Building appreciation for Indigenous cultures in Mexico via music education

by

Héctor Miguel Vázquez Córdoba

B.Mus., Universidad Veracruzana, 2009

M.Ed., Tecnológico de Monterrey, 2016

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We acknowledge with respect the the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationship with the land continue to this day.

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Abstract

The Mexican educational system has systematically marginalized Indigenous ways of knowing in schools and curriculum, which contributes to discrimination against Indigenous perspectives both within the system and in society at large. The purpose of this study was to provide potential ways to envision the embedding of Indigenous Huasteco music in Mexico's educational system. In this dissertation, I present the findings of a 6-month qualitative study in which I collected stories, experiences, and reflections from Huasteco Music Culture Bearers (HMCBs) regarding the ways in which they learned and currently transmit Huasteco music and the worldviews that are deeply connected to their music making practices. During interviews, HMCBs reflected on the possibilities, challenges, and potential ways of embedding Huasteco music making in Mexico's national curriculum for basic education (grades 1-9). I collected data through Sharing Circles and open-ended interviews with 16 HMCBs and one Huasteco culture promoter. Decolonial and Indigenous theoretical frameworks informed this research. I used Indigenous methodologies and narrative inquiry for this study. Findings and analysis of the information show that HMCBs teach music using pedagogical approaches similar to those used by the HMCB who had originally taught them how to play Huasteco music. Nevertheless, all of the HMCBs acknowledged that in their teaching practices they also include their own pedagogical approaches, which are informed by their own lived journeys with Huasteco music. HMCBs expressed that the worldview of the Huasteco people is intrinsically connected with music making since music serves both secular and ritual purposes throughout their lives. HMCBs expressed that they are in favour of embedding Huasteco music making in the educational system so long as this music making is embedded in cultural values and practices; otherwise, there is a risk that the music will be transmitted without acknowledging the importance of keeping it rooted in the Huasteco worldview. Finally, HMCBs expressed that it is important for school administrators, educators, and music educators to seek Culture Bearers' support in order to foster collaborative initiatives to bring Huasteco music into schools. A contribution of this study is a concept that I coined, *Indigenous Epistemic Resilience*, which acknowledges the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in current times, avoiding the depiction of Indigenous perspectives located solely in a static past.

Keywords: Music education, Huasteco music, Indigenous perspectives, Mexico's national educational system, decolonization, Indigenization

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to God, my parents Miguel an Berta, my wife Janette, my supervisor Dr. Anita Prest, and to the Huasteco people and culture.

Chapter 1: Introduction (*Sintokistli:* The Time When the Corn is Planted)

Mexico's current educational system excludes Indigenous perspectives. This exclusion is manifest in the most recent 2016 national curriculum for basic education (Grades 1 to 12), a product of government-led efforts to reform education. Arguably, the absence of Indigenous perspectives in the educational system impedes Mexican youth from developing an appreciation for and respect toward Indigenous cultures. In this study, I question this absence and consider the potential role of music education in fostering knowledge of local Indigenous cultures. In this study, I discuss the potential implications of embedding music with Indigenous roots into the classroom as a way to engage students actively in both the musics and worldviews of local Indigenous peoples. I researched the way in which Huasteco music has been taught by culture bearers, how culture bearers transmit Huasteca cultures and perspectives through music making, and potential ways for Huasteco culture bearers and educators to collaborate. I am aware that my own lived journey has shaped the way in which I approach this research topic. Because of this, I bring the "I" into the research in different sections of this dissertation in order to provide the reader with a broader perspective of who I am in relation to the research, an important component of studies informed by Indigenous paradigms (Wilson, 2008). I begin the following section with an initial brief description of who I am, particularly discussing my connection with music.

Positionality

> The only place from which any of us can write or speak with some degree of certainty is from the position of who we are in relation to what we know. (Styres, 2017, p. 7)

One of my earliest memories is being with my grandmother. I was sitting in a little chair helping her to remove the kernels from the corn cob—I was perhaps three or four years old. My grandmother took two corn cobs and rubbed one against the other so that the kernels started to come off. We had a big bag with dozens of dried corn cobs, and we went through the whole bag. She took some of the kernels and placed them in a big cooking pot to boil them. The following day, she took the pot to a place where there was a big grinder, and then returned with the pot filled with fresh corn dough.

My mother arrived home, and I told her that my grandmother had given me some fresh-made tortillas. I remember that I did not like to eat a lot of food when I was a child, but I definitely loved to eat fresh-made tortillas with some salt (and I still do). Part of what I enjoyed so much about fresh tortillas (apart from finding them delicious) is that I felt that I helped in the process of their creation. In some way, I felt that I earned those tortillas because I had helped my grandmother to harvest the corn kernels. We used to harvest the corn kernels once or twice a week.

The Naolinco area (which is outside of the Huasteca region) is surrounded by corn fields. Some towns in proximity to Naolinco have names that come from the Nahuatl language (an Indigenous language of the area) and are connected to corn, names such as Jilotepec, “hill of corncobs,” or Miahuatlán, “place of the corn ears.” Corn has been an important part of our Mexican diet for time immemorial, especially in the southern part of Mexico. Corn is present at the most important celebrations, such as weddings, birthdays, and special celebrations (e.g., Day of the Dead). Through conversation with study participants and through reading, I came to know that corn is a central part of the Huasteco worldview. I can understand that since, in my region,

corn is very important, too. While reflecting on how I might embed the importance of corn in my research I came to the realization that the very process of research resembles the five stages of the ritual of *Chikomexochitl* [1](seven flowers or corn-child). In research, as well as in growing corn, the process begins with planting if one wants to have a harvest. I name the seven chapters of my dissertation after the five stages of the ritual of Chikomexochitl. At every stage of this research journey, I tried to keep in mind the importance of taking care of my "corn plantation" (my dissertation) every step of the way if I wanted to produce "good corn." It definitely takes time, and one must also navigate challenges similar to those that farmers face when there is lack of rain or too much sun. But in the end, I committed to this process the best that I could in order to honour the work with a community, to honour the "seeds" that participants had given into my care. I am looking forward to the day when I can sit in a chair to "harvest" (the same as I did when I was a child) my research. Perhaps, it will mean that I have learned something in the process and that I am ready to start over again on a new research project. Research, just like growing corn, is cyclical; one needs to continue planting if one wants to continue harvesting.

In this section, I present my own life journey to provide the reader with a starting point to understand my positionality in relation to my doctoral research. According to Fast and Kovach (2019), "In the context of research, sharing our story offers the possibility of integrity, accountability as it were, in that, as researchers, we are putting forth as fully as possible our biases, assumptions, and theoretical proclivities" (p. 25). I am Mexican, and I was born and raised in Naolinco, Veracruz, Mexico. Naolinco is a municipality with a population of approximately 10,000 people, and it is located one hour by car from Xalapa (the capital of my state). I am an only child, and my parents are the first people in their families to complete higher

[1] The word in Nahuatl is constructed from *Chikome* "seven" and *Xochitl* "flower" (Hernández, 2010).

education. Both of my parents are retired teachers. As far as I know (based on my parents' information), I have Afro-Caribbean, Spanish, and Indigenous ancestry; however, I have not found documented evidence of my ancestry. Since the age of 6, I have been involved in music making. I enrolled in a music education program for children who had some level of "talent" because I was selected by a professor at the University of Veracruz who completed a prescribed five-minute test of my "abilities." His selecting me provided me access to a very low-cost program sponsored by the University of Veracruz. Through this music program in the CIMI (*Centro de Iniciación Musical Infantil* or Music Learning Centre for Children), I was trained technically (in terms of instrumental skills), and shaped mentally, and even spiritually in the Western classical music tradition. I learned everything in terms of music making in the Western classical music tradition from my teachers and peers.

I had heard about the University of Veracruz music education program for children from my godparents. I remember hearing their son playing the violin only once (perhaps I was three years old at that time), but as a result of that experience, I firmly decided that I wished to learn how to play the violin. My parents thought that, with time, I would give up this desire, but I never did. I was the first musician in my family, and consequently, also the first person to access professional music training in my family. There is no record of anyone in my living family or any ancestors playing a musical instrument in either academic or non-academic environments. I finished my education in the CIMI when I was 12 years old. This school was located in Xalapa. After graduation, I attempted and passed the entrance exam for the Bachelor of Music program at the University of Veracruz in Xalapa in order to begin my music training to qualify as a professional violinist.

At that time, this program followed the "old" model, which consisted of an inflexible sequence of 74 courses divided into 20 semesters over 10 years. In contrast to the "new" model that was developed subsequently, under the "old" model it was not possible to move forward in the program independently. The only opportunity to skip some courses was to take an entrance exam to skip six years and 48 courses; however, that was something that few people were able to do because it required secondary school completion and evidence of advanced theory knowledge and a high level of instrument performance proficiency. Approximately eight places were available every year for musicians who had reached that degree of competence, and musicians of all instruments competed for these few spots. I completed the University of Veracruz's 10-year Bachelor of Music program following the "old" model's rigid sequence. Currently, the music performance degree is in line with many other programs at the university (e.g., engineering, architecture, literature, etc.). Students are permitted to compress the timeline of the program by taking more courses than usual in any given semester in order to finish their degree earlier if they choose to do so.

From the very beginning of my music training, I was taught that Western classical music was the most refined and superior form of music expression. Most of our teachers were Europeans, Mexicans who had studied in Europe, or Mexicans who had studied in Mexico with European teachers. Teachers wishing to convey that this genre of music making was desirable, sometimes contrasted the genre and its expression with musical styles that, in their view, were not as desirable. In order to "motivate" us, our teachers made comments such as "If you don't practice, you will be just a *mariachi*. I am not here to teach mariachis," and other similar comparative judgements. Of course, we did not wish to be labeled as students who were not musical enough to play and be associated with the "right" form of music making; hence, my

peers and I would practice with even more vigor in order to avoid such critique. In several ways, the conservatory tradition and its cultural discourse over time actually shaped our own ideas and beliefs. With this rigid training and the hidden curriculum that accompanied it, we assumed that musicians who did not work hard belonged to a particular group of people who were not as skilled as Western classical musicians and who engaged in less relevant, less sophisticated forms of musics.

By the end of my music degree, I was no longer passionate about playing violin. I could not, in good conscience, continue to strive to the best of my ability in order to play the best that I could in order to fulfill other people's expectations that were not my own. I obtained a position in a professional orchestra just as I was finishing my degree. Notwithstanding this accomplishment, I was still not passionate about playing. I used to attend rehearsals, return home and leave my violin in the trunk of the car until the next day when I returned to work.

I have always been interested in teaching, so I decided to focus my energy on teaching violin, and also enrolled in a master's program in education. I definitely found a passion for teaching young musicians. One of my goals was not to repeat some of the same pedagogical approaches that my teachers used with me to persuade me to practice more. I wanted my students to find a balance between the achievement of good artistic outcomes and the enjoyment of playing the violin. To the best of my ability, I managed to fulfill that goal. I taught violin in my private studio for approximately 11 years to a total of 30 students. I taught students in both Naolinco and Xalapa.

Over the years, particularly since I entered my doctoral program, I have started to question my assumptions regarding the arbitrary value prescribed to particular ways of music making over others, and how I was also part of fostering and reproducing a rhetoric that seeks to

position classical music as a superior genre and approach to music making. Privileging classical music over other musics is privileging one worldview over other worldviews. It became clearer to me that music is just one example in society where a field of study (in this case music making) or object is used as a marker to either favour or discriminate people, signifying what is considered worthy or unworthy. As I began to reflect on my own life journey, my research topic slowly crystallized.

Reasons for centring Indigenous perspectives in this study

Currently, there is an international movement to recognize and promote the importance of Indigenous peoples and their cultures (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2008). Indigenous people in the Americas have suffered systemic oppression since colonization in 1492 (Dussel, 2000). The experience of colonization continues to shape the way in which Indigenous groups are currently treated in Mexico. Even though a large percentage of Mexicans have Indigenous ancestry (as stated in the previous section), this population does not embrace the practices and worldviews associated with Indigenous groups because those practices and worldviews are linked socially to an "inferior" culture (Paz, 1959; Tomasini, 1997). Although music is an inherent part of people's identities and cultures (MacDonald et al., 2002) and music making can be crucial to foster Indigenous identity and an appreciation for Indigenous cultures, many contemporary Indigenous people in Mexico refuse to learn their own traditions because they fear discrimination as a result of engaging in those cultural practices. According to Sturman (2016), Indigenous cultures have been "idealized, romanticized, and appropriated for artistic and political use; in mainstream practical context indigenous culture is stigmatized as impoverished, backward, and isolated" (p. 54). These uses for artistic and political gain do not

help to improve living conditions for groups or foster true respect for marginalized cultures; instead, Indigenous worldviews and traditions are tokenized to serve purposes that are not aligned with the needs and desires of Indigenous groups (Montgomery, 2019).

Mexico's federal government does not see the need to promote Indigenous knowledge rooted in local cultures as a priority. Mexican federal government leaders, through the Public Education Secretariat, has not turned their attention to the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in Mexico's educational system. A clear example of this deficiency is the new educational reform (SEP, 2016) that favours the creation of orchestras and choirs over local ways of music making. With the election of a new president of Mexico in 2018, an even newer education reform was announced (SEP, 2019). In this new reform titled "*Nueva Escuela Mexicana*" (New Mexican school), orchestras continue to be prioritized in the music curriculum. For example, in July 2019, Mexico's federal government announced the adoption of an orchestral model, a music program inspired by El Sistema, as one of the pillars of a new educational model that will soon be made public (SEP, 2019). The federal government portrays the adoption of an orchestra model in schools as a major step towards cultural democratization and a key factor in improving students' lives: This project will cultivate love for country, respect for rights, freedom, peace, and culture in children and youth. Listening and playing an instrument is seen as a valuable tool for children and youth to develop their intellectual and emotional abilities because playing in an orchestra or music group fosters better self-esteem, and love of beauty and discipline.

The arguments and rationale provided by Mexico's federal government are no different from other El Sistema-inspired projects—music for social change (Baker, 2014; Baker & Frega, 2018; Frega & Limongi, 2019; Rosabal-Coto, 2016a) (see p. 60 for more detail). Throughout the process of planning the implementation of orchestras in schools throughout the country, no

mention has been made of introducing forms of music making rooted in local traditions in collaboration with their music culture bearers.

It is important that students have the chance to actively engage with musics that are part of their local contexts, because these musics represent the worldviews of their ancestral cultures (Prest & Goble, 2018; Prest et al., 2021). Culture bearers' involvement in students' engagement with these musics is critically important to ensure that music rooted in Indigenous traditions is embedded in schools appropriately. Music making rooted in Indigenous traditions must be taught according to the pedagogies by which these musics have been transmitted and include the cultural background from which they originated (Prest & Goble, 2018). Without a responsible way of embedding local musics, music educators might simply incorporate repertoire with superfluous connections to Indigenous traditions, thus fostering tokenism of local cultures (Hess, 2015).

In the context of globalization, current Mexican government officials seek to implement policies that will enable the country to "progress." Such a perspective signifies that ancient knowledge rooted in local cultures is not a priority for these officials since, according to them, those ways of knowing represent the "past," which is not considered useful in a globalized world. It is true that Mexico's reality necessitates that the country become more competitive in different areas (e.g., technology, energy, science); nevertheless, such goals do not require the elimination of Indigenous perspectives in the public sphere. Indigenous perspectives may actually offer ways forward to solve global problems (Atleo, 2011; Battiste & Henderson, 2000). Moreover, the Mexican government currently does not provide adequate financial support for Indigenous students' education with regards to addressing their cultural perspectives in the curriculum and

providing adequate training for teachers to teach students in local languages (Aguilar, 2013; Sturman, 2016).

Refusal to embed local culture in the educational system is an expression of undermining the dignity and personhood of millions of people who identify as Indigenous. Thus, it is necessary to provide a critical perspective that might allow an understanding of the barriers that prevent Indigenous perspectives from being considered an important part of the Mexican educational system.

Research Questions

Given that Indigenous perspectives are an integral component of Mexican culture, yet lacking a central role in education for Mexican youth, I developed an intrinsic motivation to understand the role of music with Indigenous roots and the pedagogies by which they were transmitted in relaying and accessing the worldviews that inspired their creation. I wished to investigate the way in which music with Indigenous roots is taught, the cultural principles that are transmitted through music making, and the feasibility of embedding music with Indigenous roots in Mexico's national educational system. Therefore, I asked the following research questions:

1. What pedagogical tools do Huasteco culture bearers use when teaching Huasteco music?
2. What Huasteco cultural principles are conveyed through music making and music pedagogy?
3. In what relational, respectful, and reciprocal ways might music making with Indigenous roots be embedded in Mexico's educational system?

Rationale for the Inquiry

In 2006, I learned about El Sistema, an internationally acclaimed music program established in Venezuela that served as a model for fostering social change through music making. This model was eventually exported to many other countries. El Sistema's mandate is to foster social change through music making. One of the precepts of El Sistema is that children from any social stratum have access to Western classical music training. As a Western classical musician, I thought it was a perfect idea to provide this form of music to foster social change and consequently to change children's lives in a positive way. The first time that I watched a documentary about El Sistema, I was shocked by the superior musical performance outcomes and the social change message behind the program. From that moment, I sought to create in Mexico a music pedagogical program based on the premises of El Sistema.

The idea of providing people with the opportunity to access Western classical music resonated with me because in 2013 I started a movement in my town, resulting in the creation of a non-profit organization that founded the *Festival Internacional de Música Naolinco* [Naolinco International Music Festival]. Since 2016, the festival has annually hosted a series of free concerts during which over 200 musicians from different parts of Mexico and other countries perform. In the four iterations to date, we have welcomed musicians from over 16 countries and have had a total of over 16,000 spectators attending the concerts. People in Naolinco are actively involved in supporting the project in different ways to make this possible every year. We also received some financial support from organizations abroad to help with purchasing flights for invited artists. Before pursuing doctoral studies at the University of Victoria, I thought that providing students access to performing Western classical music was the correct (and only) way

to conceive of music education in schools. This idea shifted immediately before I arrived in Victoria to begin my studies.

When I had initially applied to the PhD in Educational Studies Program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Victoria, I proposed to use the idea of El Sistema and its application to the Mexican context as the cornerstone of my dissertation. However, some months before I arrived in Victoria but following my acceptance into the Ph.D. program, I had an experience that, for the first time, caused me to question my proposed research agenda. In May 2016, I attended a pre-concert talk given by a French horn player who was to perform as the soloist with a symphony orchestra in the state of Oaxaca. Oaxaca, a state located in the south of Mexico, is well known for its extraordinary community music band tradition, which can be traced from the middle of the 19th century. Most community band members are Indigenous.

During the pre-concert talk, the French horn player took questions from the audience. An older man wearing Indigenous-style clothing asked him something specific regarding the role of the French horn in the brass section of the orchestra. The old man explained that he played in a community band in his home town, and that in his band, there was an instrument that he inferred had the same role that the French horn has in the orchestra. Immediately, a lady in the audience laughed in a derisive way in response to what he had said. Her actions denoted that she probably assumed that this man was saying nonsense. In response to her reaction, the French horn player decided to take the microphone and (to her surprise) confirmed as accurate what the older man had said. When the French horn player finished his explanation, everyone in the room applauded, and the lady who had laughed left the room.

This experience profoundly affected me because, in some way, it reminded me of the assumptions that music teachers and students made during my schooling about other forms of music making. And most importantly, I realized that we as a society nurture assumptions, hierarchies, and judgements regarding various musics and the peoples who have created those musics. Later in my doctoral studies, I learned that this idea aligned with Bourdieu's (1984) assertion that one's choice of music is often a reflection of one's social class. Based on people's physical features, language, and clothes, we as a society assume that some people do not have something relevant to share. Although we could learn much from exploring the ways in which Indigenous groups approach music making and music learning—and more broadly about our Indigenous heritage and cultures—Mexicans, as a collective, refuse to recognize the musical knowledge that Indigenous peoples and communities have simply because they are Indigenous. Many Mexicans do not recognize that in refusing this knowledge, they are denying part of themselves because a large number of Mexicans are either Indigenous or have some Indigenous ancestry. This ancestry is very much in evidence in our physical features; nevertheless, we as a society continue to ignore that heritage because we desire to "escape" the discrimination that has been placed on 'them' for many centuries. The pre-concert experience resulted in an ongoing reflection of my personal journey and if, consciously or unconsciously, I was complicit in my society's ongoing undermining of Indigenous perspectives.

During my first year in the PhD program, I spent a significant amount of time reflecting about my motivations to use El Sistema as a model to emulate in my research. Perhaps the researcher who has challenged the validity of El Sistema's rhetoric of 'social action through music' more than any other scholar is Dr. Geoff Baker (2014), who critiques this project in his book *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's youth*. According to the El Sistema vision, the

project aims to provide children and youth an opportunity for growth in their personal, professional, social, spiritual, and intellectual realms, so that they can be rescued from an empty, disoriented, and diverted youth (Fundación Musical Simón Bolivar, n.d.). Baker's investigation enabled me to ask myself if the El Sistema approach perpetuates the idea of a 'superior' culture, as represented by the Western classical music tradition. I concluded that Western classical music itself was not the problem, as music or musics are simply particular sequences of sounds or rhythms. Rather, the problem lay in the ways in which some individuals and societies use music or musics as a tool for inclusion/exclusion. For example, portraying Western classical musical principles as the "best" or "correct" way to engage with music undermines other ways of approaching music making. Consequently, policy makers who hold such a perspective might call for the implementation of music curriculum based solely on Western-European principles, as, in their view, this is the correct method of providing students with "culture." Likewise, from such a perspective, music making rooted in Indigenous cultures is not an option to develop a student's music skills because those musics lack cosmopolitan capital.[2]

Another author who also influenced the shift in my thinking is Costa Rican scholar Dr. Guillermo Rosabal-Coto, who analyses music education from a postcolonial perspective. His approach has been significant for me since his analysis occurs within the context of a Spanish-speaking Central American country, which is important due to the similarities and realities that have shaped our two countries. His work allowed me to keep myself rooted in the social and political reality of a geographical area that is attempting to overcome centuries of institutional lack of validation towards forms of knowledge that do not align with 'ideal' Western-European standards.

[2] Capital linked to acquiring and displaying an aesthetic knowledge of foreign others and cultures (Igarashi & Saito, 2014; Weenink, 2008).

I had the good fortune of meeting and conversing with both Drs. Geoff Baker and Guillermo Rosabal-Coto in person at different music education conferences. It was illuminating for me to talk to them in person about their respective scholarship. During these conversations, I had the opportunity to share my research ideas with them and obtain valuable insights and feedback from both of them.

The guidance and supervision of Dr. Anita Prest has also shaped my personal research. Additionally, having the opportunity to collaborate as a research assistant with her on several projects provided invaluable learning. Through my work on her research projects, I have witnessed examples of music teachers, cultural workers, and other educators who are actively engaged in fostering Indigenous perspectives through music making in public schools in British Columbia, Canada.

The cultural context of the research

The origins of the Huasteco people date from approximately 3500 years ago when this group separated from the Maya-Quiché group (Bonilla & Gómez, 2013). The Huasteco is a region that covers parts of 6 different states (Veracruz, Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, Hidalgo, Puebla, Querétaro y Guanajuato) in what is now known as Mexico (Bernal, 2008; Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; Camacho, 2011; Güemes, 2016; Sánchez, 2002).

Figure 1

Huasteco Region

The Huasteco people have developed a specific cultural identity over time and music has played an important part of Huasteco daily life and worldview. The most well-known and representative expression of Huasteco music is *son Huasteco*[3]. The word *son*[4] comes from the Latin word *sonus*, which describes the sound that is perceived by the ear and that is used to create music (Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; García, 2016; Ivanov, 2014; Stanford, 1972). *Son* Huasteco is a form of music known as fusion, incorporating and influenced by Indigenous, Spanish, and African musics. Its instrumentation consists of the huapanguera (similar to a

[3] Some people use the term Huapango to refer to *son* Huasteco. People use the terms interchangeably (García, 2016; Güemes, 2016; Hernández, 2010; Sánchez, 2002). The word Huapango is comes from the Nahuatl language which means "'surface covered with wooden planks,' deriving from [wapa-wa], which may mean "plank" and the suffix [-co], a locative. The name, then, derives from the custom of dancing the local son on a *tarima*. (Stanford, 1972, p. 83).

[4] The word son, when italicized, will refer to the Huasteco style of music.

baroque guitar), the jarana (a little guitar with five strings), and the violin (Bernal, 2008; Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; Camacho, 2011; García, 2016).

My initial motivation for researching Huasteco music making was that this is one of the most well-known styles in the state of Veracruz, in which I was born and raised. I have always liked this style. A second reason is that *son Huasteco* uses violin, which I know how to play. Huasteco musicians are well known for playing the violin with great agility, even if they are labelled as playing "incorrectly" (mainly by Western classical musicians) because they do not employ what Western classical violinists deem to be correct technique. From my perspective as a musician, it is intriguing to consider how a pedagogical approach based on the Huasteco tradition might be developed. These two considerations (Huasteco music making being one of the most well-known styles in the state of Veracruz and the use of the violin in this music) motivated me to choose Huasteco music making for my research. As I worked on my course assignments, conversed with Dr. Anita Prest, and collaborated with her on a variety of research projects, I came to understand that there were deeper purposes for my study. Perhaps, the most important realization while working with Dr. Anita Prest in the context of BC was the need to reflect Indigenous perspectives in a meaningful way in the curriculum, and the potential for music making to be an important means to embrace Indigenous perspectives in schools. But most importantly, the role of this music making was not for aesthetic purposes (for music's sake), but to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in educational settings.

From the moment I decided to place *Huasteco* music making at the core of my study, I began to read about Huasteco culture and Huasteco music making. For the last four years, I have been familiarizing myself with Huasteco music making through listening, learning how to play

this music on the jarana and violin, and learning about the context in which this music is produced.

The importance of embracing Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum becomes more evident when one considers that according to the *Consejo Nacional de Población* (National Population Council), 26 million people in Mexico self-identify as Indigenous (21.5% of the total of the population in Mexico), and an additional 2 million people self-identify as partly Indigenous (1.6% of the total of the population in Mexico) (CONAPO, 2015). At the same time, 7.9 million people who are three years old and older (6.5 % of the total of the population in Mexico) stated that they speak one of the 364 variations of 68 Indigenous languages that are currently spoken in Mexico. Figure 2 illustrates the geographical location of the different Indigenous peoples in Mexico according to their languages.

Figure 2

Sesenta y Ocho Voces (Sixty-Eight Voices). Indigenous Languages in Mexico. Mexican Secretariat of International Affairs (n.d.)

Keeping in mind the relevance and importance of embedding Indigenous perspectives in the educational system, I began to immerse myself more deeply in the music making and cultural

practices of the Huasteco culture. Through the process of collecting data for this study, I came to understand more comprehensively the significance of music making for Huasteco people. This journey was a chance to continue my own decolonizing path, learning the significance of music making practices outside of the Western-European paradigm, also meeting and developing relationships with incredible people. Even before I entered into the fieldwork phase of my research, I knew that in future, I wished to foster collaborations with culture bearers to establish musical projects in the educational system. After completing my fieldwork in Mexico, I feel even more responsibility to be accountable to the people who participated in this study and who guided me during my data collection time.

Gaps in Research

During the recompilation of materials for the literature review of this study, I could not find any research conducted in the context of Latin America that addresses the potential implications or outcomes of embedding Indigenous musics or music with Indigenous roots in the educational system. Currently, there is literature that addresses the aforementioned topics globally, but this literature is situated mainly in the settler-colonial contexts of United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The gap in research conducted in the context of Latin America limits the understanding of the topic of Indigenous musics or music with Indigenous roots in the educational system. The lack of previous research carried out in similar contexts to the one in this study was one of my challenges when designing this study.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study enabled me to create a framework for the embedding of Indigenous ways of knowing in the educational system through music making. This framework contributes to a world-wide music education research effort to embed Indigenous content, pedagogy, and worldview in school music activities. Through collaborating with Huasteco culture bearers and ensuring that their voices frame the study, it is possible to present the importance of music making as fundamental to the conveying of knowledge linked to Indigenous cultures from the perspectives of those who hold the knowledge. It is necessary to conduct research that addresses Indigenous perspectives in music education specifically in the context of Mexico, and generally, in Latin America, in order to contribute to the expanding body of knowledge and experiences rooted in this geographical area that has its own social, economic, and political particularities.

Outline of the Study

In chapter 2 (theoretical framework), I discuss the specific Indigenous paradigm that informs this research. My discussion is based on existing literature that addresses this topic and I bridge the perspectives of different authors with my own understanding of a paradigm that is informed by Huasteco culture. In chapter 3 (literature review), I outline literature relevant to core components of this research: Indigenous perspectives in curricula in five different countries, decolonization, music education from a decolonial perspective, and an overview of the Huasteco region and its music making. In chapter 4 (methodology), I present the methodologies that guided my research, the methods of data collection I used, general characteristics of the participants and locations where research took place, how I obtained data, and how I analyzed the data. In chapter 5 (findings), I begin by describing the lengthy journey I undertook in order to

meet and become acquainted with the research participants, and offer a broader view of the contexts and cultural events where my research took place. For this chapter, participants' narratives are central to understanding how music making has been conveyed through generations and the ways in which music making is connected to cultural practices, worldview, community work, and identity. Participants' narratives also address potential ways to embed Huasteco music and the challenges that might be faced when embedding Huasteco music in Mexico's educational system. In chapter 6 (discussion), I interpret and analyze participants' narratives in order to bridge both my theoretical framework and the literature review to the different categories that emerged in the findings section. In chapter 7 (implications), I conclude offering some final conclusions plus recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework (*Mitlakualtilistli* Part 1*:* The Moment When the Plant is Growing but the Spike has not Yet Emerged)

In this chapter, I will discuss the theoretical paradigms that inform my research. I will discuss the Chikomexochitl ritual as an Indigenous research conceptual framework rooted in Huasteco culture and worldview. Keeping Chikomexochitl in mind as a research conceptual framework provides acknowledgment of the significance of approaching knowledge through a cyclical process—in this case, one that uses the life cycle of corn as a metaphor.

