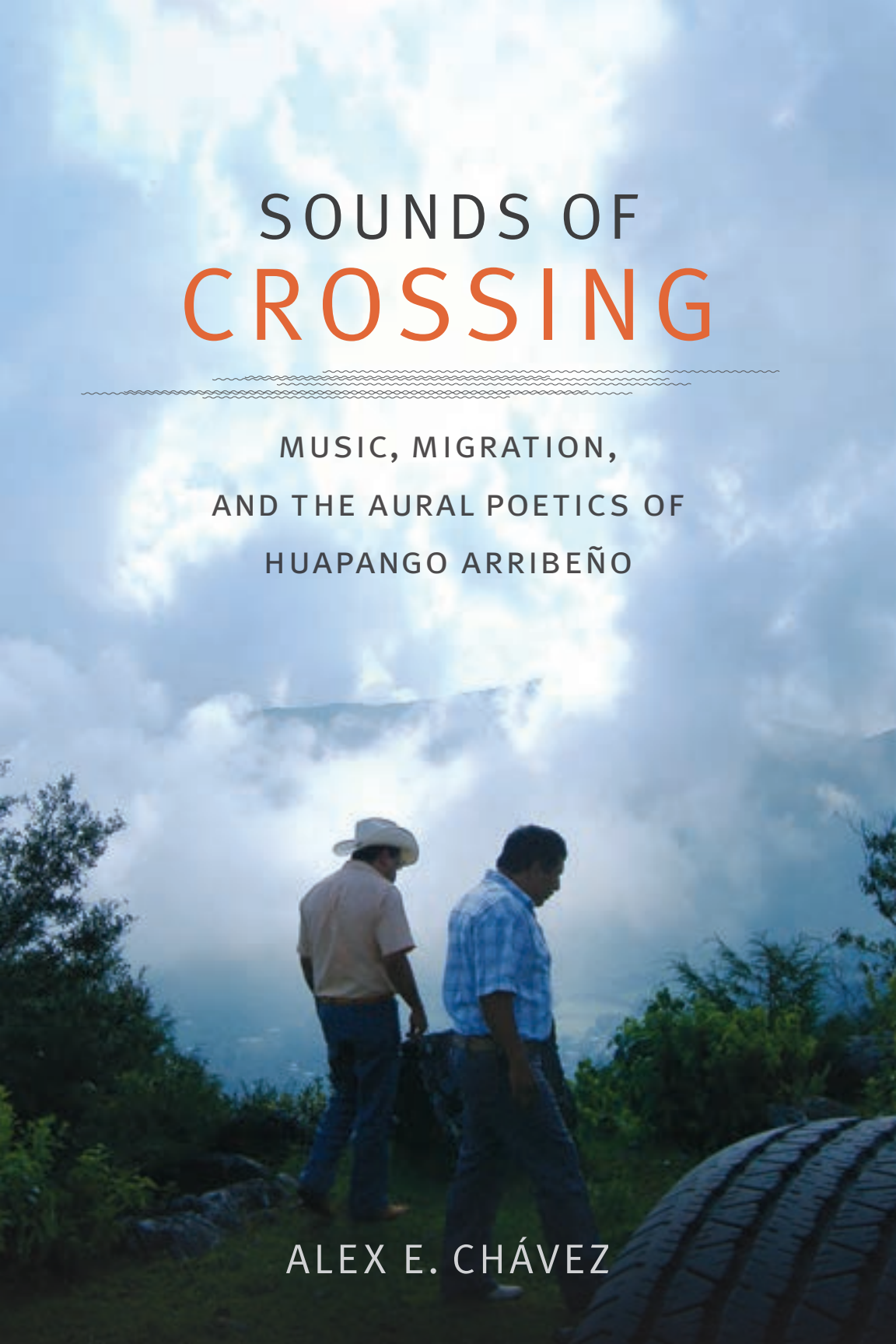

# SOUNDS OF CROSSING

## MUSIC, MIGRATION, AND THE AURAL POETICS OF HUAPANGO ARRIBEÑO

ALEX E. CHÁVEZ

SOUNDS OF CROSSING

REFIGURING AMERICAN MUSIC

A series edited by Ronald Radano and Josh Kun
Charles McGovern, contributing editor

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Cover art: *Huapangueros* wait out the mountain fog (La Florída, Querétaro). Photo by Alex E. Chávez.

*For María del Refugio and Catalina*

Hoy brillan nuestro senderos
lo digo en mis verserías
yo con estos violineros
las noches las hago días . . .

Today our paths are radiant
I say this in improvised verses
in the company of these violinists
I turn nights into mornings . . .
—CACHO

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# INTRODUCTION
# AMERICAN BORDER/LANDS

And since there is no crossing that is ever undertaken once and for all,
this ontological imperative of making the world intelligible to ourselves is,
of necessity, an enterprise that is ongoing.
—M. JACQUI ALEXANDER, *PEDAGOGIES OF CROSSING*

Sound, then, is a substance of the world as well as a basic part of how
people frame their knowledge about the world.
—DAVID NOVAK AND MATT SAKAKEENY, INTRODUCTION TO
*KEYWORDS IN SOUND*

Their stories seem impossible, nearly tragic. But the truths they hold are undeniable. My mother crossed the border in Juárez in the trunk of a car when she was thirteen. She left her home in rural Zacatecas, arriving at the border weeks later—the details of that journey remain unknown to me. After she crossed, she worked for some months as a domestic in El Paso, labor for which she was never compensated. Her sister, who was living in a small red-dirt town northeast of there, came for her late one night: "Pack your things. It's time to go." My mother had no belongings.

My father crossed near Ojinaga, Chihuahua. He had walked the brush—open chaparral dense with cacti, ocotillo, mesquite, and cenizo just west of Big Bend National Park. For nearly a week, he and two cousins traced old Apache trails in the dead of winter. For a sixteen-year-old from the steamy mountains of the Huasteca queretana in north-central Mexico, the snow and bitter temperatures seemed alien. They trekked north toward the so-called Davis Mountains (more like hills compared to back home, he thought) that hug Fort Davis, past Marfa. There was no hip artist colony then, just desert.

These stories defined much of who my mother was and who my father continues to be today. They have given meaning to their work, their undertakings,

their failures, their accomplishments, their children's lives. I was born years later, after they had crossed, after they had met and married, after they had found steady jobs and gone on to their second or third, and after they had begun to feel at home in West Texas—a place not so welcoming to undocumented migrants and their children. These stories circulated even after the greatest difficulties had passed; portions of them were mentioned offhandedly in daily conversation, whispered softly when imparting words of wisdom and care, and exhaled through gritted teeth when they confronted yet other borders—cultural, social, and otherwise—or were forced to deal with life's tragedies. I've pieced together their telling; I've found meaning in them, too. They've become a part of me, so that all the smaller borders—the soft ones, the institutional ones, the cultural ones we sometimes experience more like deep chasms—are familiar to me, despite my educational and professional achievements. Some feel as dangerous as they do familiar, everyday encounters that thrust me into an uneasy space where my nerves come alive with anger and fear . . . as in northern Indiana, not too long ago . . .

I'm performing *huapango* at a wedding reception where a group of *mexicanos* has congregated to celebrate the marriage of two of their own. Held at a local VFW hall in a small town, this gathering is being watched all evening long by a crowd of Anglo veterans who are drinking at the bar located on the opposite side of the building; a heavy velvet curtain covered the single doorway between the two spaces. At first, I am unaware of this. Then I hit the restroom, and my two huapango bandmates come in after me. A rather intoxicated Anglo man twice my age, presumably a veteran, is at the sink, washing his hands. He notices us, turns, and approaches me, standing a little too close, eyeing me up and down. His body sways. I edge back. I'm alien to him. My boots, sombrero, and guayabera are regalia from another world. He begins to speak slowly and loudly, making sure we can understand English, though the liquor in his system impairs his speech: "You know, I tell them you all paid good money for this place, and they shouldn't get upset about it. It's good business." "Them," I realize, means a group of agitated veterans on the other side of the building who are protesting the Mexican presence, surveilling the dancing wedding guests (who paid "good money" to rent the space), sneaking an occasional peek around the velvet curtain. I notice them out of the corner of my eye.

My fellow performers didn't initially catch the gist of the man's comments, his underlying threat, but I could imagine the conversation on the veterans' side of the hall. They were none too pleased with the foreign music shaking

the walls of the building and seeping into *their* evening, with the mexicanos claiming space, with their brown children playing outside in the darkness. The threat of some unimaginable violence being plotted next door to us loomed, at least in my mind. Why not? Hours south of here, in Indiana's capital city, debates rage on among lawmakers over provisions in the proposed anti-immigrant law S.B. 590. Most lawmakers agree with it in principle. Concerns are largely about its feasibility. Northern Indiana is a beating center of these xenophobic politics, not to mention Second Amendment fervor, which gives me pause in the context of the ongoing rise in mass shootings. And yet here they are, a group of migrants in celebration, carving out a place for themselves amid these various tensions—huapango music is being played even this far north, and improvised poetry is in the offing on this midwestern American night.

The man reaches for the door, mumbling something unintelligible as he steps out into the hall, where he's met with the celebratory sounds of hard-stomped zapateado dance echoing in the corridor. He goes back to the veteran bar. His words continue to echo in my head, "It's good business."

