involve playing complete pieces of a repertoire with situations that are rather centred on 'working' with fragments and manipulating musical elements; indeed, the latter will be described in the next section. Similar

comparative studies could be conducted locally within the learning processes of other genres, such as classical music or jazz.

Playing, fragmenting, isolating, ordering and manipulating musical elements…

> *Andrés*: We (The teacher and me) finish the class by practicing the piece *Amanecer Tuyero*; we play it together (we always play the tunes together – so far he has never sat to listen to me playing by myself). When I make a mistake, Juan Carlos stops and we repeat it from that point. We have begun to learn two new sections, one of strums and another one of arpeggios. He shows me both sections slowly; first he separates them, then we connect and play both parts together. If he notices that I'm not able to play something, Juan Carlos slows down the tempo. If I have questions, for example about a technical gesture or a rhythm, he isolates the element and explains it separately. Very often, we repeat a section several times so that I can incorporate it better. The exercise of learning long sections and patterns that change without the help of the music score is definitely something new for me.
>
> *(Diary entry, my private cuatro lessons)*

This segment is a fragment of one of my diary entries concerning my private *cuatro* lessons. In a few lines, I describe several moments of a learning situation that is very typical within the closed systems of transmission contexts that I observed. In this fragment, several traits of the modern pedagogic paradigm described earlier are present and evidence a clear pedagogic intentionality. At the same time, there is a permanent and shared musical activity between teacher and student, as well as an overarching use of imitation as a teaching procedure, even though both of us write and read music fluently. I will now refer to each one of the moments of this learning situation.

1   We (the teacher and me) finish the class by practicing the piece *Amanecer Tuyero*; we play it together (we always play the tunes together – so far he has never sat to listen to me playing by myself).

During my *cuatro* lessons, the teacher would sometimes stop to listen attentively to my performance of a musical fragment, but he never sat down to listen to me playing a complete piece, even if it was a solo piece. I observed two more classes with students of contrasting levels, where this same teacher worked in a very similar way. In general terms, within the classes that were observed, teachers are actively playing with students in an almost permanent way. In some situations, they will play fragments together and in others they will play complete pieces. In any case, teachers' modelling of playing is a constant.

2   When I make a mistake, Juan Carlos stops and we repeat it from that point.

The teacher is attentive to the musical result. Once a mistake is made, he decides to stop playing and to isolate the fragment where the mistake has occurred in order to work the problem out.

3   We have begun to learn two new sections, one of strums and another one of arpeggios. He shows me both sections slowly; first he separates them, then we connect and play both parts together.

Within this segment of the session, some issues arise that had already been mentioned in relation to imitation processes within closed systems of transmission settings. The first is fragmentation: the teacher fragments the piece into sections. He then chooses one of these sections, the one I have not learned yet, and he isolates it in order to show it to me. However, this is not just 'any' new section; it is the one that comes just after the last one I learned. This means that there is also some type of sequence. In order to make the section very clear for me and to facilitate my process of imitation, the teacher manipulates it by modifying its tempo; he plays it slower. We then play the parts together. First, we play each part separately and then we bring them together.

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4   If he notices that I'm not able to play something, Juan Carlos slows down the tempo. If I have questions, for example about a technical gesture or a rhythm, he isolates the element and explains it separately.

Juan Carlos is attentive to my level of understanding of the musical segments. When he detects a problem, he stops and intentionally manipulates the tempo of the section where a technical difficulty emerges so as to help me achieve success more easily. If I bring up a question, he isolates the fragment and approaches it while explaining and demonstrating. This occurs because the learning experience is permanently embedded within a concrete intentionality: to help the student (me) achieve musical and technical dominance of the repertoire that is being approached.

5   Very often, we repeat a section several times so that I can incorporate it better.

A common practice of this teacher within the sessions I observed is to repeat the problematic sections that are isolated, while gradually increasing speed. This gradual change of tempo is evidence of a linear sequence based on a simple to complex approach that seeks to enhance dominance.

I finally add a comment in my diary, pointing out the difficulties I experienced when learning long sections by ear:

Andrés: The exercise of learning long sections and patterns that change without the help of the music score is definitely something new for me.

Indeed, I was experiencing two things at the same time. On the one hand, imitating long segments without the support of a music score was a new challenge for me because my learning experience as a classical guitarist has, thus far, been based on working directly with notation when learning something new. This new experience, however, allowed me to enhance my aural memory, my ability to copy and also allowed me to see the benefits that imitation can have when incorporating new

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musical material. On the other hand, the fact that Juan Carlos worked so attentively and intentionally using strategies that are well known to me, such as fragmenting, isolating, slowing down the speed and working within simple to complex processes, allowed both of us to have a more direct and deeper control over the learning process. In fact, due to my learning background, one exercise I found particularly useful for my process was translating a way of learning that in open systems is freer and holistic, into a 'learning language', which is more familiar to me.

Within the following fragment, a similar experience is described, and involves playing music within an intentional pedagogic structure, this time framed in a group session. Again, this intentionality is expressed in terms of fragmentation, isolation, sequence and manipulation of musical elements. The challenge for the teacher, in this case, has to do with handling different levels of development within the same group:

> He (the teacher) suggests that they play it (the piece of music) and he says that it does not matter if somebody gets lost... what's important is that everyone stays in the rhythm. All of them play the section; Isaac continues to struggle with his part so he stops. The teacher continues playing until the end and asks them to play everything with him again. He then asks Jorge and Julian to play that section together; he asks them to do it slowly. The others watch. Then he asks Daniel to play with Jorge. The teacher plays it with the students and carefully observes them. Now he asks Isaac to play it with him. He says they will now do it slowly. Isaac seems to have it each time better. Now the teacher waits until they all play the section at the same time. The same section of *floreos* ... he asks them to play it a little faster and tells Isaac not to worry, to keep along playing as he can, he tells him that he will be able to practice it and to improve it after. They play a little faster. They play it twice. They take again the tune from the very beginning, slowly.

> *(Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo)*

Within bigger groups, control over the learning process involves alternative strategies on the part of the teacher, such as listening to smaller groups within the class or walking around and observing individual executions:

> While the group practices the strums, Juan Carlos moves around verifying what each student is doing.

> He continues with the exercise by asking to be accompanied by pairs or trios while he plays the *bandola*... Eventually he grabs the *cuatro* to demonstrate the *golpe*. He explains that this is a *golpe por corrío*. He demonstrates the *golpe* and then contrasts it with a *golpe por derecho*. It is an interesting exercise; it allows the teacher to keep track of individual processes. At the same time, each pair or trio acts as a model for the rest of the group.

> (*Diary entry – Diploma Universidad Javeriana*).

Earlier in this section I referred to the issue of sequencing as a recurrent strategy for developing progressive learning processes within closed systems of transmission. In some cases, sequencing appears within a concrete class situation in relation to playing music. In other cases, it is related to the way in which performance is intentionally developed within a linear time process that includes several sessions. Marco Parales, teacher at the culture house of Arauca, comments on his own teaching strategies in which students are first expected to have a dominance over all the chords and a basic *golpe* before they can start playing with other instruments in more real musical situations:

> *Marcos Parales*: I have to teach them all keys. C, D, E, F, G, A, B ... by all keys, *golpe* of *gaván* goes first. When they know the keys, they start with the accompaniment. Or I grab the *bandola* myself and I say, 'hey, let's go'.

Within the learning situations that have been described in this section in relation to music making in institutional settings, we can find once again a 'mixture' between

an essential trait of *cuatro* learning, such as imitation, and certain traits that are present in the modern pedagogic paradigm (e.g. fragmentation, isolation, etc.). In this case, not only is imitation fragmented, isolated, etc., but the actual exercise of making music is being affected in a similar way: musicking is being translated into a fragmented type of 'playing together'.

This does not mean, of course, that in open systems of transmission musicians do not break down music into sections or slow down the speed of difficult parts in order to facilitate practice and learning. In fact, this does happen with different levels of frequency according to the particular settings. For example, everyday learning situations among friends might sometimes use similar types of strategies such as breaking pieces into parts. I wish to argue, however, that this type of teaching strategy tends to be more intentional, systematic and recurrent within closed systems of transmission settings. The reason for this is related to the emergence of the notion of 'class'; indeed, when this appears, the figure of 'the teacher', who is an agent of the process and, as an expert *knows more* and has *more experience* than the 'student', automatically triggers a series of intentional actions that have a direct impact on the transmission experience. These actions are, with variable levels of intensity, framed in teaching strategies that are generally rooted in the modern, systematic paradigm that I have amply discussed by now; this includes practices such as: intentional isolation, fragmentation, manipulation of sounds, and so on. The degree of influence of this modern pedagogic paradigm on a particular teacher will differ according to his or her own personal experience as a learner and to the type of reflective processes that he or she has developed in relation to transmission processes.

In addition to this, teaching within closed systems of transmission might also be affected by the fact that most of the contexts that were observed are mediated by an economic transaction. This means that there is a student who is paying for a service of which some natural outcomes and products are expected. This, in itself, generates a certain type of additional pressure in relation to the level of control that the teacher should have over the process so as to ensure that the right learning outcomes are produced.

At the same time, I argue that pedagogic paradigms act on people, and not on settings. In other words, I would expect that a teacher who has a certain type of teaching in academic contexts would not radically change his or her pedagogic

approaches and strategies when, for example, teaching a friend in an informal setting. A more in-depth view on this type of relation between pedagogic styles and transmission settings could be possible with further pieces of research.

In any case, the point of this analysis is not necessarily to detect how more or less absolute the frontier is between the paradigms that dominate among closed and open systems of transmission. The central aim is to produce rational elements that can allow us to judge critically, and with reflectivity, the impact that both types of practices have on learning, while looking for the best learning strategies for different types of individuals in diverse settings.

Indeed, this critical insight into learning processes, in this case the learning of the *cuatro*, allows me to simultaneously observe the potency of fragmentation, isolation, intentionality and control, on the one hand, and of imitation and non-linear learning on the other. In the case of instrument transmission in higher education, the first types of strategies are apparently more common than the second types. At the same time, several pertinent questions arise from this critical analysis which could be tackled more in depth within future studies. For example, we have seen the positive effects that fragmentation, sequentiality and linear order can have on the development of technical abilities; however, the question that must be asked is how do these strategies affect enjoyment and desire? Are these emotional issues enhanced or inhibited by the fragmentation of music? Why? When?

This situation leads me to suggest, within the final proposal of this project, the pertinence of incorporating into learning experiences active, frequent and intensive spaces of musicking, not only as a complement to fragmented and linear learning, but as the actual center of gravity of transmission. I suspect that musicking is a central and intense component of learning, especially within collective practices, and that it enhances those aspects of *cuatro* playing that are less easily grasped by the systematic paradigm of closed transmission. At the same time, I also suspect that it acts as a potent trigger for the deployment of technical abilities, in response to the musical and expressive needs that emerge throughout the performance experience.

Ensembles and chamber music

In connection to individual and group *cuatro* lessons, institutions usually offer complementary spaces for making music collectively. The most common types of groups within academies and universities are traditional music ensembles. In these groups, students can play folk music in its original formats. For example, in the case of *joropo* music, this type of ensemble will offer the *cuatro* student the possibility of playing with a *harp* or *bandola*, *maracas* and *bass guitar*. As mentioned earlier, these groups will frequently take part, to some extent, in the local musical ecosystem by playing at concerts, recording or taking part in festivals and contests.

Within universities where other instruments and genres are learned, students find in ensembles the opportunity to broaden their musical references and enrich their aesthetical tastes. Several students experience these spaces as motivating possibilities. Néstor Lambuley comments on this natural interest among students to have some type of contact with other types of musical genres:

> *Andrés*: Is that ensemble present as a course throughout all semesters? Is it mandatory for them?
>
> *Néstor Lambuley:* They have to take eight mandatory ensembles ...
>
> *Andrés*: Of their genre? If their instrument is *cuatro* or *harp* they take *Música llanera*...? Or do they have other options?
>
> *Néstor Lambuley*: They have other options... the student has to take ensemble. What do we normally do? The natural practice would be that the person who's studying *cuatro* takes the ensemble of *música llanera*... of course. But then they become interested in other ensembles... for example, the *cuatro* player can get to play with the jazz band. In the ensemble of *música llanera*, for example, we have received a pianist, a sax, we receive other instruments ... we have also received singers...

At some universities, students also play within chamber music groups which are generally smaller formats where students play arranged repertoires or original compositions for *cuatro* and other instruments such as *flute* or *piano*. Very commonly,

these academic spaces will be complemented by formal rehearsals that are autonomously managed by students.

As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, peer-directed learning is found both in group sessions (i.e. when a teacher works with several *cuatro* students at the same time) and within ensembles. This type of learning implies an explicit and conscious demonstration or explanation between two or more students. Hildo Aguirre comments on this learning experience within groups while pinpointing the value of being able to perform several instruments in relation to the understanding of music and autonomy:

> *Hildo Aguirre*: Other students have started with the *cuatro* and then have gone to the *harp*. That has strengthened their learning in *harp*. My son Sergio, for example, began with *maracas*, then with the *cuatro* and then he started playing the *harp*. So he has already mastered three instruments. It has helped him to understand the music and everything has been easier for him. He can suggest things to his peers when they're playing the *cuatro* or the *maracas*, he just has to grab the instrument and show them how to do a *floreo*, a stop ... and he can direct the group. Unlike if he played only the *harp*. With peers it's good because he has the ability to conduct them, they do not need me...

Process, musical products and institutional assessment

At this point, I wish to briefly refer to some emerging tensions between the musical experiences of students and some of the assessment tools that traditionally operate within formal institutions, such as mandatory concerts and exams. These tensions seem to emerge because, in many cases, there is no explicit critical reflection in terms of what is to be assessed, e.g. the central aims of educational projects; in addition to this, there is no reflection on the side-effects of the assessment methods that are employed, neither from an instrumental point of view, nor from a philosophical one. Indeed, there is a need for a reflection that tackles not only the *how* to assess but also the *why* we assess (Rowntree, 1987). In this sense, the present section will also briefly discuss certain alternative forms of support for assessment that will be included in the proposal of the project.

In the case of universities, public presentations are prescribed by syllabuses and students are expected to present exams at concrete moments of the academic period. As in other undergraduate processes, students are also expected to present an exam at the end of their programme in which they perform a concert that evidences their overall learning outcomes.

In some cases, I was able to perceive among some students a tension between the learning process and this type of mandatory playing space. Cristóbal Reyes, who was taking the diploma in traditional plucked strings, comments:

Cristóbal Reyes: You know that if you practice for the final presentation and spend time on it, there are many things that stay outside... with a slower approach you could learn many other things. Teachers and students get trapped in this dual responsibility of 'grasping' the essence of each system but also of preparing for a final concert. Teachers are so good that they do both things at once ... but I stay with the urge to keep working on it...

This particular situation is accentuated by the practical conditions of this diploma: a three-month intensive course during which students are offered a theoretical and practical introduction to several traditional instruments from the Andes and Llanos regions of Colombia. A basic level of practical proficiency in six instruments is expected from the students throughout this short period of time.

From my point of view, special attention should be paid to the effects that deadlines and requirements have on the learning processes in terms of what they motivate and what they naturally exclude. Regarding the issue of examinations and assessment in higher education, it is interesting to assess whether or not evaluation strategies such as final exams offer an adequate insight into certain aspects of learning and *cuatro* playing that are not so easily observed through the musical object in itself. I refer, for example, to issues such as motivation and enjoyment. In this sense, other strategies, such as personal diaries and conversations with students, might be interesting tools. At the same time, these alternative spaces for assessment can shed light on other dimensions connected to the issue of motivation and enjoyment, such as whether students are adequately finding their own musical 'element' (Robinson, 2004) throughout the learning process in terms of what they

desire and what they are capable of doing. Indeed, it may be that they are simply 'accomplishing the homework' and accepting – often without a choice – to go through the imposed canon of their academic programme but with no personal reflection regarding their own artistic voices within that canonical structure. These issues are certainly related to important issues that should be taken into account, and which directly affect students' learning processes as well as, in many cases, their actual emotional and psychological integrity. This means that we need to intentionally displace our focus of attention from the disciplinary object to the actual existential realm of learners.

Studying and practicing alone and with others (closed systems of transmission)

Until now, I have referred to the way in which making music takes place within closed systems of transmission in diverse types of learning contexts: in individual and collective classes, within groups and ensembles. In this section, I will briefly refer to the way in which the idea of 'practice' appears within these settings. To start, I want to state that the notion of personal and individual practice emerges with more intensity within settings of closed transmission than within contexts of open transmission. This is perhaps due to the fact that, within these settings, students feel that they must 'prepare' for their next lesson. At the same time, it might also be produced as a result of teachers' own learning experiences within formal contexts that have implied a systematic and structured activity of personal practice and study as a naturally accepted routine which is essential for technical development.

In some cases, this personal discipline is objectified and prescribed in terms of a specific number of daily hours of study that will ideally provide the necessary amount of practice for the student's adequate technical development:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: ...that the *cuatro* player has a discipline of daily study, I emphasise a lot on that with my students, that is, that they have to study at least one hour per day, minimum, or two hours of your instrument... first, to advance and second so that the arm, the (right) hand.... so that the wrist gets used to moving the way it should.

This teaching strategy signifies a need to exert control over the learning process beyond the limits of the class – a strategy which is very common, by the way, in closed transmission settings where music is taught. In general terms, it expresses another type of closure in transmission, in this case regarding the issue of time and, more specifically, the way in which the learner profits from his or her autonomous time for practice. It also expresses a deterministic and causal understanding of time, typical of the modern pedagogic paradigm. Teachers and learners assume that a daily practice of x number of hours provides the basis for an ideal development of technical skills. As in other cases within closed systems of transmission strategies, this naturalised view of time implies a tension with at least two problematic realities attached to it. The first one relates to the fact that not everyone learns at the same speed. Second, it is not possible to objectify, in terms of concrete quantities of time, the development of other dimensions of musicality such as *sabor* and enjoyment. In fact, I have seen that too much concern in relation to the accomplishment of these ideal 'time structures' imposed from outside can, in some cases, actually inhibit enjoyment and motivation. Here again, we are in front of a particular paradigmatic device that sheds light on certain areas of transmission while rendering others invisible. Further research can offer nuanced useful insights into this aspect.

Within the context of this study, however, I did find evidence of high levels of motivation associated with personal practice. Julián Crosswaithe comments in regard to his process while attending *cuatro* lessons at a music academy. Based on his own experience, he points out the importance of personal practice when working with his students:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: I was really passionate, I loved it. I came, my teacher Hildo taught me something, and I came home and reviewed it... that's what I tell my students today, 'What we learn… When you get home, even if you're a little tired, rehearse it, it is a method of learning that really works, you are not going to forget things'.

In some cases, teachers within collective spaces demand personal practice for the benefit of the general musical result of the group. While observing a lesson in

which several students took part, I include the following observation in relation to a commentary that the teacher expresses to one of the students:

> The teacher tells the student that he needs to reinforce his part. He insists that he has to work harder on this section, especially when the chords change because it makes him stay behind the rest of the group.

> *(Field notes – Academia Llano y Joropo)*

Furthermore, at one of the universities that was studied, autonomous practice is actually included as a learning objective within formal syllabuses. These documents offer concrete suggestions regarding the expected components of this personal practice and also refer to the physical characteristics that the spaces provided for practice should have:

> A methodology that ensures effective study is enhanced, which warrants the care of body conditions, the use of contextual tools and the development of technical and performance abilities.

> For independent student work, it is required that the curricular project offers a physical infrastructure with practice studios that have adequate overhead lighting, good ventilation and acoustic isolation, so that the student can use his free time to practice in appropriate spaces, and not interfere with the common areas of the building.