Indigenous Research Paradigm

A research paradigm has four main components: ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). According to Kovach (2014), "a framework, or paradigm, includes broad, abstract assumptions and actions related to research. Examples of qualitative frameworks include positivism, transformative, constructivism, and, increasingly, the recognition of an Indigenous/Indigenist paradigm" (p. 96). She also argues that an Indigenous research paradigm must be framed according to the particular features of a given Indigenous group since each has unique ways of knowing and being in the world. For Wilson (2008), a strong Indigenous research paradigm is one that celebrates the uniqueness, history, and worldviews of Indigenous cultures. A paradigm that leads to a better understanding of Indigenous perspectives needs to be one that centres acknowledgement of the past, the present, and the future of Indigenous peoples, while "neither demonizing nor romanticizing the past" (p. 19). An Indigenous paradigm is based on the notion that knowledge is shared via both interpersonal human relationships and relationships with all creation (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Wilson, 2008); therefore,

knowledge cannot be owned or discovered, but revealed through the relationships that one has with it. Wilson (2008) posits:

> Relationality sums up the whole Indigenous research paradigm to me. Just as the components of the paradigm are related, the components themselves all have to do with relationships. The ontology and epistemology are based upon a process of relationships that form a mutual reality. The axiology and methodology are based on maintaining accountability to these relationships. (p. 70)

I turned to authors who have drawn on Indigenous perspectives in research in various international locations and to readings that illustrate specific Huasteco worldviews in order to create a framework guided by the paths that researchers followed in their own contexts while embracing the particularities of the Huasteco worldview perspectives. Creating such a framework is vital as currently there is no literature that describes how Huasteco worldviews might inform Indigenous research approaches. The readings resonated with the experiences and interactions that I lived, particularly while attending events and interacting with people during my field work in Mexico.

I start by describing ontology, epistemology, and axiology. These concepts are analyzed from the perspective of Indigenous scholars in the context of Africa, North America, and Oceania who have engaged in the work of framing Indigenous perspectives in academia. It is my intention to link these concepts to practical situations in the Huasteco worldview in order to contextualize how they are present in the daily lives and relationships among people. While within the academic world, there has been greater acceptance of the work of scholars who draw on specific Indigenous perspectives in their research, there are particularities in these perspectives that cannot be transferred to the Huasteco context. In my opinion, to learn,

acknowledge, and embrace the cultural particularities that make an Indigenous group unique is at the "heart" of Indigenous methodologies; at the core of research, it is necessary to attend to and reflect the particularities of a specific group to avoid generalizations and simplifications.

Ontology

From Indigenous perspectives, reality is relational and holistic (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach 2010; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). Wilson (2008) posits that an Indigenous ontology acknowledges multiple realities. According to him:

> rather than the truth being something that is 'out there' or external, reality is in the relationships that one has with the truth. Thus, an object or thing is not as important as one's relationship to it. This idea could be further expanded to say that reality *is* relationships or set of relationships. Thus, there is no one definite reality but rather different set of relationships that make up an Indigenous ontology. (p. 73)

Wilson uses the example of a chair: a chair as an object can have different uses depending on the circumstance. He points out that a chair can be used for sitting on or used as a door stop. According to him, in Cree language, the literal translation of a chair is "the thing that you sit on." Wilson clearly exemplifies that the importance does not rely on the object itself, but rather, on the interaction that one has with the object. This applies not just to objects, but everything around us, everything in the cosmos. According to him, "all knowledge is cultural and based in a relational context" (p. 95).

In the context of Huasteco worldview, a clear example of this interaction is the relationship that people have with corn. Corn is sacred to people in the Huasteco region (Alegre, 2001; Camacho, 2008, 2011; Hooft, 2008; Nava, 2009; Pérez, 2016). Corn is not just a grain; it

is something divine represented by Chikomexochitl. People engage in rituals to show gratitude to Chikomexochitl, and music is an important component in the ceremony. Corn is inevitably connected to the land on which it grows. Corn goes beyond a product produced for commerce—it is connected to the worldview of Huasteco people. Corn needs a particular land upon which to grow; it is not a plant (as many other plants) that can grow anywhere. Therefore, it keeps people rooted not just to a land that is seen as a piece of property, transferable for the same number of square meters in a different location, but rather, to a land that is connected to all the elements that are part of a given natural environment.

Tuck and McKenzie (2015) contrast the ontological perspectives of "place" and "land." They argue "we might imagine that ontology of place-based paradigms is something like 'I am, therefore place is,' in contrast, the ontology of land-based [paradigm] might be summarized as 'Land is, therefore we are.'" (pp. 55–56). From this perspective, Styres's (2017) concept of Land (with capital L) is crucial to understanding the relationship that Indigenous peoples have had historically with Land. For her, Land, *lethi´nihsténha Ohwentsia´kékha* (Kanien'kehá꞉ka), which means "our Mother Earth," is a philosophical concept that entails "all the responsibilities we have in our relationships to her and to each other, and they extend to all our relations (animate/inanimate)" (p. 38). Styres (2019) makes an important distinction between land (physical space) and Land as a philosophical construct, which "refers not only to place as a physical geographic space but also to the underlying conceptual principles, philosophies, and ontologies of that space" (p. 27). From Indigenous perspectives, reality is linked to worldview, with the historical relationships that people have had with Land, and how those relationships are connected to stories of creation, instead of stories of colonization (which are mainly expressed in settler narratives) (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015).

From the Huasteco people's perspective, the relationship between corn and the land on which it grows is sacred, since they understand that they are alive because of corn, they were born from corn, and they are corn (Alegre, 2001; Camacho, 2011). This perspective is completely different from the ways in which other cultures might see corn. For example, from a Western perspective, people are not created from corn; therefore, worshipping corn would be considered 'exotic' (or even sacrilegious). However, corn has had a central role in the Huasteco worldview for millennia; hence, this perspective has informed Huasteco people's relationships among themselves and also with nature. A study that aims to embed an Indigenous paradigm must reflect the particular worldview of the culture, to understand what reality is and has been for them; otherwise, there is a risk of conducting research *on* Indigenous peoples, imposing Western perspectives to study them, rather than doing research *with* them, which acknowledges and respects their own ancestral ways of relating with the world (Smith, 2012).

Epistemology

Epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge in relation to the place and social relations where knowledge is produced (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2010; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Styres, 2017; Wilson, 2008). Wilson (2008) posits that

> Epistemology is tied into ontology, in that what I believe to be 'real' is going to impact the way that I think about 'reality.' Choices made about what is 'real' will depend upon how your thinking works and how you know the world around you. Epistemology is thus asking, 'How do I know what is real?'" (p. 33)

From an Indigenous paradigm, epistemology is holistic, cyclic, relational, emotional, mental, reciprocal, spiritual, ceremonial, and action-oriented (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009;

Styres, 2017; Wilson, 2008). In order to answer the question "How do I know what is real?" according to a particular Indigenous group, it is necessary to go back and reflect on the ontology rooted in the Indigenous worldview that one aims to understand. It is crucial that researchers are clear about their own positionality (personal, theoretical, methodological, etc.) in order to be as transparent as possible about how knowledge is to be studied. If a person believes that there is one single truth that can be measured, replicated, and analyzed from a positivist perspective, it will be difficult for the same person to come to understand that one can approach knowledge via ceremony, incorporating aspects such as emotions and spirituality, which cannot be measured or understood by a purely rational approach. Kovach (2009) posits that "[i]n choosing Indigenous epistemologies, respect must be paid to their holistic, relational nature" (p. 58). She argues that knowledge rooted in Indigenous epistemologies is not fully accepted in Western research; therefore, those approaches to knowledge acquired via ceremony or through oral tradition are labeled as peripheral, anthropological, and exotic.

Oral tradition has been the primary means of revealing reality and sharing knowledge among Indigenous peoples for millennia. Stories have shaped the ways in which people have come to understand their existence; therefore, it has been through these means that Indigenous peoples have passed on knowledge from generation to generation (Kovach, 2009; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). Similarly, language plays an important role in understanding the worldview of a particular social group. Through language and stories, people have transmitted creation stories and traditions that reflect ways of knowing. Stories are key to Indigenous peoples because stories root people to Land (Styres, 2017; Kovach, 2009; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). According to Kovach (2009), name-place stories matter because they "are

repositories of science, they tell of relationship, they reveal history, and they hold our identity" (p. 61).

In the context of the Huasteco culture, language and stories are alive and vibrant. A significant number of people speak the local Indigenous languages (e.g., Tenék, Náhuatl, Huasteco). Stories have been one of the main vehicles of conveyed ancient knowledge through generations. People have learned since ancestral times that ceremony is a crucial aspect to understanding what surrounds them. Ceremonies are representations of how people were created and model how people need to interact with the Land. Through ceremony, people have learned what their relationship with corn is, how corn needs to be grown, taken care of, the process of mitigating the effects of weather that does not benefit the cycle of growing corn, and to be grateful to mother earth for a harvest.

Axiology

According to Chilisa (2012), axiology refers to "the analysis of values to better understand their meanings, characteristics, their origins, their purpose, their acceptance as true knowledge, and their influence on people's daily experiences" (p. 21). Wilson (2008) defines axiology as the "ethics or morals that guide the research for knowledge and judge which information is worthy of searching for … axiology also concerns itself with the ethics of how that knowledge is gained" (p. 34). An Indigenous axiology is not value-free since the knowledge produced must be meaningful for the community in which the study is taking place. Also, axiology from an Indigenous perspective requires the researcher to be accountable to the relationships that were forged through the process of the study (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008).

According to Wilson (2008), researchers who conduct Indigenous research are obliged to ask themselves:

- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic that I am studying and myself as a researcher (on multiple levels)?
- How do my methods help to build respectful relationships between myself and the other research participants?
- How can I relate respectfully to the other participants involved in this research so that together we can form a stronger relationship with the idea that we will share?
- What is my role as a researcher in this relationship, and what are my responsibilities?
- Am I being responsible in fulfilling my role and obligations to the other participants, to the topic, and to all of my relations?
- What am I contributing or giving back to the relationship? Is the sharing, growth and learning that is taking place reciprocal? (p.77)

In the context of this research, the aforementioned questions are central to my understanding of how the Huasteco community might feel about my research. This brings up the question, is this study relevant for the community? Based on the interactions that I had with people during my field work, participants stated that it is relevant for the community that Huasteco music be taught in schools, since, in this way, an important part of Huasteco culture (music) would be present in the general education of children and youth. It is my duty as a researcher to give back to the community not just during the process of the study, but definitely once the research has finished and results can be used not only to move forward my own research agenda, but most importantly, to support the community's own interests.

The concept of giving back to the community, as well as the notion of community work and reciprocity, is very much embedded in Huasteco worldview; therefore, it is expected that the community will have a voice regarding how projects should be implemented and the degree to which community members will participate. Historically, people in the Huasteco region have valued community collaboration and reciprocity; in their view, they are stronger when they work together as a group, which ultimately benefits their communities.

An Indigenous Paradigm from a Huasteco Perspective: Chikomexochitl and the Five Stages of the Development of the Corn

For the purpose of this study, in the following section I will use the story and ritual of Chikomexochitl as an Indigenous research conceptual framework. The goal of using a visual, allegorical, and metaphorical representation of Chikomexochitl in my research is to acknowledge the cyclical process of approaching knowledge. The five moments of the ritual of Chikomexochitl (Nava, 2009), which are connected to the five stages of the development of corn, represent the five stages of this research; meanwhile, the Land where Chikomexochitl "grow" are the seven layers in which Huasteco ontology and epistemology are rooted. The aim of using a visual, allegorical, and metaphorical representation in an Indigenous framework is to provide a foundation based on local Indigenous ways of relating to the world (Charbonneau-Dahlen, 2019; Chilisa, 2012; Jimenez, 2005; Kovach, 2009; 2018). In this case, I am using corn as a way to centre Huasteco culture at the core of my research.

Chikomexochitl is a crucial part of the Huasteco worldview. According to Pacheco (2015), the ritual of Chikomexochitl marks the beginning of the corn and rain cycles, and during the ritual, roughly 150 musical pieces are played during different stages of the ceremony.

> The deity [Chikomexochitl] is depicted as two children, female and male, dressed with colorful clothing that follows the traditional local style and is carefully designed to fit their size. The female/male duality of the deity is represented with cut-paper images and two bundles that contain maize cobs. In some towns the *xochicalli* temple corresponds to a specific temple, while in others it shares its space with Catholic churches but no other Christian temples. The ceremonies' length varies according to the resources and availability of the organizers, although traditionally the Chikomexochitl takes place for twelve days. The first four occur in the ritual specialist's house, who has previously determined and agreed with the organizers upon dates and number of offerings. Here, the celebrant places offerings in the household altar, lights, candles, burns *copal,* and starts the process of making representations of deities with cut-paper images. In the following four days, the ritual specialist arrives at the *xochicalli* temple where the congregation also gathers. During these days they all prepare offerings, to finally peregrinate to the mountain's summit in the last day. In the following four days, the ritual specialist, back in his home [gender specified by the author], keeps placing offering on the household altar while the *xochicalli'*s committee rotates to also place offerings, light candles, and burn *copal* [tree resin] in the host *xochicalli* temple. (pp. 123–124).

The story of Chikomexochitl has different versions according to the oral tradition that has been preserved for centuries in the worldview of the Huasteco people. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify commonalities among the stories that people have shared in different locations and times. According to different authors (Camacho, 2008; Hooft, 2008; Pérez, 2016), common features of the story of Chikomexochitl are:

- He was born from a virgin, whose mother (that is, the grandmother of Chikomexochitl) was against the child being alive; therefore, she attempted to kill or to have the child killed several times, but the child managed to avoid death each time. At some point, Chikomexochitl's grandmother is successful. He is resurrected in the form of corn, as a deity. Other versions point out that *Chikomexochitl* was born from mother earth.
- Life in the world is created by Chikomexochitl. Chikomexochitl plants a grain of corn from which humans will be able to survive.
- Chikomexochitl invented the music, dance, the words (oral speech), the agriculture, wisdom, and all of the expression linked to *el costumbre*[5]*,* which are intrinsically connected to the precepts of how life needs to be lived.

For the Huasteco people, the number seven is a symbol for abundance, seed, centre, perfection, and offering (Hooft, 2008). According to Nava (2009), the ritual in honour of Chikomexochitl has five moments that are linked to the five stages of the corn's development, from seed until the harvest is completed. The aforementioned author describes the five moments of the ritual as:

1. *Sintokistli:* The time when the corn is planted.
2. *Mitlakualtilistli:* The moment when the plant is growing but the spike has not emerged yet.
3. *Miyawakalakilistli:* When the plant is blooming.
4. *Elotlamalistli:* When the corn cob is ready to be picked and offered for the ritual.
5. *Sintlakualtilistli*: The time when the harvest has concluded. (p. 42)

[5] Ritual that is performed to establish a dialogue between humans and the Gods. During this ritual, a series of *sones de costombre* are performed to guide the process of the ceremony (Camacho, 2019).

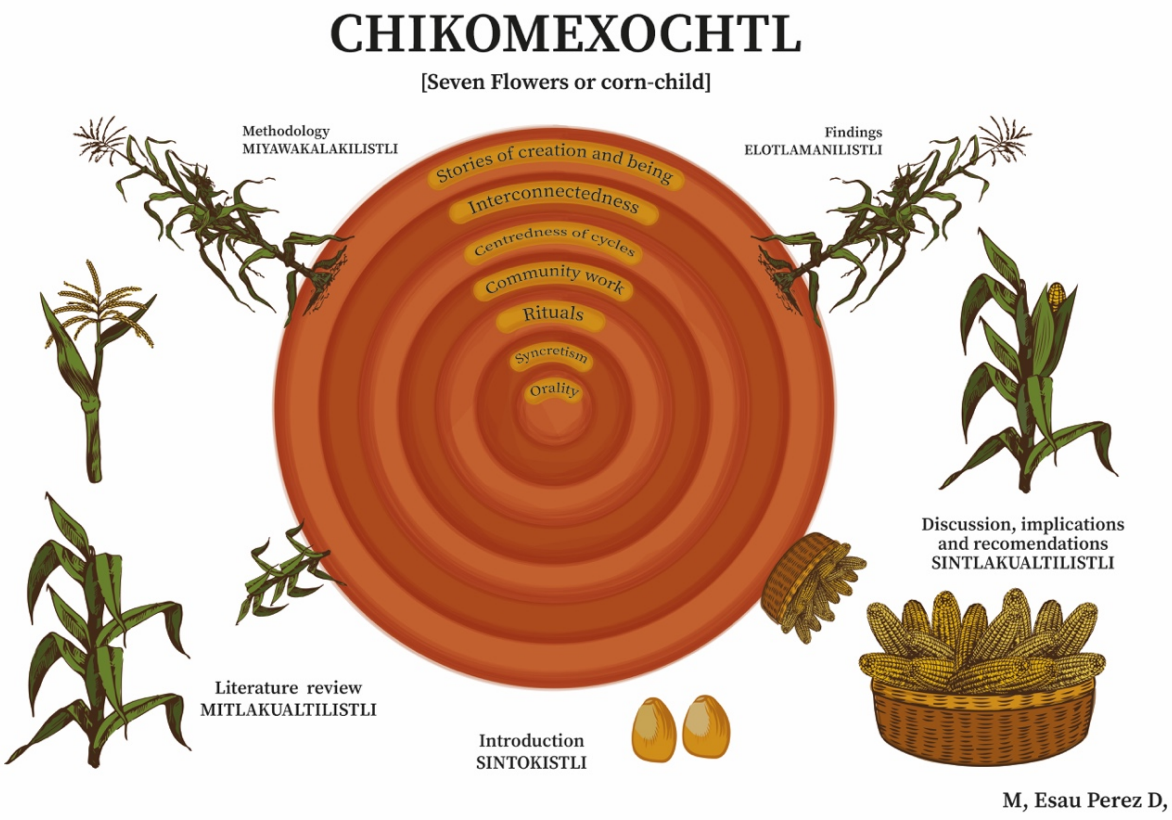
These five moments linked to the ritual of Chikomexochitl and the corresponding five stages of development of the corn are connected to the way in which my research is structured:

1. Sintokistli takes place in Chapter 1, the introductory chapter of my research. In that chapter, I provide the rationale and the process of decision making to follow this research journey.
2. Mitlakualtilistli is found in both Chapters 2 and 3, the theoretical framework and literature review. It represents the moment of reading and engaging with authors, familiarizing myself with what is already known before embarking on field work.
3. Miyawakalakilistli comes to pass in Chapter 4, the methodology section. It represents the stage of planning the methodological approach prior to engaging in field work.
4. Elotlamalistli is described in Chapter 5, my research findings. This represents the moment of the ritual—perhaps the most meaningful part—when people offer the corn cobs on the altar. According to Román Güemes, a participant in my research, Elotlamalistli is the action of offering the corn cob with the hands during the ritual. In order to offer something up with the hands, a person needs to be in front of the altar to place the offering. In this case, I relate my journey during my field work as that time to be in the place to be able to interact with participants and to be part of the cultural events at which I was present. It is from that process of being there that I was able to "gather" the "corn cobs" (data) at the time that they were ready. In order to be able to gather the narratives of my participants, I needed to complete the cycle of my courses, complete the comprehensive exams, write my research proposal, and complete the research ethics process. Like the corn, everything is structured in a natural way—it cannot be time to gather the corn cob if it has not been planted.

5. Sintlakualtilistli occurs in Chapters 6 and 7, the discussion, implications, recommendations, and conclusions sections. These chapters represent the time for me to create something once the "harvest" is completed, something that contributes to fostering appreciation of Huasteco culture, its music making, and their music culture bearers. It is similar to the process of converting harvested corn into *nixtamal*[6]: Once this is ground, it is possible to create dough to make *tortillas*. In my research journey, this stage is linked to the time to discuss and reflect on the information gathered and analyzed.

Figure 3

Chikomexochitl in Research



Note. Design Hector Vazquez, illustration Esau Perez, and digitalization Genaro Martínez.

[6] Nixtamal is the product of a process where dried corn is cooked in an alkaline solution. The mixture is boiled and left to soak for an extended period of time.

At every stage of the process in this study, I tried to keep in mind the seven layers that have emerged over time through readings and through interacting with people while attending Huasteco cultural events: stories of creation and being, interconnectedness, centredness of cycles, community work, rituals, syncretism, and orality.

As visualized in figure 3, both knowledge production and corn production are cyclical processes. It never ends; it is necessary to "plant" once more in order to keep seeking knowledge, and the process repeats. Chikomexochitl in research illustrates the allegorical relationship between the researcher and Land. According to Pacheco (2015), "in the Chikomexochitl ceremony, the participation of each individual constitutes the principle that secures a successful ceremony. Communal work and communal reciprocity are fundamental principles of social interaction in the towns" (p. 174). The ceremony, similar to research following Indigenous ways of doing, cannot be carried out by one person; it is necessary to have the participation of the community in order for knowledge to be revealed, and also, it is important that a researcher finds a way to give back to the community.

In this case, knowledge grows once a "seed" is planted, and the researcher takes the time to build meaningful relationships with those in the land and with Land itself. Through time, that seed starts growing in the Sintokistli stage: it means that the trust among participants is growing. Once the plant is growing, if one is not careful enough, the plant can die, which parallels losing the trust of participants (Mitlakualtilistli). At some point the plant is strong enough that it is possible to see how the plant is blooming, and that time is when participants feel comfortable not just to participate in the study, but even more importantly, participants feel comfortable about inviting other participants to be engaged in the project (Miyawakalakilistli). The time is right, and the corn (information) is mature enough to be harvested during Elotlamalistli, which

represents the actual time for conducting the data gathering. The researcher has arrived at this particular point because they have followed the proper protocol. Once the corn (information) has been picked comes Sintlakualtilistli, and a crucial decision must be made: what is to be done with this corn (information)? This is perhaps one the most important parts of the whole process. If the researcher does something just for their own benefit, it will be against the Huasteco principles of interconnectedness, community work, and centredness of cycles. It is necessary that the outcome of the study is beneficial to the community. Thus, the process for knowledge mobilization is not just the decision of the researcher, but also of community members. Failing to give back to the community could damage the possibilities for future collaborations, and it could prevent the community from trusting again. As mentioned in this section, if one wants to seek knowledge, it is necessary to sow; nevertheless, sowing on a land that has been damaged is a futile effort. Trust is crucial, and one must foster ongoing relationships that avoid extractivist relationships between researcher and communities. It is not enough to claim to be using an Indigenous paradigm and Indigenous methodologies; instead, it is necessary to honour Indigenous perspectives by actions rather than by statements. I am aware of the responsibilities that I have to the communities and people with whom I interacted during my research, both to those who are alive and those who have since passed away.

As stated in the aforementioned paragraphs, research is similar to planting: it takes time. If one wants to eat healthy food (such as some organic foods), it will take more effort and patience to do it in a good way (avoiding chemical substances that will make the plant grow bigger and faster). In the case of research conducted with Indigenous communities and their members, substantial time is crucial to engage ethically in the whole process from “planting” to “harvesting.” Again, “harvesting” does not imply that the researcher obtains the “product” and

forsakes the community, leaving them empty-handed; rather, at this point, community members and the researcher decide together what to do with the harvest. I see the "harvest" partially as deciding how knowledge mobilization efforts might benefit Indigenous communities. According to Castleden et al. (2010), "[spending] time in Indigenous communities engaging in conversation with members of the community and actively listening to and respecting the ideas of Indigenous knowledge-holders is essential to establish relationships based on mutual trust" (p. 168). The aforementioned authors stressed the challenges that university policies and administrators, as well as granting agencies, create for researchers when they insist that research must be completed in a given timeframe or when they are inflexible when approving ethic approvals. In both cases, there is no acknowledgement that research may take more time than expected. These factors may contribute to potential friction between Indigenous communities and researchers, given the historical extractivist relationships that Indigenous communities have experienced with researchers throughout centuries.

I acknowledge that the seven layers that are the foundation of my conceptual framework are not rigid, but they reflect my understanding of the Huasteco worldview at this point. It is possible that these layers might evolve or change in the future; this evolution will depend on my ongoing and future interactions with readings and with people.

Chapter 3 Literature Review (*Mitlakualtilistli* Part 2*:* The Moment When the Plant is Growing but the Spike has not Yet Emerged)

In this chapter, I set the stage by providing an analysis of the educational policies of five countries that have embedded Indigenous content in their national or provincial curricula. Mexico is the focus of my study, but reviewing four other countries' curricula provides a richer understanding of the educational policies and practices that currently exist or that might be possible. Then, I will discuss the case of Mexico's national educational curriculum in detail. To complement my analysis of other countries' curricula, I provide a description of the current ideas that inform music education policy and praxis in Mexico. Secondly, I discuss the Indigenous and Western perspectives that inform my research and how these perspectives inform historical and current Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the context of Mexico. The aforementioned section will introduce a discussion of decolonial and Indigenous pathways for engaging with music making. Thirdly, I will discuss the particularities of Huasteco culture and the music making connected to this culture.

Indigenous knowledge in K-12 public educational system internationally and in the context of Mexico

In this section, I will describe the current situation of Indigenous knowledge embedded in educational systems in five different countries: Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Mexico, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. The analysis of these countries and their curricula is relevant to the discussion that I will provide in chapters six and seven regarding potential ways of embedding music with Indigenous roots in the context of Mexico.

I chose the aforementioned countries for two main reasons: first, I chose Australia, Canada, and Aotearoa/New Zealand because most of the literature that I have come across regarding a call to embed Indigenous perspectives (in general) in the educational system involve these three countries. Second, I chose Bolivia and Mexico because these two countries have a large number and high percentage of people who identify as Indigenous, and these two countries are in Latin America. Researching two Latin American countries provides an opportunity to observe a geographical and cultural context that has had a different trajectory from Australia, Canada, or Aotearoa/New Zealand as former colonized countries, and to understand historical and ongoing efforts of decolonization and Indigenization via social and political movements, which have had particular impacts on their policy making.

I am aware that the aforementioned countries have their unique historical paths of colonization and decolonization efforts. The different trajectories of these countries provide a wide perspective in terms of policymaking from different parts of the globe, which can inform the Mexican case in order to envision local solutions and ways forward to facilitate the embedding of Indigenous knowledge in schools. An analysis of the current state of Mexico provides the opportunity to understand the policies that are in place, and how this study might support policymakers in envisioning how to embed Indigenous principles into Mexico's national educational system with regards to policy and praxis, as well as the training of future educators, and music educators especially.

It has been over a decade since the United Nations General Assembly adopted the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008). This declaration contains 46 articles that emphasize the need to support and promote Indigenous peoples' customs and identities. This declaration is an effort to mitigate the historical effects of

colonialism, which have resulted in the ongoing violation of Indigenous peoples' basic human rights. For the purpose of this study, Article 15, Section 1 is particularly important. This section states that "Indigenous peoples have the right to the dignity and diversity of their cultures, traditions, histories and aspirations which shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information" (p. 7). This is a call for Indigenous cultures to be visible in education. It is therefore relevant to identify the current state of educational policies in the aforementioned countries regarding the embedding of Indigenous ways of knowing in the curriculum. I acknowledge that what is stated in policy might not necessarily reflect what is actually taking place in schools; nevertheless, policy can indicate whether there is at least an effort to support initiatives that promote and reflect Indigenous ways of knowing in the educational system. Moreover, it is important to understand that inclusion of Indigenous topics in the curricula is not a solution by itself, as Grande (2008) warns:

> unless educational reform also happens concurrently with an analysis of colonialism, it is bound to suffocate from the tentacles of imperialism … it is not only imperative for Native educators to insist on the incorporation of indigenous knowledge and praxis in school curricula but also to transform the institutional structures of schools themselves. In other words, indigenous educators need to theorize the ways in which power and domination inform the processes and procedures of schooling and develop pedagogies that disrupt their effects. (p. 236).

Table 1 itemizes the most recent statistics for each of the five countries: total population, number of people who self-identify as Indigenous, and percentage of people who self-identify as Indigenous.

Table 1

Indigenous population in Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Mexico, and Aotearoa/New Zealand

Country	Total population	Population that self-identifies as Indigenous	Percentage of the total of population	Source
Australia	23,401,890	786,689	3.3%	Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016)
Bolivia	10,059,856	2,806,612	28%	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (2012)
Canada	35,151,728	1,673,780	4.8%	Statistics Canada (2016)
Mexico	121,000,000	26,020,000	21.5%	Consejo Nacional de Población (CONAPO) (2015)
***Aotearoa*/New Zealand**	4,699,755	775,836	16.5%	Stats NZ Tatauranga Aotearoa (2018)

The Australian Case

According to the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA, n.d.), Australia's curriculum is developed at the federal level and distributed nationally. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures are one of the three main cross-curriculum priorities in the Australian Curriculum from Foundation (also known as kindergarten or pre-school) to grade 10, having as a part of its framework three concepts that resonate with cultural principles: Country/Place, Peoples, and Culture. According to ACARA official website:

> The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority provides an opportunity for all young Australians to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, knowledge traditions and holistic worldviews. This knowledge and understanding of, and connection

with, the world's oldest continuous living cultures will help learners to participate in the ongoing development of Australia as a nation.

ACARA has an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Group made up of twelve invited experts who actively participate in providing advice on the development of the Australian Curriculum from Foundation to year 12, and the development and implementation of the national assessment program, among other responsibilities. Of these twelve people, up to four are representatives of state and territory Indigenous Education Consultative Bodies, and at least one of the members must be a Torres Strait Islander.

With regards to arts curriculum, students engage in artistic activities from Foundation to grade 10. From Foundation to grades 7 or 8, students actively interact with the five arts subjects: dance, drama, media arts, music, and visual arts. In grades 9 and 10, students choose a particular art that they would like to learn in depth. In the context of music, students learn music practices rooted in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music traditions. Examples in the content describe learning situations such as "Explain how the elements of music communicate meaning by comparing music from different social, cultural and historical contexts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music." (Australian Curriculum, n.d.) According to Power and Bradley (2011), before the 2009 national curriculum, not all states and territories included directions to embed Australian Indigenous musics. Nevertheless, after the curriculum was actuated, they have witnessed that local departments of the Department of Education Training have provided training, resources and developed materials to foster the aims of the national curriculum. As a result of the training and support materials facilitated from the Department Education and Training, the aforementioned authors reported that in the cases that they have studied, teachers have implemented the knowledge acquired during the training sessions and also have felt

comfortable reaching out to local culture bearers. The authors reported a significant change from 2004 to 2009 regarding embedding of Indigenous music content. Based on the experiences that they reported, the authors state "They have fulfilled the commitment expressed in the NSW Aboriginal Education Policy, making a global connection between and within a cultural frame" (p. 28).