The specter of immigration reform and border walls, mounting deaths along the U.S.-Mexico border, and growing controversy over executive orders and harsh immigration laws across the country saturate the popular media and political discourse in the United States, fueling both heated debate and public anxieties.[1] This politicized terrain is undergirded by a much larger concern with the future-tense "Story of America" (Stewart 1996), as groups of U.S. citizens grapple with the browning of "their country" amid the cultural and demographic realities linked to expanding transnational political-economic ties with Latin America—the often-cited majority-minority question plays itself out at the local level in places far from the border, in places like northern Indiana. While a palpable enthusiasm emerged during the presidential election of 2012 with regard to Latina/o issues and their potential rise to the top of the national agenda, this excitement left unchallenged nativist sentiments that cast so-called illegal immigrants as a racialized source of criminality, sentiments that have ushered in proposed state-level legislation targeting migrants across the country.[2]

National appeals to the Latina/o community ring hollow, as the call for change in politics has at times been cast as a need for a change in tone—a political tokenism bereft of any genuine dismantling of this racist worldview, for racism is not deemed wrong, merely inconvenient when too audible in national politics. In other words, the supposed change of heart—that is, to

see Latin American migrants as human beings—is anything but heartening, particularly when talk surrounding a revision in how the United States deals with undocumented migration remains committed to border militarization and considers the policing of Latina/o communities writ large as a necessary part of the equation. Unfortunately, in the Obama era of mass deportation and with its intensification after the 2016 presidential election, the underlying social location of Latin American migrants, specifically, remains entrenched in the racialized logics of disposability with little concern for the complex cultural adjustments and adaptation processes they live out in their attempts at integrating into the highly stratified American social order. Indeed, migrant detention and border buildup are quite profitable—"it's good business."

Beyond the realm of immigration policy, the business of othering communities of color is framed alongside visions of a "real" America, a politics of culture that has prompted the gradual defunding of the public sector and an abandonment of urban areas over the past four decades in the face of demographic shifts and civil rights movements. Racial conservatives refuse to invest in a brown American "underclass" they don't see as part of their cultural legacy. In a self-fulfilling prophecy, the breakdown of social institutions that is so often blamed on "immigrants" and minorities is the result of white retrenchment, not the imagined cultural dysfunctionality and pathology projected onto these racialized populations. Yet, ironically, in the aftermath of recent election cycles, "real" Americans are left asking, "How do we create constituents out of people we have utter contempt for?" while simultaneously wielding nostalgic narratives of an idyllic (and racially segregated) past in response to the perceived displacement of white privilege.[3] "Make America Great Again" rings falsely in my ears. In the America I have described here, stories abound of those who cross its borders—literal and figurative. As in my childhood, these stories are whispered, but as this book reveals, they are also sounded out and improvised in loud all-night performances in the presence of hundreds of dancing migrant bodies, stomping, moving, and being *moved.*

## THE VOICE

The enduring dilemma of how the United States has historically defined social membership along the lines of race reveals how expressive culture is often where the symbolic borders of American belonging are reconfigured. Presently, this is occuring in a context of mass expulsion, loudly voiced xenophobia, and daily violence with regard to Latina/o communities across the continental United States. This book argues that transnational music making

in everyday Mexican migrant life, specifically, positions itself at the tensive center of this volatile discursive terrain, where certain sounds—as expressive indices of a supposedly deficient culture metonymically linked to the corrosion of America—both symbolically and materially claim a place in the space of the U.S. nation-state, refiguring the borders of citizenship and alienage through embodied and agentive forms of cultural expression. In other words, for performers, "auditory perception is intimately enmeshed with bodily action" (Berger 2009: 13). Therefore, the corporeality of these performative enactments is understood in these pages as aesthetic labor, the materiality of which—just like "the subjectivity of migrant labour"—attains a "subversive potential" given that the economic subordination of migrant workers within the space of the U.S. nation-state is inseparable from the structures of immigration law, policy, and the juridical nature of illegality (De Genova 2009: 461). My specific focus is the performance of Mexican *huapango arribeño*—an understudied musical form—as a lens with which to understand the cultural and spatial contours and politics of this transnational migrant world.

A music little known outside its region of origin in the Mexican states of Guanajuato, Querétaro, and San Luis Potosí, huapango arribeño takes its name from the Nahuatl word *cuahpanco*, derived from *cuahuitl* (wood), *pan* (atop), and *co* (place), thus signifying "atop of the wood." This refers to the *tarima* (wooden platform) atop which people dance zapateado (patterned footwork) in various styles of vernacular Mexican music (G. Saldívar 1937). The term *arribeño* (highlander) refers to the mountainous regions of Guanajuato and Querétaro—*arriba* means "above"—and also to the midregion of San Luis Potosí, which sits higher (*más arriba*) in altitude than the Huasteca portion of the state.[4]

This book represents the first extended study of huapango arribeño, a topic otherwise absent from scholarship on Mexican music. Although ethnomusicologists, folklorists, and linguistic anthropologists will be able to glean the details of its formal musico-poetic properties—particularly its extensive use of the Spanish *décima* (ten-line stanza) and its relation to the Mexican stringed-music genre often referred to as *son*—this book follows the moments of this music's lush and improvisational performance within the lives of both audiences and practitioners, from New Year's festivities in the highlands of Guanajuato to backyard get-togethers along the back roads of Central Texas. In doing so, it provocatively uses *sounds of crossing* as a graphic model to map the bindings and cultural adjacencies produced through the enactment of huapango arribeño's music and poetics across this transnational geography


MAP 1.1 Map of Mexico highlighting *huapango*'s region of origin

in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In this way this book traces the contemporary pathways, or crossings, of moving bodies and bodies of musical and poetic discourse to reveal the ways in which migrants both give voice to and respatialize the oscillations of their existence in Mexico, their clandestine treks across the border, and the workaday problems of unauthorized social life in the United States. Significantly, the focus here is on how these performative contexts—which exhibit music, poetry, and dance—give rise to what huapango arribeño practitioners, or *huapangueros*, commonly refer to as *el destino* (the calling). Far more than a term for an artistic vocation,

el destino constitutes a vernacular theory of aesthetic production predicated on intimate bonds of sociability between audiences and huapangueros, or *compañeros del destino* (companions of the calling). Put another way, the quotidian (understood as both a spatial and a temporal designation) necessarily begins and ends with the body, and huapango arribeño's constellation of embodied aesthetic practices gives voice to stories of ordinary living. This reflexivity is central to the fluidity of the "poetic function" (Jakobson 1960), that is, in animating social categories (e.g., race, citizenship, geography, history) in textual praxis (Dent 2009).

I mobilize the concept of aural poetics to refer to this dialogic interplay between embodiment and aesthetics. In doing so, I rely on José E. Limón's designation of cultural poetics as "acts of cultural interpretation focused on aesthetically salient, culturally embedded textualities and enactments" (1994: 14). While my position overlaps with Limón's situated renderings of vernacular performance—dancing, verbal art, and oral legend—I augment his formulation with the term *aural* to lend further specificity to the field of aesthetic cultural production that concerns this book. Specifically, I explore musico-poetic textualities made legible through a relational process of sonic enactment and reception, a process that possesses its own social aesthetic sensibility, or poetics. Therefore, this book lends huapango arribeño an "ethnographic ear" (Erlmann 2004). It is a story (broad)cast through the perceptual field of voicing, a concept that collapses the border-binary—as it has been articulated through the epistemological "project central to Euro-Western modernity" (Weidman 2015: 234)—between the material or sonorous aspects and the immaterial, agentive, or political meanings of sound.[5] The material textures of sounds (the voice included) may be conceptualized only in culturally specific—and therefore subjectively affective—terms. We hear (literal) voices as warm, sweet, velvet, haunting, and so on, ideas that simultaneously inform that very experience. We are *moved* by them. Philosopher Don Ihde extends this intervening logic and suggests that to listen to the "surfaces" of sounds is to "be aware in the process of the pervasiveness of certain 'beliefs' " (2007: 49) as we hear and construct the social life of sound phenomenologically. In this way sound is heard through culturally and historically situated forms of listening, that is, through aural modes of attention that circulate within social fields of meaning and experience contoured by power, politics, and economy. To claim (as this book does) that voicing *matters*—resonates both materially and immaterially—is to account for embodied musico-poetic performance as a form of communication attuned to interaffective states of

attachment, of living, of solidarity within a field of U.S.-Mexico social and economic relations and all that that entails. To invoke my intellectual precursors, people "sing with their heads thrown back" (Paredes 1958: 34) and "mumble damn-foolishness into microphones" (Limón 1994: 94) to voice their presence in a world that otherwise silences their place in it. Whether carefully crafted verse or guttural *grito* (a cry of emotional release), both embody the social anatomy of discontent with the politics that encode the dominated conditions of ethnic Mexicans (Flores 2002). This is how voicing *takes place*—its material enactment constructs mattering maps that represent the ways social actors move through the world, or desire to do so (a process I refer to as *self-authorization* in chapter 5). In more conventional theoretical terms, I am politicizing what Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) has elsewhere termed *dialogism* as a way of understanding how the voices of individual actors are constitutive of their engagements with a much broader social horizon. Aaron A. Fox's comments on the expressive centrality and power of the voice in Texas white working-class culture are instructive: "The voice stands for the embodied, socially embedded self; it stands also for a communal identity in which that self has a particular and irreducible dignity. The fragile but necessary living human voice, in all its individual embodied thought and felt particularity, and in all its iconic social symbolism and situational indexicality, is the vigorous poetic entextualization . . . of a cherished *critical* 'ordinariness' " (2004: 42–43). To a similar end, Limón anticipates Fox in his work on the folkloric practices of marginalized working-class Mexican-Americans in South Texas as expressive forms that voice "a critical difference of consciousness in antagonistic contradistinction" to the "fragmentary pressures" of an alienating dominant Anglo culture (1994: 117).