> Autonomous study is developed through personal study and daily practice.

> *(Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá ASAB - Cuatro Syllabi)*

Formal documents such as this one are intended to offer institutional views and postures regarding the learning process. The extent to which these ideal objectives and conditions are put into practice by teachers and by the institution itself, is beyond the reach of this piece of research. These documents offer, however, interesting evidence of pedagogic intentionality and of the system's aim to structure the learning

process, and the conditions embedded in it, as deeply and broadly as possible, even beyond the space of the session with the teacher.

Another interesting observation is related to the way in which students reproduce teaching strategies within their own personal practice. During one of my observations in one of the university settings I had the chance to observe a student practicing for some minutes on her own, while the teacher was absent from the classroom. I comment in my field notes:

> While he (the teacher) goes out to the restroom, she continues to practice the fragment with which she has trouble. She isolates the fragment and plays it a little slower.

(Field notes –Universidad de Cundinamarca)

The student isolates the fragment with which she is having trouble and manipulates its speed in order to be able to play it. She repeats it several times. This is exactly the same type of strategy that was used by her teacher while they worked on the piece together. This may well mean that, in addition to musical knowledge, the typical traits of pedagogic paradigms are also transmitted by teachers to students in terms of ways of learning, which they then reproduce within processes of self-learning.

Finally, I was also able to observe some situations of group practice in relation to *cuatro* lessons in closed systems of transmission which, as I stated earlier, are not necessarily equivalent to formal ensemble rehearsals. In this case, what was observed were groups of students studying the *cuatro* together in preparation for their *cuatro* lesson. The following sequence occurs within a group of four teenagers with different musical levels. One of them is more advanced than the others and he certainly acts as a reference for the others. While they practice, both unconscious group learning and intentional peer-directed learning situations are taking place:

> I note that within this group of four students there are different levels. Jorge appears to be the most advanced and Isaac, the more novice. Without doubt, Jorge is a reference for his peers because he is very virtuous... playing the *cuatro* seems to be natural for him. Daniel asks for

help from Jorge with one section, and Jorge demonstrates it with his instrument. Daniel does not quite understand the beginning of the section so Jorge plays it a little slower, showing him the order of the strumming.

(*Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo*)

Once again, it can be observed that one of the students uses the same strategy that is used by his teacher (i.e. isolating the fragment and slowing down the speed) in an effort to enhance the learning process of his peer. As stated earlier, this is a recurrent teaching strategy within closed systems of transmission. In the future, both Sandra and Jorge will probably use the same type of strategy when teaching their own pupils.

Chapter 9

Performing and Creating

A *cuatro* repertoire is mainly composed of 'open works', which are musical pieces that usually suffer some type of alteration according to performers' particular styles and musical interests. In these types of works, performers 'intervene and propose within the piece's design. The connotation of 'open' alludes to the fact that each time that the piece is performed, it contains new elements and variations' (Lambuley, 2008, p. 12). This situation is surely enhanced by the fact that *cuatro* music is generally transmitted orally, which allows a natural distancing from original musical texts that are usually not fixed within formal musical scores. In this sense, Small points out the relation between orality and freedom in dealing with the musical text while also pinpointing personal needs as a basis for musical exploration and dialogue with other aesthetic expressions. He refers to the previously-mentioned experience of the traditional flutist when performing by ear, in the following way:

> The flutist's world is much less circumscribed than members of literate societies like to think, and because it is not literate, it is flexible. He is free to absorb directly from those outsiders with whom he is in constant contact what he needs to make his own life, and his musicking, more interesting and satisfying to himself (Small, 1998, p. 205).

This type of 'openness' is evidently not only a trait of *cuatro* music, of course. It is also found within a broad spectrum of popular and traditional types of music across the world. It is reflected in personal and situated adaptations, versions and arrangements of music. In general terms, it is normally related to interplay between generalised rules or stylistic codes and particular musicians' inputs. Through time, personal contributions can be disseminated and develop into new common codes or a 'collective ethos' that are established within cultural contexts. In relation to *joropo* music, Lambuley comments:

The collective norm corresponds to the common ways of performing music with respect to the behaviours of musical structures and their interpretive techniques, framed in a code and in a cultural and regional context. The result is a 'collective ethos', originated from tradition on the one hand, and on the other from individual proposals that have gradually been appropriated as a common pattern... All these behaviours incite to assert that the collective rule in *joropo* is in constant dialogue with individual norms (Lambuley , 2008, pp. 60-62).

As will be seen throughout the present chapter, this on-going movement between collective and individual 'rules' is present all across the spectrum of *cuatro* learning as part of creative processes. It corresponds well to authors' reflections and findings within literature concerning the transmission processes of traditional and popular music.

Arranging, improvising and composing in open systems of transmission

Open settings such as family, friends, groups, festivals and social gatherings continuously offer evidence of a repertoire that is embedded in creative situations, and is thus in a state of constant change. Musicians and groups play their own versions of musical pieces and their particular degree of contribution is variable; it is generally related to more or less structural modifications of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony or format. *Cuatro* players' arrangements and versions respond to personal taste, aesthetical background and technical abilities.

Creation is an exercise that can start very early within a learning process. Miguel Uva, for example, who is a young *cuatro* player from Casanare and has been playing music for three years now, comments on his own process of exploring and arranging music as part of self-directed learning:

Andrés: Have you learned some soloist tunes?

Miguel Uva: Well, there is ... el *Negro José María*[80]... One listens to the music, and tries to make it in a personal way ... with arrangements, so to speak.

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[80] *Negro José María* is a Colombian traditional *pasaje llanero*.

Different music, I try to change it ... to make it evolve, to experiment with that issue.

On other occasions, arrangements are collectively developed within ensembles. The following example, brought up by Luis Pino, evidences this type of group creation and offers at the same time an interesting intersection between four dimensions or settings of the *cuatro*-learning ecosystem. Within this single narration, Luis tells us how Cheo Hurtado once gathered some of the pupils whom he sporadically taught in *private lessons*, and invited them to play together in a *group* that would perform at a *festival*. One of the students was Luis Pino, who has been working in a self-directed way for several years. As stated earlier, this dynamic interrelation between musical and learning settings is a recurrent issue in *cuatro* learning:

Luis Pino: In 1995, Cheo made a production for the Venezuelan company *Mavesa*. They sponsored the International Guitar Festival *Mavesa*, it was one of the most important musical events at that time. They asked Cheo to compile a group of *cuatro* players, so Cheo called four of his students and we started to make arrangements.

Particular versions of musical pieces are frequently related to spontaneous collective work that takes place within the space of rehearsals and that is attached to real-time aural exploration:

Jhon Jairo Torres: When we were recording traditional music, the harpist would tell me, 'We'll play this *pasaje*...'. I would learn it ... 'We're in A major' ... I knew it was around here (he plays it) and he would say, 'But let's add something to it ... let's add an F sharp'. I would recognise the harmony, by ear...

Arrangements not only have to do with traditional local music, but also include personal versions of pieces of other genres such as folk and popular music from other regions of Colombia and Latin America, classical music, rock and jazz. Luis Pino

comments on his experience arranging a piece from Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla at an early stage of the development of his own personal aesthetic line:

> *Luis Pino*: I once heard a choir singing a tune called *Chiquilín de Bachín*, by Piazzolla. So I made a version for the *cuatro* of this work. I was 16 years old. I heard it in a choir and from there I decided to arrange it. Much later I heard other versions, but at that time I was already having an aesthetic line.

I have included Cheo Hurtado's arrangement of the piece *Caballo Viejo* by Simón Díaz, which is an interesting example of an arrangement for the soloist *cuatro* that was probably elaborated on by ear and that is, however, very rich in terms of the development of issues such as harmony and voicings.

Improvising and composing

Improvising is recurrent within *cuatro* music. The most recurrent type of improvisation is related to harmony and rhythm, since these are the most common roles of the instrument, especially within traditional music. Melodic improvisation, though less common, is found mainly among *cuatro* soloists and within groups that are working with innovation and fusion. In this sense, within traditional music contexts, improvisation has to do with spontaneous contributions to harmony (e.g. passing chords, inversions, voicings) and rhythmic embellishments as part of accompaniment or within specific sections that are seen as moments where musicians can demonstrate their technical and musical abilities:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: When you play a *joropo* and they give you a free space between sections.... you start to improvise... you play and things start to come out; (In traditional music) the harpist also improvises... based on his previous structures, he improvises ... so *música llanera* is very free, it is not so strict...

On some occasions, within traditional settings, dancers will be asked to respond to the *cuatro*'s improvisations by imitating its rhythmic embellishments and figures. This is evidence of the central role that the *cuatro* player has, in connection with *maracas*, within the maintenance of the rhythmic platform of music, especially in traditional formats.

Seeking to enrich their improvisational tools, and attracted by sonorities of other genres, some musicians have looked to other styles, such as jazz, in search of musical elements and strategies that can fortify their own creative outcomes. An example of this type of quest is the artistic process of Venezuelan ensemble *C4 Trío*, a group of three *cuatro* players who fuse traditional music with rock and jazz.

Juan Carlos Contreras brings up his own interest in this respect and comments that he finds similarities between *joropo* music and jazz in relation to the freedom it offers:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: A jazzman once told me, I think it was Willie Maestre, he said that *música llanera* was like jazz because it has a lot of improvisation... there are cycles where one can improvise so I think that it resembles jazz, because of improvisation ... So it is not difficult for me, for example, to improvise in a jazz standard. I can improvise with chords and with melodic things that I've worked ... I have worked with pentatonic scales, with the blues scale... one begins to work with modes ... to understand them...

Very commonly, improvisation happens as part of a dialogue between musicians. In the following narration, Cheo Hurtado offers us an interesting example of how particular versions of musical pieces can be produced in 'real time' with very high levels of technical and musical quality, based mainly on aural exchanges between musicians. He comments on the way famous Venezuelan ensemble Gurrufío works out its own versions of pieces:

> *Cheo Hurtado*:   ... you give me the chord symbols and when I'm going to record with you I come without the paper, I learn it. I mean, I cannot see the music sheet, so when I'm playing for example in *Ensemble Gurrufío* ... I create... the harmony... What did the flute suggest?... the mandolin ...

then I propose an answer... and you go along inventing something... that is not written ... nothing that has been produced by *Gurrufío* is written.

Regarding the issue of ear playing and musical quality, I want to place emphasis on the fact that throughout this study I was able to witness musicians and ensembles who were playing by ear and who displayed very high levels of enjoyment, feel and *sabor*. At the same time, I also found very impressive developments in relation to technique, melodic and harmonic elements. Indeed, future studies must verify to what extent musicians are 'intellectually' aware of what they are playing or if they are mainly playing in an intuitive way. However, what I can conclude is that high levels of musicality, technical development and creativity can be achieved by musicians who have rudimentary theoretical tools and who are scarcely able to read or who use notation only as a subsidiary tool. On the other hand, and as discussed earlier, I also witnessed that it is possible to aurally learn pieces of a repertoire that do not differ much in extension or technical and musical complexity from some of those that are learned within formal training. Indeed, I experienced this myself when learning pieces by ear on the *cuatro* that were very similar to some of the South American repertoires that I learned as a *classical guitar* student. This leads me to think that we can be confident about the practical possibilities of using imitation and orality as a means for learning instruments within academic contexts, disregarding the musical genre, even at university levels[81].

Versions, arrangements and improvisation are the main creative activities that are evident within *cuatro* learning and playing. However, several musicians also compose individually or within their ensembles[82]. In some cases, musicians compose within traditional styles, respecting almost plain local codes and musical structures. In other cases, musicians look to other styles in order to enrich their personal aesthetic palette. Here again, I was able to see influences coming from Colombian and Latin American folk music, jazz, rock, contemporary music, and world music, among others.

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[81] For a discussion regarding aural learning in the instrumental teaching studio see Green (2012, pp. 291-348). In Colombia, see Moreno (2015).

[82] For some discussion regarding composition in relation to other popular and traditional musical learning contexts see for example: In the UK (Finnegan, 2007, p. 254; Green, 2002, pp. 44-45). In Argentina see Shapiro (2011, pp. 68-69).

The process of composition usually follows a path of aural research and empirical exploration that leads to a personal product:

Hildo Aguirre: You begin to relate all these musics. For my compositions I start listening to one thing and another, and something different starts to appear...

Some *cuatro* musicians compose repertoires that are embedded in other regions and musical periods. Leonardo Lozano, for example, is a soloist player who has composed traditional tunes for the instrument, but also contemporary and repertoires inspired by European early music. In this sense, he has developed a rigorous enquiry into the historical relations between *cuatro* and early music instruments such as the *renaissance guitar* and *baroque guitar*. This exercise has led him to explore the use of alternative tunings for the instrument and ancient tablatures as means of notation for the *cuatro*. Leonardo points out the natural relations he has found between early music instruments and the sonority of the *cuatro*.

Leonardo mentions, however, that in some cases the emergent technical limits for the instrument within this repertoire have led him to compose original pieces that are as idiomatical as possible:

Leonardo Lozano: I like to work transcriptions of baroque music, I have transcribed several *concerti* of Vivaldi for the *cuatro*. I have played them with the orchestra. Some concerts are perfectly idiomatic for the instrument. The result is beautiful. I'm a guitarist too, but in some of them I prefer to use the *cuatro* and not the guitar. Up to that point they are idiomatic for the instrument. With others I say, 'no ... what I like most is that the *cuatro* has its own concerts'. That is why I have pushed myself to compose new pieces. To produce new works for the *cuatro*. I think it's the best thing you can do.

In addition to this, compositions, versions and arrangements are frequently linked to collective experimentation and research. Some musical creations also involve political engagement and a critical social discourse. Camilo Guerrero plays the *cuatro*

with ensemble *Chimó Psicodélico*, a group that fuses *música llanera* with rock. This is an exploration that has led Camilo to explore this instrument both musically and technically:

> *Camilo Guerrero*:   The latest thing.... is that we are taking the *cuatro* to other places with the fusion we are doing with *Chimó Psicodélico*. It implies using the *cuatro* with finger picking, and as a percussion instrument. All the time we are investigating to see what else we can play with the *cuatro*.

'Chimó' is a sort of tobacco that is traditionally chewed by indigenous people and local residents in the Llanos region of Colombia and Venezuela. *Chimó Psicodélico* uses this word to signify its artistic quest, which dives into tradition while dialoguing with contemporary musical tendencies.

Finally, I wish to mention that almost all of the musicians who took part in this study and who compose music for the *cuatro* have no academic training as formal composers. However, the music facture is generally of a very good quality. This leads me to conclude that creativity and composition are abilities that can be consistently developed in spontaneous and organic ways within the experience of performance in open systems of transmission. In this sense, the transmission of creativity is also related to, and surely enhanced by, issues such as enculturation, imitation, exploration and playing music with others.

Creation in closed systems of transmission

As in open systems of transmission, creation in terms of composing, improvising, adapting and arranging musical pieces is also a recurrent practice within closed settings of transmission. This, again, might be due to the fact that *cuatro* music is rarely written, so even within university settings its production has to do mainly with what we have been referring to as 'open works' of art, in the sense that they are subject to personal inputs and contributions according to particular contexts, musical interests and abilities.

I observed that teachers work with compositions and arrangements, generally of their own facture, within all of the closed systems of transmission settings: private lessons, music academies and universities. In some cases, they arrange music and then work on it with students, acting as models of creativity; in other cases, they actively support students in the production of their own personal creation.

In some cases, creativity is enhanced from a very early moment of the learning process and within spontaneous and free structures that promote an autonomous exploration within the media and abilities that are in reach. Leonardo Lozano comments on the role of creativity in the early *cuatro* lessons that took place in his backyard when he was young. He also points out how these skills have been echoed in his career:

Leonardo Lozano: In my backyard I had the composer, with the rudiments. There, with hands on the clay, from the first day. And I think that one should not be afraid of this. (My teacher) had the wisdom of always asking me to do my own arrangements. Rudimentary arrangements. But they were always mine. Eventually I started adding ingredients. But I already had the smell and the taste of knowing how to produce fire without the need of a lighter. That is, I knew how to rub those sticks until I had a fire. From the rudiments. And I tell you one thing; I have had to write for an orchestra and sometimes to conduct some aspects of the orchestra. That would not have been possible had it not been for that man in the courtyard of my house...

Within universities, several teachers comment that creativity should be part of students' learning process. In some cases, it is even referenced as an important learning outcome by institutional documents. *Cuatro* syllabuses at *ASAB* University include it as a specific objective:

Develop a creative capacity within the instrumental discipline.

At Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta in Caracas, where notation is used far more than in the other contexts that were studied, creativity is enhanced by *cuatro* teacher Leonardo Lozano as part of the process of learning how to read music:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: I feel that the student must be cultivated and not just in terms of reading, but in creative reading as well, 'You already learned how to write something, now create something with those notes...', 'Invent a melody and then read it'.

It is common, especially in university contexts, to find final exams in which students play a variety of repertoires including their own compositions and those of their teachers. Manuel Alcántara, *cuatro* student at Conservatorio Juan José Landaeta, comments:

> *Andrés*: What are you planning to perform at your final recital?
>
> *Manuel Alcántara*: I will play the Concerto in D major by Vivaldi, original for guitar. I'll play Bach's Violin Sonata 1001. I will also play a concert for *cuatro* and orchestra written by Leonardo (his teacher). I'll play two *joropos*, a *merengue*, and one of my compositions. And a piece by Fredy Reyna.

Adaptations and arrangements

When teachers work on arranging music with their students as part of the learning process, which is a practice that is more present in universities than in other settings, they follow different processes. In some cases, they use scores of other instruments as a starting point, such as other traditional plucked string instruments including *guitar* or *mandolin*. They will sometimes use recordings to complement the process of arranging music. In any case, the process tends to occur as a collective construction between teacher and student. Even if scores are sometimes included as part of the references as well, there is a shared exploration, which includes a strong aural component. The

following is an entry I made in my field notes while observing a session at *ASAB* University where teacher and student are working on a personal version of a *Danza Zuliana*[83]:

> Juan Carlos (the teacher) watches Zahira (the student) play. She asks if it would be correct to do a harmonisation in a given section. She plays the section and JC accompanies her. She asks him if he thinks that what she is doing harmonically in that section makes sense. He says he has not yet understood what she wants to do. She plays only the basic chords in first position and sings the melody. JC plays the *bass*. They play the section with chords and melody on the *cuatro*, JC accompanies on the *bass*. JC comments that she is sometimes out of the metric... Zahira says that the rhythm is strange... JC asks if she has the recording with her so they can listen to it. She brings out her iPod to listen to the piece ...
>
> *(Field notes, ASAB University)*

Teachers sometimes share their own personal creative works with students, passing on to them their enthusiasm and motivating autonomous creative production:

> *Andrés*: Do you also introduce the issue of arrangements of popular music in your classes?
>
> *Leonardo Lozano*: I arrange myself and I invite students to do it also. They get excited when they listen to my arrangements ... They are the first with whom I share my own enthusiasm, 'Look what I'm doing'. They also become eager to do their own stuff.

In relation to the influences of academic content on creative productions, several musicians report that they are grateful for the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that they have been offered within academic structures. On the one hand, this offers them a deeper understanding of what they are performing and creating in terms of comprehension of melody and harmony, for example. At the same time, it is a type of

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[83] *Danza Zuliana* is a typical dance from the Venezuelan state of Zulia.

knowledge that is transferable to other musical contexts and activities. Christian Guataquira refers to this transferability of knowledge and points out the importance of not only teaching students how to play a particular solo piece through mere imitation, but also offering them harmonic tools which will enhance the autonomous production of their own arrangements in the future:

> *Christian Guataquira*: At the beginning, you do have to teach them some solos, so that the students learn the basics of *cuatro*, (so they can discover) that on the *cuatro* you can also do these things. But when you're already at a professional level what one has to teach students is to take those tools and to build a solo, by themselves. Not to teach a solo but how it is constructed, based on theory and all that.