The Bolivian Case

According to the *Ministerio de Educación Plurinacional de Bolivia* (Ministry of Education of the Plurinational State of Bolivia), there are three different levels of curriculum that are in play in schools: the base national curriculum, regionalized curriculum, and diversified curriculum (local) (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2012).

a) Base curriculum: The base curriculum frames all ways of knowing—local and "universal" knowledges. It aims to produce new knowledge, strengthen the cultural diversity of Bolivia, and to develop creative capacities to produce and mobilize community values towards decolonization. It integrates practice, theory, appreciation, and production under a methodological proposal that moves from an education focused on the classroom towards an education that is connected to community and to life.

b) Regionalized curriculum: The regionalized curriculum takes into consideration the characteristics of a given sociocultural, linguistic, and productive context. The regionalized curriculum is based on the plans and programs of study that are unique to that context; holistic goals, content, methodological approaches, and evaluation are developed according to the context of each regional educational

system, which are described in the base curriculum from the Bolivian national education system. The central, independent, and autonomous territorial governments administer the regionalized curriculum.

c) Diversified curriculum (local): The diversified curriculum takes into consideration features of the local context in which the school is situated. This curriculum is focused on planning and implementing the curriculum, considering the language that is used as a first language, the ways of knowing and teaching rooted in the local community, socio-productive initiatives that are based in the municipality or the local educational unit, and other components that are expressed in the base and regionalized curricula (pp. 52–53).

As expressed in the earlier paragraph, the three levels of curriculum together acknowledge the sociocultural context, language, ways of knowing, ways of teaching and learning—plus the socio-productive initiatives that are rooted in the different parts of the country—while at the same time providing consistent, overarching content across the country.

In the curriculum, one of the base components is the knowledge and ways of knowing of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous Nations. The curriculum acknowledges community education as a foundational pillar upon which Indigenous ways of knowing rely, since it is through community and everyday life that people learn, rather than through a systematized methodology. According to the text, community is not just constituted by humanity, but also a relationship with *la Madre Tierra* (Mother Earth), with the cosmos, and with the spiritual (p. 33). Indigenous perspectives must inform knowledge and ways of knowing rooted in education at all levels.

Music education is part of the curriculum in Bolivia, since it is stated that music contributes to the formation of a person in a holistic, humanistic, scientific, artistic, and decolonial way. This is due to the sensitizing, productive, and creative nature of music (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2014). According to the aforementioned official document for elementary education, music is an important part of activities located in community and vital to one's relationship to *la Madre Tierra* (Mother Earth). Music education is based on the concept of "Vivir bien" (living well), the notion that the development of a human being through music is important because it fosters harmony between humankind, *la Madre Tierra,* and the cosmos. From this perspective, the goal of music education is much more profound than merely fostering musicianship; instead, it aims to foster people who can make a positive, qualitative change when living in community (p. 17). Based on what is written in policy, music education is a "tool" to foster well-rounded students who are aware of their particular sociocultural contexts, rather than aiming to foster high levels of music achievement.

The Ministry of Education has created a program called the *Programa de Formación Complementaria* (Program for Complementary Formation), which aims to further educate teachers via ongoing professional development in the subjects listed in the national curriculum (Ministerio de Educación de Bolivia, 2016). In this program, music education is one of the subjects for which teachers obtain education in order to implement musical engagement in their classrooms, particularly following the goal of embedding Indigenous content and ways of knowing.

The Canadian Case

In the case of Canada, education, and thus curriculum, is under the purview of provincial/territorial governments.

> While there are a great many similarities in the provincial and territorial education systems across Canada, there are significant differences in curriculum, assessment, and accountability policies among the jurisdictions that express the geography, history, language, culture, and corresponding specialized needs of the populations served. (CMEC, 2008, p. 1)

Due to the different approaches found in each of the provincial and territorial curriculum documents with reference to Indigenous perspectives, for the purpose of the study, I will use the BC curriculum since I am currently living in this province. It is important to acknowledge that in reviewing the music curricula from all the provinces and territories, Indigenous perspectives are embedded in each of them to varying degrees.

According to Prest and Goble (2018), the current BC curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 radically changed beginning in 2015, particularly with regard to the embedding of Indigenous cultures, pedagogies, and perspectives. The implementation of the new curriculum occurred in concert with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action. According to the BC Ministry of Education (2019a), "Aboriginal culture and perspectives have been integrated throughout all learning. For example, place-based learning and emphasis on Indigenous ways of knowing reflect the First Peoples Principles of Learning in the curriculum" (p. 1). The BC Ministry of Education, in partnership with Indigenous educational organizations and community members, has also published related documents (e.g., the First Peoples Principles of Learning, Aboriginal worldviews and perspectives in the classroom: Moving forward, Indigenous Knowledge and Perspectives in K-12 Curriculum). Documents such

as these offer culturally appropriate pedagogical approaches for teachers and administration to use when embedding Indigenous knowledge in curricular content, competencies, and the pedagogies that they use to do so.

In the context of music education, the curriculum includes Indigenous perspectives in the music classroom. For example, in Choral Music 10, content should include "traditional and contemporary First Peoples worldviews and cross-cultural perspectives, as communicated through music" (BC Curriculum Comparison Guide, 2019b, p. 117). Prest and Goble (2018) argue that even though the BC Ministry of Education has made an important effort to foster a progressive curriculum that highlights Indigenous perspectives, it has not yet provided all the necessary means for its successful implementation. Tuinstra (2019) found in her study that 84% of the participants (music educators in BC) responded that it is important for students to receive non-Western music education; nevertheless, she, along with Prest and Goble (2018), reflected on the need for more resources (financial and human) to support teachers so that they might fully put in place the aspirational goals of BC curriculum concerning the embedding of Indigenous content, pedagogies, and worldviews.

The Aotearoa/New Zealand case

Aotearoa/New Zealand has a unified, national curriculum, but concomitantly, the curriculum contains recognition of the need for students' realities to inform its implementation:

> The national curriculum provides the framework and common direction for schools, regardless of type, size, or location. It gives schools the scope, flexibility, and authority they need to design and shape their curriculum so that teaching and learning is meaningful and beneficial to their particular communities of students. In turn, the design

> of each school's curriculum should allow teachers the scope to make interpretations in response to the particular needs, interests, and talents of individuals and groups of students in their classes (Ministry of Education of New Zealand, 2007, p. 37).

The national curriculum is founded on values that are fostered at a national and local level. One of the framing principles in the curriculum advocates for Indigenous perspectives: "The curriculum acknowledges the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and the bicultural foundations of Aotearoa/New Zealand. All students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of te reo Māori me ona tikanga" (p. 9). According to this principle, all students have the opportunity to learn Indigenous ways of knowing.

It is important to emphasize that Aotearoa/New Zealand is constituted as a bicultural country that acknowledges the contributions of Māori people and the Pakeha (Anglo-Celtic majority) to the nation (Lowe, 2015). This acknowledgement is also evident in the curriculum vision, which states, "our vision is for young people who will work to create an Aotearoa/New Zealand in which Māori and Pakeha recognize each other as full Treaty partners, and in which all cultures are valued for the contributions they bring" (p. 8). This statement clearly states the goal of a bicultural country where the contributions of all cultures are valued. Nevertheless, because the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by Māori and Pakeha, the Māori people are not considered a minority group such as people who have immigrated from Asia, South America, or any other part of the world; rather, Māori have a place as a crucial part of the construction of the Aotearoa/New Zealand's identity as a foundational culture of the country (Lowe, 2015).

In the general field of the arts, the curriculum advocates for embracing Māori perspectives in all of the arts. In the specific domain of music, the curriculum states the following: "Music is a fundamental form of expression, both personal and cultural. Value is

placed upon the musical heritages of New Zealand's diverse cultures, including traditional and contemporary Māori musical arts" (p. 21).

Nyce (2012) presents an example of the way in which curriculum design can foster the implementation of approaches that are outside of the Western classical music paradigm. Nyce notes that out of 325 surveys received from music educators and principals in primary, intermediate, and middle schools in New Zealand, 114 (35%) of schools reported using a Māori pedagogical approaches in teaching music. Meanwhile, 62 schools (19%) reported using Pacific Island Culturally based methods, and 108 (33%) reported using multicultural methods in their teaching practice. This study showed that 87% of participants reported that they use a pedagogical approach that is either informed by local cultures (mainly by oral traditions) or other cultures from around the world.

The Mexican Case

I will analyze the case of Mexico in more detail since my study is set in the context of this country. *Secretaría de Educación Publica* (SEP) (Public Education Secretariat) was established in 1921 with the mandate to create the conditions that would allow all Mexicans access to quality education at all educational levels across the country (SEP, 2016). SEP oversees creating, implementing, disseminating, revising, and approving the national curriculum for all levels from kindergarten to high school. SEP is also in charge of 1) creating the curriculum that is implemented in Normal Schools throughout the country to educate future educators with pedagogical tools (SEP, 2017a)—and 2) hiring and promoting educators who will work in the educational system from kindergarten to high school.

At present, national educational systems in many Latin American countries and in other parts of the world promote Western cultural values, even in schools located in Indigenous communities, thereby strengthening the rejection of the communities' ancestral heritage in the name of "progress" (Vargas & Flores, 2002; Villal & Bautista, 2014), "progress" that is not reflected in Indigenous communities, which continue to be marginalized. Mexico is not an exception to this historical bias in education, a bias against Indigenous ways of knowing and being and a preference for teaching knowledge that is considered indispensable for student development. SEP follows the guidelines that organizations such as OECD, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund have recommended to foster the human capital required for global markets (Garcia, 2012). The federal government has argued that Mexico invests a reasonable amount of the GDP on education when compared with other members of the OECD (Flores & Mosiño, 2017); therefore, the outcomes for such investment should be more positive. According to the World Bank (2018), Mexico invested 4.523% of its GDP in 2017 into education. In comparison, the average of investment from OECD members is a 4.994% (perhaps Mexico's investment in education can be better understood when compared with other members of the OECD in Latin America such as Colombia (4.536%) and Chile (5.419%)). World Bank Data, 2018). These figures illustrate that while Mexico's educational policy has changed in recent decades, the amount of money that is invested in supporting these policies is not sufficient to achieve the outcomes that have been historically desired by Mexico's federal government.

The Mexican federal government's attempt to improve the quality of education over the last four decades has been based on the premise that education must be secular, democratic, and improve citizens' lives **(**González-Moreno, 2010). Mexico's educational system introduced a new educational model for basic education (grades 1 to 12) in 2017 as part of an educational reform

that was not well accepted by educators and their unions (Orozco-López, 2018). Part of their resistance to the reform (and consequently the educational model) stemmed from the fact that the reforms related more to labour rather than to educational reforms; hence, the federal government needed to use significant political capital to move the law forward in Congress in order to put the reform in place (Flores & Mosiño, 2017; Orozco-López, 2018).

The federal government's main argument to move the reform forward was that it was in line with the constitutional right for all Mexicans to receive a *quality* education. It is interesting to note that although resources have been historically invested in measurable subject areas, students' Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test scores (a tool adopted to measure quality in education) have not changed over the last decade (OECD, 2016a). For instance, in 2016, Mexico ranked 58th out of the 70 countries that participated in PISA's test (OECD, 2016b). Based on this ranking, it is clear that the government's focus on the outcome of achieving higher PISA scores, rather than attending to the underlying causes that prevent Mexican students from achieving better results in standardized tests, has not been successful. These causes are rooted in the marginalization and poverty that large portions of Mexico's population experience: 41.9 % of Mexico's population (i.e., 52.4 million people) live in conditions of extreme poverty, while 7.4% of its population (i.e., 9.3 million people) live in poverty; that is, almost half of the population currently subsists precariously (CONEVAL, 2018). Notwithstanding, the government fails to acknowledge the realities of communities that have faced historical inequalities, especially in those regions where a high percentage of Indigenous people live.

Indigenous Education in the Context of Mexico

Indigenous education in Mexico originated in 1923, immediately following the creation of SEP. One of the first initiatives under the guidance of SEP was the *Casas del Pueblo* (Houses of the people) (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; Rodríguez & Velasco, 2014; SEP, 2014). The goal of the Casas del Pueblo was to offer bilingual education to Indigenous peoples (many of them agricultural workers). Contrary to what was announced as an education in both languages, the goal was to use the students' Indigenous languages to teach them Spanish as a way to assimilate them into the dominant culture (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; Rodríguez & Velasco, 2014).

In 1964, SEP officially accepted the use of Indigenous languages in Indigenous education branches (in schools located in places where large populations of Indigenous peoples live), which was a step towards using Indigenous languages for instruction, rather than using Indigenous languages to promote the dominant language (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018). In 1978, the *Dirección General de Educación Indígena* (DGEI) (General Office for Indigenous Education) was created under SEP's supervision (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; SEP, 2014). Despite the fact that SEP had recognized a bilingual educational system in 1964, the DGEI, following SEP's directive, moved again to use Indigenous education as a tool to teach Spanish and promote assimilation among Indigenous peoples throughout the country. This step backwards resulted in teachers who did not know how to speak Indigenous languages being sent to Indigenous schools. They had neither the necessary pedagogical materials, nor the proper teacher education/training to teach in rural Indigenous contexts (for example, not knowing the local Indigenous language, which created an institutional message to teachers that Indigenous cultures were to be set aside in favour of an acculturation project (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; Rodríguez & Velasco, 2014).

In the 1990s, the Indigenous education system in Mexico shifted again, this time from a focus on bilingual education towards an intercultural approach that aimed to address not just the linguistic context, but also students' social contexts. This shift came about as a consequence of a Latin American movement that emphasized the importance of acknowledging Indigenous voices, and the ongoing critiques by several Indigenous organizations (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; SEP, 2014). According to Jiménez and Mendoza (2018), the intercultural approach conceives of dynamic cultures interacting with one another, which are, in turn, interconnected with a globalization movement that engulfs all cultures. Although this approach acknowledges a daily interplay between cultures, it still does not respond to the embedding of ways of knowing, and processes of teaching and learning that are place-specific for the communities in which the schools are located.

At the end of the twentieth century, the DGEI put a program in place that aimed to provided support to teachers in Indigenous education, the *Programa Asesor Técnico Pedagógico y para la Atención Educativa a la diversidad social, cultural y lingüística* (PAED) (Program for pedagogical support and for attending to the social, cultural and linguistic diversity in education). PAED was responsible for selecting and training personnel, who were called *Asesores Académicos de la Diversidad Social* (ADD) (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2018; SEP, 2013). The ADDs were in charge of providing ongoing training and pedagogical support to teachers who taught in Indigenous schools. According to Jiménez and Mendoza (2018), in 2011, PAED was present in 24 of the 32 states where Indigenous education was available from Kindergarten to Grade 6.

According to SEP (2017), even though there have been efforts to implement Indigenous education, the Indigenous education branch does not have enough trained instructors who know Indigenous languages; therefore, it is not possible to achieve the goal of instructing students in

their Indigenous languages (Rodríguez & Velasco, 2004). Jiménez and Mendoza (2018) point out the additional challenge that this program faces: systemic and individual racism, and exclusion directed toward the Indigenous education branch as a whole (as a parallel system of instruction), and the people who work within and for that educational branch.

It is important to reflect on the division between the Indigenous education branch and the rest of the educational system. While Indigenous students are learning about their cultures (with some of the limitations described above) and also learning about "universal" culture, the students in the 'regular' non-Indigenous branch (which constitutes the majority of schools across the country) do not have the opportunity to learn about Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing and being. Such a division between the two educational branches carries the potential risk of 'othering' the Indigenous educational branch. Teachers who work in the Indigenous educational branch suffer systemic discrimination (Rodríguez & Velasco, 2014). So long as there is not an equal exchange of content and approaches to teaching and learning between the Indigenous educational branch and the 'regular' branch, one group of students (Indigenous) will remain compelled to consume the knowledge that the dominant sector of society deems necessary and provides.

With regards to music education, González-Moreno (2010) notes the lack of interest and support for the arts in Mexico's educational system, as political leaders and policymakers do not consider the arts to be as relevant or important as other academic areas that are evaluated in national and international standardized tests (e.g., mathematics, sciences).

Educators who graduate from teacher education/training in Normal schools do not always have sufficient training in the arts (González-Moreno, 2010); yet, in many cases these educators are expected to include the arts in their teaching practices. In order to attend to curriculum

demands, educators are encouraged to participate ongoingly in workshops that are designed to provide them with strategies to incorporate the arts into their educational practices. The author puts into perspective the lack of Mexican educators who are arts specialists; she states, "the schools/specialist ratio ranges from 8 to 33 schools per arts specialist" (p. 189). Even more ominous, it is possible to infer that an even lower ratio applies for *music* specialists per number of schools.

From this evidence, we know that music education specialists are at a premium in Mexico. General educators in Mexico face a difficult challenge because they need to fulfil several roles with insufficient support from SEP. Thus, policy and curriculum do not align with the reality that many educators (in general), music educators, and students face daily.

The Current Model for Basic Education and the New Curriculum

At the time of my writing this chapter, the "new" model curriculum created in 2016 and implemented in 2017 is still in place. However, a new federal party came into power in 2018. This political party is MORENA (*Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional* (National Regeneration Movement), led by Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who became president in December 2018. MORENA replaced the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party). As one strategy to distinguish the current administration from the former leadership, Obrador has announced the creation of a new "new" model and curriculum. This newer model has been labeled as "*La Nueva Escuela Mexicana*" (The New Mexican School), and this model as well will be promoted by SEP.

Since the 2016 curriculum is still in place, I will outline some of its features. One of its innovations was the inclusion of Curricular Autonomy (CA) (SEP, 2016). The aim of CA is to

enable educators to attend to students' needs in meaningful ways within their own contexts; therefore, CA provides an opportunity for schools to implement local curriculum for up to 20% of class time. CA covers five areas for which every school has the flexibility to decide which content related to their local context to include in its curriculum. Those areas are 1) *extended use of time for key learning skills*; 2) *development of opportunities in the social and personal sphere*; 3) *new important skills*; 4) *learning and experiencing regional and local knowledge*; and 5) *developing projects that have social purposes*. According to SEP, the aim is that students will increase their social and cultural capital through implementing flexible content in these five areas. CA advocates principles of equity and inclusion; accordingly, it states that schools should offer students "places where they can develop their expression of and appreciation for artistic activities" (p. 193) and, concomitantly, motivate students to "get to know more about their local culture and traditions" (p. 199). According to the federal government, the aim of this reform is to enable schools to create and implement projects that will cover one or more of the five main areas that comprise CA.

The section regarding *development of opportunities in the social and personal sphere* recommends music instruction as one of the ways to develop a student's personal and interpersonal skills (SEP, 2016). SEP suggests that schools should create orchestras and choirs as the desirable ensembles to foster music skills as well as personal and interpersonal skills (SEP, 2016, 2017). Concomitantly and counter-intuitively, SEP also states that no government funding will be given to schools to establish choirs and orchestras (SEP, 2017b). This is a clear example, as pointed out in a previous section, where policy is not accompanied by the requisite funding to establish projects that have been deemed desirable. Problematically, this section of the CA does not promote the implementation of music education that is based on local cultures and traditions.

Rather, it is the section of *learning and experiencing regional and local knowledge* that might offer a rationale for bringing knowledge of local cultures that is expressed through music making into the mainstream school system (Vazquez, 2018). Significant numbers of musicians perform local musics; therefore, it is possible for knowledge holders and music or general educators to collaborate. Despite the most recent curriculum created in 2016, SEP has not suggested that teachers reach out to local music knowledge holders to establish collaborations that will enhance the music curriculum.

The 2016 curricular model uses the approach of Curricular Autonomy, and, from what has been announced to date, the newer curriculum model in development will have a comparable approach. SEP (2019b) expects that the new curriculum will be implemented in Kindergarten, the first and second grades of elementary school, as well as the first grade of secondary school (equivalent to Grade 7 in countries such as Canada) in August 2021. It is expected that by 2022–2023 the curriculum will be available at all levels of basic education (grades K-12). According to SEP (2019c), one of the main goals of *La Nueva Escuela Mexicana* (NEM) is to acknowledge and promote appreciation for the linguistic and cultural diversity of Mexico. The document states that other curricular goals are first, to develop high self-esteem in all students and second, to facilitate a corresponding open and universal perspective, which acknowledges and respects civic, cultural, and personal identities as the foundations of Mexico. Third, and most important for this study, the new curriculum aims to promote Indigenous and Afro-Mexican cultures, plus all other currently marginalized identities, as a foundation for creating a society free from marginalization and racism, and that can thrive according to intercultural principles (p. 9).

In July 2019, Mexico's federal government announced the adoption of *Esperanza Azteca's* orchestral model (see p. 59), a music program inspired by *El Sistema*, as one of the

pillars of a new educational model that will soon be made public (SEP, 2019a). The arguments and rationale provided by Mexico's federal government is no different from other El Sistema-inspired projects around the world: music for social change (Baker, 2014, 2016; Baker & Frega, 2018; Frega & Limongi, 2019; Rosabal-Coto, 2016a). Throughout the process of planning the implementation of orchestras around the country, at the time of my writing this chapter, there has been no mention of implementing forms of music making rooted in local traditions and collaboration with their music culture bearers.

Having discussed the case of Mexico's national educational system in detail, I move to present two sections, critiquing two programs that have informed the way in which NEM is envisioning music education Mexico. This vision is closely linked to and informed by the El Sistema model and the Esperanza Azteca adaptation of the El Sistema model. This examination is important because both El Sistema and Esperanza Azteca privilege music instruction based on an orchestra model in which local music traditions are not relevant. Instead, the music instruction of these two projects favors a standardized repertoire centered on the Western European classical music tradition. It is interesting to note that because these programs have received large amounts of money dedicated for cultural budgets from their home governments in Mexico and Venezuela, monies for other cultural projects in those countries have been significantly reduced (Baker, 2014; García, 2009).

Looking for External Answers: An overview of El Sistema

El Sistema (ES; translated as "The System" in English) is a well-known international music education program that was established by José Antonio Abreu in Venezuela in 1975 (Baker, 2014; Frega & Limongi, 2019; Strother, 2013). In 2016, ES reported having 420 music

centers (called *núcleos*) and 700,000 people enrolled in this program across the country (Baker, 2016). José Antonio Abreu, an economist, pianist, and conductor, advocated for Western classical music as a tool for social change (Baker 2014; Boshkoff, 2014; Eatock, 2010; Strother, 2013). During his life, Abreu acquired a well-regarded reputation around the world, for which he received several honoris causa doctorates, and prizes such as the TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) prize in 2009 and the *Principe de Asturias* Arts Prize in 2008. He was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 (Baker, 2014; Baker & Frega, 2018; Llorente, 2008; Lorenzino, 2015; Strother, 2013). ES is well-known around the world because of the high caliber of their musicians; among the most notable musicians who graduated from ES are Gustavo Dudamel, director of the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra, and Edison Ruis, the youngest musician ever hired by the prestigious Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of 15 (Lorenzino, 2015). Perhaps the most representative example of the high degree of musical achievement facilitated by this organization is the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra of Venezuela (SBYOV), which constantly tours around the world and has been acclaimed by several important figures in the Western classical music establishment (e.g., Plácido Domingo, Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, Daniel Barenboim) (Strother, 2013; Romero, 2016; Tunstall, 2013).

Since 1976, ES has received governmental funds, but it was not until 1979 that a state fund was created in order to ensure the project's financial stability and continuity (Carlson, 2016). ES is mostly funded by the national government of Venezuela as a social inclusion program and by international development banks (Inter-American Development Bank and others) (Baker, 2016; Baker & Frega, 2018; Frega & Limongi, 2019), which have provided ES with loans (indirectly via the Venezuela government) for over 500 million dollars in the last decade (Baker, 2016).

According to Baker (2014), ES was founded on musical principles only; he cites the 1979 ES foundation document (used to legalize the project according to governmental requirements), in which the aim of the program is described as "the training of the country's human resources in the area of music" (p. 164). It was not until the end of the 1990s when former president Hugo Chávez came to power that ES began to position and frame its activities as oriented toward social justice: "El Sistema would never have received so much support from the Chávez government and international institutions without embracing social goals. Such rhetoric may or may not reflect realities, but it is usually conceived instrumentally" (p. 163). The success of ES could not be possible without the lobbying abilities of Abreu to adapt to a new political reality in Venezuela.

ES claims to be a social program that fosters social change, social justice, and social inclusion through music and its instruction (Bergman & Lindgren, 2014; Simpson Steele, 2016). Govias (2011) defined five fundamentals of ES, which were recognized by José Antonio Abreu himself; any program that wishes to replicate the Venezuelan program should adhere to these: *Social change, ensembles, frequency, accessibility, and connectivity.*

1. Social Change: The primary objective is social transformation *through* the pursuit of musical excellence. One happens through the other, and neither is prioritized at the expense of the other.
2. Ensembles: The focus of *El Sistema* is the orchestra or choral experience.
3. Frequency: *El Sistema* ensembles meet multiple times every week over extended periods.
4. Accessibility: *El Sistema programs* are free and are not selective in admission

> 5. Connectivity: Every *núcleo* is linked at the urban, regional, and national levels, forming a cohesive network of services and opportunities for students across the country. (p. 21)

According to Baker (2014), ES has failed to deliver social change. Based on his ethnographic study in Venezuela, he identified that ES invests an important part of its resources to bring the most talented performers from across the country to Caracas (the capital of Venezuela) in order to be able to present the best "show," especially for people who travel to Venezuela to witness what has been labeled as the "Venezuelan miracle." Baker provides an example of a teacher with sixteen years of service in ES who pointed out that "foreign visitors always get taken to the same few núcleos … [h]e was highly critical of the lack of spending on ordinary núcleos, yet lavish expenditure on showpieces events and foreign tours" (p.77). Baker points out that it is more common to find the SBYOV performing in London rather than in the states of Venezuela.

In his study, Baker found that núcleos outside of Caracas struggled in terms of retaining music teachers, low salaries, lack of instruments, long waits for equipment, and no classrooms. Scholarship support was offered to young talented players as part of a strategy known as "talent-hunting" in small towns in order to send them to the capital. Thus, local talented students did not remain to transform their communities. Funds are also distributed in a centralized manner. Baker and Frega (2018) illustrate an example of centralization—the case of the *Centro de Acción Social Por la Música* (Centre for Social Action Through Music), which aimed to create seven new regionals centres across the country in 2017; nevertheless, the 109.9 million dollars allocated by this project from funds from the Venezuelan government, and a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) was used to build more infrastructure in Caracas. "The outcome of the

IDB's loans is thus the precise opposite of the intention behind them, articulated over the course of at least a decade; far from decentralizing, El Sistema has become even more markedly centralized" (p. 510).

By centralizing the benefits of ES in terms of funds, infrastructure, and talent, Venezuelan citizens around the country do not receive equal benefit from a social program that claims that it can achieve *social change* through Western classical music and its instruction. Perhaps, one of the main issues in this discussion is that since it is a social program that is mostly funded by the state, it is using money that belongs to all Venezuelan citizens; therefore, it is the government's obligation to ensure that the funding is indeed achieving its goal. A social program that is based on music instruction should be evaluated not only in terms of the musical evidence (e.g., the technical ability of an ensemble), but also according to previously established criteria that provides evidence of benefiting society as a whole. In ensuring that the núcleos in Caracas are "first class," the núcleos for the rest of the country are reduced to being "second class." Subsequently, one must ask: is ES more occupied with presenting a show in order to get both public and private loans, rather than fulfilling its promise of delivering social change?

According to Baker and Frega (2018), reports provided by El Sistema administrators to the IDB have not provided enough evidence that ES a) reaches the poorest and most disadvantaged in Venezuelan society, and b) has had the social impacts that are claimed. Rather, the foundation for this (and indeed all of El Sistema's) institutional support consists of positive rhetoric, generated by the project itself, sympathetic observers, and opportunistic politicians (p. 509).

In their study, Frega and Limongi (2019) concluded that the official narrative of ES has highlighted only the positive aspects of it without allowing a critical perspective because the

positive narrative has secured substantial funds from development banks. Nevertheless, they argue that ES has barely evolved in the last 20 years: “If we were to determine whether El Sistema has promoted any kind of renovation in the Latin-American region, it is certainly not the case, even considering that a successful music-making process is always valuable” (p. 572). According to Baker (2016), “El Sistema may be seen as part of a 500-year history of attempts by Latin American social elites to ‘civilize’ or ‘improve’ social or ethnic Others through education in European-style music” (p. 14). Therefore, this program has reinforced the idea that a person who has access to Western classical music is “saved” from living in an uncivilized society.

Mexico’s Esperanza Azteca, an El Sistema Inspired Program: From “Philanthropy” to Potential Financing by the Mexican Federal Government

Due to the international recognition and prominence of ES, a similar project was developed in Mexico. This project, entitled *Esperanza Azteca* (EA), was established in 2009 and funded by the Televisión Azteca Foundation (Esperanza Azteca, n.d.). Television Azteca is one of the main television networks in Mexico. EA has a very similar approach to ES; however, to date, it has not delivered the same level of artistic competence as ES. Although Television Azteca takes credit for the EA project, in reality this company only provides 15% of the total budget of the project via tax deductions through its own non-profit organization (Azteca Foundation). The majority of the funding comes from three levels of government. According to the Quinto Elemento Report (García, 2019), since 2010, EA has received approximately 95 million USD from federal, state, and local levels of government, due to an ongoing intense lobbying campaign. According to the aforementioned source, this financial support occurred

even though the overall budget for the federal Culture Secretariat decreased by 60% during the same period (between 2012 and 2018).

Thus, the governmental funding EA receives has resulted in discontinued funding for other projects that had been previously supported by the government, some of which were community music projects in rural areas. According to García (2019), funding for the *Sistema Nacional de Fomento Musical* (National System for Music Promotion), which supports community music organizations, was reduced by 72%. For example, the Banda Sinfónica Mixteca, a brass band from the Mixteca area (a region covering parts of the states of Guerrero, Puebla, and Oaxaca, where Mixteca Indigenous peoples live), had 42 members and was supported by the state government of Puebla. After eight years, it stopped receiving funding. Following Garcia's report, professional musicians, most of whom are Indigenous from the town of San Felipe Otlatepec, Puebla, have expressed their disquiet. This removal of funding is something that they cannot comprehend (García, 2019). They were told that there was no money to support community music, yet they are aware that Rafael Moreno Valle (former governor of the state of Puebla) gave 100 million pesos to the orchestras of TV Azteca. Now, those musicians work on farms and look for gigs to play. To date, they do not understand what transpired.

The federal government portrays the adoption of an orchestra model as a major step towards cultural democratization and a key factor in improving students' lives (SEP, 2019). The government posits that this project will develop musical abilities in all children and youth. It will foster their love of country, respect for everyone's rights, freedom, peace, and culture, and consciousness about international co-operation, independence, and justice, also promoting honesty and values connected to better learning process. Listening to music and playing an instrument are valuable tools for children and youth in developing their intellectual and

emotional capacities because playing in an orchestra or a music group fosters better self-esteem and a love for beauty and discipline, among other attitudes that will serve students throughout their lives.