This concern with voicing edges toward recent work in the field of sound studies.[6] While this sonic turn attends to an array of topics, including ethnographies of emplaced auditory landscapes, sound production, technologies of sonic circulation and inscription, and the politics of listening, there remains an opening for the continued application of this theoretical predisposition to questions of music and migration.[7] Indeed, Frances R. Aparicio and Cándida F. Jáquez (2003) took up the theme of "musical migrations" over a decade ago in an edited volume that bears that very name. However, in their analysis, migration operates largely as a metaphor for the transnational movement and interplay of folk and popular musics across Latin America. The actual physical movement of people across geographic distances is not an ethnographic concern, such that music making in the everyday expressive lives of migrants

remains somewhat unexamined. Migration in this and other works is primarily a shorthand for the sonic proliferation embedded in the globalizing music industry, with an emphasis on the various forms of circulation and resignification that constitute what Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2006, 2014) has subsequently termed the "aural public sphere" in Latin America. Ochoa Gautier's formulation is continuous with R. Murray Schafer's ([1977] 1994) "soundscape" in her attention to the material dimensions of language, music, and the voice, while also remaining phenomenologically attuned to embodiment and the senses as central to the socially and culturally positioned forms of listening that constitute modern personhood and political subjectivities. With attention to nineteenth-century Colombia, Ochoa Gautier's work demonstrates the continued challenge of integrating analytical attention to both the sonic qualities and the ephemeral dimensions of sound, which requires an anthropology capable of contextualizing the deliberate intentionality of listening as an ethnographic modality centered in auditory perception.[8] In the present case, ethnographic alertness to huapango arribeño's sonic nexus of music and poetics foregrounds the role aural immediacy plays in articulating selves and subjectivities in relation to others. With this in mind, I return throughout this book to the notion of el destino—the calling—as a communicative modality, or voicing, that generates auditory intimacies of "enduring social resonance" across time and space among migrants (Faudree 2013: 18). This necessarily opens the door to metadiscursive analysis, or focused attention to the critical reflexivity emergent from the domain of music, for el destino is a potent local theory that attends a constellation of abstract concerns regarding life, livelihood, personhood, performance, community, and aesthetics, all of which are brought together through the deep sociability—or intimacy—engendered in the course of music making.

Yet, while I explore this singular musical genre, I am equally concerned with the cultural scriptings that frame the practice of vernacular Mexican musics. These framings are centrally about the sounds of national belonging and alienation on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. I take specific interest in these sonic emplacements and displacements in the present neoliberal era of transnational integration between the two countries. How do "Mexican sounds"—as a locus of aesthetic behaviors, performative acts, and signifying practices—resonate across physical, aural, and cultural borders, and what do they reveal about transnational migrant lives lived across them? Indeed, "traditional" sounds—amplified through the loudspeaker of *mexicanidad*—ring out as calcified sonic artifacts of cultural patrimony across the aural border

of the U.S. nation-state in ways that brace attitudes about "Mexican culture" as a distortion that is polluting "American" national identity and cultural homogeneity. This particular sonic envelope offers one—and certainly the most pervasive—way of perceiving Mexican musics, which in a U.S. context are signified as foreign Spanish-language noise. The term *noise*, while admittedly referring to a generalized material aspect of all sound, operates as an evaluative category for sounds that are, at best, considered culturally incomprehensible or, at worst, deemed to possess unassimilable and alien meanings thought to be of no social value. David Novak elaborates, "[Noise] becomes the discursive *borderline* that separates one kind of person, or sound, or place absolutely from another and ultimately reduces all of the 'noncultural' elements that cannot be folded into normative systems of meaning" (2015: 133; emphasis added). Discursive borders are similarly produced through linguistic processes of social differentiation and exclusion operative in the juridical and cultural discourses that construct the so-called illegal Mexican migrant as not only a subject outside the American polity but a racially inferior and linguistically deficient outsider. This latter stigmatization is shaped by institutionally sanctioned forms of listening that hear race and class difference when encountering the Spanish language and associated expressive practices (Rosa 2010; Rosa and Flores 2015). Following the cultural logic outlined above, this is how, similar to music, certain forms of speaking among Latinas/os and ethnic Mexicans are marked as disordered sound: noise (Attali 1985: 6).

Nevertheless, Mexican migrants practice their own situated forms of listening amid the aural gaze of everyday Americans and state surveillance, as Dolores Casillas (2011) demonstrates with respect to the ways in which Spanish-language radio listeners who live below the radar use the airwaves to subvert *la migra* (immigration authorities) through live alerts that track, monitor, and outwit the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This "inverse surveillance" is also contingent on communication among listeners—on sounds that create connections and form the basis for imagining communities (Casillas 2011). Samuel K. Byrd's recent volume *The Sounds of Latinidad: Immigrants Making Music and Creating Culture in a Southern City* (2015) gestures toward such a focus, as he explores how music became a vehicle for community formation among Latina/o migrants in Charlotte, North Carolina, amid the "graying skies" that resulted from the economic recession and the failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform in the 2000s. As his argument goes, creative expression functioned as a way of claiming cultural citizenship through "[synthesizing] disparate elements—nationalities,

class backgrounds, ages, and migration experiences"—into a form of southern *Latinidad* (5). Despite the title, however, Byrd's work omits an analysis of how sound ideologies and ideologies of sound are instructive in understanding the ways migrants live in and hear the world. In other words, how and why does sound matter—materially and immaterially—when one is examining multiple experiences of migration? With this query in mind, the present work understands sound as "reveal[ing] social space as an artifact of material practices complexly interwoven with semiotic processes" (Eisenberg 2015: 202) and therefore significant in recognizing how embodied expressive affiliations are axial to *voicing* one's place in the world, that is, claiming space across the physical divides of nations and the cultural divides of politics.

## BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS

Although the scholarly field of border studies and the metaphorical use of the borderlands are often conflated, they are distinct. Border studies typically examines the material conditions of the U.S.-Mexico border as a concrete physical place, largely from the perspective of the social sciences (R. Alvarez 1984; Bustamante 1983, 1992; Bustamante et al. 1992; Davidson 2000; De León 2015; Dunn 1996; Nash and Fernández-Kelly 1983; O. Martínez 1994, 1996, 1998; Mattingly and Hansen 2006; Nevins 2002; Rosas 2012; Ruíz and Tiano 1991; Sadowski-Smith 2002; Segura and Zavella 2007; Téllez 2008; Vélez-Ibañez 1983, 1996, 2010; Vila 2000). The borderlands are used metaphorically to speak of a liminal state of in-betweenness in work in the humanities, largely cultural studies (Anzaldúa 1987; Elenes 2011; García Canclini 1990; Keating 2005; Rosaldo 1989; J. Saldívar 1997; Stephen 2007).[9] A seminal figure in the development of the latter theoretical framework, Gloria Anzaldúa, also distinguished between "a dividing line" (or border) and "the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary" (borderland) (1987: 3). Nevertheless, while the borderlands are often considered the symbolic divides among various social groups, the former, more concrete geopolitical perspective is equally undergirded by a broader consideration of the boundary work implicit in social and cultural ideologies of difference making. One cannot fully understand the physical presence of the U.S.-Mexico border as a result of U.S. imperialism without accounting for the racial ideologies that drove westward expansion in the nineteenth century (De León 1983; Paredes 1958, 1961). Centered on illegality and border inventions/inspections/crossings, respectively, the contemporary work of Nicholas De Genova (2005) and Alejandro Lugo (2008) explores how the materiality of U.S.-Mexico border policies extends across

the continental United States and subsequently shapes cultural logics that produce and restrict citizenship in everyday life, inspecting, monitoring, and surveilling "what goes in and out in the name of class, gender, race, and nation" (Lugo 2008: 115). Indeed, social relations are always shifting and embedded in much broader and more complex cultural conflicts that are historical in scope, and thus the racialization of ethnic Mexicans in the United States is inseparable from the U.S.-Mexico border as a concrete physical site (of crossing and inspection) that in turn operates as an (invented) allegorical social divide in the U.S. American imagination that renders ethnic Mexicans "policeable subjects" (Rosas 2006). This critical and ethnographically grounded integration of geographic/physical and cultural/conceptual perspectives is what Robert R. Alvarez Jr. (1995) termed an "anthropology of borderlands."

I would add, as an implicit aspect of the project of modernity, that the deepening political-economic relationship between Mexico and the United States throughout the twentieth century has only further inscribed these imagined social differences. Here, I refer specifically to transnational migration in the devastating wake of the Mexican Revolution; U.S. labor demands extending through World War II and the Cold War era, contractually managed through the Bracero Program (1942–1964); the era of structural adjustment in the 1980s alongside an imagined moral panic surrounding undocumented migration that resulted in heightened border militarization; the dissolution of both protectionism with regard to domestic industry and the foundations of agrarian reform law in Mexico in the 1980s; and, finally, the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a decade later. The work of U.S.-Mexico borderlands scholarship across the spectrum of social sciences and humanities has been to trace the "transnational dialogues that have informed culture and life" within this set of historical circumstances (Madrid 2011: 2). Indeed, Américo Paredes long ago identified the U.S.-Mexico border region as a generative site of cultural praxis and social struggle for those subjects marginalized in the U.S. national construction. Others have since conceptualized the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as an epistemological zone of liminality and encounter. Additional and more territorialized understandings of the borderlands as geographic area or cultural region have concentrated on folkloric items and social processes, producing no shortage of ethnography (Dorsey and Díaz-Barriga 2011; Flores 1995; Garza Villarreal 2014; Guerra 2011; Limón 1994; Nájera 2015; M. Peña 1985, 1999). This book engages, augments, and integrates this body of border studies, border ethnography, and borderlands theory, particularly that which has been critically informed

by the framework of transnationalism. I build on the bifocal orientation of Nicholas De Genova (2005), Nina Glick Schiller et al. (1992), Gina M. Pérez (2004), Roger Rouse (1991, 1992), and Patricia Zavella (2011), who have taken transnational theory into social spaces in which familial, economic, and political moments are offset by conflicts and constraints.[10] I share these concerns and considerations with regard to the multiplicity of the lived experiences of Mexican migrants and focus on music making as a location where they shape and live with political-economic forces that are seemingly distant.