This is a very important issue since it has to do with a potent contribution of modern rationality to the process of understanding music. Harmony is one of those issues that logical western thinking has been able to objectify while developing very complex and efficient methods and tools for its comprehension. At the same time, the modern pedagogic paradigm has 'captured' the study of harmony as a central aspect of the intellectual apprehension of music, especially within transmission processes in higher education. As has been corroborated by musicians' testimonies within this research, the understanding of harmonic systems and their relations allows for a particular type of knowledge, which is transferable between contexts and which is useful for musicians as an important component of versatility. Within a mestizo pedagogy that incorporates closed and open ways of transmission, the rational understanding of harmony is, without doubt, a very important component.

From another perspective, I will now refer to the way in which the modern pedagogic paradigm rationality expresses itself within the transmission of creativity, in this case within the process of elaborating on arrangements and of teaching how it is done. In some cases, this rationality expresses itself within broad processes in terms of a simple to complex linearity:

> *Christian Guataquira*: My interest is that she ends up learning ... I teach her how to build her own solos and I also teach her some solos. Right now I have to

teach her solos, but later on I'll have to teach her how to build her own arrangements, or to listen to a *cuatro* solo ... that she can build a solo by herself.

In addition to this, and as we have seen in previous chapters, certain aspects of transmission, such as imitation or making music, are subject, within concrete situations, to certain operations in closed systems of transmission, e.g. isolation, fragmentation, manipulation, and linear sequencing. Within the following fragment, a similar rationality is used to explain how to construct a solo piece based on the arrangement of a traditional melody:

Christian Guataquira: Let's say we are playing the song *Ay Si Si*[84]. (He plays the melody on the second string - *ISOLATION OF THE MELODY*). This one will always be the melodic string. From this string, one builds the *cuatro* solo (mimicry of playing chords on the fingerboard). (He plays the melody on the second string again). Based on that melody one builds the chords. So, why are inversions important? It is important to know in what harmonic region you are playing (he plays several chords along the fret board, and sings the melody while he accompanies it with the chords – *LINEAR SEQUENCE: BEFORE PLAYING THE COMPLETE INSTRUMENTAL SOLO, HE SINGS THE MELODY AND PLAYS THE CHORDS ON THE CUATRO*). Then you already know that the last chord is a dominant (A7) (*FRAGMENTATION - ISOLATION*). All this is a region of tonic (*FRAGMENTATION - ISOLATION*). (He plays the melody until the first dominant using inversions of a D chord; he plays without strumming - *FRAGMENTATION AND SEQUENCE: FIRST, HE PLAYS THE MELODY AND THE CHORDS WITHOUT ANY STRUMMING*). (He shows several inversions of the dominant A7 - *FRAGMENTATION - ISOLATION*). (Now he plays the melody with the chords along the fingerboard; this time he does include the strumming of the right hand. He finally plays all the parts together) (*END OF THE SEQUENCE*). This is how you build solos. All solos work the same way...

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[84] Traditional song by Luis A. Rey.

This demonstration occurred within an interview where Christian Guataquira, former student at *ASAB* University and an actual *cuatro* teacher at Universidad de Cundinamarca, was show me how to adapt or arrange a solo piece for *cuatro*. As in other cases, this learning situation can be read in terms of a translation: transmission of the ability to create, which is normally learned spontaneously and through holistic exploration within contexts of open transmission, is here being 'translated' into a learning way that is isolated, fragmented, more systematic and linear. This is a way of learning procedure that for me, as a classically trained musician, is more familiar. Again, the learning procedure that is typical in open systems of transmission is being 'translated' into a 'learning language' that is more familiar to me.

This is also a good example of how transmission paradigms act on people and not on settings. Within a casual, informal meeting, Christian was using the same intentional, fragmentary and logical rationality that he uses within academic contexts. His approach has to do more with his personal pedagogic biography than with the social setting in which the exchange occurs.

Improvisation and composition in closed systems of transmission

Improvisation, especially harmonic and rhythmic, is also present within closed systems of transmission as a natural part of *cuatro* playing and as a content of transmission. In some cases, improvisation is also mentioned as a learning content within university documents:

Study of inversions or 'drops' with all kinds of added notes and principles of improvisation when using them.

(ASAB - four Syllabus Semester VI- X)

I observed that students sometimes learn how to improvise within sessions while observing their teachers. In other situations, teachers simply 'push' students into the exercise of improvising even if they are not ready for it. I recall a former

commentary by Christian Guataquira while referring to one of his private *cuatro* lessons:

> *Christian Guataquira:* (The teacher) would say ... other students of his would come and he would say 'Well, grab the *cuatro* and improvise ... we will play a *gaván'*. I played the *gaván* and a guy began to improvise… a guy who was 'flying' up here (gesture miming playing chords all across the fingerboard...). I would say, 'Oh, but how does he do all that…'. And then David Bedoya (the teacher) would start playing a bunch of very cool things as well. And he would tell me, 'Now it's your turn', but I did not leave this region of the instrument (mimicry of the basic positions). I would say, 'But what do I do?' ... He said 'Come on, jump into the water… '. I would reply, 'No, I know nothing' and he would say 'Let's go, come on…'. So it was. He saw that lack in me and struggled a lot to help me solve these problems.

In other cases, improvisation is learned within a more intentionally linear sequence. Christian refers to the way in which he organises the broad process of teaching improvisation at Universidad de Cundinamarca. He normally starts by showing students how to build harmonic maps on the fingerboard before they begin improvising.

> *Christian Guataquira*: Starting there... I'll explain (to the student) all the inversions, and we will play them. He begins to learn the maps. Then I'll say, 'Well, we learned the maps already, so now we will play, let's improvise a little around that harmonic region'.

Christian offers me a demonstration of how to improvise while intentionally explaining every stage of the process within a logical, linear sequence so that I can grasp it more easily. Once again, we can see in Christian's way of explaining the matter, a clear influence of the same objectifying, organised, linear and rational type of thinking that was evidenced earlier within the sequence in which he was showing me how to construct an arrangement:

Christian Guataquira: Basically what I do is ... this is a *golpe* of *gaván*. (He plays a *gaván* in D minor). There are two dominants and two tonics. (He demonstrates the inversions of tonic and dominant – he improvises using the inversions of the chords, he adds *floreos*, *repiques*, etc.). Then you can add alterations, for example, how would the dominant with a *sus 4* sound..., that would give the *gaván* another colour (he demonstrates it, he improvises with the same harmony but introducing chords with added notes). Once you have that, what about if we leave the fourth string as a pedal (A), but doing the same thing (he demonstrates it).

Finally, composition as part of the learning process tends to be more common within universities than in other closed systems of transmission. Teachers perceive it as an important component of transmission, probably because they are aware of the fact that *cuatro* players in 'real life' not only perform and arrange, but also create original pieces of repertoire.

As stated earlier, university contexts offer a privileged space for students to broaden their musical references and enrich their artistic universe with a wide range of musical genres such as classical music, contemporary music, jazz, and traditional music from other regions of South America. These influences are evident within the creative works of students.

Christian Guataquira, in addition, comments on one of the pieces that he will be playing in his final exam. Within this chamber music project, he tries to mix traditional music from the Llanos region with Baroque elements:

Christian Guataquira: For my thesis I am composing a piece in two movements that is called Gavánrocordeño[85]... The first movement is a *Canto de Ordeño*[86], and the second movement is *gaván* with baroque, that is *Gavánroco*. It starts with a fugueta and then comes the *gaván*, I mix the language of baroque music with the Llanos style. It is a format of string quintet and soloist *cuatro*.

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[85] *Gavánrocordeño* is a synthesis of three Spanish words: *Gaván* (traditional *golpe*), *barroco* (baroque, in Spanish) and *ordeño* (act of milking, e.g. a cow).

[86] *Canto de Ordeño* is a traditional labour song performed by cowboys while milking their cattle in the Llanos region.

From another standpoint, Luis Pino points out the importance of offering students an overview of the *cuatro*'s main styles, which are frequently reflected in the ways of playing exhibited by particular musicians, as a central element of composition:

> *Luis Pino*: To be complete, a *cuatro* player must learn the style of Fredy Reina, and also the *rasgapunteo* style. He must have some contact with the predecessor of the *cuatro*, which is the *renaissance guitar*, for example. Then the more systematic part: the coding of chords, being able to read a music score, the music staff; knowing the styles. The *cuatro* player should also study composition. Because I could ask you to compose a work for *cuatro* in the style of Jacinto Perez (who had a specific type of sonority) or in Fredy Reina's style.

When conducting the interviews, I also found some challenges that arise within academic contexts, especially at universities, in relation to the issue of creativity. One challenge is related to the possibility of formally including composition in undergraduate performance programmes. These are two lines (composition and performance) that have traditionally been separated within university settings and which are here reunited, but only spontaneously for the moment, within the *cuatro* programmes that I observed. This situation, in itself, emerges as a 'line of flight' that 'escapes' – as does the recurrent practice of imitation – from the natural division that is found within the modern pedagogic paradigm in higher education contexts between performance and creation.

From a broader perspective, Leonardo Lozano points out some general limitations that he has experienced within academic contexts in relation to freedom in exploration and creativity. He understands these issues as attributes of open transmission contexts that are sometimes limited within institutional contexts. Leonardo concludes his commentary with a potent metaphor, which I will further develop as a closure to this chapter:

Andrés: Do you think there are things we can learn from these forms of teaching in the world of traditional music, even for a university programme? What could they be?

Leonardo Lozano: The first ingredient I mentioned before is freedom. 'Let's see what happens if I do this'. That 'Let's see what happens if I do this' is not always allowed in the formal world. The academic world works rather with 'doing this we have had certain results'. But in the academic world, that other questioning should also be present: 'And if we had done that differently, what would have happened...'. Creativity is an impulse, which alone brings life. I'll give you an example with plant life. In our house in Valencia, Venezuela, my wife had been trying for a long time to get some flowers that are called *belencitas* or *coquetas*, to be born. She had been cultivating the small seeds, trying to have them germinate. But we didn't have any success. Our surprise was big when suddenly one day, one of these plants was born on the wall of the house, in the cement. Untamed, wild. The same thing happens with music. Our conservatory ... the music belongs to life. Music is a manifestation of life. She is born wild. Our conservatories, our universities have become a kind of laboratory. But this manifestation of life occurs in a wild way. Then you have to let her have a little wildness so that what is most sincere in her, what is most spontaneous in her, doesn't' disappear. Both in the creator and in the performer.

Interestingly, this image of the wild plant finding its own way through the cement wall brings us back to Robinson's metaphor of the teacher as a gardener:

> Nobody else can make anybody else learn anything. You cannot 'make' them. Any more than if you are a gardener you can make flowers grow, you don't make the flowers grow. You don't sit there and stick the petals on and put the leaves on and paint it. You don't do that. The flower grows itself. Your job if you are any good at it is to provide the optimum conditions for it to do that, to allow it to grow itself (Robinson, 2007, p. 21).

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I would like to make this metaphor even more elastic. I want to argue that education, understood as a garden, not only demands a particular degree of care and respect regarding the natural rhythms and developments of personal skills, but also involves accepting the diversity of students' musical voices: we cannot expect all seeds to develop into just one sort of tree. In the case of music, it involves accepting that not all students within a system resound in the same way with the repertoires and styles that programmes suggest or, sometimes, impose. According to my own experience as a student and as a teacher within academic contexts, not accepting the deep meaning of this diverse reality usually has two effects on learners: on the one hand, it can block the path for the development of their particular talents and personal voices and, on the other hand, it can leave marks and wounds on those students who have not been able to adequately fit within the canons that they have been offered at different moments of their development. From my point of view, this is another expression of an overarching tension within closed systems of transmission – one that arises between what closed systems of transmission expect their students 'to be' and what they 'actually are', in terms of learning capacities and rhythms, musical tastes and technical abilities.

Chapter 10

Golpes and 'secrets' of the right hand

Throughout this study I found two types of *cuatro* contents. On the one hand, there are issues such as technical ability, historical and theoretical knowledge and repertoire. This type of knowledge emerges in a very clear and concrete way within my observations and in interviews. It is a type of knowledge that evidently crosscuts all contexts. In other words, *cuatro* players use similar techniques and approach repertoires that can be very common within open and closed systems of transmission settings. Interestingly, however, this type of content emerges with more intensity and with deeper levels of detail within closed systems of transmission settings. I wish to argue that this situation is explained, on the one hand, by the fact that the information to which I had access in closed systems of transmission is more naturally objectified within pedagogical practices, teachers' discourses and institutional documents. Moreover, it is objectified within the rationality of the modern pedagogic paradigm, which means in a fragmented, isolated and linear form. Thus, when I observed the teacher's teaching or interviewed participants and asked 'what' they teach in closed systems of transmission, this type of knowledge (i.e. techniques, declarative knowledge and repertoires) emerged naturally *because* it can be more easily objectified, isolated, fragmented and fit within linear sequences. On the other hand, I discuss how this type of content emerges more clearly within closed systems of transmission because of my own attitude when observing. When I observed a *cuatro* lesson at a university, for example, I was more attentive to this type of knowledge because of my own previous experiences within contexts in which this paradigm is common. In this sense, while observing the recording of a class, I would take into account technical aspects, repertoires and so on, while describing them in depth. By contrast, when I observed open systems of transmission settings, for example a concert at a festival, I would rather abandon my work and simply enjoy the experience while disconnecting, to some extent, from the modern pedagogic paradigm that operates in me; in Deleuze's (1987) words, I would momentarily abandon the 'tree

that is planted in my brain'. In this sense, while observing those informal experiences of music, I was less inclined to observe the learning experience in a fragmented way.

In addition to this, there is a second type of knowledge that also emerges within observations and interviews, but in a much more fussy way. This happens, I argue, because it is more tacit in nature and in a certain sense, more irrational, so it tends to appear in veiled ways within discourses. It is also addressed in different, sometimes contrasting ways by participants, and it certainly does not appear as a type of knowledge that is easily isolated, fragmented and linear. In this respect, I will approach categories such as *sabor* and the emotional quality of musical experience, expressed in terms of celebration and enjoyment of music.

Within this chapter, I will initially refer, in a succinct way, to some of the most relevant aspects of the first type of knowledge in relation to *cuatro* playing, mainly technical aspects. In a second part, I will refer in detail to the second type of knowledge, which is more tacit in its nature. I will refer to tacit knowledge more in depth because, from my point of view, it is a type of knowledge that is essential for a meaningful and complete experience of music; at the same time, tacit knowledge is precisely the portion of transmission that is at stake within the processes of translation that have been observed. This means that some ways of transmission can render it more or less visible and assign to it a more or less prominent place within the transmission experience; indeed, this can have important pedagogic, musical and experiential consequences. I am interested in exploring this situation attentively.

One technique or a thousand techniques?

Although the *cuatro* technique includes some key and crosscutting aspects that characterise it, this study offers evidence of a very wide and diverse array of approaches and versions of particular gestures and technical elements. At the same time, I did not find any type of radical contrast between the types of techniques and repertoires that are present within open and closed systems of transmission. The main differences rather have to do with the ways in which this musical content is transmitted, which is the central topic of the present report. The other difference has to do with the fact that, within open systems of transmission, an almost infinite number of technical approaches to the ways of playing *cuatro* and styles are available;

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conversely, within closed systems, this diversity seems to be reduced to the particular performance attributes of the teacher in charge of the programme or of the class.

For some participants, the transmission of this diverse range of playing methods, expressed mainly in the execution of the right hand, implies direct and in-place contact with the types of music that are being studied. At the same time, technical approaches are also diverse in relation to individuals. Musicians, who normally develop their technical proficiency through a diversity of settings within musical ecosystems, build their own technical styles.

In this sense, several musicians stand up and invite us to be vigilant in relation to the risk of homogenisation within systematisation processes in closed systems of transmission. Leonardo Lozano comments critically on the type of systematisation that is found within academic settings, especially in higher education. He does so by using the metaphor of a 'churros' (or doughnuts) machine, a device for producing this type of pastry using a unique mould:

> *Leonardo Lozano:* ... I am afraid of systematisation. Systematisation is a bit like a doughnut machine. And humans cannot be reduced to doughnuts. I like surprise and systematisation rarely allows surprises. That is why freedom is so wonderful, that's what I mean. Freedom of who is accountable to nobody.

From this perspective, a natural consequence of the acceptance of this situation should be the understanding of technical issues as an open process that is not only diverse in its contents but that is also permanently dynamic. In the case of the *cuatro*, this 'expansion' of technique is reflected in a broad array of situations ranging from the mutual enrichment of techniques between neighbouring regions, to the incorporation of *classical guitar* techniques (e.g. finger picking), the use of extended techniques typical of contemporary music, and the tapping of an *electric guitar*.

Thus, some participants maintain that this diversity of techniques and dynamism implies an intentional exposure to versions and ways of playing of other musicians. As I discussed in a previous chapter, *cuatro* musicians learn by transiting along musical paths and learning settings moved by personal quests. In each one of these nodes, they find particular technical approaches that contribute to the building of their own

personal 'way of playing', which includes styles and techniques, in response to the personal impulses that initially drag them towards those specific settings. Here, there seems to be an alternative to the homogenisation of techniques in closed transmission contexts (referred to above). This alternative option not only implies an offer of a broader number of technical options to students within academic settings, but rather, and above all, the enhancement of academic spaces where personal transits are possible, including immersion in contexts within local cultural ecosystems. Within these particular quests, technique is developed as a natural result of personal exploration, and not as an abstract, apparently neutral and decontextualised capacity; indeed, the latter is a recurrent practice, especially within higher education contexts.

The secret is on the right hand

Almost all of the participants report that the right-hand technique is the most important part of *cuatro* playing. This is so because the instrument has had an accompaniment role for decades, and perhaps centuries, within traditional music formats. As discussed in the historical chapter of this report, many of the *cuatro*'s typical right-hand gestures, such as strums and flourishes, might be a legacy of the *renaissance guitar* and the *baroque guitar*, which arrived with Spanish conquerors. These types of right-hand gestures have built the *cuatro*'s sonic idiosyncrasy, which is at the same time harmonic, rhythmic and timbric. Juan Carlos Contreras comments:

Juan Carlos Contreras: The wrist (of the right hand) is one of the richnesses of the
cuatro ... I would say that the richness of the *cuatro* is more in the wrist, in the *golpe*, in strumming, the *floreos*, the *abanicos* ... it is one of the richnesses of the *cuatro* because it is an exotic instrument...

The central component of the right-hand technique is *el golpe*, which is a rhythmic pattern composed of open and muted strums. For several musicians, *sabor* manifests precisely within the *golpe*. In Venezuela, different types of patterns for *golpe* can be found that correspond to the different genres (e.g. merengue, waltz, contradanza, porro). However, the type of *golpe* that is more recurrent within this project is the base of *joropo* music.

As mentioned previously, the two main rhythmic matrices of *joropo* music are *por corrido* and *por derecho*. I have already discussed the main traits of each of these rhythms. For now, I will present the main structure of the *cuatro*'s *golpe*.