According to the federal government, in order to move this project forward, the government will borrow 6000 instruments from the Azteca Foundation, and it will follow the methodology used by ES in order to establish 64 orchestras within the national educational system during the program's first year of operation. In other words, EA will be absorbed by the federal government so that it can be fully funded by taxpayers' money. This change in funding format, justified by rhetoric claiming that this model will change children's lives dramatically, is not coincidental; Esteban Moctezuma Barragán, former CEO of Fundación Azteca, has recently been appointed federal head of the Office for the Public Education Secretariat. Barragán's professional move, and EA's structural and financial move to the government sector are associated (García, 2019).

Indigenous Perspectives in Collaboration with Western Critical Perspectives

Following Baker's (2016) and Rosabal-Coto's (2016b) critiques, projects based on Western classical music have served to justify attempts to "improve" and "civilize" people who have been historically discriminated against and misrepresented. This begs the following question: can Western classical music be a new tool to "save" the so-called ethnic others from the "danger" of the past (ways of knowing and being opposed to Western worldview)? In this case, the goal is not to "save" peoples' souls via religion, but "save" them through music making in order to move the nation toward a globalized future. Looking to the 'past' (Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the context of this study) is not useful when looking for a standardization

of ways of knowing and being around the world due to the rapid globalization of knowledge production and consumption. Rather, in this dissertation, I argue that it is important to explore theoretical and philosophical perspectives that acknowledge the importance of ways of knowing and being rooted in local traditions in order to protect both historical and contemporary lived memories and cultural traditions around the world, which are at risk as a consequence of globalization.

A decolonial perspective in music education is needed in order to envision appropriate ways to engage with music making outside of the Western classical music paradigm. This engagement is not prioritized because higher educational institutions, government, and policymakers, among others, consider Western classical music as the most valid genre for music making.

The objective of the following paragraphs and next section (*When race meets class: New labels on old practices from colonization to marginalization*) is to engage the reader in a review of some of the current discussions across two of the theoretical pillars of this dissertation: Indigenous and decolonizing perspectives. Even though this research is focused on the subject of music education, I consider it fundamental to analyze and understand the philosophical and theoretical perspectives that frame my proposal to embed music with Indigenous roots into Mexico's educational system. Failing to provide this rationale might result in including music with Indigenous roots in the classroom without consciously understanding the foundations of *why* it is necessary to do it. Based on the literature review that I conducted, I am aware of the lack of literature in the context of Latin America, and more specifically, in the context of Mexico, regarding local Indigenous perspectives in music education, as well as an emerging eagerness to explore decolonial lenses in music education in that specific part of the world. This

lack of materials (in terms of local Indigenous perspectives) and the emerging field of decolonial voices in Latin America in the context of music education is what led me to use a significant part of my dissertation in order to contribute to a discussion that is necessary to have in Mexico, and more broadly, in Latin America regarding the shift away from a dominant philosophical and practical approach informed by a Western European paradigm.

According to Chilisa (2012), decolonization is "a process of centring the concerns and worldviews of the colonized Other so that they understand themselves through their own assumptions and perspectives" (p. 13). Styres (2017) suggests that "decolonizing as the active process, and decolonization as a result of the process of decolonizing" (p. 35) both keep the colonizer and colonial relationships at the center of the conversation, instead of privileging Indigenous knowledge. For McGregor and Marker (2018), decolonizing "refers to ongoing processes of coming to know the ways that colonizing relations have shaped the conditions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous lives and relationships to land in the present" (p. 318).

Styres (2017) argues that Indigenous knowledge should not be competing with Western knowledge; instead, Indigenous knowledge should be understood and appreciated on its own terms:

> I suggest Land-centred approaches that acknowledge but (de)centre colonial relationships while privileging and (re)centring Indigenous thought focus on the philosophies of Iethi´nihsténha Ohwentsia´kékha (Land). Iethi´nihsténha Ohwentsia´kékha (Land) as a theoretical and philosophical concept comprises circularity, understanding of self-in-relationship, language, storing, and journeying as a central model for interpretation and meaning-making. (p. 38)

Styres specifies that Iethi´nihsténha Ohwentsia´kékha (Land) represents all relations (animate/inanimate), the cosmos, the earth, humans, and non-humans. Through stories, Indigenous peoples explain how they were created in a Land from the Land (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015) and how they relate to Land and all the beings that are part of it (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Styres, 2017). Styres (2017) posits that relations to Land encompass four aspects of being: spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical.

Indigenous and Western perspectives can both serve educational institutions as ways to engage their students in culturally significant experiences that serve the distinct worldviews of their student populations. The concept of *ethical space* (Ermine, 2007) is very important in this approach since such an educational space might provide an opportunity for people to consider two different, but valid co-existing knowledge systems that do not have to compete, but rather inform and complement each other, as equal but distinct sources of knowledge (Styres, 2017).

Indigenous research requires a decolonizing perspective since, by its very nature, it addresses and critiques the historical marginalization of Indigenous peoples (Kovach, 2010, 2018). Ritenburg et al. (2014) state, "decolonization requires action involving resistance to colonization, revaluing traditional Indigenous knowledge, reclaiming equitable ways of interacting to co-create new possibilities, and transforming political and personal histories" (p. 72). Kovach (2018) acknowledges the difference between an Indigenous paradigm and a decolonizing perspective (which is rooted in critical theory); a decolonizing perspective centres the settler discourse, while an Indigenous paradigm prioritizes Indigenous knowledge (Kovach 2018; Styres, 2017).

Sousa Santos (2014) notes that there is a sort of hybridization between class-based and ethno-cultural-racial struggles in countries that once suffered European colonization (that are

now independent nations). He posits that class-based and ethno-cultural-racial struggles are intertwined. Therefore, it is crucial to build broader communication between progressive political and social movements that can disrupt the common idea that colonization is something from the 'past,' and something that has been overcome. Disruption is necessary because positioning colonization as "finished business" provides legitimacy for the ongoing marginalization and discrimination of people because of their nationality, race, social class, religion, gender, and other identity markers that have been produced and reproduced for centuries. In this research, I particularly argue that music making is an identity marker, and that people can suffer marginalization based on the kind of music with which they identify and choose to play, especially when compared to music making that has been portrayed as a superior form of art by formal institutions (e.g., higher education institutions). For example, music with Indigenous roots is neither part of Mexico's national curriculum for basic education, nor taught in teacher education programs. According to Sousa Santos (2014),

> Western critical tradition was developed to address the needs of the oppressed classes of Western countries not in the light of the oppressed classes of the world at large. Both from cultural and political economy points of view, the 'European universalism' that this tradition embodied and that the Frankfurt School celebrated was indeed a particular reading of a particular reality that, for instance, did not include colonialism as a system of oppression, even though the majority of the world population was subjected to it. (p. 40)

In his book *Epistemologies of the South*, Sousa Santos (2014) proposes that ways of knowing and being of the global South serve to disrupt the epistemologies from the imperial North that are based on exploitative relationships rooted in capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Sousa Santos conceives the global South as a metaphor that is not based on

geographical position; rather, the global South represents the people who have historically suffered oppression and dispossession. For him, the South represents those places where knowledge, resources, and humans have been exploited in the name of progress and globalization. He states that the injustices that occur in the global South have been historically ignored by the global North; therefore, it is necessary to envision ways of knowing and being rooted in the traditions of those who have being ignored and unheard. Sousa Santos acknowledges that the division of global North and global South is complex. He mentions that most of the countries that currently suffer from exploitation are located in the geographical South: for example, countries in Latin America, Africa, and South Asia—countries that have been labeled as "developing countries." Meanwhile, countries such as New Zealand and Australia, even though they are located in the geographical South, belong to the global North. Sousa Santos is clear that both an imperial South and anti-imperial South can be found in the geographic global South, as well as an anti-imperial North can be found as well in the physical global North. For example, it is possible to find an anti-imperial global South within countries such as the United States, where the anti-imperial global South is located among African-Americans who continue to experience systemic discrimination. Another example of the anti-imperial global South can be found among the Indigenous peoples of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, whose territories were occupied by settler colonial forces, and who still suffer the consequences of centuries of colonial relationships. At the same time, it is possible to find nuclei of the imperial global South, which aim to follow the precepts that have been imported from the Global North. An example of the imperial South can be found in a country such as Mexico, where neoliberal policies privatized the goods of the nation in the early 1990s. Examples of this

privatization are banks, mining, petroleum, and communications, which have led to expanding the gap between rich and poor (Núñez, 2015).

Sousa Santos notes two components of the epistemologies of the South: *ecologies of knowledge* and *intercultural translation*. The basis for the *ecologies of knowledge* component resides in the idea that there is not one single way to approach knowledge; therefore, a scientific approach is not the only way that a person can approach knowledge. Instead, knowledge operates and is validated in social practices. Based on this premise, it is necessary to acknowledge that there is not one single way to acquire knowledge; Sousa Santos (2014) affirms that "all ignorance is ignorant of a certain kind of knowledge, and all knowledge is the overcoming of a particular ignorance" (p. 188). Meanwhile, *intercultural translation* aims to create bridges between different approaches to knowledge in order "to favor alliances among social movements fighting, in different cultural contexts, against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy and for social justice, human dignity, or human decency" (p. 212).

Grande (2008) notes as well that it is important to create a dialogue between Indigenous perspectives and Western revolutionary theory, particularly with critical theory, in order "to build broad-base coalitions and political solidarities" (p. 236), since both perspectives aim to critique different struggles of society. However, concomitantly, Grande points out that it is important to understand the difference between critical and Indigenous perspectives. On one hand, critical perspectives address subject rights, anti-oppression, capitalist relationships, class, gender, private property, and race, which are concerned with the 'rights' of individuals. Even though Indigenous perspectives address some of these issues, the difference is that Indigenous perspectives advocate not only for the 'rights' of the individual, but also for the 'rights' of the earth and the collective over the individual. From this perspective, the earth is not seen as a

resource to be exploited by humans. Following Grandes's idea, perhaps one of the clear differences between those two approaches is liberation through social democracy (critical perspective) and sovereignty tied to issues of land (Indigenous). Grande posits that because of the "inexorable ties between land and sovereignty, sovereignty and citizenship, and citizenship and nation-state, one of the most glaring questions for indigenous scholars is how a revolutionary socialist politics can imagine a 'new' social order unfolding upon (still) occupied land" (p. 243).

Based on the ideas of the aforementioned authors, there is a need for a coalition among perspectives that aims to create space in order to facilitate positive change—both in academia and in everyday life—for the rights of the earth and those who have been historically marginalized, segregated, and oppressed. It is necessary to find commonalities that might enable meaningful initiatives that can serve society and the planet as a whole. At the same time, it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the particular positionalities of each perspective in order to avoid generalizations, not just theoretically and conceptually, but more importantly, regarding the struggles that each perspective has faced and is trying to overcome.

When Race Meets Class: New Labels on Old Practices from Colonization to Marginalization

It is necessary to acknowledge the historical events that have shaped the current conditions in which Indigenous peoples find themselves, and that the genocidal and oppressive actions that characterized those historic events continue to exist in different forms, perpetuating inequities, even though some contemporary political discourse characterizes colonization as finished business (e.g., postcolonialism).

Colonization by the Spanish Empire shaped much of Latin America and continues to influence the Mexican reality. In order to establish control over the “new” world, Spaniards needed to conquer the cultures, bodies, and minds of native peoples (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Rosabal-Coto, 2016b). This was partially accomplished by using both military and religious means. The Catholic Church provided a “noble” reason for colonization—by converting native peoples to Catholicism in order to provide them with souls and then "save" their souls, since Indigenous peoples were considered non-humans (i.e., without souls) (Rosabal-Coto, 2016b). Religious conversion provided the Spanish crown with a rationale that was socially acceptable—at least to the Spanish citizenry—for taking control of the land (Rosabal-Coto, 2016; Sturman, 2016). The settlers wanted "Indigenous land, not Indigenous peoples, so Indigenous peoples were cleared out of the way of colonial expansion" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 66). In Mexico, Indigenous peoples had previously built places of worship, which colonizers destroyed during colonial times, building Catholic churches over the ruins of ancient temples. Colonizers portrayed Indigenous peoples and their cultures as primitive and exotic, while European culture was imposed as it was considered the pinnacle of human culture (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008; Marker, 2011; Quijano, 1992; Rosabal-Coto, 2016b; Styres, 2017). It was necessary for colonizers to create a perception of the *other* in order to impose Western epistemology as the dominant way of knowing by which other cultures would be classified, represented, compared, and evaluated (Smith, 2012). Peoples outside of the West were labeled as ‘savage,’ ‘exotic,’ ‘primitive,’ and ‘heretic’, who must adopt the culture of the colonizer (Devalle, 2000; Giménez, 2000; Rosabal-Coto, 2016; Thekkevallyara, 2013). This racialized discourse characterized European perspectives as superior (Chilisa, 2012; Cisneros, 2014; Quijano, 1992, 2000; Rosabal-Coto, 2016b); such discourse led to the undervaluing, erosion, and sometimes eradication of

Indigenous peoples and cultures, which some scholars have termed cultural genocide (Quijano, 1992, 2000; Rosabal-Coto, 2016b).

According to Cisneros (2014), epistemologies are divided between 'core,' linked to the dominant Western paradigm (rooted on European and Anglo-American perspectives) and 'peripheries,' which are epistemologies outside of the dominant Western paradigm. He states that "Indigenous, native voices and beliefs were silenced during colonization. 'Core' [epistemologies are] producing theory and methods, [while paradigms characterized as] 'peripheries' are consuming and reproducing them" (p. 169). A crucial part of the core-periphery relationship between Latin America and Europe was shaped at the very beginning of the former Spanish Empire. From the beginning of this relationship, New Spain (currently most of Latin America, excepting Brazil, Surinam, French Guyana, and Guyana) exported raw material and exotic goods (e.g., spices, animals, woods, fabrics, minerals), and in return, imported finished products, religion, and 'culture' (Albán, 2008; Rosabal-Coto, 2016; Shifres & Gonnet, 2015; Vazquez, 2017).

According to Quijano (2000), it was necessary to create a new abstract category in Latin America that would enable the classification of the Indigenous population within the existing power structure; this new category was 'race.' The concept of race facilitated the division of dominant and dominated based on a biological hierarchy, so that "relationships of domination came to be considered as 'natural.' Such an idea was meant to explain not only the external or physiognomic differences between dominants and dominated, but also the mental and cultural differences" (p. 216). Colonizers used the discourse of race to justify roles assigned to specific populations, including the role of slavery, as people who belonged to an inferior race did not "deserve" to be paid for their work. Likewise, colonizers, who were Caucasian, "naturally"

controlled the means of production and distribution of material capital. This categorization remains in place in nations across Latin America (Rosabal-Coto, 2013). Today, Western European expansionism continues to exercise control over a large number of resources through multinational corporations around the world ,and provides "tendencies of dominant Western ideals (including of the human), and of the constitutive dimensions of dominant conceptions and progress of civilization" (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018, p. 15). Meanwhile, other geographical zones around the world provide the necessary workforce to extract desired natural resources (Quijano, 2000).

Questioning the perceived need to follow a rapacious economic and political system based on racial superiority that has caused and maintained the subjugation and marginalization of Indigenous peoples is one of the first steps towards building ways forward to resist and fight back against new forms of internal and external colonization (e.g., transnational companies) that still seek to control land and resources that belong to Indigenous peoples not just in Mexico, but globally as well (Sousa Santos, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Quijano (1992) uses the concept of *coloniality* to describe a colonial structure that transcends nations and time. He argues that *coloniality* is the basis upon which a system of global exploitation, discrimination, and inequitable distribution of work and capital plays an important role in convincing those who were formerly colonized that anything that is not connected to a European worldview belongs to the past (since European culture is portrayed as the most advanced). This rhetoric is the basis for the creation of a dependent relationship, since the former colonizer presents their culture as the one that will provide a more sophisticated culture, advance forms of knowledge, and the opportunity to be to be part of a capitalist model that will eventually lead to 'progress.' Garzon (2013) argues that *coloniality* is more insidious

than traditional colonial and imperialist relationships, not only because it is perpetuated in the present—appearing through media communication, educational systems, and in everyday language—but, more importantly, because it is firmly implanted in the *habitus* of the former colonized (p. 311–312).

Colonial relationships are still in place. In the case of Latin America, countries have obtained their political independence, but colonial relationships subsist in new and cunning shapes and forms that are considered 'acceptable' in modern contexts (e.g., economic and political institutions). Rosabal-Coto (2016a) uses the term *recolonization from within* to refer to the process by which an elite minority designs a project to construct national identity so that they might maintain and profit from colonial structures based on the assumption of *white* superiority. That elite, which aspires to "whiteness," is deemed 'superior' in the social sphere. *Recolonization from within* provides the perfect argument for people wishing to pursue their "whiteness" in the form of cultural capital, and hence, secure their privileged social status (Bourdieu,1984). In this case, the disposition for and actualization of oppression has changed hands, from those of foreign colonizers to those of a national elite that feels entitled to replace the former Western colonizer.

Indigenous peoples' marginalization in Mexico began when they suffered abuse from Spanish colonizers; later, after the colonizers left, Indigenous peoples remained on the periphery of Mexican society due the elite ruling class decision to ignore Indigenous peoples' identities in order to favour a national identity that could serve to create stability (Ducey, 2015; Sturman, 2016). This situation also occurred with Indigenous peoples in other parts of Latin American where democracies emerged after independence (Pujadas, 2000; Quijano, 2000; Rodríguez, 2006; Rosabal-Coto, 2013, 2014, 2016b). Marginalization is ongoing; 39.2% of Indigenous

peoples in Mexico live in extreme poverty, compared to only 8.5% of the non-Indigenous population (SEP, 2013). This is an illustration of the challenges that have not been overcome in the last five centuries, challenges that are very much present in everyday situations in Mexico.

As part of the aftermath of colonization, a significant number of Mexicans exhibit this aforementioned habitus or colonized inferiority complex in everyday situations in two ways: appreciating and placing a high value on everything that is from outside of Mexico and viewing Indigenous peoples' traditions as inferior. Paz (1959) points out that Mexicans do not want or do not dare to be themselves due to constant struggles with their own past, marked by the aftermath of the conquest, colonization, and several wars with foreign nations. Particularly significant is the one in which Mexico lost about half of its territory due to the invasion by the United States of America in 1848. All of these historical events have created a sense of inferiority concerning local cultures and worldviews; therefore, *malinchismo*—a concept that expresses appreciation of and a high value for everything that comes from outside of Mexico (Tomasini, 1997)—is used in a wide variety of situations to undermine what is produced in the country.

Latin Americans themselves—along with inhabitants of the so-called global South in general—contribute to the creation of 'peripheral' knowledge, which, when compared to 'core' Western knowledge, is not considered valid or as valid (Cisneros, 2014). This attitude has led to, at best, an undermining of knowledge produced in the global South in favour of 'valid' knowledge that is produced in the global North (Cisneros, 2014; Quijano, 2000; Sousa Santos, 2014). Sousa Santos (2014) suggests that this attitude has caused an *epistemicide*, or the death of the subordinated culture's knowledge. Epistemicide can only be prevented, he states, by looking to the global South—not to the imperial South that reproduces the idea of 'universal' truths but the anti-imperial South, which has contributed to the liberation of different parts of the global

South. He argues that places in the global South can be sources of innovative and transformative practices that go beyond theory. He posits that in the global South, anti-imperialist movements serve as examples of counterhegemonic globalization. According to him,

> In the global North the aspiration to an anti-imperial stance can only be imagined as a postimperial stance, since in the modern period imperialism was an original condition for the global North. In the case of the global South, to the contrary, it is possible to construct an anti-imperial stance by imagining a real or an invented precolonial, preimperial condition. As in other contexts, the Indigenous movements in Latin America illustrate the anticolonial, anti-imperial potential in claiming a precolonial memory. (p. 224)

The aforementioned author points to the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), more widely known as the *Zapatistas*, in Chiapas, Mexico as one of the movements that serve as an example of when theory is put into practice. According to Mignolo and Walsh (2018), EZLN "marked the beginning of a new political movement of decolonial resistance, resurgence, proposition, thought, shift, and movement that continues until today" (p. 25).

Over time, EZLN has managed to move away from its insurgent actions, which contributed to its infamous international reputation in 1994, to non-military strategies. The movement's shift to a decolonial insurgency is characterized by ancestral epistemes rooted in the local ways of knowing and being (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Sousa Santos, 2014, 2018). An example of the shift from resistance to resurgence of Indigenous ways of knowing is the creation of *Universidad de la Tierra* (University of the Earth), also known as *Unitierra* (Igelmo, 2009; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Sousa Santos, 2018). This university, located in the states of Chiapas and Oaxaca, is an independent and autonomous body that is project-praxis driven, where there is no fixed curriculum, no credentials are awarded, and no previous credentials are required to enter

the university (Igelmo, 2009). Instead, students are connected with a person who has real-life experience in the area that the student wants to learn about, and, within this apprentice-mentor framework, students learn in real scenarios that are connected to their social contexts. According to Mignolo and Walsh (2018), at Universidad de la Tierra, students learn "not from, but with Indigenous struggles and postulates of knowledge, in conversation with other forms of critical thought and liberation-based theory and praxis" (p. 73).

It is necessary to (re)valorize knowledge that has been and continues to be produced in the Global South, especially from cultures that have experienced systemic oppression. In this case, Indigenous perspectives, which represent both a geographical and an epistemic South, can be potential tools to inform students about important ways of knowing and being that do not necessarily oppose Western conception of knowledge; rather, Indigenous ways of knowing are one more of the valid ways of approaching knowledge and complement students' learning journeys along with Western knowledge and other approaches to knowledge.

Decolonizing and Indigenizing Music Education in Research and Practice

The "good" Musician: Hierarchical and Valued Music Making

Young (2016) defines Western classical music as music composed mainly by European composers (but also by composers from other parts of the world that adopted the Western classical music tradition) between 1600 and 1900. This form of music making is highly valued because it is portrayed in academic and social contexts as the highest expression of Western European culture and refinement (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010; Goble, 2010). When different musics are compared directly with Western classical music according to the intrinsic attributes considered important to Western music (e.g., form, harmony, pitch), it could be argued that

Western classical music is the most sophisticated of all musics in terms of the complexity and variety of these attributes (Young, 2016); hence, its production, reproduction and instruction are viewed as a good that middle and upper classes will see as desirable (Bradley, 2012; Dolloff, 2020; Folkestad, 2005).

Particularly, two distinctive Western classical music features contribute to the notion that this is a superior form of music; both characteristics are cognitive in nature and are thus highly regarded according to Western value systems. First, Western classical music uses written musical notation, emphasizing its capacity for abstraction. Second, if viewed with a Kantian aesthetic lens, people appreciate and interact with Western classical music mainly through a cognitive process (Emmerson, 2000; Goble, 2015; Shifres & Gonnet, 2015). It logically follows, according to this Western conception, that forms of music based on oral tradition are less valuable since they "lack" rational and theoretical components. The aforementioned arguments serve as a rationale to not value musics outside of the Western classical music paradigm as a desirable possession because of their connection to groups of people who have been historically portrayed as inferior (Shifres & Gonnet, 2015; Shifres & Rosabal-Coto, 2017; Sturman, 2016; Vazquez, 2019). Due to the high value that has been ascribed to Western classical music, all remaining musics around the world are tagged as “world” music, belonging to a periphery outside of a Eurocentric perspective (Bradley, 2007, 2012; Hess, 2015, 2017).

Educational institutions have not promoted the understanding of music making outside of the Western classical music paradigm on its own terms, be they higher educational institutions (universities and conservatories) or primary schools. The term *musician* continues to be granted to the person who has knowledge that has been acquired via formal institutions based on

Western-European models (Bradley, 2012; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010; Shifres & Gonnet, 2015).

Yet, music making cannot be understood in isolation as a collection of sounds and rhythms; rather, in many cases (such as the case of music with Indigenous roots or Indigenous musics), musics are strongly linked to specific cultural practices and the relationships that underpin them (Goble, 2015; Ruddock 2017; Shifres & Gonnet 2015). Moreover, most music making around the world is not taught through Western classical music notation (Hess, 2017). A contrasting definition of music making is what Small (1998) proposes as *musicking* (the gerund of the verb to music). He proposes the following as a definition for musicking: "to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (p. 9). This definition of music goes beyond the act of giving and receiving that is linked to Western classical music where there is a "barrier" between the musician (provider) and the audience (receiver). Musicking can also serve to disrupt the definition of musicians, since in some capacity almost everyone has engaged or engage in different music capacities.

Bourdieu (1984) observed that one's choice of music is often a reflection of one's social class, and, according to him, there is no other activity that is as classificatory as music since it "represents the most radical and most absolute form of the negation of the world, and especially the social world, which the bourgeois ethos tends to demand of all forms of art" (p. 19). In the context of Mexico, Sturman (2016) states that music represented social status very clearly during the vice-royal period (seventeenth century) in what is known today as Mexico. European-style church music, choirs, and orchestras represented the tastes of the social elite, comprised of Spaniards (born in Spain). Music for non-religious purposes and entertainment represented

Native-born descendants of Spaniards (creoles) and people of Spanish-Indian ancestry (mestizo). Meanwhile, Indigenous peoples selected particular forms from secular and sacred realms and adopted European musical instruments, customs, and musical forms to create a syncretic blend that allowed them to keep their ancestral cultural practices alive. That structure is still present in Mexico's society; different forms of music are associated with particular groups of people. Western classical music is still considered a form of music that represents a "superior" form of art. Engaging in Western classical music then becomes a way in which individuals position themselves in society with a form of cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). In this conception, art becomes a commodity that is used by higher classes in society to ratify and maintain their social position; consequently, the artist too becomes a commodity that "serves a utilitarian role, but now as a form of distinction between 'owners' of art—the bourgeoisie who appreciated aesthetic beauty—and the lower classes whose lack of 'culture' barred them from such experiences" (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2008, p. 240).

Access to Western classical music is not available for every single person due to several factors (e.g., geographical location, acquisition of other forms of capital (in this case from parents), and music programs with limited amount of entry spaces) (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986; Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010; Gaztambide-Fernández et al., 2013; Hess, 2017; Prest, 2016). In this framework, most "talented" people belong to a middle or upper-middle class and have both the financial wherewithal to invest in their own or their children's classical music instruction, and access to that instruction because they live in metropolitan areas. The idea that "talent" is the central characteristic needed to achieve artistic excellence does not recognize that innate talent can only be cultivated in an environment of privilege (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010, 2013; Ruddock, 2017, Small, 1999).

In recent years, advocacy for music education, and the arts in general, has focused on positioning what the arts *do* for people and for society, a discourse that aims to secure funds and space in the curriculum for the arts. In this case the arts are conceived from a Western European art perspective (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Hess, 2017a). Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) posits that arts programs globally are based on a *rhetoric of effects*, which has what arts *do* for people at the centre of the discourse. By that logic, arts for their own sake are advertised by arts advocators as a "medicine" that is going to change people's lives in a positive way just by being in contact with them. Nevertheless, the *rhetoric of effects* fails to address the active role of the person as well as the particular social and cultural context where arts education takes place. In order for people to be at the centre of discussion, Gaztambide-Fernández proposes the *rhetoric of cultural production* because from this perspective:

> rather than thinking about the arts as *doing something to people*, we should think about artistic forms as *something people do … it is actual people, under real social circumstances, in particular cultural contexts, and within specific material and symbolic relations that have experiences involving symbolic materials and forms of cultural production*. (p. 226)

In the context of music education, it is crucial to engage students in experiences that are significant to their local contexts with symbolic relations that are connected to their idea of what culture is (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Goble, 2010; Hess, 2017a). Imposing on students a conception of art exemplified only by Western classical music can create dislocations between a student's personal experience and external, "superior" form of arts.

According to Hess (2017b), musics outside the Western paradigm have either been excluded from school music curricula or have served to explore "primitive" ways of engaging

with music making. In many cases, these forms of music making are directed towards younger students, while Western classical music is for older students; hence, we can see that in "privileging Eurocentric content, the notions of white supremacy tied to 'sophisticated' Western classical music maintain[s] a [social] Darwinian hierarchy all by itself" (p. 20).

In other cases, according to Hess (2015), music making in schools provides only a tokenistic approach to culture, where music repertoire is taught in isolation, not providing students the necessary cultural background of the music; therefore, students learn 'romanticized' or 'exotic' repertoire that represents a given culture (Hess, 2015). According to Goble (2010), teaching students music without addressing the importance of music in a given cultural setting can contribute to students finding music making uninteresting. Perhaps, the concept of 'musical tourism' best describes the desire of music educators to have their students experience different 'exotic' music making from various cultures around the world (Hess, 2015). Even though one might try to argue that students accessing different musics facilitates cultural understanding, for cultural understanding to be more likely to occur, it is necessary to devote time to engaging in culturally significant experiences to learn ways of knowing and being of other cultures via music making.

Bowman (2002) is clear in differentiating between instruction and education. He defines music instruction as the process of mastering certain skills with the goal of functioning in a determined context, for example learning how to hold a violin bow or move the fingers across the piano keys quickly, for which a significant set of specific abilities are not necessarily transferrable to other areas of life. Meanwhile, according to Bowman, music education is not mainly focused on developing artistic abilities related with music performance, but instead is devoted to fostering "people who have not only the capacity but the inclination to question, to

look at things from various perspectives, and who are aware of the partiality and fallibility of all such perspectives, their own included" (p. 66). In this case, the main goal is not to foster students who might become excellent or professional musicians, but rather, music will serve as a meaningful tool to develop abilities that students can use in their everyday lives. It is necessary that the music educator prioritizes the goals of students, instead of trying to fulfill some of their own expectations as musicians or performers (Hess, 2017a). In the context of Mexico, due to the lack of music educators, it is not uncommon that people who studied music performance teach in schools. Thus, there can be an uncomfortable disconnect between the musician/educator's expectations (as a professionally trained performer) and what is considered important within the educational settings in which musician/educators find themselves (schools).

The goal of proposing the embedding of music with Indigenous roots is for students to engage in culturally significant ways with Indigenous ways of knowing while avoiding a tokenistic approach or cultural appropriation by rendering all musics into a Western framework that does not take into consideration the cultural context in which musics are rooted. The ideas expressed in the literature reviewed in the following section offer clues about potential ways to address the need for more music educators, including collaboration with music culture bearers.