Given the existing body of borderlands music scholarship in particular, I am preceded by many, most notably Paredes's (1958, 1976) seminal work on the *corrido* (Mexican ballad) of border conflict. Borderlands in this body of work refers to both music whose practice is geographically proximate to the U.S.-Mexico border and Mexican music whose transnational audience and listenership exceeds the political and cultural boundaries of both the United States and Mexico. This scholarly corpus has been augmented most recently by those elaborating on commercial forms ranging from Tejano (Tex-Mex music) (M. Peña 1999; Vargas 2012) to the Mexican brass *banda* (Simonett 2001), accordion-driven *norteña* (Ragland 2009), the corrido of drug trafficking (Edberg 2004), Chicana/o punk (Habell-Pallán 2005), mariachi (Sheehy 2006), *pasito duranguense* (Hutchinson 2007), and *Nor-tec* (Madrid 2008). Attentive to the complicated cultural exchanges within the purview of the broader Latin American social formation, much of this work has offered insightful perspectives on these forms, often drawing on Néstor García Canclini's (1990) notion of hybrid cultures in theorizing the consumptive politics of popular culture and the transnational flows of musico-symbolic formations therein. While music typically deemed folkloric circulates alongside "what historically has been considered mass music" (Ochoa Gautier 2006: 808), huapango arribeño's own circuits of circulation are in many ways distinct from those of popular music, presenting us with a different, though complementary, perspective surrounding performance, migration, and political economy. Moreover, expressive culture in borderlands studies has largely been treated as an epiphenomenal manifestation or symbolic token of lived realities. The objects of such analysis have typically been elite literary forms, film, and mass-mediated music with little ethnographic grounding. In contrast, my argument going forward as it pertains to huapango arribeño privileges the materiality of vernacular performance, and I do so with an ethnographic focus on sound and aesthetic embodiments.

## LISTENING

It is not a Southern Californian shantytown (Chavez 1992), nor buried in Chicago's urban sprawl (De Genova 2005), nor a long-established New York barrio (Dávila 2004), and it also differs from a small town in the midwestern heartland (Vega 2015). *Aquí*, along the narrow strips and steep edges of the city, is where these locals live.[11] It is not quite country, not quite suburban, just far enough out but still close. On the outskirts? You jump on the six-lane highway, escape the city limits, speed past low-built office parks and strip malls flanked by big-box chain restaurants, past shooting ranges and hunting outfitters, past colossal outlet stores and Cineplexes. Keep driving. The jagged blur of neon signs and concrete is softened by the blurry heat haze rising from the sea of parking lot asphalt baking in the sun. Gated subdivisions and megachurches come into view. You're almost there. You exit and reach a maze of farm-to-market roads encumbered by the earthmoving equipment being used for construction on the stretch of highway half a mile up from where you exited. You pull over and turn off your car, then get out and walk onto the gravelly edge between the road and dirt. At first, it seems quiet, almost silent. But then you tune in to the constant rush of wind from the never-faraway highway, the low rumble of eighteen-wheelers carrying vegetables, merchandise for the big-box stores, packaged foods, and equipment for oil drilling out west. If you listen closely enough, you hear construction; there's always something going up. It's not as quiet as it would seem, but everything is muffled and distant. Is a new overpass being built? Are they performing routine road maintenance? Whatever the case may be, the shoulders of these small roads serve as open-air storage yards for materials and machinery. Besides, the landfill is nearby, too. You climb back in and drive a little further. Greasy-spoon Tex-Mex diners and BBQ joints, dilapidated mobile home parks, and overpriced and overstocked convenience stores dot intersections that lead to other intersections, which take you to yet other roads and intersections, and so on. This maze eventually circles back to the highway, back to the bustling sea of concrete, the extravagant homes, the rush of commerce.

The spaces in between these monuments of American economic prosperity are filled with rolling bluestem grassland and wind, a backdrop that reminds you that you are in Texas. Otherwise, the manicured corporate landscape visible from the highway could be mistaken for anywhere U.S.A. There is also a human landscape to consider, one that speaks to the nativist politics of migration and labor subordination at play. Many of the people who sustain

the service, construction, and agricultural sectors necessary for this world to exist call this bizarre interstitial space—not quite country, not quite city—home. Just down the road, the menacing threat of deportation towers in the form of private migrant-detention centers—in some cases they are only a few miles away, in others a few hundred miles away: Hutto, Dilley, Laredo. The people who cook and serve the food in the restaurants and outlet food courts, who clean the office parks and chain stores, who build the subdivision homes, who construct, quarry, and design the items essential to the rustic Hill Country–meets–Southern aesthetic—in all of its handcrafted woodwork, its rusted-steel and limestone chic—are Mexican migrants who live here, too, surrounded by the structures they build but alienated by the economies they sustain, ostracized by the larger society they make possible. Their labor is valued but not their lives.

These places are becoming all-subsuming sprawls of commerce and development extending out from the city—Austin, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Waco. More important, these migrants are at the center of an economically prosperous America made possible by transnational labor, much of which is undocumented. From within that center, if you look a little closer, past the shade of cedar, elms, and live oaks, over the tall bluestem and mesquite, beyond the broken-down trucks and rusted-out metal fences, up the driveways and cluttered patios, into the kitchens and living rooms, you'll peer into the intimate lives of migrants who are otherwise rendered invisible. They stay, they leave, they return, and they live their lives along the way. And if you listen—at these homes and ballrooms and rodeos where they congregate—you'll get wind of stories that will tell you all you need to know. If you listen, you'll realize that these homes, these patios, these spaces of congregation, are powerfully tethered to far-off places, too, forming part of a palimpsest of time and space that tells the story of transnational living and belonging—of America's borders and borderlands.

Doña Rosa keeps beer in the fridge for afternoons like this.[12] People show up, a certain kind of relaxed conversation starts to *take place*, and before you know it so does huapango arribeño. Senovio, her husband, quit drinking some time back. Diabetes. Still, Doña Rosa keeps the fridge modestly stocked for guests. Today, I am a guest, so naturally, she offers me a frosty twelve-ounce can.

I grew up in homes like this. Small two-bedroom ranch-style houses with shag carpeting, eggshell-colored hawk-and-trowel drywall, popcorn ceilings,

oversized furniture wrapped in plastic and stuffed into a tiny living room. You walk in and make your way around the dusty mountain of work boots, sneakers, cowboy hats, and baseball caps piled by the front door that belong to the company that's gathered. You step into the steady wind generated by the swamp cooler in the window, bellowing out its motorized cadence, struggling to cool the space. The door closes behind you, and your eyes take a moment to adjust to the darkness—thick maroon curtains block out the sun, and only the white glow of a television set and fluorescent bulbs in the kitchen offer a sort of mood lighting. You scan the scene and find that every inch of the walls and surfaces is covered in an effusive array of home decor: the obligatory ceramic angels and elephants, artificial flowers, mirrors in faux-gold frames, family pictures, and Catholic paraphernalia including a cheap print of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper* that hangs lopsided in the kitchen, eyeing you. You maneuver around tightly squeezed bodies, say a series of hellos, shake calloused hands—you see that Homero, Valentín, Daniel, Salomón, Ricardo, and Graciano are all here (you'll make their acquaintance in the pages ahead). You settle into the plastic-wrapped loveseat, crack open the cold one you've been handed, and drift into the flow of things—the conversation, the laughter, the tuning of instruments, utterances nested within a soothing aural thicket of clanking kitchen pans, the high-frequency whine from the muted television set, the swamp cooler's hum, the far-off thuds of activity in other rooms, no doubt children playing.

It's damp in here—the sound, that is . . . The clutter of artifacts and the cushion of soft, flat surfaces and bodies deaden the attack of voices and instruments, their timbre slightly dulled and their direction tightened—strumming, singing, and talk shoot straight into the ears, sharp, like an arrow . . . a sound engineer's dream. You focus on Doña Rosa's voice: "¡Todavía, cuando se casó la hija de mi tío, eran las ocho de la mañana y la gente bailando!" (Even still, when my uncle's daughter got married, it was eight in the morning, and people were still dancing away!). Talk swells at moments and dips down to near silence at others, with a paced and jagged layering of musical sounds underneath—the attenuated strumming and plucking of strings, the soft phantom mouthing of words, half sung, half spoken, all in preparation for music soon to be played. As often happens in a gathering of musicians like this, talk hovers around memorable huapango arribeño performances, and, unavoidably, the topic of particular musicians comes up—the uniqueness of their playing, their personalities, unforgettable dances they performed in, and so on. This collective remembering takes the form of paused statements

and sparse dialogue, winding down and picking up at different moments like a breeze that won't make up its mind, perhaps hinting of an approaching rain shower in the form of music and poetry.

The cadence of the exchanges of Doña Rosa and her husband, Senovio, is musical; their utterances dance across our ears as they trade memories of one veteran musician and note how he no longer plays through the dawn because of his age. She interjects and makes note of other veterans who still do, and do it well. She's recalling one performance close to Victoria, Guanajuato, where her family is from. It was at a wedding.

> ¡A las diez sirviendo el desayuno a toda la gente—menudo y todo—y los músicos tocando! Esa boda fue en Álamos. . . . Ahí se hacen las bodas y se acostumbra que en la mañana se les da desayunar a la gente—el menudo y barbacoa que sobró, lo que haiga.

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> (At ten in the morning, everyone was being served breakfast—menudo and everything—and the musicians were still playing! That wedding was in Álamos. . . . At those weddings it is customary to serve people breakfast in the morning—the leftover menudo and barbecue, whatever is left.)

She pauses her story, glances toward the kitchen, and offers those present something to eat. The talk of food and social obligation must have prompted this gesture. Most of us pass for now but will likely take her up on her offer later.

As the conversation resumed, Senovio named this practice: "¡El recalentado!" I chimed in, "La tornaboda." The *tornaboda* refers to a feast held the day after a wedding in which family and friends celebrate the newlyweds with a meal that may consist of leftovers, though not always. Senovio stresses, "Nosotros pa' allá le decimos el recalentado" (Over there we say *recalentado*). The timbre of his words changes slightly; he shifts his body and elevates the pitch of his voice, as if calling out to someone across a distance: "¡Vamos al recalentado allí on' ta' fulano!" (Let's go to the recalentado where so-and-so is at!). Senovio momentarily inhabits the voice of a person presumably from the region in question to demonstrate the sociability that surrounds the recalentado as a community event, much like the wedding celebration and huapango arribeño performance that preceded it. This fragment of his speech is a type of other-voiced direct discourse, or "reported speech purportedly in the voice of another but unmistakably inhabited by the polemical presence of the speaker" (A. Fox 2004: 120). We listen and momentarily imagine ourselves

calling out to a neighbor across a dusty street in Álamos, eager to feast and perhaps just as eager to nurse a hangover from the festivities the night before.