The main rhythmic pattern for *joropo por corrido*, is as follows:
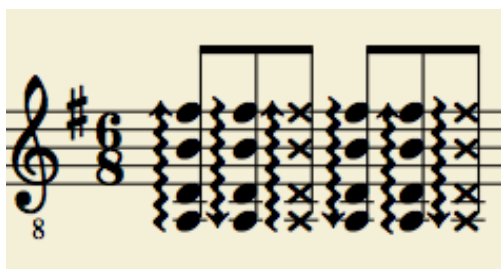
Figure 10. 1 *Golpe por corrido*

Where: , stands for a muted strum.

As can be seen, the muted strum introduces a timbric accent on the 3rd and 6th eighth notes of the bar. By contrast, the *golpe por derecho* will include an accent on the 1st and 4th eighth notes of the bar:

Figure 10. 2 *Golpe por derecho*

Very commonly, *cuatro* players will improvise rhythmically based upon these two matrices while displacing accents, regrouping the figures and introducing flourishes. In any case, there is, generally speaking, a special emphasis on the rhythmic and dynamic balance of the *golpe*.

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In addition to this, I wish to point out at some techniques that are used to embellish and vary the right-hand performance of the *cuatro*. These include: *floreos*, *cacheteos*, abanicos and other techniques that have a direct relation with the *cuatro*'s idiosyncratic sound. Particul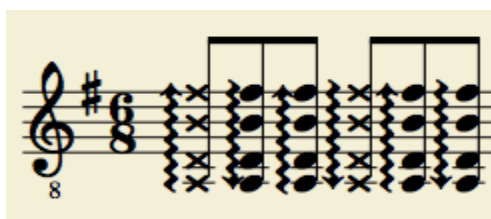ar styles usually set norms for the types of ornaments that are used and define specific moments for embellishments within repertoires.

The *floreo* or *repique*, to start, is a type of ornamentation, which involves a very fast execution of several strums within short lapses of time. I will not present here all of the possible variations of *floreos*. In general terms, they involves variations of the basic type of *floreo* that introduces two or four sixteenth notes at some point within the 6/8 bar:

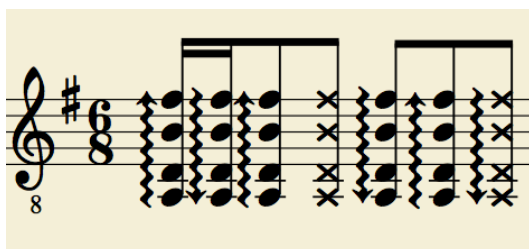<p align="right">**Figure 10. 3 *Floreo simple* (simple *floreo*)**</p>
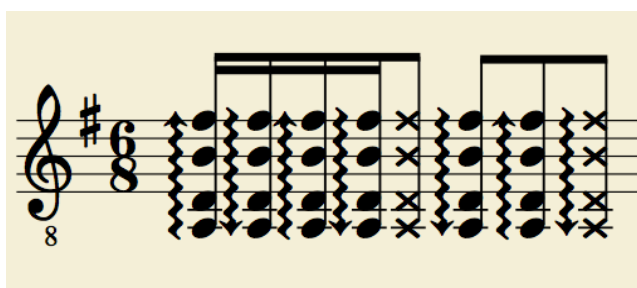

<p align="right">**Figure 10. 4 *Floreo doble* (double *floreo*)**</p>

Floreos are normally combined with another type of downward strum called a *cacheteo*, which involves a fast whip-type of attack on the strings. The most common rhythmic pattern for *cacheteo* in *joropo* music is the following:

Figure 10. 5 *Cacheteo*

Another type of commonly-used right-hand ornament is the *abanico,* which involves a fast, tremolo-type strumming, which recalls a similar gesture that has the same name in *flamenco guitar*.

Finally, it is interesting to observe that over recent years, the *cuatro* has incorporated certain techniques that are typical of other plucked string instruments, such as the *guitar*. This has happened especially within the soloist performance of the *cuatro*, where finger picking is each time more common. In this vein, the present project offers evidence of three current techniques: arpeggios, melodies with accompaniment and melodic playing. This can be explained by the fact that the guitar is an instrument of very common use in South American popular music. Furthermore, in Venezuela, the area where the *cuatro* has had its major development has also seen the development of a very important tradition of *classical guitar* inspired by folk and traditional music.

Repertoire

Two types of repertoires were found across the learning contexts of the *cuatro*: ensemble and solo pieces. Within these two groups of repertoires, I found the following categories: the first is traditional music in which the *cuatro* was originally present. In this sense, the most common genre in open and closed systems of transmission is *joropo* music, with its traditional *golpes*. On the other hand, the *cuatro* is also present in a wide variety of rhythms from Venezuela, which are less visible within this study, since the focus of the research was Colombia. The second category is music that originally did not include the *cuatro*, e.g. music from other regions of South America, Caribbean music, and other genres such as jazz, rock etc.

I found no significant differences between the types of repertories that are approached within both types of systems of transmission. I do wish to point out the

fact that traditional music is an evidently crosscutting category: *joropo golpes* are learned in very traditional contexts and at universities as well. On the other hand, soloist repertoires and contact with other types of music, which do not normally include the *cuatro*, tend to be more evident within closed systems of transmission. At universities, the range of aesthetic possibilities is even wider and there is more prominent contact with academic music such as jazz, classical and contemporary music. It was interesting to see the presence of studies composed by teachers with pedagogic purposes within academic settings.

Music from the Llanos region

I will now present a detailed description of the traditional rhythms that appear more frequently within the *cuatro* learning contexts that were studied. As stated earlier, the fieldwork of this project took place in Colombia. For this reason, I will concentrate mainly on Colombian traditional music in relation to *cuatro* playing, and specifically *joropo* music. I wish to recall the fact that *joropo* is the traditional music of the Llanos region, a territory that is shared by Colombia and Venezuela. However, besides music from the Llanos, the *cuatro* is also very present within a diversity of rhythms in Venezuela, and so I will also make some reference to other types of Venezuelan music, but with less depth. Music from the Llanos region mainly comprises *golpes*. As stated earlier, the term *golpe* is used, on the one hand, to refer to the execution of the rhythmic pattern referred to above. On the other hand, it is also employed to denominate a particular combination or sequence of chords that works as a harmonic basis for a series of melodies with idiosyncratic traits. This harmonic structure does not usually change and determines the specific *golpe*'s name.

The following list of *golpes* includes their names and some related rhythms. In some cases, these associated *golpes* might have the same harmonic structure but differ in their melodic patterns. In other cases, the name of a *golpe* in a major key can change if the same progression is played in a minor key. All of the *golpes* have a polyrhythmic structure (3/4 vs 6/8) and most of them can be grouped within *the joropo por corrido* system.

Table 10. 1 Sequence of *joropo* traditional *golpes*

1. ***Golpes*** **in the first group, according to Díaz (n.d.), share a basic I- IV –V structure with a progression that lasts for four measures. Several cycles are necessary to complete a melodic period:**					
	Golpe	**Key**	**Associated** ***golpes***	**Harmony**	**System**
1	*Gaván*	Major or Minor	Guacaba, Perica, Chicuaca, Cachicama Paloma y Gavilán, Gavilana	$\lVert: V_7 \mid \% \mid I \mid \% :\rVert$	Corrío
2	**Seis**	Major		$\lVert: I \mid IV \mid V_7 \mid \% :\rVert$	Corrío or Derecho
3	**Pajarillo**	Minor		$\lVert: Im \mid IVm \mid V_7 \mid \% :\rVert$	Corrío or Derecho
4	**Catira**	Minor		$\lVert: Im \mid IVm \mid V_7 \mid \% :\rVert$	Corrío

#	Name	Mode	Variant	Harmonic progression	Type
5	**Perro de agua o Revuelta**	Major or Minor		$\parallel\!: \text{IV} \mid \text{I} \mid \text{V}_7 \mid \text{I} :\!\parallel$	Corrío
6	**Seis Numerao**	Major or Minor	**Garipola en Casanare (minor)**	$\parallel\!: \text{I} \mid \overset{\vec{D}}{\text{I}_7} \mid \text{IV} \mid \text{V}_7 :\!\parallel$	Corrío o Derecho

2. A second group of *golpes* includes longer harmonic progressions where only one single cycle is required to complete a melodic period (Díaz, n.d.):

#	Name	Mode	Variant	Harmonic progression	Type
7	**Guacharaca**	Major (most common) or Minor		$\parallel\!: \underset{S}{\text{IV}} \mid \text{\textpercent} \mid \underset{T}{\text{I}} \mid \text{\textpercent} \mid \underset{D_7}{\text{V}_7} \mid \text{\textpercent} \mid \underset{T}{\text{I}} \mid \underset{\vec{D}}{\text{I}_7} :\!\parallel$	Corrío
8	**Cimarrón**	Minor		I7-I7-IV-IV-I-V7-I-I	Corrío

9	**Merecure**	Major			Corrío
10	**Guayacán-**	Major or Minor (Most common)	**Cunavichero (minor)**		Corrío

3. **A third group implies more complex harmonies: secondary dominants, temporary modulations to the sixth degree and longer harmonic cycles (up to 28 measures).**

11	**Cachopelao**	Major		**//: I-%-V-%-%-%-I-I://VI-%-III7(D)-%-%-%-VI-VI//**	Corrío
12	**Pollo**	Major		**//:V7-V7-I-I://VI7(D)-%-II-%-I-V7-I-I//**	Corrío

13	Periquera (Juan Guerrrero-Mocho Hernández)	Major	Zumba que Zumba (Minor)* -	$\left\Vert: I \mid V_7 \mid I \mid / \mid I_7 \mid / \mid IV \mid I_7 \mid IV \mid\right.$ $\mid II_7 \mid V_7 \mid IV \mid I \mid V_7 \mid I \mid / :\Vert$	Corrío
14	Nuevo Callao	Major		$\left\Vert: I \mid / \mid V_7 \mid I \mid V_7 \text{ de } II \mid IIm \mid V_7 \text{ de } II \mid IIm \mid\right.$ $\mid V_7 \text{ de } V \mid V_7 \mid / \mid I \mid IV \mid I \mid V_7 \mid I :\Vert$	Corrío
15	San Rafael	Minor	San Rafaelito (Major)	$\boxed{A} \left\Vert: Im \mid V_7 \mid Im \mid / \mid V_7 \mid / \mid Im \mid / :\Vert\right. \boxed{B}: V_7 \text{ de } V$ $\mid / \mid V \mid / \mid V_7 \text{ de } V \mid / \mid V \mid IVm \mid Im \mid V_7 \mid Im \mid / :\Vert$	Corrío

16	**Los Corazones**	Major or Minor (Modulating)	**Cari - Cari (In disuse)**	$\|: I \mid \% \mid V_7 \mid \% \mid \% \mid \% \mid I \mid \% :\|\|: VIm \mid$ $\mid \% \mid V_7 \text{ de VI} \mid \% \mid \% \mid \% \mid VIm \mid \% :\|$ $\vec{D}$	Corrío
17	**Quirpa**	Major		$\|: IV \mid V_7 \mid \% \mid I :\|\|: V_7 \text{ de II} \mid IIm \mid \% \mid VIm \mid \% \mid$ $\mid V_7 \text{ de VI} \mid \% \mid VIm :\|$	Corrío
18	**Carnaval**	Major		$\|: I \mid \% \mid V_7 \mid \% \mid \% \mid \% \mid I \mid \% :\|\|: V_7 \text{ de VI} \mid$ $\mid \% \mid VIm \mid V_7 \text{ de V} \mid V \mid V_7 \text{ de V} \mid V \mid \overset{1.}{\%} :\|\| \overset{2.}{V_7} \|$	Corrío

| 19 | **Mamonales** | Major | | $\|$: I $\|$ ⅔. $\|$ ⅔. $\|$ V$_7$ $\|$ ⅔. $\|$ ⅔. $\|$ ⅔. $\|$ I $\|$$\|$: V$_7$ de VI $\|$

 $\|$ VIm $\|$ V$_7$ de V $\|$ V $\|$ V$_7$ de II $\|$ IIm $\|$ V$_7$ $\|$ I :$\|$
 $\vec{\mathcal{D}}_7$ | Corrío |
| 20 | **Chipola** | Major/Minor (Modulation to vi-V-ii with the same cycle) | | $\|$: IV/V$_7$ $\|$ I :$\|$$\|$: IV $\|$ I $\|$ V$_7$ $\|$ I :$\|$

 $\|$: IV de VIm /V$_7$ de VIm $\|$ VIm :$\|$$\|$: IV de VIm $\|$ VIm $\|$

 $\|$ V$_7$ de VIm $\|$ VIm :$\|$ | Corrío |

| 21 | **Diamantes** | Major | | ‖: I | ✗ | ✗ | V₇ | ✗ | ✗ _(IV) | ✗ | I :‖‖: I | VII° \| V₇ del VI | VIm \| V₇ de V \| V \| V₇ del IV \| IV \| V₇ de III \| IIIm \| V₇ de II \| IIm \| V₇ \| I \| ✗ \| V₇ \| ✗ \| I :‖ | Corrío |
| 22 | **Gavilán** | Major | | ‖: V₇ \| I \| ✗ \| V₇ \| ✗ \| ✗ \| ✗ \|¹· I :‖²· I/VIm \| V/IV \| V₇ de VI/IIm \| I / V₇ de VI ‖: VIm \| ✗ \| V₇ de VI \| ✗ :‖ VIm ‖ D.C. | Corrío |

| 23 | **Tres damas** | Minor - modulating | | | Corrío |
| 24 | **Quitapesares** | Minor | | | Corrío |

Some additional *golpes* found within the research are listed below:

- Camaguán
- Caracoles
- Chiguire
- Chilaca
- El manzanare
- El Pato
- Garza
- La bandolera
- La garipola
- La mula
- La picura
- Las perdices
- Manzanares
- Morrocoyero – *golpe* del elefante
- Mula
- Picura
- Sapo

The following are some additional traditional rhythms of *joropo* music in which the *cuatro* can play an accompanying role: The first of these is the *tonada,* which is a freer type of song with harmonies that are usually simple (I IV V). It normally has a slow tempo and it can be measured or unmeasured. In traditional contexts, *tonadas* are associated with everyday work, such as cow milking and cattle driving. *Pasaje* is also a song, similar to the tonada, but is usually more complex harmonically and is normally performed faster. Finally, certain rhythms, such as *Canto de Tono*, are associated with funeral rituals.

Traditional music from Venezuela

As I mentioned earlier, the *cuatro* is present in a broad palette of rhythms in Venezuela. I now include a succinct relation between some of the most prominent ones:

Venezuela	
Aguinaldo	
Bambuco	
Calypso	

Contradanza	
Danza	Danza Zuliana
Gaita	Gaita-Gaita de tambora
Galerón	Galerón Oriental
Golpe Tocuyano	
Guaraña	
Joropo	*Joropo* Central
	Joropo Oriental
Jota	Jota Carupanera
Merengue	Merengue Caraqueño
	Merengue *Golpe* Arriba
	Merengue Rucaneao
Onda nueva	
Orquídea	
Pasodoble	
Polka	
Polo	
Porro	
Punto	Punto de navegante
	Punto redoblado
	Punto y llanto
Sabana Blanca	
Tamunangue	
Vals	

I have included in Appendix 2 of this document a detailed list of additional rhythms and styles found throughout this study, which are nowadays performed on the *cuatro* but were not originally.

Chapter 11

Tacit Knowledge: sabor and celebration of music

Throughout this report I have been arguing that there are certain types of knowledge in *cuatro* transmission that are rendered invisible by the modern pedagogic paradigm. This does not mean that they are never visible or non-existent within systems where the modern pedagogic paradigm operates. I have argued, however, that the modern pedagogic paradigm rationality, which naturally isolates, objectifies, fragments, names (labels) and organises knowledge within linear sequences, is not able to 'capture' certain realms of music and musical experience within this type of operation. Polanyi would refer to this type of dimensions as 'tacit knowledge':

> I shall reconsider human knowledge by starting from the fact that *we can know more than we can tell*… Take an example. We know a person´s face, and can recognize it among a thousand, indeed among a million. Yet we usually cannot tell how we recognize a face we know. So most of this knowledge cannot be put into words (Polanyi, 1966, p. 4).

In this vein, the fact that it is impossible to 'name' certain portions of knowledge also implies that it is impossible to fragment them. In a way, tacit knowledge exists when an experience takes place as a whole, but once we try to analyse its components separately, we miss its essence. Building on Polanyi's thoughts, Keith Swanwick comments:

> In music we can be impressed by a general quality of movement or continuity, or by some stylistic traits that are especially strong; but we can only tacitly know all the melodic, rhythmic and instrumental details that take part in the overall impression that we receive. We perceive them as a whole, and any analysis done at an inferior level to that whole implies that we should abandon momentarily our focus on the totality of experience, which is

its most satisfactory and meaningful quality (My translation, Swanwick, 1991, p. 148).

In this sense, some types of knowledge cannot be fragmented nor named. If we manage to do it, we will be missing the essence of that particular knowledge as a whole or, in Swanwick's words, its 'most satisfactory and meaningful quality'. This does not mean, of course, that we cannot fragment a musical whole with a pedagogic intentionality. However, as we will see, the issue at stake is whether or not we are actually aware of what is lost within this exercise of fragmentation, which is, in itself, an exercise of translation. In addition to this, it may be that we are intentionally compensating for this fragmented experience by bringing forward other ways of learning into the pedagogical situation, which are more organic and based on music making as a continuum, as a complement to fragmentation.

In this section, I will refer to some of these 'hidden' aspects of transmission, based on certain emergent categories of this project. Specifically, I will discuss two aspects of transmission: *sabor* and celebration of music.

Because local literature in relation to *sabor* is scarce, throughout this chapter I will mainly build on the perceptions of participants to develop this category and on the ideas of some authors who discuss issues such as rhythm, feel and groove in the midst of other artistic frames and musical genres, mainly within popular Anglophone music. I am aware that further enquiries into literature that addresses issues such as feel and expression could offer a broader musical scope as a pertinent reference for the understanding of *sabor*, but it would surpass the limits of the main aims of this study, which are of a pedagogic nature. Future studies could foster this understanding by establishing connections with similar categories in other genres.

Sabor

As I mentioned at the beginning of this report, *sabor* is a very important emerging theme in this thesis. In fact, many participants refer to it as a central aspect of music making. I also mentioned that I did not come up with a unique definition of what *sabor* is. Some musicians refer to *sabor* strictly in terms of musical elements,

such as rhythm, accents or melodies. Other participants refer to non-musical aspects such as emotions or relate it to socio-cultural contexts.

In any case, *sabor* is expressed in music, and does not exist by itself. By analogy, Ong's (2002) reference to the meaning of words within oral cultures is useful when it comes to understanding the situated and multidimensional character of music, expressed in terms of its particular *sabor*:

> Of course, oral cultures have no dictionaries and few semantic discrepancies. The meaning of each word is controlled by what Goody and Watt (1968, p. 29) call 'direct semantic ratification', that is, by the real-life situations in which the word is used here and now. The oral mind is uninterested in definitions (Laura, 1976, pp. 48-99). Words acquire their meanings only from their always insistent actual habitat, which does not include, as in a dictionary, simply other words, but also gestures, vocal inflections, facial expressions, and the entire human, existential setting in which the real, spoken word always occurs. Word meanings come continuously out of the present, though past meanings have, of course, shaped the present meaning in many and varied ways, which are no longer recognised.

In this sense, the 'meaning' of *sabor* is variable, and has to do with people's personal musical biographies and with the direct experience of the context in which music is taking place. It is a relative and subjective category. As an example of this, I will refer to a personal experience while visiting the *Festival de la Bandola Criolla Pedro Flórez* in Maní, Casanare. One of the activities of the festival was a contest, in which musicians competed by playing traditional *golpes* with the *bandola*, with the *cuatro* and *maracas* as accompaniment. While referring to the competitors of this contest, who were mainly young musicians, senior *bandola* player Hollman Caicedo comments:

> *Hollman Caicedo*: That's why I say that this festival is no longer called for Pedro Florez because he did not play like this. Pedro Florez was *criollo* (traditional). Very *criollito*, he did not add many things to it. It was a

bandola criolla, which formerly was played. He played every sound neatly, clearly.