Embracing Culturally Significant Music Practices

Music making in different parts of Mexico is diverse because it has emerged through centuries of multiple forms of cultural exchange among Indigenous peoples, Spaniards, and people who arrived from Africa. Even though Mexico does not have sufficient music educators for its population, there is significant and valuable music knowledge present in every region of Mexico, knowledge that has been conveyed from generation to generation by music culture

bearers. Therefore, venues of collaboration between music culture bearers and educators may be a way forward to provide students with the opportunity to engage in culturally significant music experiences. In this section, I discuss what I describe as *music with Indigenous roots*, and the ways that these musics might be embedded in the educational system. This section is part of an ongoing discussion that is present throughout the whole dissertation since it is at the core of the participant's narratives in chapter 5 and the discussion that is presented in chapter 6 regarding potential ways for the embedding of Huasteco music in Mexico's national educational system.

According to Sturman (2016), as part of the conversion process to the Catholic faith during the colonization process, Catholic missionaries trained many Indigenous peoples to play and construct musical instruments, which served as a way for Indigenous peoples to participate in the Catholic mass as well as to reduce the number of instruments that had to be imported from Europe. Music provided Indigenous peoples with a tool to keep their traditions alive; "Indigenous people adopted musical instruments, customs, and musical forms to keep alive their own practices even as they accepted the frames of Catholic worship" (Sturman, 2016, p. 95). Thus, in the current Mexican context, Indigenous music cannot be fully understood without acknowledging the musical influence from Europe both in terms of the kinds of instruments and musical forms. In the context of Mexico (as well as other places in Latin America), it is important to frame music making that has Indigenous influences as *music with Indigenous roots* (Vazquez, 2019). This term creates a space for discussion regarding the different influences that have shaped current musics used in Indigenous contexts.

Music with Indigenous roots is very much alive in Mexico. Music has served to "disguise" ancient knowledge that otherwise might have vanished during colonial times; therefore, Indigenous music making can be seen as an act of resistance to keep alive important

aspects of Indigenous cultures (Sturman, 2016). Huasteco culture is an example of the cultural blending between different cultures that enabled Indigenous traditions to be conveyed and survive since colonial times (Bernal, 2008; Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; Camacho, 2011; García, 2016). According to Sturman (2016), Indigenous musics are very much present in rural communities where Indigenous peoples have historically lived. She points out that the instruments used for music making and the way that people teach and learn music vary between different regions and Indigenous groups in Mexico. For example, the Mixes people in the Oaxaca highlands have a strong tradition of wind band, where they are taught to use Western music theory to read music from a young age. This custom of using wind instruments and written notation contrasts with the music tradition in the Huasteca region where instrumentation consists of string instruments and music instruction is passed on mainly by an oral tradition (Bernal, 2008, 2009; Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; Camacho, 2011; García, 2016).

According to MacDonald et al. (2002), music is an inherent part of cultures and people's identities; therefore, it is crucial that music making embodying Indigenous perspectives be represented in both research and practice in meaningful ways in order to foster pride among those who self-identity as Indigenous in the context of Mexico (Vazquez, 2019). It is necessary for students to see themselves represented in the music that they learn in places such as schools (Hess, 2017a).

There is a danger that music teachers might approach Indigenous musics and music with Indigenous roots in the classroom superficially, contributing to 'musical tourism' and tokenism that do not provide students with meaningful learning experiences (Campbell, 2002; Hess, 2015). In different cases, 'music' in Indigenous cultures goes beyond the act of performance since making is connected with rituals to connect with deities, for healing, and as an important part of

the social networks in the communities (Bermúdez 2010; Martínez, 2002; Sturman, 2016). Therefore, it is necessary to devote time to engage with music with Indigenous roots beyond learning the musical components (e.g., sound, rhythms), and instead, engage in the purpose of music making in the specific contexts where musics are rooted.

Indigenous musics and music with Indigenous roots might not be part of music educators' practices because of their valid fear of misrepresenting Indigenous perspectives through ignorance. Nevertheless, fear of misrepresentation can also serve as an excuse not to engage in culturally significant experiences and wilfully remain ignorant. In this regard, Kallio (2019) posits that "political correctness [has] been noted to serve as a justification for epistemic ignorance … these excuses allow scholars to disengage, reinforcing the barriers of the academic episteme and one's comfort zones" (p. 8).

Indeed, 'musical tourism' and political correctness are problematic in several situations. It is the mutual responsibility of teachers, administrators, and researchers who engage in studies that include Indigenous peoples to counter these tendencies and engage in a meaningful process to learn about Indigenous protocols and seek guidance from local culture bearers. Educators and researchers need to take time to engage with Indigenous communities in order to reframe their views about music and see a broader perspective, as well as to establish meaningful relationships of trust before projects can be legitimately developed (Castleden, 2012; Prest, 2020; Prest & Goble, 2018; Prest et al., 2020, 2021). In this regard, Piercey (2012) recalls her experiences when she lived, taught music, and conducted research in an Inuit community, "By going to church every Sunday and by participating in events at the community hall, two activities deemed of high importance by Arviamiut, I was soon accepted into Inuit society" (p. 160).

The most effective way of embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the music education classroom and in music education research is through collaboration with Indigenous culture bearers (Dolloff, 2020; Kallio, 2019; Locke & Prentice, 2016; Prest, 2020; Prest et al., 2021; Tuinstra, 2019). Again, creating relationships takes time, and it is necessary for people in school settings to be willing to go through the process, which can be long, and sometimes outside of the time frames established by employment and academic requirements (such as ethics procedures); nevertheless, developing relationships and engaging in collaborative endeavors require a personal and collective decision that needs to be negotiated in order to enact a learning process in a good way.

To conclude this section, it is important to affirm that both Western classical music and Indigenous musics must be understood in light of their particular contexts. Each form is equally valid because each represents important aspects of a distinct culture; therefore, it is crucial to favour both perspectives as equals in educational settings, demonstrated through recognition in educational policy and equitable distribution of financial resources. Fostering equity of perspectives in the educational system might lead to enhanced pride among those who identify as Indigenous (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Kanu, 2011).

Huasteco Culture and Music Making

In this chapter, I have discussed the curricula of five countries, putting special emphasis on the case of Mexico. I presented the theories that inform my research and how these theories can enhance our understanding of the historical lack of appreciation for music with Indigenous roots in education broadly and music education specifically, as well as literature that addresses potential ways to bring Indigenous ways of knowing and being to music education practice. In

this following section, I will provide a historical overview of the Huasteca region in order to situate the reader in the particular context of the region, a place that experienced its own colonization process and different attempts by Indigenous peoples in the area to obtain more autonomy first from the Spanish Empire and then from the emerging Mexican government (once Mexico obtained its independence). I will conclude by discussing Huasteco music making and its significance in Huasteco culture.

An Historical Overview of the Huasteca Region

Huasteco people have developed their own traditions over centuries. Through music, Huasteco people present their worldview and daily lived experiences. The word *Huastecos* derives from a hybridization of Nahuatl and Spanish – *Cuechtécah* – which is a demonym from the plural *Cuechtlán*, which also derives from *cuech/tli/, caracolillo* (snail) and *tlán* (place) (Bonilla, 2013; Güemes, 2016). Huastecos can be understood as "*los originarios del lugar del caracolillo*" (the people from the place of the snail).

The Huasteca region is a multiethnic area where Teenek, Nahua, Hñuhu (Otomí), Tepehua, Totonaco, and Xi'oi (Pame) peoples created common cultural features due to centuries of interaction before the Spaniards arrived. Concomitantly, these Indigenous groups managed to maintain their own cultural practices such as languages and worldviews (Alegre, 2015; Caraveo, 2015; Ducey, 2015; Güemes, 2016; Nava, 2009; Paraíso, 2015; Pérez, 2016; Pérez & Castillo, 2007). The contribution of these pre-Hispanic cultures, the cultural influences from the Spaniards, plus those of slaves who were taken from Africa have all shaped the current Huasteco identity (Alegre, 2015; Caraveo, 2015; Güemes, 2016; Paraíso, 2015; Pérez, 2016). For the purpose of this study, Huasteco culture is understood as the result of the contributions from all

the aforementioned, a culture that is easily recognizable through its distinctive features (e.g., music, food, clothes) and the fact that corn is a central part of the daily interactions among people who live in the Huasteca region.

According to Nava (2009), the first contact between Huasteco and Spanish peoples occurred in 1519. Between 1525 and 1526, Indigenous peoples in the Huasteca region organized several revolts; these concluded with the execution of over 400 Huasteco lords. Spaniards also sold many Huastecos as slaves, who were sent to the West Indies (Bonilla, 2013; Nava, 2009). Following these harsh actions, the children and heirs of those 400 Huasteco lords served as intermediaries between Huasteco communities and Spanish settlers. This servile relationship between the Spanish settlers and Indigenous peoples was known as *encomienda* (Alegre, 2015; Paraiso, 2015; Rosabal-Coto 2016). The main ideas behind encomienda were that a Spaniard (the *encomendero*) would be 'in charge' of a certain number of Indigenous peoples who lived on a specific piece of land. The Indigenous peoples needed to pay tribute in the form of a certain amount of money, labour, or product (e.g., corn, vegetables, etc.) to the encomendero to whom they were assigned. In "return," the encomendero respected the methods of production, social interactions, and political structures that were in place prior to the colonizers' arrival (Alegre, 2015; Avila et al., 1995). In theory, Indigenous peoples were not slaves; nevertheless, the encomienda served to produce wealth for the Spanish crown and the encomenderos. Spaniards realized that productivity increased when they used Indigenous peoples to produce goods rather than kill them. One of the arguments to justify the encomienda was that the encomendero would provide "protection" and Christian indoctrination, which would "save" Indigenous peoples' souls from hell (Alegre, 2015; Rosabal-Coto 2016). One of the goals of the encomienda was to show Indigenous peoples that they were not civilized; therefore, it was a

'humanitarian' act to teach them how to be civilized, using religion as one of the teaching tools. This approach served as a rationale to portray Indigenous peoples as low in the social hierarchy because of their savage nature; as a result, they were destined to be ruled by the Spaniards. Less than one decade after the first revolts by Huastecos, there was not a single town that was not under the encomienda. Many Huastecos, unwilling to live under this new system, left their towns, escaping Spanish rule by living in more remote areas in the mountains (Alegre, 2015; Ducey, 2015).

In 1532, the Spanish Crown created what was known as *la República de Indios* (The Indian Republic), which had at its heart the same logic as the encomienda—a social structure in which Indigenous leaders would be in charge of controlling the Indigenous population in order to provide tribute to the Spanish crown (Alegre, 2015; Ávila et al., 1995; Beaucage, 2000; Ducey, 2015; Paraiso, 2015; Tutino, 2000). The Indigenous people were allowed to create *cabeceras* in which a descendent of the former Indigenous ruling class would be named *cacique* (Alegre, 2015), which enabled the creation of *cacicazgos* (chieftainships) in order to exercise political control over a determined area of land (Chance, 1998; Menegus, 2002). The different cabeceras and caciques would then report to an *Alcaldia Mayor* (main town hall), which was controlled by the Spaniards (Alegre, 2015; Ávila et al., 1995). The premise behind the República de Indios (whose regions were later transformed into municipalities) was that Indigenous communities would have nominal autonomy, referring to local ways of political organization and decision-making, so long as the flow of goods and taxes were paid to the Alcaldias.

Nevertheless, it is evident that Indigenous peoples in the Huasteca were not supportive of the idea of paying tribute to the Spanish crown. Ducey (2015) provides an example of this sentiment, citing a statement made in the early 1800s by a delegate of the Spanish crown in the

Huasteco region (while the independence movement in Mexico[7] was in progress): "Indigenous peoples abhor any new taxes, and there is nothing that makes Indigenous peoples more compliant than not modifying their own protocols and customs" (p. 128).

According to Ducey (2015), Indigenous peoples in the Huasteco followed the rules established by the Spanish Crown as much as possible; nevertheless, there were several unsuccessful revolts in the 1700s against the Spanish rulers. It was not until the beginning of the Mexican Independence movement that the Indigenous communities had the opportunity to fight against the regime. The *independentistas* sought support among Indigenous leaders who were the heads of the República de Indios. The *independentistas* enlisted Indigenous leaders in their army to build support from the Indigenous communities. According to Ducey's study, during colonial times, Indigenous peoples were not obligated by law to serve in the army; however, over the years, the Spaniards recruited Indigenous peoples and people of African descent to join the armed forces of the crown. To have Indigenous peoples with military training was in some ways a challenge for both independentist and colonial interests. Among the Spaniards, there were voices that were against providing military training to Indigenous peoples because of the fear of an eventual revolt; on the other hand, in some cases, the independentists faced Indigenous communities that were divided due to their service to the crown. The independentists found a solution; they offered better pay and higher positions in the army to the Indigenous soldiers, both of which were denied by the Spanish military.

The independence movement created a sense of new national pride, a movement which focused on creating a national identity, but at the same time envisioning a new state where all the different Indigenous "Nations" (the former República de Indios) would have self-determinacy,

[7] The independence movement occurred between 1810 and 1820 (Ducey, 2015)

and most importantly, where those Indigenous nations or republics would no longer need to pay tribute. According to the Ducey, the *independentistas* wanted to form a decentralized new state that allowed nations to live within a confederation; however, this vision did not materialize. Perhaps Ducey's viewpoint best reflects the outcome for the independence movement in Indigenous realities; the independence movement did not make significant changes for Indigenous peoples since that social movement provided concessions to the independentists, but left the local structures of power from colonial times untouched. The constitutionalist era (in the form of a nation-state), which Huastecos agreed to be part of, did not mark the beginning of a new era in which governments respected Indigenous community structures. The constitutionalist era fostered centralism, a key aspect to which Indigenous communities were historically opposed, and which systematically aimed to limit both the right to vote for Indigenous peoples and the creation of new municipalities. The members of the former colonial elites who controlled commerce, along with landowners in general, ended up controlling the main positions in government, particularly the prefectures (Durcey, 2015, p. 213). Once it was clear that Indigenous voices would not play an important role in the new nation-state, Indigenous leaders and their communities began to operate "parallel" political structures in the smaller communities near the main town of the municipality[8] (usually the largest community). This parallel structure resembled that of the former República de Indios. This emigration to smaller communities is still evident not just in the Huasteca region but in the whole country due to the high percentage of Indigenous peoples who continue to live in smaller communities rather than in the main town of the municipality. The Indigenous self-governance proposed and promised by the independentist

[8] In the context of Mexico, *municipios* (municipalities) are made up of a main town or city, as well as other smaller communities called *localidades* or *comunidades.*

movement did not come about; this is an example of neocolonial structures that were kept in place once independence was obtained.

I consider it necessary to have a sense of the history of the Huasteco region and culture in order to understand its present. This background knowledge enables comparisons between the region and other parts of the world with regards to colonization struggles and decolonial paths that are unique to a particular group of people in a certain geographical location; otherwise, there is a risk of generalizing colonization as a single concept that is then applied inappropriately in exactly the same way in different contexts.

Music Making in the Huasteco Region

As discussed in the previous section, music making is present in everyday life in Huasteco culture. Music has been present in the Huasteco region before, during, and after the colonial times. According to Güemes (2016), some of the instruments that are rooted in precolonial times are a little drum, a flute with three holes made out of *carrizo* (sugar cane wood) that is used to play the *danza de varitas* or *Kuaxompiahtinih* (dance of the little rods), the *Kokowilotl* (a little ocarina), little bells made out bronze and little whistles that are used during the Chikomexochitl ritual, turtle shells that are used as percussion instruments, and the *nukup* or *teponaxtli* (a type of slit drum) that is used for the *Bíxom mixthú* dance. The aforementioned author notes individuals who wish to construct a teponaxtli must follow a specific protocol; while the teponaxtli is being made, this instrument needs to be next to the roots of the tree from which the wood came in order for this instrument to have a long life and a good sound. The instrument maker must offer the instrument something to drink and eat, candles, and prayers (p. 171).

Son Huasteco (as the other sones in Mexico) is a fusion of musics, incorporating the influence of Indigenous, Spanish, and African music making, and whose instrumentation consists of the huapanguera (similar to a baroque guitar), the jarana (a little guitar with five strings), and the violin (Bernal, 2008; Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; Camacho, 2011; García, 2016). The use of the violin and the huapanguera in the Huasteco region can be traced to the 18th century; meanwhile, the jarana can be traced to the 17th century (Güemes, 2016). The word *son*[9] comes from the Latin word *sonus*, which describes the sound that is perceived by the ear and that is used to create music (Bonilla & Gómez, 2013; García, 2016; Ivanov, 2014; Stanford, 1972).

Son Huasteco is the music that is most representative of the Huasteca region. Nevertheless, there is also a strong tradition of brass bands in the region, which play in celebrations and rituals (Pérez, 2016; Pacheco, 2016). *Son* Huasteco plays an important part in religious celebrations, harvest rituals, local special dates (e.g., Day of the Dead), weddings, baptisms, and funerals (Bonilla, 2013; Güemes, 2016; Pérez, 2012; Vargas, 2016). Even though the terms *son* Huasteco and Huapango are used interchangeably, in the following paragraphs, I provide a categorization proposed by Güemes (2016) that identifies the different types of sones that can be found in the Huasteco region according to the *use* that they have in rituals and ceremonies or in secular celebrations. Güemes also notes that *son* Huasteco and Huapango can be used interchangeably; nevertheless, in order to offer a wider perspective about the use of sones Huastecos, I will divide sones Huastecos into the following categories: Huapangos, sones Huastecos, and *sones de costumbre* (traditional sones).

A Huapango usually has a composer; nevertheless, some of the Huapangos are in the public domain and is not possible to identify the composer (Güemes, 2016; Pérez, 2016). The

[9] The word son, when italicized, will refer to the Huasteco style of music.

Huapangos have a fixed number of stanzas and a fixed topic. The Huapango is accompanied by dance, and the singers use a long lasting, high-pitched falsetto. It is constructed in the format of a "song," and thus, the length of the song can be predicted. The listener who is familiar with the Huapango knows what to expect when a trio is about to play it. Huapango became popular in the 1940s because of Nicandro Castillo, a prolific composer from the Huasteco region who officially registered 96 compositions. Because of its song format, Nicandro adapted Huapango to mariachi bands, and so Huapango became very popular in the cinema. This motivated other Huasteco composers and non-Huasteco composers to use the Huasteco "flavour" to compose more Huapango for Huasteco trios and for mariachis.

Son Huasteco does not have composers—it belongs in the public domain. *Son* Huasteco contains three specific features: foot-stomping dance forms, poetic verse in a strophic song structure (using a high-pitched falsetto in some sections of the song), and music (Güemes, 2016; Paraiso, 2015; Stanford, 1972; Sturman, 2016; Vazquez, 2017). During the song, a singer sings verses (accompanied by the instruments) that do not follow a pre-established narrative. This allows a *son* to last as long as the Huasteco trio desires, according to how tired the musicians or the dancers are. In a section, the singer will stop, the violin will improvise, and then the singer will sing again in a sort of A-B-A structure, which continues for as long as the song lasts (Garcia, 2016; Güemes, 2016; Sánchez, 2002). Through Huasteco music, people describe their natural environment, daily lives, feelings, places, and stories (Güemes, 2016; Bonilla & Gomez, 2013; Vazquez, 2017). Sones Huastecos are mainly used for secular purposes; nevertheless, some sones can be used in rituals (Güemes, 2016). *Son* Huasteco is linked more to the mestizo population that lives in the Huasteco region (Alegre, 2015; García, 2016; Güemes, 2016; Pérez, 2016).

Finally, *son* de costumbre, also known as *sones indígenas* (Indigenous sones), is used in rituals and is connected to magical-religious ceremonies performed in Indigenous communities, which are mainly connected to life, cosmic cycles, and agricultural cycles (Alegre, 2015; Bonilla, 2013; García, 2016; Güemes, 2016; Hernández, 2003; Hernández, 2010; Pacheco, 2015, 2016; Paraíso, 2015; Pérez, 2016). The sacred use of *son* de costumbre serves as a symbol to differentiate mestizo and Indigenous populations (Alegre, 2015; Güemes, 2016; Pérez, 2016). This branch of *son* is traditionally played only with violin and Huapanguera; nevertheless, at present, it is possible to use the jarana as well. In *son* de costumbre there is no singing, only music and dance (Bonilla 2013; Hernández, 2010; Pérez, 2016). An example of the use of music in rituals is *Tlamanes*, a ritual to thank the earth for a good corn harvest (Alegre, 2001). In this ritual, a series of *canarios* (small pieces played during rituals and ceremonies such as weddings) are used to open a sacred space to ask the divine for a good corn harvest (Alegre, 2001; Pacheco, 2015, 2016). A good corn harvest is important for two reasons; first, corn is an essential food staple for people in the region, and second, according to the Huasteco people, humans are part of the sacred universe with a divine energy inside of them that comes from the sun. Once this energy is inside of the body, it is transformed into *chicahualistli* (Alegre, 2001, p. 170). In order to keep the chicahualistli alive, people need to eat corn; otherwise, the body loses energy, and the person dies.

In the same category of ritual music, it is important to mention *música de arpa* (Harp music) or *música Chiquita* (Little music) (Pérez, 2016; Tiedje & Camacho, 2005). Música de arpa or música Chiquita is used purely in rituals, and is therefore sacred. According to Hernández (2010), in the past, people knew well that the dance of the harp was not a game, but something very important and sacred in the community. The instruments used for música de arpa

could not be played on just any ordinary day or at any time. It was used mainly for ceremonies when offering thanks to the corn or asking for rain when there was no water, as a medicine, and during the *Xantolo* celebration [celebration for the Day of the Dead] (p. 242). The instruments used for música de arpa are different than those used in the other type of sones. In this case, the instruments are the *kuarsono* (a 22- or 24-stringed harp), *pilkochotsin* (rebab) and *cartonal* or *cardonal*, which have their roots in European and Arabic instruments from the 13th-15th centuries (Hernández, 2010; Tiedje & Camacho, 2005). These instruments were also embraced by Huastecos and adapted to their own worldviews. In the construction of these sacred instruments, the Indigenous luthiers take great care in the process. According to Hernández (2010), instruments are made by request, and the process by which the musician asks for the instrument has a meaningful protocol of commitment between the luthier and musician. The process of constructing these instruments is different from those for building the jarana, violin, and huapanguera, since the latter do not require a ceremony.

In order for musicians to begin the process of commissioning a kuarsono, pilkochotsin, or cartonal, they must bring the luthier a*guardiente* (alcohol made out of sugar cane), *copal* (tree resin), and four candles. The aguardiente and the candles are for the gods of the earth (Cintehtli), to ask them permission to build the instrument, since tree and humans are born of the earth. The musician first has a toast with the earth (demonstrating a relationship with a non-human entity), and then with the luthier. Following the toasts, the candles and the copal are burned. The instrument usually takes six weeks to complete. During that time, the luthier needs to be "clean;" therefore, the luthier must abstain from sex and some foods. Failure to do so will be seen by the gods of the earth as a lack of respect. The luthier must wait until the moon is in a particular phase of its cycle, and in the case of the harp, the wood of a red cedar tree is planted on a hill before the

harp is cut. The luthier is required to work on the construction of the instrument three days a week, usually Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays according to tradition.

Music is present in different arenas of Huasteco life, both secular and rituals. Music culture bearers are the keepers and transmitters of the music tradition that Huasteco people have been carrying for generations in practical and social settings, in which orality is the sole means of sharing the tradition, and memory is the medium for its conservation (Bernal, 2009; Garcia, 2016; Vazquez, 2017). Learning the music tradition from music culture bearers is an opportunity to learn more about the cultural practices. It becomes a collective and community activity that promotes solidarity (García, 2016).

Encuentros (encounters-musical gatherings) or *Festivales* (festivals) are annual events that take place in different parts of the Huasteca region, across all the different states where Huasteca people live (Bonilla, 2013; García, 2016; Paraíso, 2015). Encuentros are one of the most significant places for building connections among music culture bearers, since they offer a space for intergenerational interactions between young and old musicians. The Encuentro becomes a practical space to interact with hundreds of other musicians and share musical and personal experiences. Encuentros offer an opportunity for people (Huastecos and non-Huastecos) to gather so that they might celebrate the cultural and collective identity of the Huasteco region. During Encuentros, Huapangos, *son* Huasteco, and *sones* de costumbre are performed. In the case of son de costumbre, it is mainly used at the beginning of the event as a way to purify the place where the Encuentro will happen. During an Encuentro, people gather to celebrate.

> Music and dance, food (heavily based on corn), traditional clothing and crafts, a connection with nature, respect for the elders, ancestor worship, a distinct sense of

> community, a hefty amount of rituals and ceremonies, and a sense of space in accordance with nature are all part of the celebration as well. (Paraiso, 2015, p. 163).

Encuentros are organized between the community at large, local authorities from the municipalities, and cultural promoters, sometimes with financial support from the state or federal government (Bonilla, 2013; García, 2016; Paraíso, 2015). Towns are flooded with thousands of people who attend the event as musicians, tourists, artists, researchers, traveling vendors, cultural promoters, and dancers, among others. According to Paraíso (2015), sharing is an important part of the event since people offer food and a place to stay for participants. She states, "place and space foster the cultural experience within the festival context. Collectively created, the festival feeds from [is fueled by] local nuances and recreates the connection between past and present" (p. 179).

Chapter 4: Methodology (*Miyawakalakilistli:* When the Plant is Blooming)

In order to promote recognition of and support for music with Indigenous roots, it is crucial for the voices of those who have the knowledge to be very present throughout my research in order for it to be credible in their eyes. Therefore, it is imperative that my research methodology draws from principles that are accountable, responsible, and relevant to Huasteco people's knowledge and worldview.

Indigenous methodologies and narrative inquiry forefront participants' lived experiences; therefore, it makes sense that the narratives of people in the Huasteco region be the common element that links and justifies the use of both methodologies. Particularly in Huasteco music, these narratives are often woven into the lyrics of songs, in which people represent their own lives, nature and its elements, places and their stories, and their sentiments (Bonilla & Gomez, 2013).

In the following sections, I will show the ways in which Indigenous methodologies and narrative inquiry, and the methods that support them, are appropriate means for me to conduct my research. Methods such as Sharing Circles and interviews that are interviewee-oriented minimize the power structure between participants and researcher because participants feature prominently and are described through their own words and worldviews (Kovach, 2009).

Indigenous Methodologies

When I initially considered whether I should use an Indigenous approach to conduct my research, certain challenges arose. The Indigenous authors I read gave a clear set of principles regarding the need for, origins and aims of, and methods that were included in Indigenous methodologies when a study is done in collaboration with Indigenous peoples. I could see

several similarities in the arguments presented by those authors, but still, I could not see how their perspectives aligned with my research path. Then I came to understand that the term Indigenous methodologies is plural. Through reflection, I came to understand that the experiences of those authors did not fully resonate with me because the particular contexts from which they were writing and deriving their methodologies address the realities of countries such as Canada, the United States, and New Zealand, where the colonization process was different from that of Mexico (and perhaps—in a broader sense—Latin America).

That being said, there are general characteristics across all Indigenous methodologies that are connected to relationality (knowledge emerges through the relationships that inform it), reciprocity (the research should address Indigenous peoples' needs), accountability (the researcher is accountable to the relationships that are formed through the study), ways of knowing directly connected to the Land (as defined by Styres, 2017), and the importance of stories as a methodological component when addressing Indigenous knowledge (Archibald, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Fast & Kovach, 2019; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2018; Smith, 2012; Styres, 2017; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008).

Historically, research has been conducted *on* rather than *with* Indigenous peoples, addressing subjects that are not necessarily in line with Indigenous peoples' needs and desires (Champagne, 2015; Chilisa, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Kovach, 2009, 2014, 2018; Smith, 2012; Styres & Zinga, 2013; Styres, 2017; Wilson, 2008; Windchief et al., 2018). According to Smith (2012), the word research "is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary" (p. 1). Kovach (2018) points out four distinctive aspects that are embedded in Indigenous methodologies: Indigenous Epistemologies (beliefs about knowledge), Indigenous Theory-Principles (beliefs about values and actions, Relational Actions (beliefs about conduct

and actions), and Re-Storying/Interpretations and Representations (responsibility in witnessing and relating events and meaning). Indigenous methodologies must resonate with local communities, and participants must take a relevant role in order to take away some of the power that the researcher possesses (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009).

As I discussed in Chapter 2, Indigenous methodologies are informed by Indigenous frameworks, which are constituted by epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies that correspond to a particular sociocultural group (Fast & Kovach, 2019; Gobo, 2011; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2018; Ritenburg et al., 2014; Wilson, 2008; Windchief et al., 2018); hence, it is not possible to create a unique research framework that addresses all perspectives of Indigenous groups and worldviews (Kovach, 2009). Nevertheless, Kovach (2018) offers guidance that calls for embedding tribal knowledge and relationships at the core of Indigenous methodologies: "If you want to do Indigenous methodologies right, uphold tribal knowledge and honor the Indigenous laws of love, respect, kindness, honesty, generosity, reciprocity and caring in your research. If you do this, you will be doing Indigenous methodologies right" (p. 230).

Kovach (2010) states that Indigenous methodologies are a paradigmatic approach that emerges from the epistemology and ontology rooted in particular cultural settings:

> Within a paradigmatic approach to research, the paradigm influences the choice of methods (i.e., why a particular method is chosen), how those methods are employed (i.e., how data is gathered), and how the data will be analyzed and interpreted … In a paradigmatic approach to research, be it Indigenous or otherwise, methods ought to be congruent with the philosophical orientation identified in the research framework. If a researcher chooses to use an Indigenous methodological framework, the methods chosen should make sense from an Indigenous knowledge perspective (p. 41).

Denzin and Lincoln (2008) point out that qualitative research can be divided into at least eight moments. According to the authors, the *future* or eighth moment "asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community … many critical methodologists and indigenous scholars are in the eighth moment, performing culture as they write it" (p. 6). Nevertheless, Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous methodologies are too frequently seen as "quaint folk theory" by people in academia (p. 8). This attitude puts these methodologies in a position of being viewed as part of an approach that reflects "cultural exoticism" that "relegates them to the periphery of the 'real' work of knowledge construction" (Kovach, 2009, p. 78). Cisneros (2014) asks the following questions regarding the lack of affirmation of Indigenous methodologies and the outcomes of the research conducted using this approach:

> Yet why have colonized qualitative researchers not been listened to by their colleagues when producing their own approaches or Indigenous methods? Is it just a consequence of the quality of their products? Or is it a result of the lack of integrity, validity, reliability, transparency, applicability, and/or replicability accorded to the dominant Western epistemology? (pp. 75–76).