As if Senovio's performance might have pulled us further into Mexico, Doña Rosa pivots—like any good dancer—and swings us back around. The talk of large celebrations and convivial partying triggers a memory of her equally large family in and around Álamos, now spread all over the United States. She says proudly, "Dondequiera que escuches ese apellido—Ibarre—es de la misma familia." (Wherever you hear that last name—Ibarre—it's all the same [my] family.) Senovio follows her lead and extends these bonds of kinship further into specific places in the United States: "Vas pa' Dallas y hay de esa familia." (You go to Dallas, and there are members of that family.) A muted chuckle from someone follows the mention of this first city.[13] Doña Rosa and Senovio continue listing off places, carefully mapping out for us the people they are connected to. They begin in unison with giant grins:

**DR AND S:** Vas pa' Houston, San Antonio—Ibarre. (You go to Houston, San Antonio—Ibarre.)

**S:** Vas pa' Florida, vas pa' Chicago, vas pa' Austin, vas pa' San Antonio—Ibarre. (You go to Florida, you go to Chicago, you go to Austin, you go to San Antonio—Ibarre.)

**DR:** En Seattle. ¡En California! San Francisco, Los Ángeles—Ibarre! (In Seattle. In California! San Francisco, Los Angeles—Ibarre!)

**S:** En San Rafael. ¡Ooohh . . . ahí está la mata! (In San Rafael. Ooohh . . . that's where the taproot is!)

This prompts laughter from everyone. Doña Rosa and Senovio's back-and-forth is a meaningful recognition of bonds between family and friends that extend across the U.S.-Mexico border. The chorus of laughter following Senovio's final statement, however, marks a shared realization that transnational Mexican migrants are deeply rooted in the space of the U.S. nation-state despite being unwanted—this defiant reality represents a victory that animates a type of communal jocularity. These connections among people and between places are on this occasion expressed through talk as a sort of prelude to the music and poetry that followed. To that end, music making, as this book demonstrates, takes on a special significance among this community, for it refigures the sociopolitical and economic terms of migration through aesthetic means. Huapango arribeño voices the intimacy and connection at stake in the experiences of Mexican migrants—a phenomenological consideration that has no distinct essence or cohesion, as it were, but rather is in motion, always.[14]

## SOUNDS OF CROSSING

The indignant policing of migrant bodies in everyday moments is indicative of the cultural and racializing logics that restrict Mexican migrant life across the continental United States, of the ways the boundaries of America are intensely present in "informal managements" (Rosas 2006) at the vernacular level. In turn, the spaces convened by and through huapango arribeño performance emerge as politicized moments of congregation amid the vulnerabilities of transnational living in this post–Great Recession era, or, as huapango arribeño troubadour Guillermo Velázquez puts it in the following verses:

> Hay inquietud en la raza
> porque en los U.S.A. hoy día
> como que la economía
> no anda de muy buena traza
>
> ———
>
> Mexican folks are anxious
> because today in the U.S.A.
> it seems like the economy
> is practically in disarray

The space of huapango arribeño performance is entangled with politics, mobility, and emplacement, and it is a goal of this book to demonstrate how the microelements of huapango arribeño music and poetics—as overlapping communicative resources—are the creative embodiments of social and individual engagements with the U.S.-Mexico transnational social and political-economic formation, engagements that speak directly to the uncertainties and anxieties of the troubled U.S. economy in which migrant livelihoods are positioned, as Velázquez voices above. This requires an ethnographic ear attuned to how the musical and poetic minutiae of a long-standing traditional repertoire index present-day realities concerning the boundaries of race and nation as they relate to Mexican migrants. Therefore, the *sounds of crossing* refers to, on the one hand, (1) sonic invocations—a calling to mind through music and poetics—that are centrally about people and places and tell how both travel and, on the other, (2) the ways such invocations themselves exceed their space-time situatedness, or *sounding across place*, both metaphysically and physically. A full understanding of both senses within the purview of Mexican migrants' social lives requires attention to the embodied dimensions of performance in contexts where migrant bodies are subject to various

forms of structural and cultural violence. In other words, to follow these sounds is to trace how this community's own chosen form of expression is projected out as a way of binding lives and geographies across the dense, lingering, and knotted dissonance of class, race, politics, and transnational mobility as key dimensions of the Mexican migrant experience.[15] This formulation is not the same as a materially emplaced acoustic environment (or soundscape), nor is it equal to—although perhaps adjacent to—an audiotopic construction (Kun 2005), but this book's major contention is that sound claims space physically and culturally in ways that rebuke politically motivated nationalist and segregationist epistemologies. At last, huapango arribeño is treated in these pages not as a cultural artifact—unearthed from a substratum of authentic (and necessarily fetishized) Mexican culture—but as a complex and contingent voice heard across localities. In the words of Jacques Attali (1985), "music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world" (4).

This book centers on the world of transnational migration and, more important, the sounds, social lives, and cultural real that flow through it. Many of the borderlands music scholars previously mentioned have relied also on García Canclini's (2001) extension of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1972, 1987) notions of deterritorialization and reterritorialization to discuss the relocation of displaced sounds and their symbolic productions. I, too, look in this direction, with particular interest in the politics surrounding the transnational movements of Mexican migrants. I ask, how do the transnational political-economic contours of human mobility generate stories subsequently voiced through embodied music and poetics? How do these forms of expression circulate and in turn generate subjectivities? This final consideration opens up discussion of the political—that which animated laughter in Doña Rosa and Senovio's living room in Texas, that which prompted the intoxicated Anglo man in northern Indiana to accost me in the bathroom, and that which is woven throughout most of the stories you will encounter in this book. Fundamentally, the political is a question of inclusion and exclusion, of class, of belonging, and of citizenship, a concept that scholars have augmented socially (Del Castillo 2007; Gálvez 2013) and culturally (Rosaldo 1994). Both social and cultural citizenship extend the sense of belonging beyond the political rights accorded by the state and instead privilege everyday practices and dimensions of identity through which people create community, fashion subjectivities, and perceive their world. It is among these practices that I locate huapango arribeño as an aesthetically salient cultural form that binds and gives voice to the multiple places that constitute transnational living.[16] *Voicing*, therefore,

refers to the textual interplay between (1) musical expression, (2) ritual poetic discourse, and (3) bonds of sociability expressed through ordinary conversation among the practitioners and people in question and, furthermore, the ways in which this nexus constructs and advances vernacular theories for understanding space, time, emplacement, and personhood. Attention to these theories requires an ethnography of performance—a conceptual framework centered on the discursive action, artistic activity, and social interactive dimensions that constitute aesthetic enactments. In this regard, I rely also on Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs's definition of poetics as "the artful use of language in the conduct of social life" (1990: 79) as a way of conceptualizing the culturally situated moments of composition and creative exchange where huapango arribeño music and décimas sound out and braid themselves to build a loud, felt, and circulating interaffective dialogue. With this approach in mind, I call attention to (1) the conventions and structural rules that govern live performance, referred to as *reglamento*; (2) the recurring grammar and rhetorical logics of composition, referred to as *fundamento*; and (3) the reflexive theory linking the domains of aesthetics and sociability, referred to as *el destino.* Empirically, these aspects of performance are represented with the aid of transcriptions and descriptions of naturally occurring music and poetics. Theoretically, I turn my attention to the semiotic constructions of copresence (or the poetics of affect) and the metapragmatic discourses emerging from performance that mediate the relative social distance between audiences and practitioners, both of which brace an analysis linking the social resonance of huapango arribeño performance to phenomenological fields.

Finally, I follow De Genova's lead and consciously employ the term *migrant* to "[disrupt] the implicit teleology of the more conventional term *immigrant*," which connotes "a one-directional and predetermined movement" (2005: 2).[17] De Genova suggests that transnational migration is primarily a spatialized experience where social relations not only transcend distances but also form a conjunctural space that comprises innumerable places that are home to everyday practices of meaning making. These makings, moreover, do not carve out an "idyllic Mexican cultural space" apart from the nation-state; rather, they are forged at the very intersection of transnational migration, labor subjugation, and social inequality at the nation-state's heart (111). I would further add that the flows of everyday life that achieve such bindings are at their most fundamental level manifest through embodied acts whose enactment in space and time—in this case across the "treacherous geographies" (Rosas 2006) crucial to the U.S.-Mexico border formation—necessarily becomes a politicized

mode of creative and generative social exchange.[18] By way of this conceptual move as it pertains to the conjunctural space of transnationalism, I deploy *trans* in the sense of active *crossing* and thereby attend also to the correlative social decentering of the space of the nation-state. This paradigmatic shift bypasses nationalist and essentialist models that cling to an "originary Mexican space" (De Genova 2005: 99–100): José Vasconcelos's *México de afuera*, Américo Paredes's (1958) Greater Mexico, and the primordial Aztlán within the Chicana/o nationalist paradigm all come to mind. Nevertheless, transnationalism is not a paradigmatic solution that neatly frames the experiences of the communities in question but, rather, a problem to be engaged with, as migrants must do in daily life. Therefore, in these pages *belonging* is not a catch-all appeal for juridical citizenship. Going forward, I use the term as a phenomenological address to account for the embodied affects that coalesce around the complicated relationship between immaterial and material registers of experience—in this case, sound and place—which in turn generate bonds of sociability that reveal the contingency between inclusion and exclusion in everyday life. To belong is "an enterprise that is ongoing" (M. Alexander 2005: 6).