Andrés: What is changing? Speed ... *sabor* ...?

Hollman Caicedo: That speed was not part of playing (points to the park, where the contest takes place). The *sabor* is lost, there is no taste.

Andrés: So it was slower but with more *sabor*...

Hollman Caicedo: It's criollo...Al right? Exactly. You ... make a broth or soup that's not prepared in a pressure cooker... Yes? Exactly .. But if you prepare it at low heat, in a wood fire... it's very tasty ... Yes? But if you make it in a pressure cooker it's done in a hurry and it's tasteless ... that's what musicians today do.

This metaphor is very beautiful and pertinent since it uses an analogy that allows us to understand, within the realm of gastronomy, the essence of the word *sabor*, which in Spanish means 'flavour' or 'taste'. For Hollman, as with cooking, if you play too fast, music does not have the same *sabor*. At the same time I should say, however, that the day before this interview I had been watching the same young musicians playing in the contest, and they appeared to me to have lots of *sabor*. Interestingly, one of the competitors spoke with great admiration of the senior musicians, such as Holman, because he felt that they have plenty of *sabor*. In addition to this, if these competitors hear me playing the *cuatro* or the *bandola*, they might feel that I do not have enough *sabor*; however, perhaps somebody from London might find that I do, and so on, and so on. In this sense, *sabor* is a category that is recognised in a relative way according to situated musical contexts. *Cuatro* player and singer Camilo Guerrero expresses the relativity and opacity of the term in the following way when I ask him to define *sabor*:

Camilo Guerrero: ... When they talk about *sabor* some refer to how hard you play the harp or that the *bordoneo*[87] sounds "prmmm"... but that's very relative, it has to do with points of view. *Sabor* is a point of view because

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[87] *Bordoneo* refers to the playing of the low strings on the *harp*; it is generally executed by the left hand of the harpist.

suddenly you sound with *sabor* and I don't. It is a very complicated concept to define...

Intersonic and extra-musical dimensions of sabor

The relation between sounds is, without doubt, a central aspect of musical performance and experience. Small comments:

> Although the sounds that the musicians are making do not constitute the whole of the experience, they are nonetheless the catalyst that makes the experience take place, and their nature and their relationships are therefore a crucial part of the nature of the experiences as a whole (Small, 1998, p. 184).

These relations have to do with basic dimensions of music such as harmony, rhythm, melody and timbre. This inner realm of these sonic interactions and their particularities express not only a particular style or 'way of playing', but also offer the mediating substance for the emergence and flow of feelings and affectivity in musical experiences. I should say, at this point, that several musicians referred to *sabor* and style as interchangeable terms. The 'particularities' of the sonic relations within a particular style are related to the way in which performers set them in motion. From this standpoint, *sabor* and feel are determined, in essence, by musicians' particular ways of combining and manipulating musical elements within a musical performance. Green (2012) comments:

> Whatever the instrument or situation, and whether the music is a precise copy or a looser interpretation, internalization and reproduction are not restricted to the pitches, rhythms and forms of the music. For, equally importantly, they also encompass exacting attention to ephemeral details, often referred to as 'feel'. This includes the precise timing of notes on and around the beat, the exact and often changing sound or timbre of each instrument, the sensitive interrelations and responses between the instruments and many other subtleties (Green, 2012, p. 32).

Sabor, in this sense, can be discussed in terms of the way in which musicians 'play around' the parameters of music with expressive purposes. In this vein, Deleuze comments on the difference between meter and rhythm:

> It is well known that rhythm is not meter or cadence, even irregular meter or cadence: there is nothing less rhythmic than a military march... Meter, whether regular or not, assumes a coded form whose unit of measure may vary, but in a non-communicating milieu, whereas rhythm is the Unequal or the Incommensurable that is always undergoing transcoding. Meter is dogmatic, but rhythm is critical; it ties together critical moments, or ties itself together in passing from one milieu to another. It does not operate in a homogeneous space-time, but by heterogeneous blocks. It changes direction (Deleuze, 1987, p. 313).

In a similar sense, for Keil (in Washburne, 1998, p. 163), it is precisely this 'out of time-ness' and 'out of tune-ness' that dye music with a vital force that, at the same time, guarantees the qualities of participation of other musicians and listeners. Camilo Guerrero addresses the same issues in his own terms when referring to *sabor* in *joropo* music:

> *Camilo Guerrero*: In relation to singing, when people say that someone sings with *sabor*, 'That one really sings criollo'... it is because he enters right before the beat. If one sings *música llanera* as it goes – in the beat – it sounds without *sabor*. For example in a *pajarillo*. It sounds without *sabor* ... so you hear people saying, 'No, that guy has a good voice but he sings without *sabor*'... but it turns out that he himself is singing where it should be ... No, the people from the Llanos when singing we start ahead of time, a little bit ahead of time and that's what gives the *jalonazo* (start-up) to *música llanera*, then it sounds with *viaje* (trip), that's it.

As we can see, *sabor* is simultaneously a vital aspect of performance and an incommensurable trait of music whose constitutive elements (both musical and emotional) can hardly be objectified, fragmented and organised within a logical, linear sequence. This is so because, precisely, *sabor* ontologically exists 'within the border', a limit zone that is messy and not definable. Thus, the question must be asked, to what extent does this out of tune-ness and out of time-ness stretch itself? Does it always stretch in the same direction, with the same length and for the same period of time? These are unanswerable questions within the rationality of the modern pedagogic paradigm. On the other hand, even if these interrogations could be answered, *sabor*, as we have seen, is a relative and situated category. This fact makes the task of choosing the 'ideal' reference of *sabor* within the broad diversity of situated meanings, quite impossible. *Sabor* and feel, however, exist, and are a central trait of playing; indeed, the only true way in which they can be transmitted seems to be through the actual experience of playing with musicians who have this *sabor*, whatever it is, and imitating them in the deepest sense, almost like 'contagion'.

In this frame of ideas, some questions that disturb me, and to which I cannot have a definite response today, are: What happens with *sabor* when the modern pedagogic paradigm operates on the learning process? To what extent is it rendered less visible when this happens? Does it continue to circulate within learning experiences in the learning processes regardless? Does it continue to emerge with the same intensity as in the musicking experiences observed in contexts of open transmission? Is it variable between teachers? How is *sabor* affected, for example, when imitation emerges in the process but in a fragmented way and with manipulation of elements such as tempo?

I now wish to share a testimony that brings up a description of styles and their differences, including ideas that have been expressed by other musicians in connection to *sabor*. It also allows me to introduce the issue of *sabor* in relation to extra-musical categories such as cultural contexts and emotional aspects, which I will discuss in the next paragraphs. Isaac Tacha speaks about the different ways of performing a *golpe* according to the style, which has particularities in performance according to its particular sub-genre of *joropo*, or to its specific historical period. He points out the importance of the cultural contexts embedded in music as a means to discover *sabor* – an issue to which I will return later on in this chapter:

Isaac Tacha: Strumming has a different connotation in each type of music. So how do you combine your open strums with your muted ones...? I spoke a short while ago about the *música torrealbera*[88] and other types of music. The *cuatro* is not played in the same way in every type of *joropo*. This cannot be. You have to locate the style within its corresponding period. Just as when you interpret the *violin* and identify it, for example, with baroque music, you must identify where it is situated culturally, at what time, you must identify the culture of the time so that it can be played. If you're learning English, it should be culturally identified in order to speak it properly ... it's exactly the same. Then in music, for example with *música llanera*, for its interpretation one has to identify the historical moment so that it sounds like it. It must be the style of that moment.... A peasant music (he sings a fragment of the tune *Campesina* – which means peasant woman – and while he accompanies himself, he uses some ornaments and leaves some silent spaces). But if you're going to play it like this (he plays the basic rhythm without flourishes and in *corrido*) ... it's the same peasant but without ornaments, without flowers, without the trimmings. So the performance of music is not the same, even if it's the same song.

While I write this section of the report, I return to the video recording of Isaac's interview. I listen again to the two examples he offers in which he contrasts both types of playing. When speaking about it, Isaac refers to *sabor* strictly in intersonic terms, but when he plays he is rendering something else visible. Life comes into his playing – some type of emotional quality is now different. As such, I want to state that *sabor* is certainly in the music; it 'occurs' or 'exists' within the sounds of performance. However, it also expresses something else: it has to do with the movement of something that is deeper – an emotional substance that is expressed by sounds but that transcends them at the same time. The spirit of music is unleashed.

As can be seen until now, several participants addressed the issue of *sabor* while referring to the intersonic relationships of music. They point out particular ways of

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[88] Juan Vicente Torrealba is a celebrated harpist and composer from Venezuela who developed a particular stylised way of performing traditional music.

'playing' with elements such as rhythm, pitch and timbre, among others. I will now try to refer to other views of *sabor*, related to extra-musical elements that remain however connected to intersonic issues. In this sense, some participants refer to *sabor* by rather addressing issues such as intellect, emotions, energy, cultural contexts and so on. Green (2012) reports other categories associated with feel, such as humanity, care, ability to touch other people's feelings, passion, personal voice and spirit.

In addition to this, Washburne brings up a definition of 'feel' that expresses the category in terms of a set of intersonic materials which are set in motion in a particular way within a context that is both intellectual and emotional:

> Feel refers to the rhythmic placement of pitches (attacks and releases) and how those pitches are executed (timbre, intonation, inflection, embellishment, and dynamics) by an individual musician. The personal choices musicians make concerning feel are based on both intellectual and emotional considerations. For example, when a conscious decision is made to play either ahead or behind the beat intellectual processes are at work. The motivation behind that choice is often rooted in a musician's emotional perception of the music, such as, a desire to build excitement or tension within the groove (Washburne, 1998, p. 161).

In some cases, musicians connect *sabor* with the contexts in which music is embedded. Julián Crosswaithe, for instance, suggests that music should actually 'taste' like the savannah where it is composed:

> *Julián Crosswaithe*: One believes that *pasaje* is slow, but if you pay attention (to some versions) its beginning has a high speed, with a very fast attack, which produces a *joropo* that 'tastes' of the savannah, as we say, it makes it 'taste' like folklore.

Other participants go even further and are more explicit; indeed, they suggest that *joropo* music should 'taste like the cattle's dung'. Let us recall the fact that one of the Llanos region's main agro industrial activities is cattle breeding. Camilo Guerrero comments, in relation to *sabor* in *cuatro* playing:

Camilo Guerrero: It's a concept that is very difficult to define, but if it's like ... local people would say 'play something that *tastes* like dung ' ... you should feel it and transmit it...

Once again, I argue that this reference is not just a 'mental image' or a metaphor. On the one hand, it does signify a 'rude' type of sound, which is 'not so clean', and that is typical of *joropo* music. However, at the same time, it pinpoints a certain type of 'vibration' or 'flavour' that is produced and alive in the local environment – within the web of nature, men, landscape, music – and that insider participants feel can only be *truly* transmitted through direct contact with the territory where it actively deploys.

Some important questions arise at this point concerning the transmission of sabor, for example: How can sabor be transmitted if its definition is so complex and elusive? Who determines whether musicians have sabor or not? In response, I wish to mention a couple of issues. First, of one thing we are certain: sabor exists in so far as, sociologically speaking, because musicians refer to it. As we have seen, however, it is defined in variable ways building on both intersonic (e.g. rhythmic variations) and non-musical aspects (e.g. relation to cultural contexts, emotions). In this sense, its transmission has to do with both dimensions; indeed, any process of transmission inevitably involves both intersonic and extra musical issues. Therefore, in the case of traditional music, I wish to say that the transmission of sabor implies intentional emphasis, on one hand, on imitation because it involves direct replication of intersonic aspects that signify sabor in a musical product. This element is very important for the learning of sabor within institutional frames, where access to local cultural contexts (outside universities) is not at hand. In this sense, the use of recordings and videos is certainly a central tool for the learning of sabor in institutions through imitation. It might also be desirable for the Higher Education curriculum to include a detailed exploration of issues such as microtiming in relation to sabor. For example, by analysing with students the connection between sabor and rhythmic micro variations in the waves of an audio software display, while at the same time asking them to reproduce these subtle changes in music on their own instruments. Other uses of

technology for the enhancement of imitation will be explored further on in this chapter in relation to the transmission of sabor.

On the other hand, learning sabor can also be potentiated by exposure to cultural contexts that frame the production of traditional music. Even if less accessible than working with videos and recordings, it is possible to organise visits to contexts where musical experiences can be shared with local musicians. This immersion in situated experiences allows students to access the cultural meanings that people construct which are expressed in action (Becker, 1991, p. 80). I refer to meanings that can be religious, political, moral, and sexual, to mention just a few, and that relate and express themselves within a wide array of elements within local contexts including relationships to landscape and territory, political dynamics or even in gastronomy. In the same sense, these meanings are also expressed and constructed through music as a means of expression within communitarian practices. The access to these situated circulation of meanings expressed in concrete actions, including music, might be an important issue for the transmission of sabor accepting its contextual dimension, one that is perhaps less easily objectified and controlled (e.g. within logical sequences, etc.) than intersonic aspects per se. A dimension, however, that is brought up with strength by most of the participants in this study.

In the next two sections, we will see how relationships are established between transmission and these two aspects (i.e. intersonic and extra-musical elements) with more or less intentionality and systematicity across the learning contexts. Future research could study how intentional pedagogic emphasis on intersonic elements or contextual exposure to traditional contexts affects the development of sabor, given a constant negotiated value judgment by a group of experts. In this sense, it is important to mention that any value judgment to be emitted in this respect will always have some level of subjectivity and will depend on situated aesthetic norms. However, aesthetic norms and intersubjective aesthetic judgements are always socially situated and negotiated. For the purpose of formal assessment, the way of resolving this issue would not differ much from the usual ways in which music is assessed in institutional contexts. This means, by generating assessment procedures that imply the participation of a group of experts who evaluate performance according to the tacit aesthetic agreements of a particular musical field. For example, when a group of juries assess the performance of a classical piano player according to technical, expressive

and stylistic aspects that are tacitly accepted as 'desirable' or 'normal'. In this context, it could be convenient to have a traditional musician invited as part of the jury when a *cuatro* student offers a final audition at a music academy or university so as to enhance the richness of this situated negotiation of juries in terms of traditional expression and sabor.

How is sabor learned in open systems of transmission?

When responding to the question about how *sabor* is learned, musicians referred to two types of learning: listening to music (life and recorded) and direct contact with music's cultural contexts. Not a single one of the participants speaks about notation as a means for the transmission of *sabor*. These two types of responses correspond well to the ideas that were above discussed in relation to intersonic and extra-musical issues when participants describe what they understand by *sabor*.

From an intersonic perspective, listening to and copying other performers' music is a central strategy for the development of *sabor*. Both within open and closed systems of transmission contexts, musicians find that recordings are a rich source of knowledge in terms of style and *sabor*. This knowledge is usually associated with particular artists who constitute themselves as references within the field. Camilo Guerrero comments on this issue while confirming the prominence of feel over technical issues:

Camilo Guerrero: Listening to a lot of *música llanera* and listening to proper *música llanera*. I think that *música llanera* is a complete school. Who plays folklore must have listened to Ángel Custodio Loyola, for example, or Carrao de Palmarito, Eneas Perdomo, these people had so much *sabor*. They had uneducated but very powerful voices, they were stunning voices.

Several musicians, at the same time, suggest that it is not just a matter of merely listening. They bring up the idea of listening with a particular purpose (Green, 2012) while setting in motion a process of analysis that can be more or less systematic. Isaac

Tacha again brings up the metaphor of taste in gastronomy when he comments on the issue of purposeful listening:

> *Isaac Tacha*: You have to listen... what's its flavour ... and.... Like when those who love cooking begin to look for the flavour of what they're eating... 'What's in the recipe...?', 'What is the bouquet of the thing?'... This exercise must be done in order to really find *sabor*, so if I want to be a *cuatro* player, but in a range of great performance, I have to not only learn to move my fingers...

Along similar lines, Adrián Peroza also includes the idea of purposeful analysis in listening when he answers my question about how *sabor* can be developed by people who are born in cultural contexts from abroad:

> *Adrián Peroza*: Listening to lots of music and rehearsing a lot. *Joropo* has to start being part of the person. Listening to music, listening to *joropo*, knowing how a good *joropo* sounds. Knowing how to play the *cuatro* appropriately. Listening... 'that *repique* is well executed, well done' ... 'it was played where it had to be played.' That's *sabor,* the one referred to by the old musicians, by the ancient *cuatro* players. *Sabor*.

It is precisely the exercise of reiterative copying that will enhance musicians' development of those personal voices and styles. Lucy Green comments: 'I explore the notion that popular performers find 'their own voices', not as a result of some mysterious authenticity or ungrounded originality, but *after* an apprenticeship of close copying or covering existing recordings' (Green, 2012, p. 189).

From another standpoint, several musicians think that *sabor* is mainly developed within the cultural contexts that frame music. It is transmitted through a process of enculturation which starts very early in musicians' lives. Furthermore, some participants comment that *sabor* is 'in the blood', which can be read as 'either you have it by birth or you don't have it'. John Jairo Torres comments:

John Jairo Torres: I think that it's carried in the veins... you have to feel it. It is as if I played *vallenato*[89]. Imagine me playing *vallenato*. What swing could I put into it? I'm a creole bassist... (from the Llanos), or playing a *reggaeton* or something ... I wouldn't find myself. I have to feel it, to feel what I'm playing, I need to like it...

From this essentialist view of *sabor*, its acquisition is problematic since any attempt to transmit it can be artificial. According to Rafael Padilla:

Rafael Padilla: *Sabor* cannot be bought in any store. I think that if *sabor* could be bought in any store, you could pass it on. And I could buy enough *sabor* so that you can feel my song, be touched by it. There are people with an excellent voice, but it does not touch you. There are *joropo* dancers who are very good, but who have no *sabor*. There are *cuatro* players, who are very good technically, who play *joropo* ... but you cannot feel that flavour...

Andrés: And how do you develop *sabor* in a student?

Rafael Padilla: I think it is quite difficult. I do not know if *sabor* is born with the person or if it's learned. It is difficult; I would say that *sabor* is born with people...

Most of the participants, however, do think that it is possible for learners to develop *sabor* even when they have not been exposed to an early type of enculturation within the original traditional contexts. *Sabor*, in this case, is 'like a substance' that gradually starts 'sticking' to musicians. Juan Carlos Contreras comments:

Juan Carlos Contreras: ... For somebody who's not born in that region it's hard to get the feeling, the *sabor* ... but sharing in farms... and in *parrandos* ... and at festivals and listening to *música llanera*, *sabor* starts to stick to you...

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[89] *Vallenato* is a traditional rhythm from the Caribbean coasts of Colombia, mainly from the region of Valledupar.

When any exposure to this type of 'original' *sabor* is produced, people who 'were not born with it' can absorb it to some extent. However, if this 'contamination' of *sabor* does not occur, then the performance tastes 'watery'. Zahira Noguera, a *cuatro* player from Bogotá, comments:

> *Zahira Noguera*: They carry all that in the blood, it's that passion; sometimes you do not get 'soaked' by those things so you play like very watery.