It is important for the study to resonate with people; therefore, it is necessary that the research question and agenda are clear and articulated to everyone who participates. The research needs to make sense to the community where it takes place and participants must feel at ease that the research will not harm the world (Jimenez, 2005; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2018; Wilson, 2008). This can be a solid base from which to conduct research since participants are aware of the purpose, which might lead to fostering a relationship where trust can develop between the

researcher and participants. Wilson (2008) suggests that the researcher become a participant observer. The element of active participation from the researcher and participants allows for fostering stronger relationships with the community or communities in which the research is taking place. These relationships are necessary for the researcher in order to be considered trustworthy by the people who are participating in the research (Gobo, 2011; Kovach, 2010; Windchief et al., 2018); therefore, relationships developed with people in the community are key to researchers being able to access the necessary information while also being accountable for the relationships made (Fast & Kovach, 2019; Gobo, 2011; Kovach, 2010, 2018; Wilson, 2008). Wilson (2008) states that for those individuals who are unfamiliar with Indigenous ways of doing things, relationships in different situations might be seen as a form of nepotism; nevertheless, he states that relationality is at the core of Indigenous worldviews:

> Identity for Indigenous peoples is grounded in their relationships with the land, with their ancestors who have returned to the land and with future generations who will come into being on the land. Rather than viewing ourselves as being *in* relationship with other people or things, we *are* the relationships that we hold and are part of (p. 80).

According to the authors consulted (Archibald, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2018; Smith, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Styres, 2017; Wilson, 2008), Indigenous methods acknowledge oral tradition as fundamental to research. This acknowledgement highlights the historical connection that Indigenous peoples have had with oral tradition, helping to mitigate the perception of the superiority of written text that represents the Western-European tradition. Particular methods that were described by the aforementioned authors that are rooted in Indigenous traditions are storytelling, Sharing Circles, story work, conversation, interviews based on the Medicine Wheel, and life-story interviews. All these methods favour oral tradition

by providing people with an opportunity to share their stories in a holistic way, without the researcher constantly guiding the conversation in a structured way, "stories remind us of who we are and of our belonging … stories can never be decontextualized from the teller" (Kovach, 2009, p. 94). When Indigenous people share their stories in research, it facilitates ways for "healing associated with decolonization" (p. 15). Therefore; the story becomes a tool for decolonization: "[W]hen asking Indigenous people for their stories in research, a researcher must be aware that the choice of this method opens a door for healing associated with decolonization" (Kovach, 2009, p. 15).

An important shift in the balance of power between the researcher and participants occurs when participants' voices are heard and amplified when describing their reality from their own lived experiences (Archibald, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2018; Smith, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). This oral sharing enables participants to put forward the way in which they see themselves and their community, rather than an external party taking full charge of representing Indigenous perspectives. Many researchers have misrepresented Indigenous cultures in their studies because Indigenous people's voices were not central to the research (Chilisa, 2012; Smith, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008); concomitantly, the use of stories from Indigenous peoples as a methodology has been challenged for lacking legitimacy and verifiable truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Kovach, 2009). The concept of validity in research from Indigenous perspectives will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

According to Indigenous protocols in methodology, it is important that the researcher (I) begins by introducing or positioning herself or himself; this is an approved way to begin the journey and serves as a prologue or prelude from which it is possible for readers to make sense of what will be told (Fast & Kovach, 2019; Kovach, 2009, 2014; Smith, 2012; Styres, 2017).

Additionally, positioning oneself serves as a way to disclose one's own lived journeys, which can reflect potential biases or assumptions that have developed as a result of the researcher's own lived experiences.

Wilson (2008) describes three Rs that must guide Indigenous research: Respect, Reciprocity and Relationality. Adopting Indigenous principles in methodologies can help to disrupt the historical misrepresentations that have been put upon groups who have been marginalized, have played the passive role of the object, and have been analyzed without having their voice in the research (Fast & Kovach, 2019; Jimenez, 2015; Kovach, 2009, 2010, 2014; Smith, 2012; Styres & Zinga, 2013; Styres, 2017; Wilson, 2008). In my research, adopting Indigenous principles aim to provide space in research (particularly in the context of music education) for participants to reflect on and express their own perspectives in terms of music as a living sound heritage of their communities. It is important for the music education community (and other areas of knowledge) to be able to understand music with Indigenous roots from the perspectives of its bearers, instead of understanding music with Indigenous roots through the filters of a Western frame of mind.

Narrative Inquiry

Narratives help people to present themselves through stories, which describe their own lived experiences, relationships, identities, and ways of knowing (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Bowman, 2009; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandini, 2006, 2009; Dumbar-Hall, 2009; Fraser, 2004). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) point out that narrative inquiry is closely linked to an autobiographical perspective since personal stories influence the inquiry plotlines; hence, narrative inquiry "characteristically begins with the researcher's autobiographically oriented

narrative associated with the *research puzzle*" (p. 41). Narratives open the possibility for marginalized, disempowered, and delegitimized groups to present their perspectives in a meaningful and responsible way in order to contest official discourses (Bowman, 2009; Jones, 2016; Kovach, 2009), which is in line with Indigenous methodologies in terms of centring the voices of participants as a tool to address the marginalization and misrepresentation that Indigenous peoples have experienced. Narrative inquiry as a methodology "entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular view of experience as a phenomenon under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). This methodology creates an opportunity to present a participant's perspective in a holistic way since their voices and stories are not reduced to data or behaviours (Bowman, 2006; 2009 Hartwig, 2014). For Bowman (2009), one of the crucial qualities of narrative inquiry is "to render audible the voices of the disempowered and the marginal, contesting official discourses and—as Barrett and Stauffer suggest—to 'trouble' the certitude on which universal claims and broad generalisations are so often based" (p. 212). In my study, I devote significant space for participants to share their stories in ways that were meaningful to them and relate to music making. In chapter 5, in many cases, participants explore their life journeys and how music making is embedded in their life, not just as a musical expression, but as a 'voice' of their communities, of their worldviews.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call for researchers not to avoid the "I" since personal stories influence their approach to the study; therefore, it is important for researchers to be willing to share their personal stories with participants so that "when we say 'I', we know that 'I' is connecting with 'they'" (pp. 122–123). The aforementioned approach helps to break down the dichotomy between the participant and me, since they and I share our personal stories, and our

voices are represented in the study; this sharing can minimize the power differential between researcher and participant (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Jones, 2016).

People make sense of their lived experiences, including their actions and relationships with other people, through the stories they tell of those experiences (Chase, 2007): Such subjective stories are sometimes desirable in research, especially when researchers are seeking to understand the ways in which people interpret their own experiences (thoughts and emotions) (Hartwig, 2014). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note that narrative inquiry entails the creation of a metaphorical *three-dimensional narrative inquiry space* informed by temporality, the social, and place, since "studies have temporal dimensions and address temporal matters; they focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequences of places" (p. 50). This metaphorical space often speaks directly to the experiences that participants have in their life-stories and in their unique contexts; these experiences in many cases challenge institutional grand narratives (Bowman, 2009). Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) state the importance that everyday experiences have for Narrative Inquirers to understand participants' experiences:

> Beginning with a respect for ordinary lived experience, the focus of narrative inquiry is not only a valorizing of individuals' experience but also an exploration of the social, cultural, and institutional narratives within which individuals' experiences were constituted, shaped, expressed, and enacted—but in a way that begins and ends that inquiry in the storied lives of the people involved. Narrative inquirers study an individual's experience in the world and, through the study, seek ways of enriching and transforming that experience for themselves and others (p. 42).

Clandinin et al,.(2007) suggest that when considering narrative inquiry as a methodology, researchers should take into account three kinds of justification for using it: The personal, the practical, and the social—in other words, the researcher's personal motivations and how such an approach might provide an appropriate yet unique perspective about the subject and the contribution. In this self-examination, the researcher is "able to answer the 'So what?' and 'Who cares?' questions" (p. 25)

It is important for researchers to reflect on their own epistemological and ontological stances since these perspectives will influence the way that research is written and presented (Barrett & Stauffer 2009; Dunbar-Hall, 2009). Once the researcher acknowledges the potential implications of their own set of beliefs, it is important for the researcher to be committed to honouring participants' voices in an ethical manner and be willing to change their perspectives based on what is learned from participants (Barrett & Stauffer 2009; Bowman, 2009). According to Bowman (2006) narrative inquiry can serve to present small narratives, especially those of marginalized and silenced people, which "can offer alternative, often resistant or counter-hegemonic versions of things like truth and reality" (p. 9). For Bowman, this methodology permits not only those who have formal academic skills to be in charge of producing and controlling knowledge. Because narratives are temporal, personal, and situated, it "affords unique and indispensable insights into human meanings and action: the ways people use music to make sense of their lives, for instance, or how they make sense of their musical lives" (p. 9).

In the particular case of my research, the narratives of Huasteco music culture bearers become central to representing the perspectives of Huasteco musicians and the importance of Huasteco music in the Huasteco worldview. This is will be evident in the findings section.

In this study, I have translated participants' narratives from Spanish to English—I have made my best effort to ensure that participant's voices are heard accurately despite the narrative appearing in translation. Vernacular words in Spanish and words in Nahuatl are also present in the narratives, so in both cases, I have provided translation into English and commentary where needed in order for the reader to understand the meaning of the word appropriately in a given context.

In the context of music education (Bowman, 2009), and particularly in the context of my study, narrative inquiry can serve to disturb the conception of a standardized and taken-for-granted music education that does not acknowledge the particularities of any given set of geographical, temporal, and sociocultural contexts (Clandinin, 2009). Similarly, Bowman (2009) also calls for a narrative inquiry that emphasizes contingency over certainty. For him, narrative inquiry:

> consists in the process of questioning or challenging certainty. To engage in narrative work is, then, to trouble certainty. Read as an adjective, on the other hand, it implies that certainty is itself a "troubling" state of affairs–that certainty is an inherently troubling notion (p. 214).

Narrative inquiry serves to present the stories of Huasteco culture bearers in relation to music making, a relation that does not necessarily follow or share the same principles and values of the Western classical music tradition. The narratives of Huasteco music culture bearers contextualize what music represents in the daily life of Huasteco people and the ways in which music is embedded in cultural practices. According to Dunbar-Hall (2009), "the objective of narrative inquiry in music education shifts investigation away from music or music pedagogy per se towards the figures working with them" (p. 176). Therefore, narrative inquiry provides the

necessary approach to focus on the people and their stories, rather than only on music. Through narrative inquiry, it is possible to understand how music is related to the lived experience of participants in a place, time, and sociocultural context, which provides a broader angle from which to observe music from a worldview perspective. Participants' narratives provide an opportunity to hear from Huasteco culture bearers about potential ways for Huasteco music making to be embedded in the educational system, particularly in schools in the Huasteco region.

Giving Back to Community: A way to Stay True to the Knowledge that has been Shared

From the very first stages of my research project, it was clear to me that Huasteco peoples' voices must be central when presenting the research findings. Because of this, Indigenous methodologies and narrative inquiry were the two methodologies that I chose to use for this research. As discussed in the previous section, in order to address Indigenous methodologies, it is important that the theoretical paradigm and the methods chosen for collecting data are in alignment. In order to be accountable for declaring the use of Indigenous methodologies:

- I chose methods in which the narratives from participants are the most important; these methods also align with the principles of narrative inquiry that aim to present the narratives of misrepresented groups. These methods facilitate space for Huasteco culture bearers to speak about their lived experience in relation to music making and culture. It was important that participants describe themselves using their life-journey experiences in order that I not be the one representing their stories; rather, they were in control of telling their own experiences in a way that was meaningful for them.

- In order to follow Indigenous principles in my research, I incorporated the three Rs recommended by Wilson (2008) when addressing Indigenous research in a good way: Respect, Reciprocity and Relationality.

Following the Three Rs Recommended by Wilson (2008) When Using Indigenous Methodologies in Research

Relationality

A key aspect in Indigenous methodologies (IM) is the acknowledgement of the people who provide information for a study, since credibility in IM is linked to presenting information and knowledge as faithfully and closely as possible to how one received that information and knowledge (Chilisa 2012; Kovach 2009; Wilson 2008). Wilson (2008) posits the need for researchers to acknowledge that the knowledge presented in their written work is informed by the knowledge that was shared with them. In this view, researchers should not claim ownership of the knowledge that they present:

> We need to honour the relationships that *they* share with the knowledge *we* are writing down for our research. We don't claim ownership over it then. We need to name that relationship, so that, well, we're not claiming it, but saying where it came from and what those relationships were that went into making it … In a dominant system way of doing those ethics reviews, you are not allowed to name participants and stuff. But I think that in Indigenous research paradigms, it is almost unethical not to name them … And in a sense, they are giving you permission to put that in your thesis, so, if you are leaving out their names, how can people know that you have the authority to present this information? (p. 115).

In order to access information and then be able to share it as closely as possible to the same way I received it, first, I needed to create the necessary relationships in order to be considered trustworthy. According to Wilson (2008), knowledge from Indigenous knowledge "cannot be owned or discovered but is merely a set of relationships that may be given a visible form". I was lucky to have Huasteco culture bearers who were willing to talk to me and introduce me to other music culture bearers. Without creating those relationships, I would not have been able to access the information that I did. I had the opportunity to visit some of the participants' houses and workplaces. It is my hope that the community as a whole and participants in particular will be willing to keep collaborating with me on future projects. It is important for me to be accountable to those relationships in the future.

Respect

As I related in Chapter 1, my experience as a musician trained in the Western classical music tradition is a significant part of my own life journey, and this background informed my relationship with music making and my worldview for many years. In the Western classical music tradition, developing proper technique is key to playing an instrument at a professional level. There are several instructional methods and pedagogical approaches that have been developed over the centuries for students to achieve a high technical level of music performance. In my journey as a professional violinist, I was instructed using different methods to improve my violin technique (for example, étude methods and scales methods). My teachers assigned me sequences of lessons and materials that would improve my violin performance technique through solo practice. My personal journey taught me that it was important to build certain technical skills prior to performing with others.

From the beginning of my research, it was necessary for me to acknowledge my own personal relationship with music. During this research journey, I have come to learn that music goes beyond the act of performing and the development of music technique, activities in which I was mainly immersed for twenty-four years before starting my doctoral studies. Once I acknowledged the importance of music beyond Western classical paradigms, it also became clear that I needed to decolonize my own approach to music making. As a researcher, I needed to understand the importance of music outside of my own personal experience. Going through this decolonizing process taught me to appreciate and respect profoundly other ways of music making outside of the Western classical music tradition.

When I met and became acquainted with the Huasteco culture bearers, my respect for Huasteco culture grew even more. In Huasteco culture bearers, I see teachers who have been willing to share their experiences and knowledge with me. I have had the opportunity to have long conversations with them, and I keep learning from their teachings. During this learning process, I attempted to leave my own approach to music making (informed by my own life-journey) aside to the best of my ability so that I might learn a new approach to music in a respectful and humble way. I was forthcoming with culture bearers about of my lack of practical knowledge of Huasteco music, and they were and continue to be very kind in teaching me. Bowman (2009) notes the need for a researcher to present participants' voices and be willing to change based on interactions with participants:

> Perhaps above all—in keeping with the narrative commitment to honouring the particularity and the integrity of others' voices and of others' stories and in keeping with the collaborative, interactive processes these considerations implicate—the narrative inquirer must be willing to change, willing to be changed by what she

hears and finds (p. 221).

A way to show respect for people who participate in this research is for their perspectives to be reflected in a way that is meaningful to participants, rather than speaking on behalf of the participants. According to Kovach (2018), when using Indigenous methodologies "researchers must care for the stories and those who offer them. In asking for individual's stories, it matters to respect *their* dignity, *their* voice, and *their* experience on *their* terms" (p. 227). In this research, the narratives of participants are central so that they can express their experiences on their own terms.

Reciprocity

An important part of Indigenous methodologies is the need to give back to the community (Kovach, 2009, 2010; Wilson, 2008). Kovach (2009) posits that "[R]eliable representation engenders relevancy and is a necessary aspect of giving back to community" (p. 100). McGregor and Marker (2018) posit that reciprocity is not about finding the right gift to give to participants at the end of a project; rather, the authors suggest that ¨perhaps we [as researchers] might think of reciprocity as a journey, and not a fixed point on a map" (p. 325). As I came to know more people from the Huasteco community, it became evident to me that this study was a first step towards giving something back to the community, a community that is not my own, but whose members kindly offered their assistance throughout my research journey. During conversations with music culture bearers, it became clearer that the idea of bringing Huasteco culture into the school system via music education was something meaningful not just to my research, but, most importantly, also to the people with whom I interacted. This journey also provided me with the opportunity to see that there are allies who are willing to work together on the second step—

bringing this proposal to life. Moving this project forward will mean approaching policy makers; local, state, and federal authorities, plus school representatives at local and regional levels. Now that a number of community members know me, and I know them, I would like to see if there are ways in which we can collaborate to move towards mutual goals. I am hoping to offer reciprocity in gratitude for the support given to me. Once I finish my doctoral journey, I would like to contact culture bearers and other study participants to see if there is interest in forming a team in which Huasteco community members will lead the way, and I will be by their side to support as wanted and needed. I know that the information that they shared with me is not just to fulfill the goal of gathering my data; instead, the process has created a commitment to return to the community and offer my time and energy to partner in their ideas to promote Huasteco music making both within the formal and non-formal educational contexts. This reciprocity is necessary so that the information shared with me does not remain solely in a file on my computer or in a database, but, rather, actively serves and benefits the community.

Research Participants

Participants in this study were people who self-identified as Huastecos and had relevant knowledge and experience regarding Huasteco music making and Huasteco traditions in general. For the purpose of this study, a Huasteco music culture bearer is a person who is well-informed and knowledgeable about the Huasteco music tradition and culture regardless of their age.

All participants agreed to meet with me on an individual basis or group basis. In the case of Sharing Circles, the whole Huasteco trio participated; meanwhile, interviews were done with individual participants. People who participated in individual interviews did not participate in Sharing Circles and vice versa.

A total of three Sharing Circles and eight individual interviews occurred during the data gathering process. A total of 17 people participated in the study: two women and 15 men, aged (approximately) between their 20s and 70s. More men than women participated in this study because historically, Huasteco music used to be learned and performed mostly by men, a custom that was more prevalent in past generations. Thus, the older music culture bearers who participated in this study were men. However, it is important to mention that currently an increasing number of women play Huasteco music. That is the reason that some of the younger participants in this study are women. This gender imbalance clearly reflects how Huasteco music has been changing over time and how this situation also informed the recruitment process for participants of this study.

I decided to interview people of different ages to obtain a wider range of perspectives regarding the current perception of Huasteco music making in the social context. This age difference provides an opportunity to see some similarities and differences in the approach to teaching and learning Huasteco music between generations. This age difference also provides a wider understanding about how cultural practices are understood and represented among culture bearers from different generation.

Participants agreed to their real names appearing in this study. Mentioning participants' real names in this study is a way to fulfill the responsibility to acknowledge the person who shared information and knowledge, according to Indigenous principles for conducting research (Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009; Wilson, 2008).

In the following table, I list the participants and whether they participated in an unstructured interview or in the Sharing Circles. The story of how I got in contact with each one of them is explained in chapter 5 (see p. 134).

Table 2

Research Participants

Participants in unstructured interviews	Participants in Sharing Circles
Enrique Melo	Trío Zontecomatlán: Arturo Fuentes, Eduardo Fuentes, and Margarito Zavaleta
Elfego Villegas	
Román Güemes	Trío del Balcón: Jorge Vera, Humberto Soto, and Luis Olivares
Víctor Ramírez	
Osiris Caballero	Trío Tres en Línea: Elba Acosta, Horacio Cortéz, and Iván Cázares
Kenia Melo	
Edgar Peña	
Cresencio Hernández	

Methods and Collection of Data

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), methods are "techniques and procedures for gathering and analysing data" (p. 1). For this study, I used individual interviews, Sharing Circles, and a journal for field notes. Kovach (2010) posits that particularly when using Indigenous perspectives, the methods used need to complement the Indigenous paradigm:

> [I]t is not the method, per se, that is the determining characteristic of Indigenous methodologies, but rather the interplay (the relationship) between the method and the paradigm and the extent to which the method, itself, is congruent with an Indigenous worldview. From this perspective, one could argue that the focal discussion of Indigenous methodologies ought to be a deep concentration of worldview or paradigm (p. 40)

It is important to recall that one of the seven layers—in fact, the central layer, the nucleus of the seven layers—in which the Huasteco ontology and epistemology are rooted, is orality. In order to honour that important part of Huasteco culture, the methods used for this study have in common a focus on the narratives of the participants, which is in line with what an Indigenous framework advocates—the centrality of the voices of participants—in order for them to present

their perspectives in a meaningful way (Archibald, 2008; Chilisa, 2012; Kovach, 2009, 2010; Smith, 2012; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008).

The methods used in this study provided me meaningful information from people who were interviewed one-on-one and also to gather information from a group of people. At the same time, the journal provided me with a way to track my own thoughts and reflections, as well as to recall particular details of my encounters with people and observations related with the environment where interviews and Sharing Circles took place.

Snowball Sampling

I used snowball sampling to recruit participants. Kovach (2009) and Chilisa (2012) frame snowball sampling as an approach suitable for Indigenous methodologies since it relies on relationships between people in order to reach people in the community where research takes place. This approach involves the researcher reaching participants through the referral or recommendation of another person, which opens doors to access a particular population (Goodman, 2011; O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2014). It was important to find people who could point me in the direction of participants. Particularly important was to find a Huasteco music culture bearer who was willing to introduce me to other Huasteco culture bearers. It was important for me to be supported by someone who was very well known in the music tradition because their support would enable me to gain access to more participants. The guidance and support of knowledgeable people was crucial to securing the participation of well-known Huasteco music culture bearers in the Huasteco region. It was thanks to the people who recommended me to other participants that the culture bearers agreed to receive me in their homes or workplaces so

that way might have a long conversation and sometimes even eat together; therefore, snowball sampling was a key component to collecting meaningful data.

Conversational method

According to Kovach (2010), conversational method is defined as a "dialogic approach to gathering knowledge that is built upon an Indigenous relational tradition. It utilized open-ended, semi-structured interview questions to prompt conversation where participant and researcher co-create knowledge" (p. 44). I conducted semi-structured interviews so that participants had a meaningful space to share their stories and experiences. According to Kovach (2009) unstructured interviews as well as the use of story and life story "allow participants to share their experiences on their terms" (p. 82). Kovach argues that "highly structured interviews are not congruent with accessing knowledges that imbue both fluidity and regulation of the storyteller's role within oral tradition" (p. 123). Therefore, she calls for the use of methods that are flexible to embrace oral traditions.

I designed a set of open-ended questions that would provide a space for participants to approach the topic through their life journey. The first question addressed the participants' own relationship with Huasteco music. This question was crucial because it provided a starting point from which participants could share their own life journey. When responding to this first question, participants invariably also addressed some of the following questions both directly and indirectly. Their holistic responses resulted in more meaningful narratives since participants reflected back to their childhood, and then moved forward in time. Obtaining participants' background information from that very first question also afforded me the opportunity to move with more flexibility through my prepared questions. I think that beginning our conversations

with their personal stories helped the flow of the interviews. When personal stories are a central part of the data collection, the goal is not to create the 'right' question; rather, the focus is on the interaction that might allow for participants to reflect about their own lived experiences (Fraser, 2004). Therefore, the interviewer is more interested in understanding the logic of the narrative and looking for clarification when needed (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Polkinghorne, 2007).

During the interview, I tried to connect the new questions with information that was provided in the answers to previous questions in order to better understand how the narratives fit with one another. I am aware that music teaching and learning processes differ between Huasteco and Western classical music traditions; therefore, I tried to put aside as much as possible any preconceptions regarding both the pedagogical approach and the meaning of music making in this particular cultural setting.

In these interviews, seven Huasteco music culture bearers and one Huasteco culture promoter participated: Edgar Peña, Elfego Villegas, Enrique Melo, Román Güemes, Víctor Ramírez, Kenia Melo, and Osiris Caballero. Interviews took place in different settings. There were a total of eight interviews; two of these were phone interviews due to the participants and my being in different countries at the time. The other six interviews were in person. The in-person interviews took place in the municipalities of Zontecomatlán, Chicontepec, and Xalapa. The locations for the interviews were the houses of the participants or their workplaces. One interview took place in an open public forum; this was the interview during the Encuentro. To provide context at this time, Encuentro is translated as "encounter" or "gathering." Encuentros are organized gatherings where people from different places get together to dance, play music, drink, and eat], in Zontecomatlán.

Sharing Circles

I used Sharing Circles as a method since it gives equal voice to all participants (Kovach, 2009; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Wilson, 2008). The goal of using Sharing Circles was to create a space of sharing where all participants can share their own experiences in a culturally appropriate way.

Sharing Circles are used as communicative tools among Indigenous groups where every participant has an equal chance to speak and be heard in a respectful, supportive and non-confrontational manner (Lavallée, 2009; Rothe at al., 2009; Wilson, 2008). Sharing Circles offer an opportunity for participants to talk about different aspects of their life experiences, and they are used to transmit culture and tradition (Lavallée, 2009; Rothe at al., 2009). Each participant has the opportunity to voice their thoughts four times (Wilson, 2008). Sharing Circles move in a clockwise or counter clockwise direction according to the tradition of a particular community (Lavallée, 2009). A circle symbolizes equity among participants and the holism of Mother Earth (Chilisa, 2012; Wilson, 2008), in which the energy of the late ancestors is manifested (Kovach, 2009; Lavallée, 2009). Sharing Circles have recently been adopted in academic settings (Kovach, 2009) and differ from focus groups due to their sacred meaning (Lavallée, 2009); these settings provide a "highly culturally sensitive research environment" (Rothe et al., 2009, p. 336). People who participate in culturally significant research processes are able to share in meaningful ways, beneficial not only to researchers, but, most importantly, to themselves.

This method was particularly useful and relevant when I attended the Encuentro in Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, since I could involve all three members of a Huasteco trio in one conversation through a Sharing Circle. In the Encuentro in Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, I conducted a Sharing Circle with each of three Huasteco trios: Trío Zontecomatlán, Trío del

Balcón, and Trío Tres en Línea. The Encuentro was the perfect setting to conduct the Sharing Circles because of the large number of trios that gathered for that Encuentro in Zontecomatlán. Each participant who took part in the Sharing Circles had an equal amount of time to answer the questions. This method provided a flexible and meaningful timeframe for answers while following the circle and taking turns.

Journal

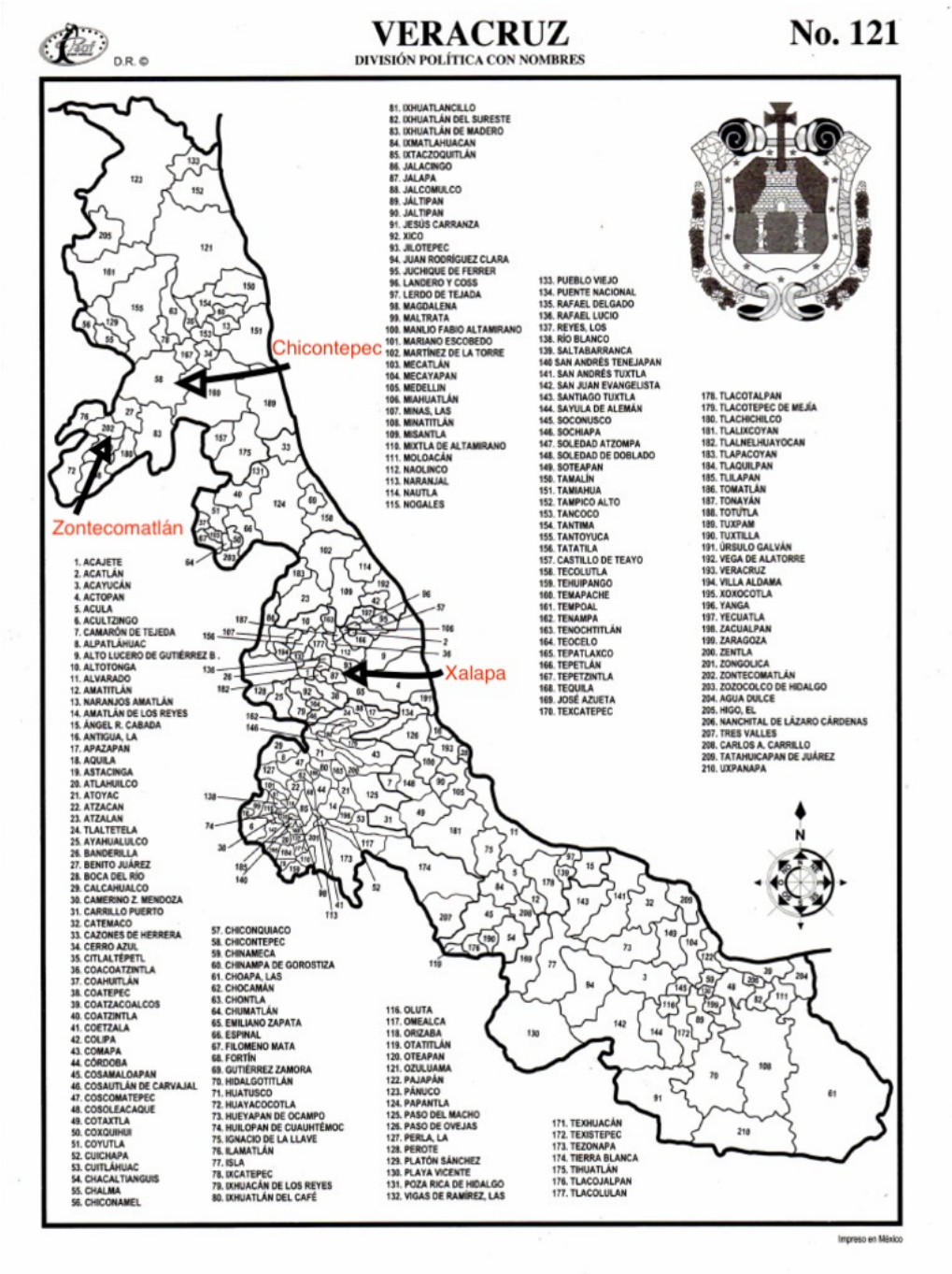
During fieldwork, I kept a journal to take notes about particular situations so that I would be able to remember the lived experiences of my field work when doing the analysis and discussion sections of my study. According to Fraser (2004), "taking notes about the time, place and emotional climates of the interviews might prove useful because they are likely to affect the subsequent interpretations made" (p. 186). Creswell (2014) states that recording information in a written form (such as notes) while collecting data, can be divided between descriptive notes (a way to recall a physical description of the setting or event where observation took place) and reflective notes (in order to record researcher's personal thoughts, ideas, and impressions). The journal was used immediately following every interview and Sharing Circle to write thoughts and ideas that came to my mind while conducting the interviews and Sharing Circles. I had the journal with me when I attended the Encuentro and the event organized by *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso*. In this journal, I kept track of relevant situations that I observed during the events. Those notes were significant when trying to recall specific moments and thoughts that I had while attending those cultural events.