## ENCOUNTERS

M. Jacqui Alexander (2005) calls for a grounding of theory in everyday life, drawing on personal experience in her explorations of race, modernity, and colonialism, an epistemological project to be sure. Inspired by her work and that of others—namely, Gloria Anzaldúa, Américo Paredes, and Renato Rosaldo—I too rely on my life experiences, on the memories that both haunt and make possible my entanglement with huapango arribeño music. Like verses and melodies that hang in the air, my ethnography too is coated with a "broad brushed phenomenology" (A. Fox 2004: 30). As a researcher, ethnographer, and participant, I attempt ethnography in the same spirit of poetic telling and retelling that one finds in huapango arribeño. My interlocutors' knowledges, in this regard, hold an equally important space in my rendering; in fact, the dialogic and transpersonal exchanges among us, sharing our perspectives, are a major part of the process of tracing how meanings, feelings, and resonances are conveyed culturally. Fixated on the spaces between those phenomena, my ethnographic process thus acknowledges the lack of division between the subjectivity of the ethnographer, ethnographic writing, and the world itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The space of ethnography is boundlessly conducive to (and not analogically restrictive of) meaning and ought

not be contained within the "single, static plane of analysis" (Stewart 2007: 3). It is built on the affirmation that *this is happening* or occurring or existing. This is best represented by what D. Soyini Madison (2011) refers to as the labor of reflexivity, a space of contingency built on sociality and alliance, manifest in the spatiotemporality of the story itself, where one's presence laboriously spreads out as an intrinsic part of ethnography. True, our entextualized observations are relatively stable constructions of what exemplifies the systemicity of social processes—exemplars. However, we are always inside the phenomenon itself, and central to these pages, then, is the embodied moment of intersubjective encounter—a back-and-forth connection with others that is admittedly difficult to measure, or quantify, yet is undeniable, even unavoidable, a reflexivity that huapangueros consistently draw on for their own musico-poetic labor, a key point that is explored throughout and that inspires both the content and the style of my writing (in particular, see chapter 6, "Huapango sin Fronteras," for a discussion of interaffectivity).

This book connects performance to everyday life, but it does not keep to a linear chronology so much as form an assemblage of moments, remembrances, and dialogic encounters that ultimately create an incomplete picture (like a social theory) that disturbs the desire to know "Mexican culture."[19] It reveals the space of performance to be full of bundled relationships to be disarticulated; this space is not an already constituted form but rather a "porous array of intersections where distinct processes crisscross from within and beyond its borders" (Rosaldo 1989: 20). *Sounds of Crossing* traces the web of aesthetics, politics, sensate experience, past histories and social memory, and anticipated events, moving through space and time to reveal their forceful coming together within the context of a twenty-first-century transnational U.S.-Mexico social formation. The viability of ethnography in this approach, however, exists away from the realm of so-called *objective* proof and instead acknowledges the many voices of migrants and their importance in ways that "confidently resist the slings and arrows of positivism's obsession with evidence" (Madison 2011: 130). I treat personal stories and poetics as social histories in their own right. In this way I perform ethnography that is an undeniably personal and private act made both public and plural (Berry 2011). Reflexive ethnography, Rosaldo (1989) maintains, signifies a postmodern skepticism, an intellectual dismantling of regimes of objectivity and the mythic charter of distanced ethnography (Stocking 1983), an erosion of the categorical legacy of anthropology, which now competes "with the truths of case studies that are embedded in local contexts, shaped by local interests, and colored by local

perceptions" (21). It is here—embedded in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands—that we find native ethnographers Anzaldúa, Limón, and Paredes, for instance, whose exemplary positioned accounts offer unique and critical perspectives central to the paradigm of an anthropology of borderlands as a whole. This brand of native ethnography has challenged conventional intellectual wisdom regarding people of Mexican origin, their culture, and anthropology's conceptual formulations. Still, a rejection of objectivity doesn't mean that the embrace of one's own situated subjectivity is without its complications. Subjectivity itself, James Clifford (1988) suggests, is more often than not beyond the control of the ethnographer, such that the cultivation of an ethnographic science must always be understood vis-à-vis more political debates regarding representation. As anthropologists, we tend to want the ever-elusive patterns of culture to be clear and defined, and we wish for interpretation itself—the drawing out of meaning and significance—to possess a degree of clarity. Embracing one's own subjectivity does not guarantee this. Instead, that embrace requires that one enact particular strategies of representation that ought to take into account not only one's own positionality but also that of our interlocutors, who are equally positioned. As Paredes (1993) reminds us, the informant always speaks to us from *somewhere*. My own "somewhere"—with its overlapping transnational spatial and temporal dimensions—is where I have often come face-to-face with my grandfather.

In February 2012 I had just finished playing a *huapango huasteco* performance at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago with my previously mentioned huapango trio.[20] As is customary, we waited outside the hall to greet the audience members, shake hands, and discuss various facets of the music and performance. Two people who looked to be my age approached me and said they were delighted to have heard huapango huasteco live onstage. They introduced themselves as sister and brother and explained how they'd recently discovered that their great-uncle had been a well-known musician in Mexico, but who had played a different style of huapango in Querétaro. He was heralded as an influential *trovador* (troubadour, or poet-practitioner), they said. I looked into their faces and saw myself for a moment. I asked the man's name. "Mauro," they replied without hesitation. I embraced each of them and said, "Now I know I have cousins in Chicago because he was my grandfather." It appeared Mauro was following me again.

Traces of Mauro's memory have circulated within me as deeply as my parents' stories of crossing. I met him only once, but even if I had little direct knowledge of him, the familial connection still holds meaning in the poetic world in which he moved and in which I now move and am inscribed. His place in my life is beyond my control, except to the extent to which I can embrace him, however tentatively. I tell my single story of him, the sobering moment when, on a visit to Querétaro, Mexico, I, for the first and only time, encountered my grandfather.

> Entre sueños (amid dreams), we took an afternoon trip with my parents and several paternal relatives to a tiny community in the mountains above my father's hometown in northern Querétaro, Mexico. We all piled into an old fifteen-passenger van—a rusty, battered mammoth relic of the 1970s—and noisily turned onto the dirt road that led the way, leaving clouds of dust in our wake. I was seven years old.
>
> In the company of aunts, uncles, and cousins, I was on my way to meet Mauro, my father's father. The community wasn't too far away, about a thirty-minute climb up mountainsides, just enough time for a child's mind to ponder, though not resolve, vexing questions concerning his family. I was told very little about him. I overheard that he was a musician of some kind. That's all. Up until that day even my father had not seen him in close to thirty years.
>
> The trip was brief. We arrived at a small cluster of homes perched on a hillside, some made of concrete, others mere wooden shacks. Our parents inquired where the old man lived. They found him. We children followed.
>
> I recall timidly walking up to a tired, stoic old man as he sat warming his bones in the afternoon sun. I introduced myself and shook his dry, calloused hand, and someone explained to me that he was my grandfather. As I shyly observed him, standing next to him, I could sense a chorus of wisdom in his touch, his demeanor.

A year later, he passed away. As time went on, I began to ask questions. I often overheard family, friends, and musicians speak of Mauro with great ceremony: "Trovador, músico, huapanguero . . ." (troubadour, musician, huapango practitioner), they would say. I suspect that these conversations had already been happening earlier, but after his passing I took a deeper interest in them. What exactly is a *trovador*?, I asked. Who was my grandfather? Why do people recall his memory so? These questions have occupied my mind for some time.

Yearly family trips to Querétaro throughout my childhood and countless conversations with relatives and huapango musicians left me with scores of stories about Mauro, his life and his craft. Those varied accounts partially answered my embryonic queries. In a sense, these pages are in part the reflection of a search kindled long before I arrived at the University of Texas at Austin, where I began my formal research around huapango arribeño as a doctoral student in anthropology, encountering Mauro's memory time and time again. Though I never had a relationship with the man, I came to know him through those who remembered him on both sides of the border. This collective remembering has traveled with me. My engagements with communities and huapangueros alike have been mediated in varying degrees by it. Ethnography, for me, has thus been a dynamic process embedded with an inescapable personal history, a struggle to understand and negotiate my entanglement with this powerful precursory cultural memory. I recall the words of Guadalupe Reyes, a veteran troubadour from Querétaro who had performed across from Mauro numerous times in the all-night musical and poetic marathon encounters referred to as *topadas*:[21]

> Él [Mauro] fue un elemento; no estaba fácil para derrotarlo. . . . Allá en Arroyo Seco fue donde lo acabé de plano que ya no tenía con qué. Luego él empezaba y decía, "Apagaste esta lumbre, pero todavía queda el bracero." ¡Era terco! Hasta Don Antonio García me decía, "¡Oyes, ese Mauro está demonio! ¡No lo acaba uno muy fácil!"
>
> ---
>
> (He [Mauro] was elemental; defeating him was no easy task. . . . It was in Arroyo Seco, where I had outright finished him and he had nothing left. But still he went on, "You've put out the fire, but the coals still remain." He was stubborn! Even Don Antonio García would tell me, "That Mauro is a devil! You can't finish him easily!")

Reyes composed a *poesía* to speak of his most memorable topadas with various troubadours.[22] He mentions Mauro first:

> DE MIS TRIFULCAS VOY A TRATAR
> DE AQUELLOS GÉRMENES DE POESÍA
> CUANDO JUGABA EN LA VERSERÍA
> Y AHORA MARCHITO EN UN DELIRAR

Topé con Mauro y Don Emeterio
con Don Bartolo y Antonio García
el superior en la versería
y mucha fama por su criterio
yo me quedaba pensando en serio
pero con ánimo de triunfar
con Antonio Escalante y Asención Aguilar
Asención Mesa y Isabel Ibarra
conferenciando con mi guitarra:
DE MIS TRIFULCAS VOY A TRATAR[23]

———

I AM GOING TO TELL OF MY BATTLES
OF THOSE POETIC SEEDLINGS
WHEN I PLAYED IN VERBAL DUELING,
AND NOW I WITHER IN DELIRIUM

I clashed with Mauro and Don Emeterio,
with Don Bartolo and Antonio García.
he was the best in the way of verses
and gained much fame for his judgment
I remained serious in pensive thought
with the righteous fortitude to triumph
in front of Antonio Escalante and Asención Aguilar
Asención Mesa and Isabel Ibarra,
conferencing with my guitar:
I AM GOING TO TELL OF MY BATTLES

Even now, though Mauro passed long ago, his still-warm coals continue to glimmer and flare up in moments of movement and encounter—from Guanajuato to Texas and back—much like the oscillations that mark the transnational lives of those featured in this book, lives who shadow my recollections as I write.