In this sense, a privileged space for the development of this 'contact' with the original *sabor* of traditional music is festivals. Zahira Noguera, again, comments:

> *Andrés*: When you're not from the Llanos, how can you develop *sabor*? ... What alternatives do you have?
>
> *Zahira Noguera*: I think it's a matter of language, of acquiring that type of *sabor*, that *viaje* (journey) as we say. It is important to fully know the music, to attend festivals, to share with the people who are originally from the Llanos, because it is very difficult to... let's say a classical guitarist who starts to play the *cuatro* but is not familiar with the sound as it is, with the language of that music, it is essential to attend at least to one festival to acquire it, to see small children playing and dancing.

On the other hand, several participants point out that this contact is not only musical, but also involves living with people, and taking part in their everyday activities:

> *Cheo Hurtado*: *Un Solo Pueblo*[90] went to Curarigua. They stayed there for 15 or 20 days. They were in touch directly with local playing and singing. And they learned those things there, living and eating and living ...
>
> *Luis Pino*: ...the issue of experience, of closeness with the earth... The issue of what the local musicians eat, how they speak...

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[90] *Un Solo Pueblo* is a traditional group from Venezuela, specialised in afro-Venezuelan rhythms since the decade of the 70s.

Guillermo Díaz goes even further in this vein and comments on the actual relation of *sabor* not only with the general culture, but also with the concrete, physical territory where music is produced:

Guillermo Díaz: ...When you're playing the instrument, and you play it in the Llanos, it sounds different. The instrument tells you how to play it, the environment, the land, the landscape... all these things lead you to play with *sabor*. That's when you really understand what *joropo* is. Playing it in the Llanos, in the savannah....

From another standpoint, Luis Pino speaks about *sabor* as a category that relates directly to the particularities of the idiosyncrasies of people and cultures. For Luis, people who live without *sabor*, play music without *sabor*:

Luis Pino: The cold people are cold people. There are many people like walking dead out there. Living dead. They do not incorporate the *taste* of life. By being able to live with situations, with emotions. People who are closed, hermetic people. That is not part of the traditional culture of any people. Of any culture, however peaceful it can be ... So that's also *sabor*.

In the same vein, Luis also refers to a particular type of emotional care that is nourished by a self-consciousness of identity as part of *sabor* in musicians' performance:

Luis Pino: It is an issue of dedication. I think it's an issue of love for what you do. Loving what you are and having roots. It is a matter of intensities. The origin, where you come from. Venezuela is Caribbean. We must then see the case of *caciques* (Indian chiefs) in Venezuela. How they were, how they behaved. What occurred in Venezuela in the process of transculturation? What did we receive? The drum of our coast, for example. This situation of intensity, of a permanent boiling blood. In Venezuela, in the Caribbean, on the islands. All the time people have a boiling blood. In the popular

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language, when you have the blood boiling, it means that you can get very annoyed. That you have hot blood. That's what it means. And that allows things to go with some intensity, in a certain way... a certain way of speaking, of eating, of knowing everything right away. It is always very thick. The people of the Caribbean are very dense. Thick in that sense, in the way of life. And all that is in the music. In that *sabor* ...

At this point, I feel tempted to establish a connection between the level at which *sabor* is developed and the type of enculturation to which an individual is exposed. In a previous chapter I spoke of two types of music enculturation. In the first place, I referred to a *primary type of enculturation*, which occurs when the learner is involved in direct experiences within the cultural practices of the original territory where the music is produced. I discussed how this exposure to music within social practices usually takes place early in life and tends to have an intense imprint on the subject. On the other hand, I referred to a *secondary type of enculturation,* which implies late and/or virtual contact with traditional music and its cultural contexts. I used the variables of age and type of contact (virtual or direct) to determine if a process of enculturation is more or less intense. I referred to these levels of intensity using the adjectives 'hard' or 'soft' type of enculturation.

In this frame of ideas, *sabor* would be an issue of transmission that is incorporated into higher levels of intensity by musicians who are primarily enculturated. By contrast, a musician who only has access to music through audio recordings, but no contact with its original contexts, would develop *sabor* with less intensity. This relation is apparently clear. The problem is that, as we have seen, *sabor* is a relative category. In this sense, the intensity with which it is developed or incorporated will be judged with subjectivity according to the parameters or criteria of the listener. A musician who was born in the Llanos region will perhaps find that a musician coming from another region of the same country plays without *sabor*. By contrast, a musician from another culture might judge the same musician as having plenty of *sabor*.

As stated earlier in this report, *sabor* seems to be a category that connects intersonic particularities and extra-musical aspects such as cultural idiosyncrasy, in an organic way. From this standpoint, a piece of music is played with *sabor* when there is,

on the part of the performer, a subjacent apprehension of the meaning of sounds that is not only musical but also emotional, social and cultural. In this sense, I wish to argue that the only true 'measure' of *sabor* is the degree to which a particular musician is using, with authenticity and care, a series of mediums and technical devices to express him or herself, within his or her present possibilities, while engaging in an act of celebration that has some type of socio cultural localisation. Any attempt to establish a judgement in relation to *sabor* will thus be restrained to situated meanings that are constructed in relation to it by an individual and by a specific group of people at a particular moment and within a particular context.

At the same time, however, I am aware that an exposure to the cultural webs that frame music can enrich the musical and extra-musical material that acts as a fertile substratum for the celebration of music within people, and through music, for the celebration of life. I choose to adopt the opinion that *sabor* is *something* that is alive within the experience of musicians in and outside of music. I feel tempted to say that *a musician plays with sabor because he lives with sabor*. I will use the idea of *sabor*, as approached in this section, to guide the proposal that will be presented in the final chapter of this report, building on the metaphor of a 'pedagogy with *sabor'*.

How is sabor learned within closed systems of transmission?

As in open systems of transmission, within closed systems of transmission *sabor* is also approached by musicians from two types of perspective: on the one hand in relation to intersonic aspects and, on the other hand, in relation to extra-musical elements or contextual framings of music. These two perspectives will be related, in turn, to teaching strategies that favour either internal or external aspects of music. In any case, *sabor* is something that tends to happen in an organic way within closed systems of transmission settings. Musicians are aware that separating its transmission from a more integral, situated and individual learning experience makes no sense. Hildo Aguirre:

> *Hildo Aguirre*: 'Oh... that musician plays with lots of *sabor* when accompanying'. It is something that cannot be explained, it is something that is implicit in each artist. But one cannot say, as in a university, 'Well, today we have a course on *sabor*' ... that's not it, *sabor* comes with each person.

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Intersonic views on sabor in closed systems of transmission

Views on *sabor* in terms of intersonic elements were expressed in teachers' perceptions, learning strategies and in institutional discourses. *Cuatro* syllabuses at *ASAB* University, for example, include learning outcomes such as 'controlling dynamics' or 'understanding phrasing'.

I certainly witnessed teachers acting as models within closed systems of transmission who had, in general, from my perspective, a very good feel for music. I did find important differences, however, in terms of the subtlety that emerges within the various performance styles in terms of intersonic elements such as the control of dynamics and timbric contrasts. Some players are, in this sense, more static, and the work on these aspects within classes is determined by the texture of the piece in itself and does not dive into deeper detail. In the following fragment, the teacher invites the student to play with more strength at a certain point of the piece and works on a rhythmic dynamic at its closure. These were the two types of explicit elements that I found within the *cuatro* lessons observed: character and rhythmic dynamics:

> There are not many dynamics, or at least they're not explicitly worked, but rather seem to be given by the texture of the piece (when you go from arpeggios to strumming, for example). However, Juan Carlos (the teacher) does insist on the momentum of the strummed part. But there is no work in subtleties. There is a ritardando in the final arpeggios.
>
> (*Field notes - ASAB university*)

Other *cuatro* teachers have a much more subtle type of playing in this sense, especially those who have had some type of training as *classical guitar* players. However, I want to point out that, even when this occurs, explicit work on this type of nuance is very rare, almost non-existent, within *cuatro* sessions. In other words, when teachers perform using subtleties and contrasts, they will transmit this type of playing to their students throughout their playing, and not by explicitly pointing out specific contrasting elements while they teach. In this sense, these types of subtleties in

performance are transmitted as tacit knowledge.

In relation to intersonic elements, several strategies within closed systems of transmission are intended to enhance the development of 'style'. On some occasions, the intersonic elements that characterise style are related to rhythmic issues that are collectively accepted as patterns that should be played at certain moments of the pieces or *golpes*. They are called 'obligados' because of their 'obligatory' nature within styles and they usually determine the synchronic execution of the rhythmic instruments of *joropo*, which essentially means the *cuatro* and *maracas*.

> (The teacher) has written on the board a rhythmic entrance of the *cuatro* on the chords that usually precedes the *Seis por derecho golpe*.
>
> (*Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo*)

The teacher not only demonstrates and speaks about this specific rhythmic pattern but he also writes it down on the board with a pedagogic intention. This is a good example of the type of elements in relation to *sabor* that can clearly be objectified, fragmented, isolated and represented with abstract symbols. The same thing goes for the rhythmic pattern that 'should' be executed at the end of the *golpe*. Indeed, Hildo explains how the *golpe* finishes:

> We practice the end with the whole group. Hildo plays the *cuatro* to demonstrate the end. While we play it, Hildo uses onomatopoeia for the rhythm of the *golpe*. Once we understand the rhythm of the end, he shows us the harmony we must do, because there are some chords that change.
>
> (*Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo*)

As can be seen, within this fragment there is an imitation strategy that isolates a section to demonstrate something in relation to style, in terms of intersonic elements. Additionally, there is a linear sequence: the teacher first 'resolves' the issue of rhythm and *then* starts working with harmony within that section.

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Listening to music

The most important source of *sabor* through imitation in closed systems of transmission settings is, of course, the teacher. Since notation is almost absent, there is a permanent exposure to the performance of the teacher, who acts as a technical and musical referent. Guillermo Díaz comments on the type of intersonic elements of which students should be aware when imitating *sabor*:

> *Guillermo Díaz:* Imitating notes is the least important. The challenge is to imitate what is beyond. The subdivision, the dynamics. The accentuation of the eighth notes. If the teacher is aware of that, we could speak at some point of *cuatro* being played with *sabor* outside of the Llanos region.

Besides direct demonstrations from the teacher, the other source of *sabor* is recordings. Teachers invite students to listen to recordings, asking them to reproduce issues such as stability in the *golpe*. On some occasions, students are asked to play along with recordings. Julian Crosswaithe, a *cuatro* teacher at *Academia Llano y Joropo*, comments:

> *Andrés*: Many of the children are not born in the Llanos region but here in Bogotá... How do you awake in them the issue of *sabor* and put them in touch with the essence of música *llanera*?
>
> *Julián Crosswaithe*: As my teacher Hildo did it with me. He made me listen to things. One invites them to hear a certain *cuatro* player, who is one of the first performers, but who has a very steady base, a very nice execution, and you ask them to play with the recording, to accompany it. I think that is one of the most important methods, to play the accompaniment with a recording.

Recordings, on the other hand, offer a valuable opportunity to compare different styles between musicians, especially in relation to those subtle aspects of *sabor* that cannot be verbalised. Guillermo Díaz comments on the imitation of recordings:

Guillermo Díaz: For example, if one listens to Alexander, the *cuatro* player of Cholo Valerrama's group, he's a guy who plays very tight and with a supremely symmetric subdivision. On the other hand, Luis Pino is a guy who plays differently; with much more freedom of movement in his right hand, with a subdivision that tends to move forward (he imitates both styles). I do not know how you can explain that, but the difference can be heard.

Guillermo goes even further and suggests that technology could be a useful tool in *cuatro* pedagogy. He imagines a learning setting in which a multi-track session is used in order to highlight the different instruments in search of a more distinct perception of *sabor* subtleties and relations between instruments. Indeed, Guillermo comments that:

An aid could be that, at the time of mixing, the performance of the *cuatro* is highlighted a bit more. He suggests having *playalongs* with a multi-track system on the computer. He imagines the teacher, the student, each one with his *cuatro* and a laptop with *ProTools*; having recorded audio sessions of *cuatro* players or groups that are important references, and being able to listen clearly what the *cuatro* plays, and making exercises in which, for example, synchronicity with *maracas* is practiced.

(*Entry in my field notes*)

Teaching sabor within a sequence

As occurs with the transmission of other types of knowledge, the teaching of *sabor* is frequently organised within some type of logical, linear structure. An interesting example of this is when teachers learn a song with their students by working first on

the montage of a piece, and then on *sabor*. I comment in two of my entries while working with two different *cuatro* teachers:

> Juan Carlos (the teacher) suggests that now that we've finished learning the piece, we will focus on the *viaje* (trip) of the music...

<div align="right">(Diary entry, my private lessons)</div>

> We play the *Seis por derecho*, each one plays it alone, accompanying Hildo. When we finish, Hildo says it's okay; what comes is to work *sabor* and *viaje*.

<div align="right">(Field notes, Academia Llano y Joropo)</div>

This certainly does not mean that, while learning the notes of the piece, no *sabor* at all was circulating. However, it does express a clear awareness of some type of linear sequence on the part of teachers, which contrasts with *sabor* transmission in open systems of transmission; indeed, the latter generally just 'happens' within the process of making music and informally imitating peers and advanced players. In some cases, the incorporation of *sabor* is understood by teachers as an 'in progress' process. While working with a *llanero* ensemble at Universidad Javeriana, Juan Carlos Contreras addresses the group and says:

> *Juan Carlos Contreras*: Let's play the complete section until there, so that we start to grasp its *viaje*....

Interestingly, when the teacher invites us to 'play the piece until that point' he is leading us gently towards an experience of musicking. Until that moment we had been working in a fragmented way, small section by small section. He now invites us to 'play' a longer portion of the piece in order to 'grasp' *sabor*. I argue that this type of learning situation is an interesting example of a mixed or translated type of approach to learning in which fragmentation (typical of modern pedagogic paradigm and closed systems of transmission) is used to procure technical development, while musicking

(typical of open systems of transmission) is used to actually work on the transmission of *sabor* – a type of tacit knowledge that apparently has to do more with an integral experience of music than with a fragmented, step-by-step sequence. The teacher, with great intuition, was aware of the benefits of both approaches for the group and could find a pertinent space and timing for the use of both types of strategies.

Extra-musical issues in relation to sabor in closed systems of transmission

The teaching of strategies for the transmission of *sabor* that are based on extra-musical issues was also found within closed systems of transmission settings. Teachers in these settings are aware of the importance of experiencing music within its traditional cultural contexts as a means to transmit *sabor*. I have already brought up several examples in this respect which show how musicians link extra-musical issues such as people's ways of living, culture, gastronomy, dancing, drinking, and landscape, among others, with the way in which music sounds, with its *sabor*.

All the possible situations that are brought up by teachers as necessary, are related to an enculturation of the second type according to the arguments that I made in the chapter regarding cultural contexts and music transmission. It is a strong, secondary enculturation, because it implies direct, in-person contact with the original contexts. On the other hand, some teachers bring up a secondary type of enculturation that is softer, because it implies the use of virtual media as a contextual framing for learning in academic settings. It implies using audio, videos and written documents. Ricardo Zapata states:

> *Ricardo Zapata*: ... I encourage their approach to these musics not only through playing but also through discography; I invite them to consult the few documents that are available on music from the Llanos: audios, videos and the few written documents that exist.

I will return to this issue of cultural framing for the learning *cuatro* in the proposal brought up in the following chapter. I will emphasise the importance of enhancing this type of contact with those extra-musical realities that frame the production of music, particularly in relation to direct contact with local settings. I will

also point out the importance of the role of the teacher, who acts as a 'cultural translator' (De Sousa, 2009) and accompanies students throughout this process of contact with other cultural settings while helping them to establish meaningful links between their own academic knowledge and the traditional knowledge with which they establish a vital relationship within these visits.

Enjoyment and celebration of music

Enjoyment is present in musicians' testimonies and 'in the atmosphere' throughout most of the contexts that I was able to observe. It was particularly visible within live performances and within spontaneous acts of musicking. However, it was also present within *cuatro* sessions in closed transmission contexts; I could sense it myself within my *cuatro* lessons. As I suggested in the chapter about musical paths and learning ecosystems, desire is usually at the centre of musicians' motivation throughout these learning and musical paths. What is normally desired *is* playing for enjoyment or increasing technical or musical dominance, which that allows access to those repertoires that are desired by learners. In this vein, Cristopher Small brings up the idea of celebration, as the result of a social, musical action that is performed with love and care and within the frame of people's situated technical possibilities and personal meanings about music:

> However trivial and banal the work may be that is the basis of the performance, meaning and beauty are created whenever any performer approaches it with love and with all the skill and care that he or she can bring to it... (Small, 1998, p. 7).

> (The experience of musicking) empowers those taking part to explore and to affirm their values, it leaves them with a feeling of being more completely themselves, more in tune with the world and with their fellows…. In short, it leaves the participants feeling good about themselves and about their values. It is thus an instrument of celebration (Small, 1998, p. 184).

> Ruth Finnegan comments on the value of this social character of music, where

shared celebration can be lived as a transcendent experience that stretches the boundaries of self and realities:

> This special crystallization of musical experience created by the interaction of both performers and audience represents somehow a shared symbolic dimension which removes it above and beyond ordinary experience… there does seem to be a sense in which the process of joining together in music, with all its problems and conflicts, really does unite people 'in harmony'… in some unique and profound way which, except perhaps in religious enactment, is seldom found in other contexts (Finnegan, 2007, p. 152).

This type of enjoyment and celebration is, of course, common in musical experiences across the world. In relation to popular music, Green comments:

> … all popular musicians unfailingly report…the extremely high levels of enjoyment that accompany their music making and music-learning activities' (Green, 2012, p. 9).

In relation to this project, enjoyment can be traced back to most of the musicians' first contact with music. Within a testimony that was presented earlier in its full length, Leonardo Lozano comments on his experience when listening to a friend of his family who played the piano:

> *Leonardo Lozano*: When Carlitos visited us I really got excited. I remember him playing Scott Joplin's Rag Time. I celebrated his playing, for me it was glory. Because he made these gestures, he was full of emotion ... all the music theatre, all the fun, all the excitement ... I caught it all. When he played the piano at home, it was like rain and I caught all that wonder.

Enjoyment, on the other hand, compels people to play in *parrandos* for several hours, even several days. I recall another comment, this time from John Jairo Torres:

> *John Jairo Torres*: I took part in *parrandos* with them until 8 am without drinking at all because I was a child of 11 or 12 years, but they did drink all night

long. I felt very sleepy but I was also very passionate about it. My hands burned, my fingers burned... I would even bleed sometimes... but I kept on playing.

Cuatro players are continuously in search of this enjoyment. They desire technical and musical dominance and new repertoires; they also desire better sound quality in their instruments, and to play with others because they enjoy playing the *cuatro* and musicking in general. Their desire is fulfilled when they obtain that 'something' that nourishes their hearts – that celebratory experience of music. Some of the participants express this emotional drive as a 'mystic' attitude toward *cuatro* playing. Luis Pino comments on an early experience while taking part in his first musical ensemble in Venezuela at the age of 12:

> *Luis Pino*: All this was built in four months… those four months from September to December were very important and fundamental, that's why I remember them so much. It was a matter of having a discipline and a mystique to ensure that everything turned out well.

Making music with others enhances this enjoyment and enhances feelings of empathy between players. The *cuatro* is usually played in groups and musicking with others seems to be a central trigger for learning. Playing together is frequently attached to friendship and affective bonds and, in some cases, musicians even live together as part of a shared musical desire.

From another standpoint, and in relation to closed systems of transmission, some teachers bring up the idea of enjoyment in terms of passion for the instrument and for playing. They point out this issue as being at the base of learning, even of discipline for practice. When I ask Guillermo Díaz to tell me what he considers to be the most crucial aspect of *cuatro* teaching, he responds:

> *Guillermo Díaz*:　I think the first thing a teacher has to do is to transmit a lot of passion to his student. That above anything else; if he has or doesn't have skills or abilities... but he needs to have a passion for the instrument.