Data Gathering Locations

The interviews and Sharing Circles took place in three different municipalities in the state of Veracruz. Two of the municipalities are located in the Huasteco region: Chicontepec and Zontecomatlán. Xalapa (the capital of the state of Veracruz) is outside of the Huasteco region; nevertheless, because this city is the capital of the state, a large number of Huasteco people live there, and thus, a great number of activities connected to Huasteco culture take place there. The average time to drive from Xalapa to Chicontepec is seven hours, while the average time to drive from Chicontepec to Zontecomatlán is two and a half hours. I consider it important to note the locations where the research took place since there are two strong music traditions in the state of Veracruz: Huasteco music in the north of the state, and Jarocho music in the south of the state; therefore, mentioning the places contributes to grounding the music making in specific socio-cultural relationships, relationships with natural landscape, and historical relationships for specific places within a given territory.

Figure 4

Municipalities Where Interviews and Sharing Circles Took Place



Research Ethics

I conducted my research according to the University of Victoria research ethics standards. My research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) at the University of

Victoria, assuring that I had systematically designed the study so as to ensure, to the best of my capability, that participants would not be harmed in any way.

I first introduced the study to participants, and I explained that I hoped to acknowledge them individually in the study, which would mean having their real names accompany their narratives if they so agreed. I also explained to them that, according to the University of Victoria's ethics regulations, they could remain anonymous if they preferred. In the end, my participants made a personal decision about whether to be anonymous or not. Participants all consented to their real names being used for the study so that the information they provided could be attributed to them.

Participants received the consent form that the HREB approved for distribution as well as a translation into Spanish of this form. Materials translated into Spanish were approved by the HREB. All this was done in order to guarantee that participants were fully informed about what they were consenting to and signing. I also had conversations with potential participants about any doubts or concerns that they might have prior to their signing the consent form. Participation in this study was completely voluntary.

Analysis

I transcribed all the recorded individual interviews and Huasteco trio Sharing Circles. I used thematic analysis for my study (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Guest et al., 2012; Sang & Sitko, 2014). According to Mills et al. (2010), thematic analysis "is a tactic for reducing and managing large volumes of data without losing the context, for getting close to or immersing oneself in the data, for organizing and summarizing, and for focusing the interpretation" (p. 926).

I adopted the phases for thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) for my research.

Table 3

Phases of Thematic Analysis in This Research

Phase	How I did it
1.- Familiarizing yourself with your data	I manually transcribed all of the interviews. I familiarized myself with the information by the very process of transcribing, and then revising the text (along with the audio) once I finished transcribing the interviews.
2.- Generating initial codes	I kept the research questions in mind, which provided me with an initial step to seek meaningful data in my research. I did the coding manually. I created an Excel spreadsheet where I listed all the codes I had created, and I marked in which transcriptions those codes appeared in order to identify how many times the same codes appeared in the transcriptions. I identified which codes related to research questions, after which I started to notice a relationship between the different codes that emerged from the analysis.
3.- Searching for themes	I separated the different codes into potential thematic categories. While analysing, I noticed that some codes potentially related to more than one category. When that occurred, I went back to the transcriptions to read the specific section of the codes in order to make a decision about in which category the code would fit best according to the context where the code was identified. It was an ongoing process to go back and forth between transcriptions and the Excel spreadsheet to find the best place for the code.
4.- Reviewing themes	I made a final selection of the themes and subthemes that emerged from the analysis and a potential sequence of themes.

5.- Defining and naming themes	At this point, I defined the themes according to the research questions.
6.- Producing the report	This process is reported in my findings chapter, where I draw connections between the different stories of participants in order to respond to the research questions.

Note. Table adapted from the phases for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Every thematic category has two to three subcategories. I selected narratives from the participants that best captured the essence of the categories. Representative texts from all of the participants, from either interviews or Sharing Circles, are included in the study.

Relational Validity

According to Kovach (2008), relational validity is "concerned with do research in a good way" (p. 35). In other words, relational validity is rooted in ethical responsibility. From Indigenous perspectives, relational validity depends on people sharing information as they know it or as information was passed to them—particularly in storytelling—since "truth is bound in a secret commitment … it means that the storyteller is telling the truth according to how she or he heard it" (Kovach, 2009 pp. 102–103). From Indigenous perspectives, the relational validity of the information relies on naming the person from whom one learned something; it means that researchers should be accountable for and to the relationships that they maintain with the people whom they 'cite.'

In this research, the voices of participants are key to understanding their lived experiences while learning Huasteco music, as well as learning the cultural principles that are conveyed through music-making and what potential ways forward they envision in potentially embedding Huasteco music making in the educational system.

It is my duty as the translator to find the most appropriate words to translate the participants' narratives from Spanish to English to the best of my ability, and also, to contact participants to clarify ideas or words that I did not understand. I am a native Spanish speaker; nevertheless, in some of the narratives, Nahuatl words were used, and I do not know Nahuatl. In order to understand the interview completely, I needed to return to the participants in order to ask them how the words should be spelled and also to obtain an accurate translation from Nahuatl to Spanish.

A good example of relational validity occurred during one of the stories that Román Güemes shared with me (I will get into more detail about this story in the next chapter). Román spoke about how musicians had specific platforms (high enough for the sound to travel easily) in the communities, and how musicians used to be carried to those places. While he was telling me this story, he mentioned at some point, "I was told this. I did not see it, but I could feel it." For me, this was a powerful statement. He shared with me something that someone else had witnessed and shared. Even though he did not see how the musicians were carried to those platforms (because he was not yet born), he was told that the musicians were carried to the platforms "on a path covered by blankets and rose petals." When he shared this with me, he put in place (acknowledged) his relationships with the people who had shared this information with him. In this case, he is accountable to his relationships by sharing the information as he was told it, and I am responsible for sharing what I heard from him to the best of my knowledge since I am translating his words. In the end, I am relating his story and also the story of the people who told him this experience.

If I am true to passing the information as it was shared to me as well as following all the protocols (both in my personal relationship with Román and the university protocols), I am doing

my best to do research in a good way. According to Kovach (2009), following relational validity means to “tend to the process in a good way, so that no matter the outcome you can sleep at night because you did right by the process” (p. 52).

Chapter 5: Findings (*Elotlamalistli:* When the Corn Cob is Ready to be Picked and Offered for the Ritual)

A Synopsis of the Journey to Becoming Acquainted with Participants: Relationships at the Core of Trust

Establishing relationships of collaboration is an important part of Indigenous methodologies; therefore, it is relevant for me to present the journey of becoming acquainted with participants. Describing the journey of connecting with participants acknowledges the importance of the process of creating trust, which, in Indigenous methodologies, is equal in importance to gathering the data.

In order to invite community members to participate in the study, my first step was to contact an acquaintance who is very well informed about Huasteco music. His name is Enrique Melo, and he himself is a Huasteco music culture bearer. I was introduced to Enrique in the summer of 2017 by a mutual friend, Israel Estrada. Israel is a retired primary school teacher, and a musician interested in different styles of music. He told me that part of his family has roots in the Huasteco region. My friendship with Israel goes back to 2004 when I started teaching his children violin.

At that time, Israel introduced me to Enrique Melo through a phone conversation before the Encuentro in Tepetzintla, Veracruz (for further information about Encuentro, please see p. 101). Israel explained to me that he would not be able to travel to Tepetzintla for personal reasons, so I decided to invite a friend of mine to go with me to that Encuentro. I met Enrique in downtown Tepetzintla. He guided my friend and me to a home where we were able to stay overnight since the Encuentro lasted all night. This particular Encuentro began at approximately 5 p.m. and ended at 6 a.m. The location where we stayed overnight had been reserved for

Enrique and his Huasteco trio, called Trio son Melo. He mentioned that they already had another place to stay, so we were welcome to their spots. We slept on a couple of folding individual mattresses on the roof of a house. This was not a problem at all, since the weather there was approximately 35 degrees Celsius. During Huasteco Encuentros, hundreds of people arrive from other towns to attend the event, and usually, the host towns do not have enough rooms to receive all the visitors; therefore, there is a need to improvise accommodation, places like the roof of a house where my friend and I stayed.

We had the opportunity to hear Enrique's trio during the Encuentro. Due to the nature of an Encuentro, it is difficult to remain with one person for the whole time, as people constantly mingle with others. I had little opportunity to speak with him extensively for the remainder of the Encuentro. I spoke to him the next day during the breakfast that is offered by the Encuentro organizers for anyone who wants to eat. Encuentro*s* organizers are generous and hospitable—they invite everyone to eat at no cost.

After I arrived in Mexico for my data collection in February 2019, I reached out to Enrique to introduce my research project to him and to ask if he would be willing to be a participant in the study. He kindly agreed to meet and talk with me. During our conversation, I had the opportunity to talk to him about my project. He reacted positively to my proposed study and consented to be my first participant. At that meeting, he offered to bring me to an Encuentro in Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, in the heartland of the Huasteco region.

Before arriving in Zontecomatlán, I had the occasion to stay some days in Chicontepec, Veracruz with Enrique at his family home. At that time of the year, it was *Semana Santa* (the week of Easter), which is one of the most significant holidays in Mexico and one when many people travel home. Therefore, a significant part of Enrique's family was in town, and I was able

to meet a good number of his family members. During my stay in Chicontepec, Enrique agreed to start teaching me how to play the jarana Huasteca. I followed his guidance during the days that I stayed with him.

When teaching me the jarana, Enrique focused on showing me the basic *rasgueo* (strumming, the movement of the hand that allows the fingers to touch the strings in order to produce sound) and chords. He taught me in the same way that he did his other students. His main approach was to teach through modelling, asking me to replicate a series of actions that he demonstrated, and when I understood those, he added more components. I had never played an instrument that required *rasgueo* prior to that, so it was a challenge for my violinist fingers to get used to playing an instrument that requires more direct contact with the strings. It was also difficult for me to play for more than 20 minutes at a time. Trying to play the jarana made me realize how difficult the instrument is in terms of endurance, since musicians in trios play this instrument for long periods of time. It requires significant practice to achieve more endurance. While practicing the jarana on Enrique's front doorstep on a very warm April day, I also realized that playing for hours in hot weather conditions is another physical challenge. During those days in Chicontepec, Enrique guided me to various locations in town. We went to visit some local musicians and other people in the town. I had the wonderful opportunity to eat in the local *mercado* (marketplace) and sample food from the region.

Figure 5

Market Place in Chicontepec

After a few days, we traveled to Zontecomatlán for the Encuentro. As usual, I checked Google Maps for the distance between Chicontepec and Zontecomatlán; Google Maps indicated a distance of 53 km with an estimated travel time of one and a half hours by car. However, the journey took us longer than I had expected. The road was unpaved (gravel and dirt) for approximately half the distance. As we drove towards Zontecomatlán, I speculated that many people might not be able to make it to the Encuentro because of the road conditions and driving distances.

On our way to Zontecomatlán, Enrique also gave a ride to a couple of young Huasteco musicians who were attending the event. They mentioned that they were originally from a town close to Chicontepec. At that time, they were college students living in a city in the northern part

of Veracruz State. They mentioned that even though they no longer lived in their hometown, they kept in touch with each other in order to play Huasteco music together because it was part of their identity. They liked to get together to play and attend some of the local Encuentros. They said that they had heard that there would be a significant number of Huasteco trios at this Encuentro. This made me wonder if I had been wrong, and that perhaps most people would be willing and prepared to travel to the Encuentro despite the difficult road conditions. I kept thinking about it as we continued through the mountains on that gravel and dirt road.

Figure 6

View Before Arriving to Zontecomatlán

We eventually arrived at Zontecomatlán, which is a very small town. I swiftly realized that there was no cell phone signal. We went right to the heart of the town, where there were a couple of people registering the Huasteco trios who would be participating in the Encuentro. I was shocked when I heard the number of trios that they were expecting—more than 60. At the time of our arrival, I did not see too many people, so I still had some doubts regarding the number of Huasteco trios that would actually show up. After Enrique registered his trio, a member of the organizing committee showed us the location where we would be sleeping. It was a large room with approximately 30 bunk beds. They told us to pick an available bed and to leave some of our possessions there to show that it was taken.

Figure 7

Enrique Melo Registering His Trio at the Registration Table

Soon after, we were offered lunch at the family home of one of the most famous musicians in the Huasteco region—perhaps the most famous musician in the history of Zontecomatlán—Serafín Fuentes. Serafin had passed away some years prior; nevertheless, it had become a tradition to offer a large lunch in his honour at his family home, where the family has an altar with some pictures of him on display. The family and the municipal authority provided the lunch. Over the course of two hours, Huasteco trios made their way to Serafin's house to play music as a tribute to his memory. At some point during lunch, the mayor of the town, accompanied by more musicians and approximately hundred people, arrived at Serafin's house. This was a way for everyone to show respect to his memory. The mayor of the town stated that the Encuentro also serves as an annual opportunity to remember Serafin's legacy.

Figure 8

Altar in Serafin's Family Home

Figure 9

Inside Serafin's Family Home While Trios Play as a Tribute to His Memory

Figure 10

People Gathering Outside of Serafin's House

Before all the trios began to play, three Huasteco elders conducted a *Pehpentli* (a ritual to prepare the space and bring it into harmony), which was accompanied by a traditional *son* called *Xochipitzahuatl.* As part of the ritual, a pair of male and female elders carried out a ritual dance and blessed the site where the Encuentro would take place. Following the ritual, trios played one by one. At the registration table, each group received a number that designated when they were to play. They were also told that they could play only two songs, due to the large number of Huasteco trios that would be participating. Enrique's trio was assigned number 46, so they waited for a long time.

Figure 11

Elders Doing a Pehpentli

One of the first trios to participate in the Encuentro was Trio Zontecomatlán, formed by Arturo Fuentes, Eduardo Fuentes, and Margarito Zavaleta. Arturo and Eduardo are both offspring of Serafín Fuentes. Because of their heritage and immersion in Huasteco music and culture, I felt that it would be crucial to hear what the family of Serafín Fuentes thought about the potential inclusion of Huasteco music in Mexico's education system. Once they had finished playing, I approached them as they were on their way back to their family home. While walking, I introduced myself and told them that I was Enrique's acquaintance, and the trio agreed to participate in a Sharing Circle with me. Before starting the Sharing Circle, we had a conversation and some drinks—they wanted to toast their late father for the occasion. After that, we started the Sharing Circle. Once we finished, I asked them if it would be possible for them to play a song that they played at the Encuentro called "La Primavera." *Primavera* can be translated as "spring," but it is also the name of a bird that is common to see during the springtime. The song's lyrics portray both the bird and the season. They agreed to sing the song one more time in order for me to record it for my data collection.

We continued talking, and they continued playing for a while after the official Sharing Circle. After my time with them, I returned to the main plaza to continue hearing more Huasteco trios. This encounter and exchange were the starting point of my data collection during the Zontecomatlán Encuentro. If I had any doubt that 60 Huasteco trios would arrive and play during the Encuentro, this doubt evaporated as the day progressed as, according to the organizers, there were more than 60 Huasteco trios who performed at the event.

Figure 12

Encuentro in Zontecomatlán

During the Encuentro in Zontecomatlán, Enrique introduced me to the majority of my participants, among them Edgar Peña, and Huasteco trios such as Trio del Balcón and Tres en Línea. During that Encuentro, I conducted the second and third Sharing Circles with the two Huasteco trios, and I also had an interview with Edgar. Edgar is currently living in the state of Mexico.[10] He said that he tried to go to as many Encuentros as possible:

> I found in the Huasteco who I am, I found what I like to do. I found my real family, not the one that I am tied to because of blood, but the people with whom I share ideas and commonalities, and the ones that I like to spend my time with.

[10] It is important to differentiate between Mexico (as a country), the state of Mexico (which is one of the 32 states of Mexico), and Mexico City (which is the capital of the country),

The trios with whom I spoke are Trio "Tres en Línea" and "Trio del Balcón." Trio "Tres en Línea" members are Elba Acosta, Horacio Cortéz, and Iván Cázares. This trio is based in Mexico City. Their name originates from the metro lines in Mexico City (*línea* is "line" in English). They mentioned that they chose that name because it represents a characteristic part of Mexico City and because they often play in the metro stations. The other trio, "Trio del Balcón" consists of Jorge Vera, Humberto Soto, and Luis Olivares, all of whom are originally from Chicontepec, Veracruz but currently live in Xalapa, Veracruz. The name "Trio del Balcón" (Trio of the Balcony) is in honor of Chicontepec because the town is known as the "balcony of the Huasteca."[11] This balcony allegory comes from the location of Chicontepec, which is located right on the edge of a mountain, which gives extraordinary views of the area.

During the Encuentro, Enrique also introduced me to Elfego Villegas. According to Enrique, Elfego is a highly respected musician in Zontecomatlán and in the whole Huasteco region. Enrique told Elfego about the study that I was conducting, and I asked Elfego if he would be willing to participate. He agreed to be interviewed and invited us over to his place for breakfast the following morning.

We arrived at Elfego's place the following morning for breakfast. After breakfast, I conducted the interview with him. He shared many of his experiences over the years. He said that he was very close to Serafín and that he was his *compadre* (godparent to one or more of Serafín's children). He recalled old times in Zontecomatlán and how he eventually moved to Xalapa, also describing how he ended up working for over 30 years as a Huasteco musician employed by the University of Veracruz. After breakfast and the interview with Elfego, we left Zontecomatlán and we returned to Chicontepec, where I remained a couple more days with

[11] Huasteca refers to the Huasteco region. In Spanish, it would be La Huasteca.

Enrique and his family. There, I had the opportunity to continue practicing the jarana and also to learn more about the region by visiting and talking with more of Enrique's acquaintances. Finally, I returned to Xalapa with rich memories and stories from the Zontecomatlán Encuentro, the visit to Chicontepec, and spending time with Enrique and his family.

Some months later, I had the opportunity to interview Kenia Melo and Osiris Caballero. Kenia is Enrique's daughter, and she is currently studying music education at the University of Veracruz. I met her because we collaborated in a music education forum some weeks after my return to Mexico. At that time, I invited her to participate in an interview. For me, it was very interesting to hear the experience of a new generation of Huasteco culture bearers. This conversation was doubly rich because she also spoke from the perspective of a future music educator. In many ways, I see in her an example of the perfect person to bridge the music tradition of the Huasteco and the formal music education system. Kenia's interview provided very interesting insights to my questions about Huasteco music making being part of the educational system; her comments did reveal a bridge between Huasteco music tradition and the formal music education perspective. For example, she mentioned the use of Western classic music theory to facilitate the Huasteco learning experience for people who had previously learned music using Western classical music theory principles. She acknowledged the importance of using a learner's previous experiences to facilitate the learning process. She also recommended that I interview her boyfriend, Osiris Caballero. I had heard about Osiris' work from Elfego; therefore, it was the perfect opportunity to contact Osiris via Kenia.

Osiris's main work takes place in Tantoyuca, Veracruz. He has conducted two community projects in recent years, which have been directed at teaching children Huasteco music in non-formal education contexts. Osiris' insights provided me with a valuable perspective

of a new generation of music culture bearers working on the ground teaching children in the Huasteco region. Osiris completed a Bachelor's degree in Arts Education. Osiris's and Kenia's experiences provided me with a glimpse of a new generation of music culture bearers who are engaged in teaching Huasteco music using a combination of traditional approaches to music making from a Huasteco perspective and using pedagogical tools that they learned and developed through their teacher education programs.

During my visit in Zontecomatlán and Chicontepec, I was told about some Huasteco music culture bearers who were established in Xalapa and whom it would be ideal to contact in order to gain their perspectives regarding my research topic. Two people in particular attracted my attention: Román Güemes and Víctor Ramírez. In May 2019, I attended an event hosted by an organization in Xalapa called *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* (Huastecos United for Progress). The goal of this organization is to promote Huasteco culture in Xalapa. During that event, I met with Israel Estrada. He knew Román Güemes, so he suggested to Román that we have a meeting to talk about my research project. Román agreed and arranged a date and time when he could speak with us.

I had the chance to have two long interviews with Román. Román is considered by Huasteco community members as one of the most respected Huasteco culture bearers, not just regarding music but all aspects of Huasteco culture. Currently, Román works for the Institute of Anthropology of the University of Veracruz. During our first meeting, Román shared his experiences as a child with me. He mentioned that his community chose him to receive special training to become a *curandero* (healer) o *ritualista* (the person in charge of leading the rituals in the community). People in his community believed he could become a Wiseman due to the circumstances of his birth (the way in which he was delivered). In his childhood, he was trained

to learn ancient rituals, some of which required learning music as well. We had a long first interview, which left some questions unanswered, so he recommended that we meet again a week from then in order to finish the interview. We (Israel and I) returned to his office to continue the interview a week later.

Figure 13

During the First Interview with Román Güemes

The next person I contacted was Víctor Ramírez. A mutual friend, Norma Hernández, mentioned him to me. She told me that her dad and Victor were very good friends, and said that if I wished, she could contact him to ask him if I could interview him. Norma contacted me some days later and told me that he was willing to receive a call from me to hear more about my study. I called Victor and he agreed to receive me the following morning. I visited Victor at his home in Xalapa, Veracruz. He shared with me his journey from when he was a child in the municipality of Xoxocapan and the way in which he started learning how to play the violin. Victor is one of

the most respected violinists in the Huasteco region; I had heard about him from several people. Additionally, I had heard several of his recordings with his trio, Trio Xoxocapan. He is a great violin player and has been teaching new generations of Huasteco violinists. He mentioned that his first language was Nahuatl (an Indigenous language of the area) and that he had learned Spanish later in life. He was a very kind and approachable person. At some point, he took out his violin and played for me. The way he approached learning to play the violin was very different from my own approach, so it was very interesting to learn the logic behind his way of learning and teaching. This was a truly valuable learning experience.

Figure 14

Víctor Ramírez Playing After the Interview

As I mentioned before, Huastecos Unidos organized an event in Xalapa in May 2019. During that event, I had the chance to meet with Cresencio Hernández, the current president of

Huastecos Unidos. I approached Cresencio during that event, and I told him that part of my research was learning about the perspectives of organizers of these kinds of events since roles like his are very important in bringing the community together to promote Huasteco culture. I was interested in learning about the process of collaboration among Huasteco people. He agreed to be formally interviewed. During the interview, he shared with me his insights on how he supported the Huasteco community in coming together by organizing two large events each year in Xalapa. It was interesting to acquaint myself with the perspective of someone who is not a musician, but whose role is important in connecting people in order to get things done. When I heard his narrative, I related to some of his experiences as a result of my own efforts in organizing events with no established funding. Huastecos Unidos is a wonderful group of volunteers working together with a common interest to promote Huasteco culture in the Xalapa area.

Figure 15

During an Event Organized by Huastecos Unidos por Un Progreso

In the upcoming sections I present the findings that are the product of recording, transcribing, coding, analyzing, and translating the series of interviews and Sharing Circles. From the analysis process, five main categories emerged: (a) The process by which the Huasteco music culture bearers learned Huasteco music and the way in which they teach it; (b) The role of music and music culture bearers in the Huasteco worldview; (c) Music identity in the Huasteco culture, (d) Workshops, festivals, and Encuentro*s*: An opportunity to build collaborative relationships; and (e) Envisioning Huasteco music making in the educational system: Potential ways to proceed and challenges. The emerging categories are framed according to the research questions of this study: What pedagogical tools do Huasteco culture bearers use when teaching Huasteco music? What Huasteco cultural principles are conveyed through music making and music pedagogy? In what relational, respectful, and reciprocal ways might music making with Indigenous roots be embedded in Mexico's educational system?

Before moving forward to the narratives of participants, it is important to note that some narratives might be long. Nevertheless, it is crucial for this study, from both methodological and theoretical positions, that the stories and reflections of participants are not edited (broken into smaller pieces) in order to avoid a misrepresentation of participant's experiences wherever possible.

Teaching and Learning Huasteco music: Pedagogical Approaches Might be Changing, but the Tradition Stays in Place

The Beginning of the Journey to Become a Music Culture Bearer

As expressed in chapter 4 (see p. 119), for the purpose of this study, a Huasteco music culture bearer is a person (regardless of their age) who is well-informed and knowledgeable about the Huasteco music tradition and culture. All participants explained that they started their learning journey on how to play Huasteco music via oral tradition and by observing other people playing the instruments. Their learning occurred with family, with friends and acquaintances, and with the instruction of a community member in charge of teaching Huasteco music. All participants learned by imitating and engaging with music making from the very onset of their learning journey.

Some of the participants belonged to families who have had a tradition of Huasteco music making for generations; therefore, Huasteco music has been an important part of their life journeys. Kenia Melo was one such participant; she reminisced about how music has been with her since her childhood:

> Huasteco music is part of me, part of my life because since I was very little, a baby, this music was always present in my home … my parents always took my siblings and me to events where there was Huasteco music. It could be festivities such as *Todos Santos* (Day of the Dead) when you visit the cemetery. Those memories have been really present in my life. That is why I started singing. My mother always supported me, and she always told me, "Let's learn another Huapango." I really liked it a lot because I was used to seeing my father, and I admire him a lot. I started singing, and little by little, I wanted to start learning how to play an instrument. My father was there for me. He never forced us to learn—he waited until we wanted to get involved; he would not force us to do it. When we asked him to teach us, he was always there. Even now, he is always willing to teach us, always, we keep learning from him.

In Kenia's recollection, it is evident that she regarded Huasteco music highly from the early stages of her life, which contributed to her willingness to learn it and pride in her Huasteco heritage. Similarly, Víctor Ramírez shared his experience learning Huasteco music in his hometown Xoxocapan:

> Since I was a child, I really liked music. In every gathering and party, I always got close to the musicians to see them and hear how they played—I really liked it. I did not know how to play, but I followed them. For example, during the Day of the Dead celebrations, I could be following them for a week, always following wherever they went … When I was four, my mom bought me a little violin made out of sugar cane wood. That little violin made out of sugar cane wood had four strings, it sounded good, but it had a different sound because it was made out of sugar cane wood. That is how I started playing the violin. Then, when I went to gatherings and parties there were some

> musicians and they were ok with me playing their violin. I used their violin for a while and I really liked it. I wanted to play it night and day … I think I have had this call to be a musician since my very birth because my parents, grandparents, and uncles were musicians. My brothers were musicians, too. My grandfather on my father's side played guitar and violin. My grandfather on my mother's side, his name was Luis, he played the guitar really well. When I got to know them, they were already playing, they played really well. I did not know back then that I would become a musician one day too. I really liked music, too, and my family did not prohibit it—they never told me, "Do not touch that guitar or the violin." If they had said something like that, I might have not learned, but on the contrary, they always told me, "Here is the violin, play it." The violin was too big for me—I could not reach the whole instrument, but I always took good care of it because I knew that I should not break the instrument.

Again, the support and willingness of Victor's family to support his interest to learn Huasteco music were integral to his motivation to continue learning Huasteco music. However, some culture bearers did not have a family member who was a musician when they were young. For them, community played an important role in their learning Huasteco music. Community, in this context, consisted of friends, acquaintances, and members of the wider community at large. All participants acknowledged the support that they had received from the community in learning Huasteco music. An example of this acknowledgement is evident in Osiris's description of his learning music journey:

> I started playing jarana when I joined a *cuadrilla* (group of people that get together to play and dance) of dancers—I started looking at how everyone did it. After that, I started learning violin with the Fajardo Hernández family from Chicontepec, Veracruz. They

> have a tradition of *son* Huasteco. One of the members of that family is married to a lady from Ciudad Victoria [in the state of Tamaulipas]—they have a trio called "Soraya y sus Huastecos." I started learning with them … A lot of people believed in me from the beginning, like I mentioned before. Maestro[12] Román and other musicians believed in me, and they told me that next year, they would be waiting for me to come back and play in a really important celebration that happens in the North of Veracruz, in Amatlán, Veracruz, in the Encuentro of the Huastecas. They wanted me to go there to play. The dream of playing came true, and people kept supporting me. I have always received a lot of support from the Huasteco community and the musicians.

The Journey from Learning to Teaching Huasteco Music

All participants reflected on the ways in which they learned Huasteco music and the ways in which they teach Huasteco music. Participants indicated that Huasteco music culture bearers are retaining traditional ways of teaching and learning Huasteco music, while also implementing their own pedagogical approaches using unique tools that they have personally developed through years of experience. Kenia commented,

> When I was a child, my dad already knew how to play the jarana, actually the three instruments: Jarana, huapanguera, and violin. I remember that a lot of famous musicians in the Huasteco tradition would come to my place … Because they used to come a lot to my house, this did not really attract my attention when I was a child. But because I heard it over and over again, this music started getting into me. Then, I started to imitate, I imitated the movement with my hand on my body as if I had the jarana, but of course I

[12] Title of respect used for teachers or musicians.

> did it, just with my body, no jarana, and this is how I learned. I think this could be a way for children to learn, too … I learned by myself. It is harder to learn by yourself, but as time passes, I think the way that I learned is better. I teach in the way I learned. Some people want other people to learn just by saying "Look, do it this way." But I think it is easier to do it in sections, by saying, "First, do this movement down, now, do it two times up, now, do this." After that, it is easier to put everything together. My students learn how to play the same day that they arrive, they play the very same day! In some ways, I am teaching the same ways in which I learned, but I am simplifying some steps.

Víctor Ramírez also reflected on the way that he teaches music, which is informed by his own life journey:

> I honestly teach my students the same way that I learned. Like I tell them, when I wanted to teach myself to play the violin, I started with playing one string, just with one string, you play a melody with one string. You move one finger up the string, you need to move it up, you move. As you move it up the tone also goes up. If you move your finger down, then the tone goes down. You start that way; otherwise, it is hard to manage to learn on four strings at the same time. You use just one string then. For example, I have my violin here, and I tell my students, "Here is the violin, learn how to play it."

Just as each of the participants had different ways of starting their journeys to become Huasteco music culture bearers, all of them also acknowledge that over the years, their own lived experiences of playing and receiving feedback from different musicians have informed not only the way in which they play, but also have provided them with different tools and approaches in terms of how they can teach Huasteco music to others.