I am traveling from Houston to West Texas, my cousin Amador in tow, recently arrived from Querétaro via northern Florida. Curiously, he asks me to keep playing the old tape of vinuetes (dirges) I keep in my car. He stares out the window. "A la vez tristes y alegres. Como que escucho la chilladera de la gente en el velorio." (Both sad and happy. I can hear the people crying at the wake.). He was picked up by ICE and deported a few months later.

A trip to the Austin bus station—Humberto and a friend, both huapangueros, have asked me for a ride. They're headed back to Guanajuato (voluntarily). Humberto has been coming to Texas since 1980: working as a ranch hand, working in construction, doing landscaping. He was thirteen the first time he crossed.

I am taking the long bus ride from Rioverde, San Luis Potosí, to Ciudad Acuña, Coahuila . . . First-time crossers are on board. The bus made a quick stop in the town of Cerritos to pick up passengers. It was late. A few souls climbed on—five men, one woman. One sits next to me, a few years younger than me; Rubén was his name. He tells me he and the others are crossing. They're all friends, headed for Houston. The coyote will be waiting for them on the outskirts of Ciudad Acuña. Hours later, the bus stops, as a deep mauve hangs in the sky like a blanket—night turning into day, Acuña in the distance, frost on the ground. It's January. I hand Rubén my number, and he rushes to meet the others outside. I never hear from him.

"Perhaps we'll run into each other at a huapango arribeño performance," I say to myself months later. Perhaps an improvised greeting in his honor will alert me to his presence. Perhaps. After all, it is Rubén and his companions who make these performative moments possible. Huapango arribeño musicians are *their* musicians, and the poetics that bloom belong to *them.* They too claim the American night for themselves. Huapango arribeño lives loud, carrying memories of people and place, telling of the experiences that bind, the things that one can't control, reaching out to people who are close or far away, or who were gone before one was ready to see them go, and voicing the politics that govern many of these happenings.

### HOW IT ALL PLAYS OUT

This book begins in the 1970s, though it necessarily attends to a cursory history of huapango arribeño before that time—more as a point of reference than as a matter of focused inquiry. Seminal years considered along the way include 1982, which marks the beginning of the Mexican debt crisis; 1986, when the Immigration Reform and Control Act passed; 1994, the year of the ratification of NAFTA, in addition to a groundswell of heightened U.S.-Mexico border militarization and anti-immigrant laws across the United States; 2001, which brought the events of September 11 and the ensuing conflation of the issues of terrorism, border enforcement, and undocumented migration; and 2006,

when massive mobilizations occurred throughout the United States in support of migrant rights.

These moments also mark meaningful chapters in my own life as a child of Mexican migrants: my mother and father crossed into the United States in the early 1970s and I was born years later; they were both granted amnesty through the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and I witnessed the arrival of family from Mexico in the wake of NAFTA; I began my research not long after September 11, and I was deeply embedded in the huapango arribeño community on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border amid the groundswell of protest in 2006 and witnessed firsthand how the subsequent political backlash impacted their daily lives as individual states responded with anti-immigrant laws, deportation campaigns, and migrant-detention efforts on the part of the federal government with programs like the 287(g) program and Secure Communities (which later became the Priority Enforcement Program). Fieldwork and real life have overlapped in ways beyond my control. Creatively, my role as a musician granted me access that was crucial in developing my understanding of this expressive world. Politically, my unrestricted mobility as a U.S.-born citizen brought into relief the brutal reality of the entitlements of citizenship—it was easy for me to cross the physical border, while many of the individuals who populate these pages came close to dying in their attempts.

The people in this book make up part of the Mexican diaspora in the United States—35.3 million people in 2016, according to the Pew Research Center.[24] Some are among the estimated 5.6 million unauthorized Mexican migrants.[25] They come from mission towns and rural communities nestled in the Sierra Gorda municipalities of Atarjea, Doctor Mora, San Luis de la Paz, Santa Catarina, Tierra Blanca, Victoria, and Xichú in Guanajuato and Arroyo Seco, Jalpan de Serra, Landa de Matamoros, and Pinal de Amoles in Querétaro. Others come from the midregion of San Luis Potosí—or the Zona Media—in particular, the municipalities of Cerritos, Ciudad Fernández, Rioverde, San Ciro de Acosta, San Nicolás Tolentino, Villa Juárez, and Armadillo de los Infante, which borders the region.[26] But, for them, home is also in Central and East Texas and along the Gulf coast, from Houston to northern Mississippi. And while these places are the focus of this book, this community extends to California, Florida, Tennessee, and many other places where I did not conduct formal research—recall Doña Rosa and Senovio's mapping.

Over the years I witnessed huapango arribeño music and poetics grow more sharply political, most deeply from their sheer embodied voicing. This and other realizations emerged out of formal ethnographic fieldwork carried out over the course of a decade among huapangueros on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. These individuals have diverse migratory histories and various legal statuses—some are long-term legal residents, others undocumented recent arrivals. During my research I conducted interviews as a way to contextualize the experiences of my interlocutors as both huapangueros and migrants; I attended social gatherings where I observed huapango arribeño performances firsthand in both Mexico and the United States; I engaged in ethnographic performance—that is, as a musician myself, I also participated in music making alongside huapangueros. Finally—from the standpoint of formal analysis—I retrospectively examined the musical and poetic discursive workings generated in these contexts with critical attention to their aesthetic design, thematic structuring and propositional content, and pragmatic use as highly situated and interactive modes of representation that accomplished social ends. Along the way, I time and again found myself at gatherings before and after huapango arribeño performances: before performances, practitioners, families, and friends informally inspired the poetry and music to be played, and afterward they slowly relinquished the nearly euphoric gravity of hours of listening or dancing. In fact, I arrived at this project as a musician in these very settings, first observing and then actively performing alongside musicians.

Much like my experiences, the chapters of this book perform when and where huapango arribeño itself lives and breathes, spreads out, and inscribes social lives. The ensuing chapters establish themes like the *planta* (base quatrain) that guides a set of improvised décimas before venturing into the airy territories of aesthetics and experience (this reference to poetics will make more sense as you read on). Inspired by the aesthetic framework of huapango arribeño, I am guided by this community's own reflexive theorizing regarding the social contexts in which performance is positioned. To speak of el destino, reglamento, and fundamento—and all that these vernacular theories entail—is to recognize the aesthetic sensibilities that not only produce huapango arribeño performance but tether it meaningfully to social lives en route. This book is carried along in this manner, and along the way the following themes emerge at singular and compounded moments: impermanence, reflexivity, movement and mobility, counternarratives, presence and resonance, and the politics of home and belonging.

Chapter 1, "Aurality and the Long American Century," examines the cultural relationship between Mexico and the United States through the landscape of Mexican music and the politics of aurality. Huapango, I argue, is burdened by the semiotics of national authenticity in dual senses: (1) it participates in a U.S. racial markedness structure as a sonic index for a derided Mexican otherness, and (2) it is also the soundtrack to a powerful antimodernist Mexican national sentiment. In order to demonstrate this transnational cultural linkage, the "ranchero chrono-trope" is introduced as a way of understanding (1) the spatiotemporality of essentialist representations of Mexican culture and (2) the specific sterotypes—or tropes—embedded in the space-time construct. The second chapter, "Companions of the Calling," familiarizes the reader with the musico-poetic design and performance of huapango arribeño. I describe how huapango arribeño's dynamic performance produces the shared sentiment of being compañeros del destino among huapangueros. From this standpoint, I argue that back-and-forth movement—at the levels of migration, the dialogic topada performance style particular to huapango arribeño, and the cultural syncretism central to the historical making of Mexican vernacular stringed music in general—is crucial to this music. This discussion challenges conventional narratives that immobilize huapango as calcified tradition by arguing that polyphony and intertextuality—as dialogic components—are at the heart of huapango arribeño.

In "Verses and Flows at the Dawn of Neoliberal Mexico," hip-hop is discussed as a familiar musical model as a way of introducing the relationship between poetics and politics (or verses and flows), with a focus on a brand of post-NAFTA transnational hip-hop among Chicanas/os-Latinas/os. I then pivot and similarly situate the topada performative dynamic in the real-life context of neoliberal structural adjustment; that is, I consider how huapangueros from the 1980s on have reimagined this performance style through new geographies of cultural transmission catalyzed by neoliberal migration flows from Guanajuato to Mexico City and to the United States. To illustrate this, I center on the New Year's Eve topada in Xichú, Guanajuato, with attention to its recent history as a grassroots festival site.

In "Regional Sounds: Mexican Texas and the Semiotics of Citizenship," I then detail how huapango arribeño performance in Texas complicates the symbolic construction of ethnic Mexican musics as regional styles, Tejano and Regional Mexican, respectively. While the marketing around these musics ties them to unique and homegrown regional identities that take precedence over homogenizing national or pop styles, they ultimately coat themselves

with the use value of traditional iconography undergirded by American and Mexican nationalisms, pitting one against the other. Huapango arribeño is caught in the middle, and its expressive domain carves out a transnational space for itself, indeed reimagining the horizons of its own region of origin as listeners and practitioners put huapango to use in constructing their lives beyond central Mexico and in the United States amid heightened and pervasive xenophobia.

"From Potosí to Tennessee: Clandestine Desires and the Poetic Border" applies Michel de Certeau's (1984) concept of the *poetic*—in which everyday inhabitations run against the grain of the official intentions of built space—to the U.S.-Mexico border, particularly how huapango arribeño performance as an aspect of transnational life unfolds according to its own logic and possesses its own rhetoric, poetics, and desires, making ambiguous the official legible order of the border. This sociolinguistic and embodied critique of presumed illegality is made clear by detailing an ethereal vector existing between San Luis Potosí and Tennessee, as improvised verses are sung across the border to a person long gone from Mexico. The lyrical greeting that may never be heard draws a wistful and poetic line of desire between those places, grounding the argument that the impermanence of performative moments can powerfully negate the supposed boundaries and politics of geography.