Because that passion is going to lead him to have a good study discipline without even noticing it.

This trigger for learning is found by some teachers within the musical tastes of students. Camilo Guerrero comments:

Camilo Guerrero: First of all, I ask the student what he likes. Because if you play what you like you will probably do it with more passion, it's more exciting. Then we agree on a tune that he likes and we work on it.

Interestingly, some institutional documents include enjoyment as part of the expected learning outcomes. *Cuatro* syllabuses at Universidad de Cundinamarca:

Enjoying the process of learning, of creation and the development of the artist.

The postures and testimonies to which I have alluded throughout this section allow us to see a shared view regarding the prominent space that celebration and enjoyment occupy within the musical experiences of people. In this sense, I wish to think that even if it is difficult to be objectified in terms of the modern pedagogic paradigm rationality (fragmented, isolated, sequenced, etc.), enjoyment should always be at the centre of transmission. Enjoyment is related to personal identities, technical and musical dominance, adequate balance between understanding of intersonic and extra-musical elements, and capacity to share musical experiences with others, etc. From this perspective, pedagogic experiences in closed systems of transmission should permanently build on methodologies that enhance these elements, while keeping a careful track and awareness of the way in which 'ways of learning' impact enjoyment and celebration. In other words, and from a more radical standpoint, if the essential aim of musical experience is celebration, a teaching strategy that does not consciously enhance it as a central component of transmission is an actual failure, regardless of how good it is in terms of technical efficacy.

Chapter 12

Towards a 'mestizo' pedagogy in academic contexts

Beauty is not an artificial ornament added when everything else is already present, it rather buries its roots in the interior…beauty appears when the essence of the object and the essence of the human being attains a clear expression.

(Guardini in Musaio, 2013, p. 26)

This project has offered me a privileged opportunity to observe how *cuatro* learning is transmitted within a diversity of settings. On the one hand, I have examined what I call closed systems of transmission settings, which essentially relate to settings where the idea of a formal class starts to operate and where the *role* of the teacher emerges (i.e. institutions and private lessons). On the other hand, I have analysed several settings where transmission occurs in more spontaneous and free ways, which I have regrouped within the category of open systems of transmission contexts (i.e. family, friends, music groups, social gatherings, festivals and self-directed learning). Within the venues that I studied I have observed a confluence of two distinct transmission paradigms: first, a paradigm that is very systematic, based on isolation and fragmentation of knowledge, linearity of transmission and which implies a subsidiary use of notation. I have referred to this type of transmission as a modern pedagogic paradigm because of its direct relation to the modern-enlightened views of pedagogy that were discussed in earlier chapters. In addition to this, I have also drawn attention to an aural/oral type of transmission which is strongly attached to early enculturation processes, based on imitation, holistic, and embedded in collective music making; indeed, this enhances the ability to play several instruments and integrates performing and creating. These two types of approaches appear in a complex way and frequently intertwine; however, the former tends to emerge more clearly within closed systems of transmission contexts, especially within universities, while the latter seems to be more dominant within open systems of transmission settings.

In this frame of ideas, one of these two paradigms tends to predominate in each set of contexts, although it can also be found, to some extent, within the other type of

setting. Particularly within closed systems of transmission settings, I was able to find that a blend of the two types of transmission paradigms above were described with variable degrees of balance and intensity. Within a single private lesson, for example, I could find a strong use of imitation (aural/oral transmission) that is based on strong fragmentation of music (modern pedagogic paradigm). I have discussed the fact that some aspects of this blend appear as an actual translation of a certain way of learning into another, with a pedagogic aim. In this sense, it is fitting to refer to the fact that my teacher breaks up a piece into fragments which he teaches to me through imitation. Indeed, this involves a very useful translation of an aural/oral procedure that is usually holistic and random, into a fragmented and linear procedure that is more familiar to me as a classical musician trained within closed systems of transmission. Another, more concrete example of translation, is the actual representation and systematisation of music in notated abstract symbols.

Thus, one of the main purposes of the project was to characterise these paradigms of transmission and the way they interact and operate within the learning paths of musicians. I was motivated by the observation of the impressive outcomes in terms of the musicality and enjoyment evident among the *cuatro* players that I have met throughout my life. This is a trait that is common among many traditional musicians that I have met in Colombia and in other regions of the world.

In this sense, some of the common traits that were found between the learning paths of the *cuatro* players that were studied are:

1. Musicians learn along personal musical paths moved by personal interest and desire. These learning paths are deployed in rhizomatic ways throughout musical ecosystems where learning settings, or *plateaus,* emerge and where musicians spend very variable periods of time. Within these circuits, all of the learners have been exposed to open systems of transmission settings and at least 30 out of 44 have also had some type of contact with closed systems of transmission.

2. Open systems of transmission plateaus (i.e. family, friends, groups, social gatherings and festivals) are usually embedded in socio-cultural contexts that enhance the emergence of intense processes of early music enculturation. On the other hand, most closed systems of transmission settings (i.e. institutions

and private lessons) evidence intentional efforts to establish explicit relationships with cultural contexts such as active participation in music festivals.

3. Except for universities and private lessons, where individual lessons are at the centre of learning, most *cuatro* transmission takes place within collective spaces of music making. These group experiences can happen spontaneously, as in families, or systematically, as in music academies.

4. Transmission is based on aurality. When it appears, notation is subsidiary and open, in the sense that musicians usually invent personal codes, particularly for the representation of right-hand issues of *cuatro* playing. Even in contexts where traditionally music is taught through notation, such as universities, the *cuatro* is mainly being taught through imitation.

5. In open settings of transmission, learning is usually not linear, but rather holistic. On the other hand, in closed settings, transmission generally does imply logical simple-to-complex sequences, both in micro learning processes as when learning a piece, and in macro processes such as repertoire programmes.

6. Musicians are very versatile in terms of: first, their ability to perform different instruments with important levels of proficiency. Second, a general good capacity to accompany dancing and having had at some point on their paths some active experience with dancing themselves. In terms of closed settings of transmission, this versatility is enhanced mainly by community learning projects such as music academies, but not so much by undergraduate programmes at universities.

7. Throughout all of the contexts there is some level of integration of performing, improvising, arranging and composing.

Based on the findings of this project and on my own experience as a musician, teacher and *cuatro* student, I will use this chapter to present a proposal for the transmission of the *cuatro* in higher education contexts. I wish to refer to a pedagogy that 'blends' these two types of approaches within what I would like to name a 'mestizo' or 'creole' type of pedagogy. I argue that this is a type of approach that uses elements which stem from modern, western pedagogy – embedded in a modern pedagogic paradigm – while at the same time including those ways of learning that are

present within the aural/oral traditional contexts that were studied. This blended pedagogy occurs both at a macro level, for example in relation to the ways in which a curriculum is designed, and at a micro level as when imitation is used within fragmentation and sequentiality.

Metaphorically, I want to argue that, in essence, this mestizo pedagogy is a 'pedagogy with *sabor*'. As we have seen, *sabor* – being very close to the category of *feel* in English – has to do with that particular way of 'playing' with formal elements with expressive purposes. If a musician 'with *sabor*' is someone who can have a good meter while at the same time moving around it with a particular expressive intention, then a pedagogy 'with *sabor*' is someone who is able to 'play around' the 'parameters' of formal structures such as curricula, institutional times, spaces and programmes, with a pedagogic aim. In other words, it is a type of pedagogy that is flexible and that understands institutional framing and educational techniques as mediums to develop students' personal voices and their capacity to celebrate music. Learning strategies within this approach will use elements from one paradigm or another (modern pedagogic paradigm or aural/oral – traditional) as long as they enhance the deployment of diversity, musical growth and celebration.

Celebration of music and personal paths at the heart of learning

At the centre of this proposal are the celebration of music and the development of personal voices of students. Indeed, this is a type of pedagogy that is centred on the subjects and not on the objects of musical transmission. As we have seen throughout this report, we have seen a rapid growth in the amount of literature which calls our attention to the possible contributions made by informal ways of transmission to formal music education in terms of enhancing issues such as autonomy and motivation in students' processes. However, we have also seen that local literature examining this subject is still scarce, and that it is almost non-existent in terms of concrete proposals based on these alternative ways of learning in the frame of higher education. It is in relation to this point that the present proposal hopes to make a contribution, by bringing up some concrete dimensions and pedagogical strategies that might frame a project of higher education in music, with the aim of potentiating the deployment of these two aspects: celebration and personal voices of students.

To start, I wish to mention that, for an educational process built upon these two essential concerns, the crosscutting 'measure' of achievement of a student's process is the development of his or her personal voice, based on particular interests, capacities and learning modes. On the other hand, this also refers to his or her capacity to enjoy music as a performer and as part of an audience. I argue that the development of the objectual side of learning expressed in terms of, for example, technique, will be a natural consequence of the other two elements. The global musical outcomes of this type of pedagogy will necessarily be authentic, and the formal tools that are used will naturally correspond with pertinence to the aesthetic requirements that emerge along the learning process. In other words, the crux of the goal here can be summed up by referring to a student who has transited a learning path along which he or she has been adequately mentored by an effectively sensitive and musically proficient teacher – a teacher who has used techniques and materials that correspond well to the development of personal voices and capacities 'with love and care' (Small, 1998). Indeed, this student has a deeply engrained opportunity to produce beautiful and authentic products … as ripe fruits of the process.

As mentioned above, *cuatro* musicians learn along personal paths that are deployed rhizomatically, triggered by desire, moving between learning and musical 'plateaus'. If celebration of music is at the core of this proposal, one of the main requirements of its pedagogy is to attend to students' interests, learning rhythms and inclinations, and to enhance the development of personal paths. As we will see in the following section, this does not mean that 'all paths' are possible, nor does it mean that trajectories will be based *exclusively* on students' interests, since one of the aims of the proposal is to actually enhance the enrichment and broadening of students' aesthetic references.

From this perspective, this pedagogy is flexible, open and diverse. It tries to adapt to these individual paths. It is also aware that musical plateaus do not exist only *within* institutions. In this sense, it implies a curriculum that is deployed as a web (Castro-Gómez, 2007) incorporating learning experiences that take place both within and outside universities.

Collective musicking as plateaus for learning

With this approach, a music curriculum has no 'courses'. Instead, it is based on 'nodes' where collective musicking takes place within groups or ensembles. These musicking spaces work as actual artistic projects and involve an active experience of actual social rituals, ideally on a daily basis, during variable periods of time according to particular learning needs.

Since knowledge transmission is not fragmented into separate compartments, issues such as music theory, sight-reading, music history and organology, are learned in relation to the repertoire that is being performed within the musicking spaces. In this sense, concepts and information are impregnated with meaning because they are directly related to active musical experience.

Within these spaces, on the other hand, students are expected not only to play the *cuatro*, but also to have contact with other instruments, especially when traditional music is being played (i.e. *maracas*, *bandola*), while understanding their functioning within the different roles (i.e. melodic, accompaniment, and so on). In the same vein, students will permanently be asked to accompany dancers and to dance themselves. This experience will not only enhance students' versatility but will also offer experiential situations that favour a deeper and more meaningful understanding of musical elements such as rhythm and *sabor*.

Imitation will be strongly enhanced as a central and permanent learning strategy, which enriches the delivery of knowledge in a holistic and organic way whereby both explicit and tacit knowledge are conveyed. Imitation will happen at two levels: in real time, with teachers and peers as references, or virtually, while taking advantage of recordings and videos as a support for the learning of technique, styles and *sabor*. It is desirable to have very good recording resources that can offer the best sound and image quality and the possibility to video record playing examples from multiple angles. In some cases, software such as *Protools* can be used in order to pinpoint certain musical elements or instruments and favour *play-along* experiences.

In the same sense, notation will have a subsidiary role. Students will be asked to decipher tablatures and traditional music scores, but a strong emphasis will be placed on representing *cuatro* playing in an open way. This means that learners will be permanently invited to invent codes that represent their technical styles in original

ways while using symbols framed in explicit and clear conventions that will be interpreted by their peers.

Within these imitation experiences, teachers will take advantage of modern pedagogic paradigm issues such as fragmentation, simple-to-complex sequences, repetition or manipulation of musical elements in order to enhance technical apprehension. They will, however, be vigilant as to use these strategies as a means and not as an end in themselves. In this sense, teachers will have to be very sensitive to the pertinent timing of the movement between control of the learning experience and free musicking; in Swanwick's (1988) words, between *instruction* and *encounter*. Too much fragmentation and linearity might render the learning experience arid (thus endangering music celebration) and too much free playing might result in losing the opportunity to set in place, with more efficiency, certain musical and technical aspects.

Musicking spaces will also be a space of creation. Students will be asked to arrange, adapt and compose pieces for their groups and to invent pertinent methods to share their creative work with their peers. Free and in-style improvisation will be present within playing as a recurrent learning strategy.

Finally, these spaces will work as *reflexive practicums* (Schon, 1983) in which teachers also participate as active musicians. In this sense, they will offer a valuable practical experience in which emergent musical and technical problems can be discussed either during collective sessions or in private meetings between activities. Teachers will be able to discuss alternative solutions to these concrete problems with students while acting as models of reflectivity and metacognition. Systematic work based on the analysis of music literature in recordings will also be enhanced.

I wish to pinpoint the fact that the possibility of actually 'playing' together will create meaningful emotional bonds between teachers and students, through music. Evidently, this type of practice will also represent a space for continuous learning for teachers.

Musicking spaces and ecosystems

The personal paths of learners will move across different musicking spaces, and they will be closely accompanied by a personal mentor (who can be the same instrument teacher). I will examine this type of mentorship in more detail later on. These learning

tracks, or 'rhizomes', will have a strong 'core' based on traditional music in which the *cuatro* takes part, mainly *joropo* music and some chosen genres from Venezuela. Mentors will decide, in dialogue with students, how many of these musicking spaces related to traditional music will take part in the learning path, according to particular interests and learning outcomes.

On the other hand, musicking spaces might also include other musical genres according to students' interests and learning necessities, such as traditional genres from other parts of South America, classical music, jazz, rock, electronic, and world music, among others. If possible, projects will also include interaction with other art projects such as performances, happenings, theatre, movies and dance.

These learning experiences can happen inside or outside universities. In this sense, some portions of the learning paths can include musicking spaces that are intentionally organised by the programmes and other portions will happen outside. The student will transit without any type of linearity between both types of spaces (inside and outside institutions), and always with the close mentorship of an advanced player who may or may not be his or her instrument teacher within the programme. In this sense, even if the teacher or mentor does not take an active part in external activities with the student, a permanent exercise of reflection will be carried out between students and mentors in relation to emerging aspects of musicking, including positive and problematic aspects. Examples of the latter could be technical difficulties, musical blockages, stage fears, or dealing with bar managers and with sound engineers in concerts in the local scene.

The programme will intentionally enhance students' participation in musicking spaces both in urban settings and in rural and traditional settings, outside the school. At least once per year, the participation of students in traditional musicking spaces should include a stay with local communities, sharing their everyday life and culture. They will be invited to write field notes that keep track of perceptions and learning issues, and to keep audio or video recordings that capture relevant musical and cultural experiences as part of their stays. As I will discuss later on, the exercise of writing and keeping a reflective record in a personal diary of learning, musical and life experiences, will be a central component of the process of mentorship students along their paths.

The following is an imaginary example of a possible learning path for a student:
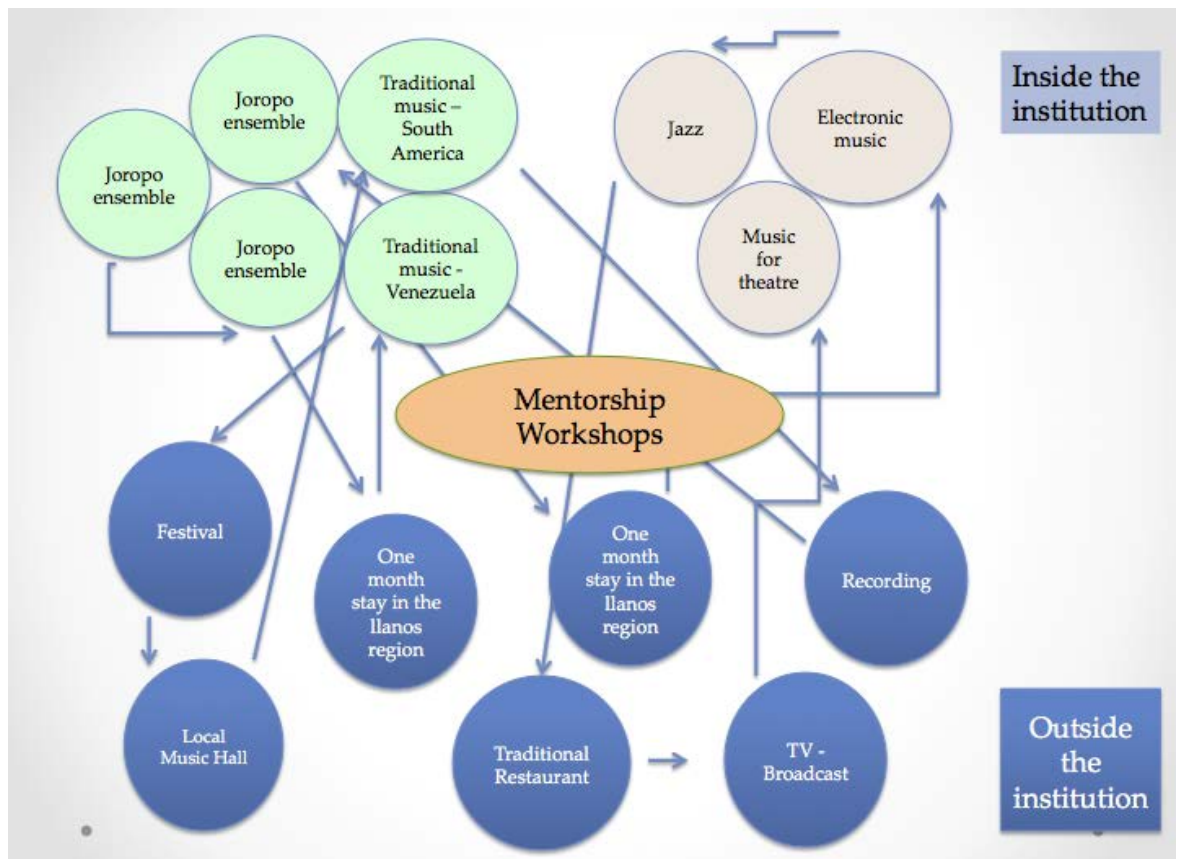
Figure 12. 1 Example of a learning path for a student

As can be seen, this imaginary *cuatro* student is visiting diverse settings for active musicking in a non-linear way. On some occasions, the student might be playing in two or three settings at the same time. For example, he or she might be playing within a *joropo* ensemble at school while at the same time taking part in a group that plays at a local 'asadero' or traditional restaurant. Since the spaces of musicking outside the school cannot be predicted nor imposed, the institution must be flexible: valuable learning opportunities might emerge along the way that should be incorporated. The only explicit intentionality within this learning landscape is the deliberate inclusion of a bigger portion of nodes or settings related to traditional music where the *cuatro* is usually played. In this sense, learning paths will include within their deployment some 'clusters' of settings: I have included one of these possible clusters at the top-left of the figure using a green colour to designate those settings where traditional music is at the centre of the process. Contents will obviously be determined by the particular repertoires that are approached within the musicking spaces.