"Huapango sin Fronteras: Mapping What Matters and Other Paths" begins with a huapango arribeño performance at an immigrants' rights rally in 2006 and ends at a newly established huapango festival. We visit the home of Doña Rosa in between. Along the way I argue that interaffectivity and intimacy between people also connect to place, such that migrants form "mattering maps" that transcend national boundaries. While advocating for an ethnographic approach that seeks to learn how that mapping occurs in the everyday lives of migrants, I offer a critique of texts that neglect to do so and that reify the attitudes reflected in musical discourses concerning the Mexican character—sounds and sentiments succinctly expressed in the famous *canción ranchera* (country song) "Camino de Guanajuato," which I analyze. I suggest that these received narratives are metapragmatic mattering maps that impose their own models of circulation and of the meaning of Mexican culture. Huapango arribeño, I conclude, provides a mapping of its own that traces the paths and flows of daily life across borders, beyond Mexico, and outside, but always in intimate relation to, the nation-state, such that we can

ascribe meanings to *Mexico* and *Mexican music* that comprise a multitude of places and sounds.

With these arguments in mind, the title of this book reflects the ultimate purpose I have in writing. Huapango arribeño is, of course, a type of Mexican music that is largely unexplored through ethnography. When I invoke *Mexican music*, I mean simply a musical style performed by people from Mexico—I do not lean on ontology about what is Mexican or what Mexican expressive culture is. As I discuss the transnational contours of contemporary migrant life, it will also become clear that *Mexican music* refers to the people who are performing rather than the location of performance. I argue that people carry locations with them, here and there, so a town in Mexico can be imaginatively invoked at a performance in Texas, and vice versa. In thinking through this dynamic, the concept of crossing, also part of the title, illustrates how lives are bordered by assumptions, expectations, and tropes as much as by physical boundaries, walls, and policing. My understanding of the border is not ahistorical, however, but rather necessarily informed by a broader perspective on how its meanings and material conditions have shifted continuously over time in accordance with changing political, economic, and social circumstances within the context of the "power struggles at the core of the societies that use it [the border] to define themselves" (Madrid 2011: 2). Presently, the difference making that is operative in the material and semiotic work performed by the U.S.-Mexico border produces a subjugated, so-called illegal immigrant subject. Finally, within this context, I consider migrant aural productions, which exceed predetermined notions of who Mexicans are and where they belong, as the "sounds of crossing"—sounds that cross the boundaries of both cultural and legal rationalities tethered to nation-states.

In the end, these pages are about Mexican migrant artists who go on living and creating, pushing and pulling at the real and metaphorical edges of nation-states. In these pages an opening emerges where everyday people give form to a tactile and fleeting expressive world that erupts in moments of congregation—dramatic and everyday. This is what rests behind the music; this is what is potentially left out of supposedly definitive accounts of the ethnohistorical variety and what likewise escapes studies that gaze on everyday life from a distance. This is what's at stake: attention to "people's own theorizing of their conditions" and the ways these insights can engender a type of "emancipatory reflexivity" that may "challenge present-day regimes

of veridiction, including philosophical universals," ranging from hegemonic truths about ethnic Mexicans and migrants to armchair readings that silence the arts of living from below (Biehl 2013: 575, 583). Huapango arribeño, in this sense, is not the object of study in these pages so much as it provides an analytical lens in to the contemporary experiences of Mexican migrants.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1. For a discussion of how stereotypical group cues concerning Latina/os trigger anxiety among whites, see Brader, Valentino, and Suhay (2008).
2. These legislative efforts include H.B. 56 in Alabama, S.B. 1070 in Arizona, H.B. 87 in Georgia, S.B. 590 in Indiana, S.B. 20 in South Carolina, and H.B. 497 in Utah.
3. Michael Maly, Heather Dalmage, and Nancy Michaels (2013) suggest that nostalgia works as a tool to construct contemporary forms of whiteness in response to perceived place attachment.
4. The huasteca is an ecological region that spans several states, including Hidalgo, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas, and Veracruz. It is home to several indigenous groups, including the Téenek (or Huastec), from whom the region derives its name.
5. Novak and Sakakeeny have elsewhere described this as a "feedback loop of materiality and metaphor" (2015: 1).
6. This recent preoccupation with sound and listening is best represented by Erlmann 2004; Feld and Brenneis 2004; Finnegan 2002; Kruth and Stobart 2000; and Nancy 2007.
7. This book augments other works on music and migration, including Thomas Turino's (1993) work on Peru, David B. Coplan's (1987) discussions of Lesotho migrants, Veit Erlmann (1996), Adelaida Reyes' (1999) work on Southeast Asian forced migration and music, and Tina K. Ramnarine's (2001) focus on Indo-Caribbean music.
8. In this way Ochoa Gautier subsequently also lends historical and cultural specificity to Arjun Appadurai's (1990) related and opaque language of "scapes."
9. The first scholarly conceptualization of the borderlands as a culturally contested geographic area between New Spain and the United States may be attributed to historian Herbert Eugene Bolton (1921), though much work has been done since with respect to the history of the borderlands (De León 1983; Montejano 1987).
10. Zavella draws on queer and feminist theory to further apprehend the cultural logics and "gendered formations of family and sexuality" (2011: 7) that play out

in the struggles of everyday life and exacerbate the inequalities associated with transnationalism.

11. This language is a purposeful nod to Anzaldúa's now-famous description of the border as "*una herida abierta*" (an open wound) (1987: 25).
12. *Doña* and *Don* are common honorifics used in deferential Mexican Spanish; they are part of local speech conventions used to convey respect.
13. The Spanish expression *da' las* (to give 'em)—short for *dar las nalgas* (to give your buttocks; a reference to getting screwed, comparable to the English colloquial expression *to give it up* in reference to a sexual offering)—is invoked as a phonetic equivalent of *Dallas*, the name of the city in Texas, which activates a linguistic pun frame that is typical of a kind of humorous verbal play commonly referred to as *albur.* See Chávez 2015.
14. References to the "migrant experience" throughout this book should not be understood as invoking a generalizable category of experience or a reification that "[erases] all substantive distinctions among historically specific migrations" and, in turn, propagates a certain "immigrant essentialism" (De Genova 2005: 71). Rather, these references attend specifically to the lives embedded within the transnational political economy of Mexican migration in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.
15. My approach dialogues with work in phenomenology that explores the poetic relationship between the body and place (Appadurai 1988; Casey 2000, 1993; Feld and Basso 1996; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Hirsch and O'Hanlon 1995; Rodman 1992; Stewart 1996; Stokes 1994).
16. Inspired by Rouse's (1991) notion of bifocality in reference to how Mexican migrants imagine their lives in Mexico and the United States simultaneously, Zavella (2011) makes the case for what she terms "peripheral vision." She writes, "As a form of transnational subjectivity, peripheral vision reflects the experience of feeling at home in more than one geographic location where identity construction takes place in the context of shifting ethno-racial boundaries and gendered transitions in a global society" (8–9).
17. De Genova's ethnographic work is particularly relevant in its description of the spatial production of what he terms a "Mexican Chicago" as a "reinvention of Latin America" owing to spaces in the city that "conjoin with multiple sites in Mexico" (1998: 89–90).
18. In her work on indigenous Oaxacan migrants, Lynn Stephen (2007) draws on Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller's (2004) concept of the social field to make a similar claim about how the everyday activities and relationships that shape experiences (of work, family life, and encounters with gender and racial prejudice, for instance) are in fact the lived connections through which transborder community emerges.
19. My use of *assemblage* going forward follows in the Marxist tradition of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), who in their work offer a corrective to vulgar (economistic) Marxist theories that previously proposed a deterministic correlation between the mode of production of material life and social relations. Deleuze and Guattari turn

away from this causality and consider instead a dialectical reading with respect to the connection between the social production of everyday life and economic material forces. While it could be argued that this more fluid perspective regarding the relationship between capital's constant search for socially necessary labor and the constant resistance on the part of those whose surplus labor is being appropriated is what Marx always intended, I find the poetics of Deleuze and Guattari's theorizing useful in the present ethnographic context.

20. Huapango huasteco is another form of vernacular music that is closely related to huapango arribeño; it is practiced along Mexico's central Gulf coast in the huasteca regions of Hidalgo, Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, and Veracruz. It will make several appearances throughout this book.
21. In 2006 Reyes received the Mexican government's Premio Nacional de Ciencias y Artes (National Prize for Arts and Sciences) in the category Artes y Tradiciones Populares (Popular Arts and Traditions).
22. A *poesía* is a poetic composition made up of a set of décimas anchored by a base quatrain.
23. Throughout the book I represent base quatrains, or plantas, orthographically with all capitalization to indicate their function as syntagmatic and paradigmatic anchors of corresponding décimas that follow either the *pie forzado* or glossed styles.
24. Renee Stepler and Anna Brown, *Statistical Portrait of Hispanics in the United States*, Pew Research Center, Hispanic Trends, April 19, 2016, http://www.pewhispanic.org/2016/04/19/statistical-portrait-of-hispanics-in-the-united-states/.
25. Jens Manuel Krogstad, Jeffrey S. Passel, and D'vera Cohn, *5 Facts about Illegal Immigration in the U.S.*, Pew Research Center, April 27, 2017, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/.
26. While adjacent to the listed municipalities, Armadillo de los Infante is not officially considered part of the Zona Media.

#### CHAPTER 1: AURALITY AND THE LONG AMERICAN CENTURY

1. Presently, *fandango* and *huapango* refer to dance as a social gathering or event in the central and southern Gulf coast regions of Mexico, particularly where jarocho and huasteco musics are performed. After the struggle for independence from Spain (1810), sones, fandangos, and dance were accepted as legitimate cultural expressions of Mexican heritage—most of the insurgent militia elements that fought in the struggle were from the pueblo and identified with these forms of music and dance. By the mid- to late nineteenth century, Mexican elites would turn a deaf ear to such expressions in favor of European high culture: Italian opera, French salon dance styles, and so on. Still, vernacular forms continued to be practiced in their communities of origin during and after Porfirio Díaz's rule (1876–1911).
2. The second huapango featured in this scene is "La Presumida," which Barcelata claims to have authored. This particular huapango, however, forms part of the vernacular repertoire of huapango huasteco, and thus a more accurate claim would be that the specific arrangement featured in the film is his. Nevertheless, this practice of registering traditional huapangos with music publishers as original