Assessment, teachers' roles and mentorship spaces

The learning paths of students will permanently develop in connection with periodic *mentorship workshops*. Within these workshops, which can be collective or individual according to the particular learning needs of students, technical and musical issues will be approached. However, at the same time, they will work as reflective spaces where students will share the emerging situations, positive and problematic, that appear during their learning experiences. Teachers will be there to offer guidance. Based on what is discussed within these workshops, teachers will decide on any 'intentional' movement to be suggested to students along their learning paths. For example, a student might encounter recurrent difficulties when accompanying an ensemble at the 'asadero' (restaurant with live music). Based on this difficulty, teachers might invite him or her to enrol in a couple more of traditional music ensembles in order to strengthen his or her accompaniment capacities.

In this sense, teachers will certainly be expected to have a special type of profile. First, they should have very high levels of musical proficiency since they are expected to act as models for students and to offer adequate responses and performing alternatives for technical difficulties which emerge during the learning process. On the other hand, within ensembles, they will be expected to arrange, adapt or compose repertoires for diverse learning levels and individual capabilities in accordance with the particularities of each ensemble. Teachers will usually have a role as directors within ensembles.

Teachers are also expected to have a good knowledge of traditional music and its cultural contexts, including the typical aural/oral ways of transmission that are found within these settings. In addition to this, they will be expected to have adequate knowledge of academic issues such as notation codes, harmonic systems, analytical tools, and historical and contextual notions of the music that is approached, among others. This two-fold type of profile will allow them to move at ease, as *cultural translators (*De Sousa*, 2009)*, between the realm of open and closed transmission contexts and learning experiences while guiding students through the process of incorporating musical knowledge into experiences of juxtaposed pedagogies (Heuser, 2014). This will involve a methodological 'sense' or 'instinct' that will permit the teacher to use strategies for learning which are derived from both types of systems,

open and closed, according to the particular needs of students and of groups. At a certain point within a learning process, a teacher might, for example, feel that he or she needs to include more intense work and fragment a certain repertoire into musical tracks with the help of *ProTools* in order to offer a particular group of students a more acute sense of rhythmic feel for each instrument; in a separate way, this would also complement musicking. On other occasions, the teacher might perceive that students are starting to become too attached to the music score, when there is one, and thus he or she might decide to intentionally work more intensely in improvisation. The institutional frame should be flexible enough as to permit this movement.

From another standpoint, this ability to act as a cultural translator will be very valuable when students are learning with traditional musicians. On some occasions, for example, a senior *cuatro* player from the countryside might be invited to offer a workshop at the institution. This musician might have plenty of *sabor* and technical dexterity but he or she might not have the discursive tools required to 'explain' what he or she is doing. Teachers, acting as cultural translators will be able to make visible the richness of the visitor´s performance and at the same time extract and explain pertinent technical aspects of his or her playing. They can also use metacognitive strategies that enhance the transference of this knowledge to a diversity of musical and performing situations.

Finally, in relation to assessment, tools that shed light on the multiple dimensions of students' development will be employed. Thus, the type of assessment that will be used is the correlate of broadening the scope of what we intend to detect as accomplishments throughout the learning process. This means thinking of learning not only in terms of technical and disciplinary outcomes but also in relation to issues such as emotional satisfaction, expressed in the capacity to celebrate music within an adequate development of personal voices and self-esteem. It seems to me that the underlying question behind the *why* of the assessment has to do with the actual *preparation for life* (during and after university) of students in a sense that transcends disciplinary training and which makes assessment a human act (Rowntree, 1987).

Formative assessment of this type involves the use of participatory practices in terms of peer-assessment and self-assessment (Lebler et al., 2015). It also involves alternative methods such as portfolios (Fautley, 2010), one-to-one interviews or informal conversations with students (Rowntree, 1987), diaries and focus groups.

These assessment practices seek to enhance critical thinking and mature dialogue between peers and they can happen in an ongoing way within the process of ensembles and in other contexts. I wish to state, in fact, that an overarching trait of the type of learning process brought up by this proposal, which is based on personal interest, self-discovery and artistic expansion, is autonomy. Therefore, assessment and evaluation will be oriented toward developing in students the capacity to be reflective and constructively critical regarding their own learning processes and those of their peers. In this sense, evaluative supports will be used to foster metacognitive abilities that favour reflective habits, framed in strategies of auto-evaluation and co-evaluation. Reflective diaries will be used to keep track of students' perceptions in relation to their personal quests and developments. Ideas will be included in these writings regarding technical, musical, psychological and emotional aspects of the process. These diaries will be used as support for periodical conversations with mentors. At the same time, students will keep track of their artistic development with the aid of a portfolio that will include good quality recordings of their musical and artistic development. This portfolio will also be used as support for reflection within the mentorship spaces.

In addition, real musicking circumstances such as playing in bars or at concerts might substitute traditional final exams in front of a jury. These musicking experiences might allow teachers to keep track, in a more authentic way, of the type of impact that learning experiences are having on students in terms of technical and musical skills, or on their general abilities to cope with the 'rituals of performance', including communication with the public and emotional security, among other issues.

In this frame of ideas, teachers' accompaniment of students' processes will not be limited to technical and musical aspects. If the ultimate aim of the learning process is to favour the development of personal voices within experiences of motivation and celebration, teachers will also have to keep track of extra-musical elements that foster or inhibit this process of self-discovery and enjoyment. In several cases, this may involve helping students to deploy processes of self-observation and reflection that lead to aspects such as psychological blockages and emotional limitations (Whitehead & McNiff, 2004, 2007). Teachers' accompaniment in the observation of these issues, based on their own personal experience, will be very valuable. The subjacent idea is that musical development is related not only to musical and technical abilities but also

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to critical issues such as self-esteem, personal confidence and self-consciousness. Naturally, some situations might certainly require intervention from a third person, for example a professional psychologist. However, a basic level of preparation in dealing with these types of extra-musical issues will be expected as part of teachers' profiles.

Looking forward...

In terms of future research, I wish to mention some important issues that are awaiting further study. A first group of research themes appears in relation to the actual impact of the translation of ways of learning that are commonly found within open systems, into closed rationalities. In this sense, research can shed light on the ways in which learning contents, for example technical issues such as the *golpe*, are affected by the exercises of translation which are being proposed. A concrete example of this, among many others, could be studying the extent to which a recurrent use of the metronome can affect the actual *sabor* of the *golpe*. In a similar sense, we are certainly aware of the positive effects that fragmentation, sequentiality and linear order can have on the development of technical issues; however, how do these strategies affect *sabor*, enjoyment and desire? Are these emotional issues enhanced or inhibited by the fragmentation of music? Why, when and how?

In relation to this, the category of *sabor* in itself demands further research dealing both with intersonic aspects of music such as microtiming, timbrical articulations and groove from a musicological and music-theory point of view; and with its relationship to situated musical practices and cultural contexts via ethnographic observations and phenomenological approaches that take into account personal, subjective views on *sabor* and its transmission. Work of this nature has been done, and more could of course be done, across a range of other contexts and in relation to other musical styles beyond the ones considered in this thesis. In this sense, for further development of the work in this thesis it would be valuable to consult research that has been undertaken in these two directions in relation to other musical genres such as rock, jazz, and traditional music from India, Africa and other cultures. Such an enterprise would be a musicological and ethnomusicological exercise, which falls beyond the boundaries of this thesis.

It is also important to examine the most pertinent options to assess the development of tacit knowledge within blended types of pedagogy. Some questions to bear in mind, in this sense, are the following: Are some of the academic traditional evaluation techniques such as auditions in front of a jury appropriate means for the assessment of the development of issues such as *sabor* and motivation? What kind of impact on the assessment of these aspects does the inclusion of techniques such as

self-evaluation based on personal diaries have? What are the possible contributions and limits of taking into account other experiences of music making such as playing in bars or at festivals as part of assessment?

In a similar vein, studies can investigate the canonical views on music education in terms of issues such as repertoires, methodological postures, conceptions of time (e.g. credit systems) and their typical methods of assessment; indeed, it would be very useful to establish how these views affect the development of diverse personal voices and learning rhythms in formal settings. What are the actual impacts of these views and procedures on the subjectivities of learners in institutional contexts?

In relation to the way in which closed system rationalities affect the connection with the cultural contexts that frame music, pertinent questions can be approached regarding the issue of the different levels of enculturation that can be intentionally triggered within academic contexts. For example, in the case of 'virtual' enculturation, is something 'lost in translation' when the entrance to music is just sound (or just sound and image, in the case of video) and not the original cultural contexts that frame these musical practices? What is won and what is wasted?

From another standpoint, a second group of research questions could assess the way in which the incorporation of learning strategies inspired by open systems of transmission affect learning in closed settings. Research can examine, in more depth, the impact of the type of aural/oral mestizo pedagogy that is proposed on the learning of other instruments, such as classical and jazz, in terms of impact on memorisation, expression, creativity, self-encounter, motivation and self-confidence. In this sense, it would be interesting to observe what happens in terms of musical and technical development, as well as the actual inner experience of musicians when the music score loses the central role that has been adjudicated to it in closed systems of transmission, especially in higher education. In the same vein, further research can investigate, more systematically the emotional effects of collective practices and music making on learning. This could be achieved, for example, by comparing the degrees of motivation and enjoyment that emerge between individual sessions and group sessions.

In addition to this, further studies can also assess the impact of incorporating and validating, within higher education settings, practices that are common among students 'outside' institutions, not only in traditional music, but also in jazz and

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classical programmes. This means methodically observing the nature and outreach of the type of learning that is being produced in informal practices by students within their extracurricular life.

Regarding other areas of studies, several questions remain open for further projects. In relation to musicology, it is pertinent to study musical commonalities between different musical expressions in Latin America from pedagogic perspectives. I refer to issues such as rhythmic matrices underlying different genres across the region. Understanding these overarching musical characteristics, both conceptually and practically, offers students pertinent tools with which to transfer knowledge between musical contexts. It also enhances a faster and more natural incorporation of other types of genres and rhythms from Latin America that share these common structures, thus fostering autonomy and opening up possibilities for students in terms of interregional aesthetical dialogues. From another standpoint, studies can look into the relation between right-hand *cuatro* techniques and the performance of early plucked string instruments such as the *renaissance guitar* and *baroque guitar*.

In addition to this, the present study offers new knowledge that is pertinent to future local research both in music education and in ethnomusicology in terms of cultural contexts as an essential aspect of music transmission. In this vein, it is necessary to analyse more in depth the ways in which the vital experiencing of the different layers of cultural contexts in relation to music affect the contents and learners' overall aesthetical experience. A very broad scope of connections can be explored in this sense between transmission, music and issues such as: history, politics, gastronomy, religious gatherings, extended celebrations, alcohol, landscape, and dancing, among others. In a similar sense, studies can tackle the issue of gender and its relation to the transmission of traditional instruments in Colombia while examining the way in which gender cultural meanings are reproduced within music transmission and how these practices have an impact on women's subjectivities.

In relation to teachers, attention could be paid to the ways in which pedagogic paradigms operate on people, and the extent to which the emergence of these paradigmatic traits is affected by the actual settings in which transmission takes place. In other words, are pedagogic paradigms 'incarnated' in teachers independently because of the type of system (closed or open) of music transmission in which they act? Or are they determined by the dominant logics of the particular contexts? What

type of conscious or unconscious negotiations take place between personal pedagogical approaches and institutional paradigmatic framings?

To finish, I wish to introduce a personal comment in relation to my own experience within this project. The exercise of analysis which I have developed for the study has led me to observe my own pedagogic practice in terms of how paradigms act on it. I have been able to observe in myself the extent to which my own pedagogic approaches are strongly permeated by the type of modern pedagogic paradigm rationality that I have been describing in the present report. In this sense, I have been able to attest to the pedagogic potency of isolation, fragmentation, manipulation and linearity. At the same time, I have also become more aware of those aspects of my pedagogy that tend to be more hidden such as, for example, concern with aesthetic experience expressed in terms of enjoyment and celebration of music, of myself and of students. I have become very interested in carefully monitoring the different dimensions of transmission on which I am shedding light at different moments of my teaching and the types of strategies that can favour the enhancement of these dimensions. Furthermore, I have also become more aware of those emotional components of teaching and learning that are not necessarily related to music directly and that express themselves in my own personal relationships with students.

From this perspective, I must refer to a suspicion which I have long had, and which must be confirmed through further self-study and other types of research. Indeed, I suspect that these personal paradigms (strongly embedded in the modern pedagogic paradigm) have caused me to, on many occasions, over value those aspects of transmission that are mainly related to the 'object' of music in terms of its technical and musical perfectibility, both when I teach and in my own process of self-learning. This has occurred in detriment of those other aspects that cannot be objectified in the same way. As a teacher of music education, I have also felt that a similar trap can be expressed in terms of excessive emphasis on pedagogic theories and techniques – the pedagogic 'objects' – that do not take sufficiently into account issues such as empathy, intuition and care. The modern pedagogic paradigm seems to offer us a very powerful level of agency on musical and pedagogical objects, while at the same time it sometimes leads us into the trap of thinking that those objects are the central aspects of musical experience. Occasionally, as a student and teacher, I have even sensed this

situation in terms of a certain 'obsession' with musical objects that has limited the emotional depth of my musical and pedagogical experience.

In addition, on some occasions I have also perceived another type of trap, perhaps even more dangerous: being tempted to think that anything – even issues such as feel, expression, or empathy – can be turned into an object that can be isolated, fragmented, manipulated, and so on. The answer seems, to me, to rely rather on a structural paradigmatic shift in music pedagogy, which can offer us an alternative epistemic frame for practices that include, with more centrality, all those issues that are rendered less visible within closed systems of transmission and that I have mentioned as being not only important, but an ontological part of the process of learning and of music making. Attending to the alternative ways of learning that can emerge within this paradigmatic shift implies, at the same time, an opportunity to keep alive the awareness of musical experience as one that has desire and enjoyment, and thus subjects not objects, at its centre. It should always be remembered that music is a situated, cultural experience that occupies a sacred place in relation to life, human nature and existence.

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Appendix 1

Interviewees in alphabetical order

Participant's name	Learning Context	Profile/Role	Type of interview or support	Type of observation
Abel González	Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Structured (By email)	-
Adrián Peroza	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Alexander Romero	Villavicencio	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Andrés Samper	Private Lessons	Senior musician/ *Cuatro* Student	Diary	Participant
Ángel Martínez	Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Structured (By email)	-
Camilo Guerrero	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Carlos Aldana	Festival de la *Bandola* Criolla (Maní, Casanare)	Young Musician /*Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
César Niño	*Academia Llano y Joropo*	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Cheo Hurtado	Festival Internacional del *Joropo* - Villavicencio	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-

Christian Guataquira	Universidad de Cundinamarca	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Cristóbal Reyes	Diploma in Traditional Plucked Strings Instruments - Universidad Javeriana	Senior Musician/ *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant
Fabio Martín	*Academia Llano y Joropo*	Senior person/ *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Fabio Vega	Villavicencio	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Gerardo Blanco	Arauca	Senior Musician	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Gregorio Amaya	Festival de la *Bandola* Criolla (Maní, Casanare)	Senior Musician/*Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Guillermo Díaz	Bogotá	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant
Hildo Aguirre	*Academia Llano y Joropo*	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Hollman Caicedo	Festival de la *Bandola* Criolla (Maní, Casanare)	Senior Musician	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Isaac Tacha	Villavicencio	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Iván Parra	Diploma in Traditional Plucked Strings Instruments -	Senior Musician/ *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant

	Universidad Javeriana		
John Jairo Torres	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
John Mendieta	Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá - *ASAB*	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Jorge Gómez	*Academia Llano y Joropo*	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Juan Camilo Aráoz	Diploma in Traditional Plucked Strings Instruments - Universidad Javeriana	Senior Musician/ *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant
Juan Carlos Contreras	Private Lessons	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant
Juan Manuel Urrego	Universidad de Cundinamarca	Chair of program	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Juan Zambrano	Academia Llano y Joropo	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Julián Crosswaithe	Academia Llano y Joropo	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Julián Niño	Academia Llano y Joropo	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Leonardo Lozano	Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta	Senior Musician /*Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-

Luis Carvajal	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Luis Pino	Venezuela	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Participant
Manuel Alcántara	Conservatorio Nacional de Música Juan José Landaeta	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (By Skype)	-
Marco Parales	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Miguel Uva	Festival de la *Bandola* Criolla (Maní, Casanare)	Young Musician/ *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (By telephone)	-
Nelson González	Festival Internacional del *Joropo* - Villavicencio	Senior Musician /*Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Néstor Lambuley	Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá - *ASAB*	Chair of program	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Pedro Herrera	Arauca	Senior Musician	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Rafael Martínez	Sistema de Orquestas de Venezuela	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Structured (By email)	-
Rafael Padilla	Arauca	Senior Musician	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Raúl Colmenares	Arauca	Senior Musician	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-

Sandra Londoño	Universidad de Cundinamarca	Young Musician /*Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant
Uriel Blanco	Arauca	Senior Musician / *Cuatro* Teacher	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	-
Zahira Noguera	Academia Superior de Artes de Bogotá - *ASAB*	Young Musician / *Cuatro* Student	Semi-structured (Face-to-face)	Non - participant

Repertoire

Rhythms and styles which are nowadays performed by the *cuatro*, but originally weren't.

Rhyhtms from other regions in Colombia and Latin America

Colombia

- Bambuco
- Cumbia
- Danza
- Pasillo
- Porro
- Torbellino
- Vallenato

Latin America - Outside Colombia

- Boleros
- Bossa Nova
- Guaracha
- Salsa
- Sambas
- Son Cubano
- Tangos

Rhythms from other regions of the world

- ○ Blues
- ○ Fusión
- ▼ ○ Jazz
  - ○ Latin Jazz
- ○ Rock

Styles from other periods

- ▼ ○ Other styles
  - ○ Children music
  - ▼ ○ Classical music
    - ▶ ○ Clasicism
    - ▶ ○ Contemporary music
    - ▶ ○ Early music

Appendix 3

Samples of interviews

With teachers

1. To start out, could you please tell me something about your musical background?
2. How did you start learning the *cuatro*? [Early leaning experiences; Role of family and community]
3. Who taught you and how were your lessons like?
4. Do you play any other instruments? If so, what instruments and for how long have you studied these instruments?
5. How is *cuatro* learnt and taught generally speaking, in the traditional setting?
    a. What age do learners start; why; how?
    b. Who teaches them; why; how?
    c. Role of family and community?
    d. What are the best, and the worst, kinds of teaching and learning that go on?
6. What do you think should be the **main aims** of *cuatro* lessons according to your experience?
7. What do you think should be the **main teaching strategies** of *cuatro* lessons?
8. Do these aims and strategies change depending on the context (for example would you teach differently an adult inside and outside of university?)
9. How is *cuatro* taught at *ASAB* (*Academia Superior d Artes de Bogotá*) University? [Main contents, cycles, profiles, etc.]
10. What kind of notation notation/representations is used? Why? What is the impact of the approach taken on learning the *cuatro*?
11. How can the scarcity of *cuatro* programs in universities of Colombia and Venezuela be explained? [Tensions or difficulties while teaching in universities.]
12. Do you have any comments regarding the focus and approach of this study? Do you have any suggestions to improve it?

With students

- Please speak to me about your musical background.
    o Training as musician (Where did he learn music, what instruments does he play)
    o Actual musical experience (What type of music does he play, active projects, etc.)
- Please refer to your experience as a learner in the *cuatro* sessions of the Diploma in which you are participating.
    o What relevant aspects have attracted your attention in relation to the teacher's methodology?
    o What is your impression of the repertoire that has been used?

- o In general terms, are there any difficulties or positive aspects you want to point at?