A common thread among all the participants is that they are trying to maintain the music tradition (what some of them label as the 'flavour' of the *Son*), but at the same time, they have found their own ways to pass the knowledge on to the new generations of musicians using pedagogies informed by the teachings of their former teachers and their own lived experiences. Enrique emphasizes the importance of teaching Huasteco music in a way that follows the traditional style in terms of rhythms, instruments, and how musical phrases are structured in order to maintain the traditional structure of this music:

> It is very important to keep the music tradition as it is, not to make alterations to the music. Otherwise, if you start adding some stuff, then the music starts degenerating and becomes another type of music once you add other rhythms. That has happened to other musics. I think that with Huasteco music, it is important to keep using the same music instruments, and most of all, try to keep the same rhythms, with no variations so that the music does not degenerate. I am not against innovations, what I am referring to is that Huasteco music should continue having the same root, that is the same Huasteco music. I am not against new rhythms; if someone asks me, "What do you think about those groups that are making new rhythms?" Well, musically speaking, they are doing very well. I cannot say, "This does not work." I cannot say that. What I am saying is that we need to keep Huasteco music alive as it is.

Osiris Caballero mentioned that he has developed his own methodology to teach Huasteco music. Yet, he also acknowledged that his way of teaching is very much informed by the way in which he was taught. Like Enrique Melo, Osiris calls for a preservation of the traditional styles of Huasteco music in order not to lose what makes this music unique in addition to keeping alive the particularities of the music styles of the microregions of the Huasteco.

Well, yes, I teach in the same way that I was taught. I learned from a lot of people, and I think that based on learning from different people, I have developed my own methodology to teach. I am still using the methods that other people used with me, but in some way, it is also different than the way in which I was taught. I think that the way that I have been teaching my students has helped them to move forward in their progress … I think that in traditional music, there is not a unique or specific technique or a methodology to teach. But I think my approach has worked well so far, so I continue working that way … Of course, workshops have worked well, but there have also been people with no vision of keeping a traditional line [not adopting instruments outside the traditional three: Jarana, huapanguera, and violin, and following the harmonic, rhythmic, and structure of phrases in the *sones*] of the music. Of course, now, with globalization and everything that happens around the world, some changes in the tradition will emerge in order for the tradition to be maintained. But sometimes, I feel that this has deteriorated the *son* Huasteco. I mean, not all the traditional styles have been kept—all the music styles that were in this region. Among the different states that make up the Huasteco region and also among the microregions inside of those states, there were particular styles. For example, back in time, you would hear musicians from Chicontepec, and you would say, 'That is the Chicontepec style," the Panuco Style, the Jaltocán Style, the Huejutla style, the one from Hidalgo, or the one from Tampico'. The one from Tampico is very rich because a lot of musicians arrived there. Especially musicians from Tamaulipas and Veracruz did their own style, it is a really nice way to do the *son*. You have also the style from San Luis Potosí, from the Huasteca Potosina, and some of those

> styles are kind of lost. Now, people play very similarly, it seems that everything has come to a sort of standardization.

Elfego Villegas also learned by interacting with and observing how other musicians played.

> I learned through observing how other people played, the positions of their hands, the rhythms, trying to feel rhythm. It was important to see how to move the hand, where to do the *rasgueos,* where to do the *apagados* (movement that is done with the hand to prevent the vibration of the strings), and all that. I was able to understand all those elements.

Elfego stressed how important it was that the particular style of *son* from Zontecomatlán be taught to younger generations. He was aware that although he had developed his own way to teach this style of *son*, he always tries to remain true to the tradition:

> Sometimes in my teaching, I modified some things, but always in the cornerstones of the tradition. I always try not to lose the flavour of the style, the flavour of the Huapango, especially if it is *son* Zonteño. Some people here play *son* Zonteño but are lacking some aspects, some tempos, some of them start playing where it is not right, some play before and some play after they are supposed to.

He shared that violinists who are trained in the Western classical music tradition have asked him to be their teacher. He recalled an experience with a violinist raised in the Western classical music tradition and brought to our conversation two different approaches to playing the violin: on one hand, the developed technique of a musician coming from a Western classical music tradition, and on the other hand, the flavour that is not attained through technique, but rather through feeling the music and getting involved in the music tradition.

> There was a violinist, Beto (nickname for Alberto), Alberto Flores. He is a violinist who studied in the conservatory. He heard me one time when I did a workshop on Huasteco music. It was the time when the university was really pushing us to do workshops in different parts of the university. He was very interested and asked me if he could continue learning from me. I told him that this was okay with me. He asked me if he could come to my house, and that was fine with me. He used to come every day to learn the style of *son* from Zontecomatlán—he really liked this style. He told me, "We can do a CD recording with these *sones*" … I told him, that is okay. I knew that he had another type of technique. And I thought, "Let's hear how this sounds with a violin from a professional." He was awarded a scholarship to study in Belgium for 3 years. I told him, "Hey, I need to tell you something. I teach you here what I have, what I know, and you need to take good advantage of that, you have an enormous ability to assimilate everything easily" … We ended up recording the CD, and I dedicated that to my *compadre* (term used to refer to the godfather of one or more of one's children) Serafín. I wanted a reason for this recording, and I wanted it to be a tribute to Serafín Fuentes … I received some comments and critiques from some people who play Huapango. Osiris called me and told me, "Mr. Elfego, this sounds nice, it is well played, but it is missing something." Of course, this is missing some of the Huasteco flavour; these versions are very technique driven. Sometimes, people look for perfection, but that limits the main ingredient, which is the flavour.

Kenia Melo reflected about the way that she teaches Huasteco music, a hybridic pedagogical approach, which is informed by her own journey learning Huasteco music, but also incorporates pedagogical tools learned during her music education studies.

> For example, sometimes you have students who are academic musicians themselves. Then, it might appear to be easier to teach *son* Huasteco to professional musicians, but actually, it is a little bit more complicated. When I find myself in that situation, I use theory concepts [Western classical music] in the classes so that they can easily understand. I also try to incorporate what I have learned so that they can also learn that music language (*son* Huasteco). In this way, I can explain things to them so that they can learn more quickly than using imitation or oral tradition. On the other hand, when I am teaching a person without previous music theory knowledge, then I use the same methods that my father used with me. At the same time, I am trying to use the tools that I have learned in my music education degree. I always try to be a teacher who does not try to frustrate their students, but rather, I try to motivate them so that they do not abandon this journey. I want them to move forward and fall in love with *son* Huasteco.

Román Güemes talked about the importance that Huasteco culture bearers had on his life and the way in which the community viewed them. He also recalled the teachings that he received regarding the importance of treating the instruments with respect:

> I learned from the culture bearers—they were not teachers; nobody called them 'teachers.' We learned what teachers were once we arrived in Xalapa. In our lands, we saw them as more than teachers—we saw them as heroes, here they were heroes, too. But there in the community, they were heroes who did not wear shoes, and their clothes were like ours. They taught us the best of themselves in the most patient and loving way. According to the local traditions and beliefs, people thought I would become a *Tepahtihketl* [13] (Medicine man—Traditional doctor—ritualist). The first thing that I was

[13] Words in Nahuatl or Spanish will be written using italics with a translation in brackets. Nahuatl is one of the Indigenous languages that are currently spoken in the region.

> taught was the music related to the jungle, the music for flute and tambourine, also the rhythms that we can find in the communities of those *sones*, from those ethnicities. I learned since I was five. My father's sister, Regina—we used to call her Minina—she was the godmother of all of us. She said, "First, he needs to learn the flute." Don[14] Juan Pitador came three times a week. I was a child; I did not have big responsibilities. He [Juan] stayed all day; he ate and slept there for three days … I learned how to play the traditional *sones*. Why? Because in the community, we have the *Nanawatili* (Carnival), the carnival. We have the *Xantolo* (Day of the Dead), *Mihkailwitl* (Indigenous celebration for the dead—a predecessor of Day of the Dead), Day of the Holy Cross on May 3rd, the Assumption. Celebrations for nearby towns, like *Chiconamel* (Seven wells) that had a party on the 16th of August. We used to go there to participate in those celebrations, to dance, too. We were there to participate—this unified us. What really mattered was the dance and music which brought us together, which used to foster cohesion and still does.

His reflection continued with a reflection on the role that 'teachers' have had on his journey to become a music culture bearer:

> They have their own ways of teaching, otherwise they could not have done it, right? But they were not focusing only on teaching you how to play the instrument. They really taught you how to play the instrument well, how to take good care of it, how to make it look more beautiful. If they saw you putting the guitar on the floor, they would say something like, "What is happening? This instrument is going to help you work; it is like your mother. Do you ask your mother to sit on the floor? No, right? Pick it up because somebody could come and step on it." I always take care of my instruments … Look at

[14] *Mister* or *sir* in Spanish.

> the instruments of traditional musicians—when there were no instrument cases, they had their piece of cloth to cover it. They fed the instruments; they decorated the instruments in a ceremonial way. This one is the lady [points at the huapanguera] *kixtiano* (huapanguera]), *xinola* (madam), the jarana is *okixpil* (child), and the violin is *Ichpokaesi* (miss or girl), with her voice really high. If you are going to teach how to play, and you do not describe and immerse the student in all the meaning and the poetry behind the instruments, then there is nothing, it is cold—they are just going to learn maybe good technique to play the instrument, to have good fingering, and good use of the violin bow.

When I asked him if he currently teaches the same way as he was taught, Roman responded that he made some modifications whenever he thought that it would be beneficial for the teaching process:

> Yes, of course, I have observed that I can move forward faster if I decide to go this way, but I give an explanation why. I am going to dare to contradict my teachers, but I think that perhaps this is the most efficient way to go. There are things that do not necessarily have a methodology, you need to do those things as they are. Of course, the technical part and the didactics are important, those are important, but also, those [technique components] do not create a conflict with traditional ways of learning.

Music Beyond Performance: Music Culture Bearers, Living Testimony and Carriers of the Huasteco Worldview and Identity

The Function of Music in the Huasteco Region

When participants were asked about the use and meaning of Huasteco music in the Huasteco worldview, there were a range of answers, from describing the natural world in the Huasteco region to being an essential part of rituals such as those honoring people who had passed away. Kenia Melo commented:

> Through Huasteco music, it is possible to express everything connected with the region, for example, the festivities for *Xantolo*, where music plays an important part of the dances for this festivity, as well as for *Todos Santos* (Day of the Dead) when people wear costumes and don't take off their masks until Ash Wednesday. Also, music is used for rituals asking for rain, which have their own *sones*.

Arturo Fuentes noted that his father composed a *son* that describes the Spring season and the animals that were in the region during that season:

> For example, we sang "*La primavera*" (Spring) earlier. He [Serafín Fuentes] focused on this season of the year, Spring. He wanted to communicate to everyone the different animals that you can see in the Spring, such as *chachalacas* (a type of bird from the region), the little rabbits, the butterflies.

Jorge Vera from Trio del Balcón expanded on the meaning of music in this region, which is connected to the worldview of Huasteco people:

> Music transmits the lexicon of the region. You also learn about the local fauna in the lyrics, about the idiosyncrasy and the worldview of this place. *Son* Huasteco covers a lot of things—it is not just about the *sones* that you hear here. There is another part that is ritual, a part that is not well known. But everything is connected, starting with the animals that you interact with, the way that you move, what you wear: a *calzón de manta* (cotton pants), a *cuera* (a traditional outfit from the Huasteco region, particularly from the

> Tamaulipas area). Also, music is related to the way in which Huasteco people feel something like love, right? Everything, absolutely everything is condensed in the music.

Elfego Villegas recalled his experiences in the community where music was an important part of bringing the community, friends, and family together. He shared some of the recollections of his youth in Zontecomatlán:

> In the community, music serves to gather people together; otherwise, everyone goes to their houses to watch television. Back in time, we did not have television, we did not have electricity. We gathered together to listen to music, and some people liked to sing, to sing some older songs. A lot of people liked to learn the old songs, and some would make some new songs. The point was to gather with friends. Sometimes we would sit on the porches to talk—we were maybe three or four of us, and there was my *compadre* Serafín, and also, I was there, talking with everyone. And then, someone said, "Hey, why don't we ask someone to get the pieces of wood?" They referred to the musical instruments. And from there, we would go around town singing and dancing. Yes, because we did not have electricity, what other way of distraction could there be for people to be entertained? In the Huasteco culture, the musicians are the engine to help people enjoy—they make the time special.

Osiris Caballero and Román Güemes described the key role of music in preserving rituals. In this context, many *sones* have a particular use; therefore, preserving the *sones* also contributes to keeping the cultural practices alive. Osiris commented,

> There are *sones* for a lot of things. For example, I have been immersed in a particular ritual, a ritual that is connected to asking for rain, but there are also *sones* for fire, for earth, for water, and for wind. Respect towards nature, the rivers, and the forest is

> conveyed through rituals and music. Unfortunately, in the Huasteco region, and also, I imagine in other areas of Mexico and around the world, a lot of resources have been taken from the land … In the ritual asking for rain, I have seen that this is very related to respect. This ritual is very much linked to music because there is no ritual without music. There are rituals for making dolls, which people called 'guardians.' In this ritual, the dolls are hung and placed in a line. There are *sones* to play on the edge of the river. There are *sones* to play in the mountain where an offering is going to take place, when a hen is offered to the God of the wind in order to protect the corn plantation when heavy storms come. Corn is the most important part of the Nahua worldview because from corn, we get our tortillas and everything. There is also a ritual to bless the instruments in order for them to have a good sound to make music because this is really important for the community.

Roman Güemes also reflected on the importance of music as a vehicle to remind people that corn is central to Huasteco culture and of the need to protect the ancient tradition of growing, respecting, and protecting the corn:

> The *sones* talk to you. The *sones* can hear when you are, for example, playing for the corn. This *son* is telling you "remember that the corn is a child; it is at the same time both a boy and a girl." We abandon them to the most dangerous places: to a hillside, next to a rock, next to a tree, we leave them there and we come back home. But who is taking care of the children? Who takes care of the children who are simultaneously a boy and a girl? We are ungrateful; the corn cries because we have forgotten about them—we do not do its ritual, its *costombre*, its ceremony. It used to be done year after year, but times change, as well as the corn that we eat nowadays. There is still some pristine corn that has been

kept safe, seeds that have been protected and taken care of in order to make sure that there is still pure corn.

The aforementioned reflection is connected to the story of *Chikomexochitl*, the child-corn (see p. 31). In his narrative, Roman pointed out the connection between music, ritual, and the relevance of corn in the Huasteco worldview.

Roman also addressed the use of music in different social celebrations such as weddings, Carnival, and festivities during Day of the Dead:

> So, we have the *sones* for a person who has died, but also for the dead (for Day of the Dead), for *Tlachicontilliztle* and for *Xantolo*. We also have the *sones brincados* (*sones* where people jump)—these are the *sones* for Carnival. These *sones* have a rhythm that allows for leaping during the Carnival; these are also used for the *Xantolo*, but are mainly linked to the Carnival. People call those *Nanawatilsonas* (*Sones* for carnival) or *Nanawatilsones* (synonym), *sones* for the Carnival. During the Carnival, souls of bad people come. But really the bad and the good is relative—during the Carnival, the souls of the bad dead people come. Then, for *Xantolo*, both the good and bad souls come. But like I said before, good and bad are inclusive concepts. Anyway, that is the way that people say it because during the Carnival the devil is the one who rules in this festivity; meanwhile, during *Xantolo* the one who rules is Jesus Christ. Well, we have the *sones* for Carnival, *sones* for weddings *Monamiktilissones*, *sones* for a wedding … So, let's see, when do we dance? During *Xantolo*, Carnival, weddings, rituals and ceremonies, *Tlamanilistli* (offering/the action of offering something with the hands), which is the ceremony for the corn. During the *costombre* or the *Elotlatlakwaltilistli* (Feeding the corn cobs), which is to offer a tribute to the earth.

Music is present at both sacred and secular important events in the Huasteco region. Thus, musicians have had a fundamental role over time in keeping the music tradition as well as the dances and Indigenous languages vital and vibrant in the Huasteco region, which are all at the core of Huasteco culture.

The Music Culture Bearer

Participants described the roles that Huasteco music culture bearers have in the Huasteco communities and towns. Enrique Melo affirmed that "musicians have a really important role in the community. It is through them that it is possible to convey all our cultural heritage, which has been acquired through time." In their responses, Huasteco music culture bearers outlined the many roles for musicians in the community, which go far beyond playing on a stage; rather, they are very much immersed in key aspects of people's daily lives in ceremonies such as funerals, weddings and rituals.

> The musicians in some way direct the ritual. For example, at a wedding or a funeral, the musicians lead the ceremony. The roles really vary depending on which part of the Huasteco they are in—Hidalgo, Veracruz, Tamaulipas. Depending on the place, there are different local protocols. The role of the musician is really important—the musicians are very respected in Huasteco society. – *Edgar Peña*

Osiris Caballero particularly reflected on the special and important link between music and rituals in the Huasteco region, commenting:

> The role of the musician is very important here because without music, there would be no celebrations, there would be no rituals. I think people in the community, in the Huasteco,

> really have a lot of respect for them, people admire them for what they do, for what they convey at the time that they are playing in particular ceremonies and rituals.

Víctor Ramírez described his own experiences regarding the respect that musicians receive in the communities, particularly in the Huasteco region:

> People really appreciate musicians. Musicians are really respected in the towns. For example, I go to my town, and there are a lot of people I knew when they were children, when they were small. Now, these people are grownups, with their own families. I do not recognize them because of that, but they recognise me, they say to me, "Don Víctor, Don Víctor!" I ask them, "Who are you? Who is your father?" and they say, "My father is this person" then I know who they are. But they know who I am, even if I do not know them. But when I go to play somewhere, a lot of people know me, they call me by my name.

Román Güemes recalled some of the stories that he was told about how music culture bearers were treated in the past:

> I was told this, I did not see it, but I could feel it. Musicians stayed in a special place where they were protected from jealousy and disequilibrium. People there are really careful about jealousy. They [the musicians] were taken on a path covered by blankets and rose petals. They were carried on a litter so that they could climb to the *Paclapechi*, which was a platform where it was possible for sound to travel easily because it was acoustic string music. Musicians were treated as important people in their community and region. This was because the musician offers not just their talent but also their health.

In his narrative, Román provided an important insight into how musicians play a key role in cultural practices in the Huasteco in events such as honouring people who had passed away:

So, I was telling you that some *sones* are used for really special occasions, right? People do not rehearse to play together because there is no time; people are busy working, and they arrive a little late in the day. They arrive and have dinner at home. After that, they [the musicians] go to the house where they are invited to play. They did not used to be hired [paid], possibly now they do sometimes, but in the past, it was not like that; you just needed to invite them to your place. They knew where to go—it was a community. If there was a deceased person, they knew exactly what to do. For a deceased person, you need to play *sones de muerto o sones de muerte* (*sones* for death) … These are called *Mihkasonas* (*Son* for a deceased person) or *Mihkasones* (synonym). *Mihka* means 'deceased.' Therefore, the *sones* for the deceased are *Mihkasones,* this is a really specific category of *sones*.

Elfego Villegas recalled the first time that he played at a funeral for a child who had passed away:

There was a time, I was around 15 years old, I already played huapangos, and there was a little angel—a deceased person, that is how we called the children who passed away. In the neighbourhood of Soledad, people used to play music to children who had passed away. Then, someone said, "Let's go to see Lazaro for him to play [during the funeral]." They found Lazaro, but they did not find Timoteo because he was working in the corn field. And someone asked, "What do we do now?" and someone said, "Elfego also plays, doesn't he? Go to his place and look for him." At that time, I was out of the house doing some carpentry work, something like that. Then someone came and said, "Hey, we came to ask you for a favor, for you to go play, we have a little angel, and we need some music." I said, "Okay, but I do not have someone that I can play with." Then, this person

> told me, "Lazaro is there, he is just waiting for the person who will play the huapanguera." Then, I said "Okay, but I do not have my instrument here." This person said, "Don't worry, Juan already agreed to lend you a huapanguera." Then, I went to the funeral; it was the very first time that I played in something like that … Currently, it is not that common to play for a person who passes away, unless the deceased person has asked for it in advance.

In this memory, Elfego notes that the musician needs to be ready to be 'initiated' when the time comes, when the community needs the musician. In his recollection, he is called to cover the musician who usually played in his community, and he answers the call and steps in to fulfill the role that musicians have played before him. In some ways, this occasion is a symbolic rite of passage, signifying a 'baton' passing between generations.

In his narrative, Román addressed a particular cultural practice that occurs on the 9th day after an individual passes away:

> During that night, a *petate* (bedroll made from palm fibers) was placed in the house, and on top of that, the clothes of the deceased person were placed in a way that simulated the shape of the body by placing articles such a pants, shirts, hat, *morral* (personal bag), *huaraches* (Mexican sandal), and any other clothes that the person used in the traditional dances. At some point during the night, people started crying. If the deceased was a married man, then his wife would start, but if the mother of the deceased person was there, then the mother started, followed by the father, wife, children, grandchildren, siblings, and aunts and uncles [in that order]. It was not just crying—it was a weeping sound. It was a weeping just with the sound, it was a sort of singing that was accompanied by the *Xochipitzahuatl* (traditional *son*). The music for the *Xochipitzahuatl*

would start and then people would follow. The *Xochipitzahuatl* would start in the key of D (music key). Then, people would sing and say things about the deceased person, things such as, "You were a really hardworking person; when you were here, everything was taken care of; you were a good father, a good son, and a good husband; you never got into trouble."

During the interview with Román, one of the words in Nahuatl, *Tlalahlamihketl,* particularly attracted my attention. This word translates to something very similar to 'culture bearer.' I asked him to expand on this concept, which reflected the role of a wise person in the community.

It is the *Tlalahlamihketl* (The Wiseman—the ritualist). Has knowledge of everything in the cultural context, or *Tlamahketl* (synonym). *Ihlamikilistli* (the memory—knowledge comes from remembering) is culture, the action, the action to express culture, the memories. *Ni tlakatl tlawel lahlamiki* is the person who knows a lot, but *Ihlamikilistli* is the memory. He or she can see the past, can see the future, can see everywhere. This person can see up and down. This person is a *Tlalahlamihketl* or *Ihlamikilistli,* depending on the case, it is a variation of Wiseman. The Wiseman is not understood in the same way as in the mestizo population, no. A good person to conduct a ritual is a *Tlalahlamihketl* or a *Tlapochwihktl* (the person who is in charge of the incense), the one who wafts incense, (who carries and shares) the arts and knowledge (like wafting incense from a burner). Culture refers to concrete things but also to deeper aspects, too. If you could only know how many concepts are related to what is inside the human being.

Music Identity in the Huasteco Culture

Huasteco music culture bearers stressed that music is key to fostering pride in the local Huasteca cultures due to its connection to other crucial aspects of culture, such as dance, language, and worldview. The Huasteco music culture bearers made one thing clear to me—music keeps you rooted in your community, family, language, and traditions, no matter where you are. In their narratives, Huasteco music culture bearers reflected on the importance of people being able to learn the music that represents their cultural roots as a way to engage actively in a cultural practice (music making) that is alive and present in their context. In their narratives, participants agreed that music is an important component of people's identities.

The Interconnectedness of Music, Dance, Language, and Worldview. Music is not separate from dance and language—this cultural practice is holistic. Dance not only accompanies music; dancing on the wooden platforms while Huasteco music is played is the heartbeat of the violin's improvisation in the middle section of the *son*. Dance and music are interlocked and integral to one another. As Elfego said,

> People who like to dance start dancing as soon as they hear a Huapango. They start dancing even if they do not know how to dance. It is not the same to dance in a ballet on a stage where all the steps and movements are already planned. Here people dance feeling the rhythm, according to how they feel that rhythm.

Edgar Peña described the importance of dance as a visual and embodied representation of the Huasteco worldview:

> Well, the worldview, the worldview is the way in which you see the universe, what is around you. In different parts of the Huasteca, ritual dances are really important, such as *voladores de Papantla*, *danza de los tres colores*, *danza de Matachines*, *danza de Chules*.

> In all those dances, the worldview of the Huasteca is clearly seen—all the worldview is inside the music and dance, as well as in society as a whole.

Roman Güemes noted the interconnectedness between music and dance, while also underscoring their transcendent purpose beyond performance:

> Music has a role in many expressions of culture [such as dance or ceremonies] and also in fostering identity, and identity makes other actions possible. Also, sometimes music is at risk because of different circumstances. If a rock band decides not to play heavy rock anymore and wanted to change to other branches of rock, there is not a problem, no problem at all. This band is not committed to a form of identity, nobody is going to say anything. Maybe this band is more or less accepted by the audience, maybe more or fewer people attend the place where they perform. This is not the same case with traditional music; this [traditional music] does not work like that. For example, if a musician says, "I do not like this *son* [style]; I am going to create a different one," then people are not going to know how this is danced, they would not know when a sequence of steps ends—it is going to be chaos. Some people are going to turn to the left and some to the right; they are going to start crashing into each other. If one *son* is lost, then the sequence, the sequence of the dance is lost. It is similar to taking out phrases or words, or cutting out words: if you synthesize them, nobody is going to understand the idea. This is not a simple thing. If one or two *sones* are lost, then the dance is lost, and then the ritual is in danger; the very social structures of the communities are in danger.

Enrique Melo also addressed the connection between music and dance as well as how music in the Huasteco region is connected to both Catholic and Pre-Hispanic celebrations and traditions:

> Through music, dance is conveyed too, dance is linked to music. What I have been able to see is that in the past, dancers dedicated their dances to their Gods. When the Spaniards arrived, a fusion was created. The fusion now with religious mysticism has created an impression that dances now are dedicated to the Virgin, to the patron saint for each town, and there you can see how music and dance are interconnected. That is how music has managed to stay: It was the way that old time *campesinos* (people who work on and/or own agricultural land) used to do music. Back in time, Huasteco music was played mainly for the people who lived in the countryside, farmers. After that, people in nearby towns started adopting it, they started paying attention to it. Through music, you will sing to the flowers, to the birds, to women, to the countryside. In a verse, a message that someone wanted to give to a lady can be recorded. In a verse, it is possible to keep records of the way in which people live their everyday lives.

Cresencio Hernández is very aware of the need to keep language and music related to cultural activities in general. This is evident in the way in which his group has worked together to facilitate events where language and music are present:

> Everything is connected to language, everything in the Huasteco region is related to language. For example, in a ceremony, language is related to music, they need to go together in order to perform a ceremony. The *Huehuehtlakatll*, it's how we call the Wiseman—so when he is praying, the musicians need to know when to play and when to change from one *son* to the other. That is what we are trying to promote, an event where it is, for example, not just about language, where we go only to speak the language [Nahuatl]. We cannot address the language without including the worldview, without the people. For example, it is not the same to use the word *canasta* (basket) in Spanish

> because it only has one connotation. In the Huasteca, canasta has another meaning, another way to think about it. The colors of the canasta are really connected to the worldview.

Víctor Ramírez reflected on his experience as a Nahuatl speaker, since he was raised in a family that spoke Nahuatl as their first language. Víctor also reflected on the use of Nahuatl in *sones*.

> I started speaking Nahuatl when I was a child, just Nahuatl. My grandparents spoke Nahuatl; they did not speak Spanish. There [in that community], people just learn the level of language [Spanish] and vocabulary necessary to function at school, but my grandparents did not attend school. Then, I noticed that in order to learn how to speak Spanish, you needed to learn how to write, but if you do not know how to write, then you use a word in Nahuatl … I definitely speak Nahuatl better than Spanish—I learned Spanish when I was 20 years old. I always worked as a farmer; all the men [the men with whom he worked on the farms] spoke just Nahuatl. There, we talked and worked, but just using Nahuatl, and no Spanish because I did not attend school … There are a lot of *huapangos* that are sung in Nahuatl. I remember that an anthropologist went to La Tasca because they wanted to hear how we sang in Nahuatl. We sang Cielito Lindo, La Leva, Xochipitzahuatl, El Huerfanito. The music from here is really nice—it has a very nice sound, and if you sing in Nahuatl, then the music flows, it is really nice.

Building Identity Through Music Making. Music culture bearers expressed the importance of music in the construction of a sense of identity in and among people. Sounds are connected to a collective memory of the society, which creates a sense of belonging for both

those in the Huasteco region and those who, for whatever reason, no longer live in the region. Music, then, is a vehicle to keep people rooted in their communities.

Enrique Melo's family is rooted in the Huasteco region; therefore, he grew up in a town (Chicontepec) where Huasteco culture features in everyday life.

> For me, music is part of the tradition of my town, of my land, from the Huasteco region. This is a way in which we find or create identity, to express our traditions through music making. This music has been inherited from friends, family, ancestors. In some ways, we are just reproducing what they did. We are trying to cultivate and keep alive this beautiful tradition, music.

In the case of Edgar, he grew up outside of the Huasteca region; nevertheless, he became very attached to the Huasteco music and worldview. He mentions in his narrative that he found who he is in the Huasteca. This is a clear example that music identities—and more broadly, identity—are not only shaped by the places where individuals are born, but also by the places where they find other people with similar attitudes and ways of seeing life. Edgar commented,

> I found in the Huasteca who I am, I found what I like to do. I found my real family, not the one that I am tied to because of blood, but the people with whom I share ideas and commonalities, and the ones that I like to spend my time with … Sometimes, we forget where we come from and also where we are heading. We just let ourselves consume what globalization is giving us.

In his narrative, Edgar pointed out an interesting aspect regarding identity. He acknowledged that even though his family is not from the Huasteco region, he found there something that connects him to that region in a very profound way.

Roman Güemes reflected on the importance of music and music making in the community beyond the realm of performance. He outlined music's many vital roles, including its function as a means of communication among community members. He referred to the different forms that Nahuatl language uses to describe the uses of words, music, and language. Roman makes a close connection between music and language as a medium for communication in the community.

> Well, first of all, music helps you to create an identity as a human being that is part of a group. Music itself talks to you in a community such as the one where I grew up. Fortunately, in other cultures they also have this heritage, where music actually speaks to you, it speaks to you. *Ne Tlatsontsontli* (music—string music)*, Ne Tlatlahtowah* (The action of talking between two or more people)*, Nechkamowi* (The action of interacting in an informal conversation) *or Mitstlahtowa* (synonym) all the possibilities to say: It speaks to you, it communicates to you, it expresses something to you, it shows you. Music is like language; it is a sound heritage—a sound of the group. Music educates you. If you know what *son* this is, then you have learned a lesson. If you are a child and you want your mother to come back because she went out to get something or to meet with the rest of women because there was a group for men and another for women—so, if you were missing your mother because it was already late, then you just need to [whistle]. With this, you are telling your mother, "Mom, please come, I really need you, I want to tell you something, I need you, you should come now." And just like that, when you least expected it, there was your mother rubbing your head … So, music is really connected with the formation of our identity, with our integrity as human beings, with your own emotional equilibrium, with the cultural heritage of your community, your language, your

> own accent or the tone in which you speak, even with the number of words that you can articulate and how you construct you own way of speaking … Music talks to you, it allows space for contemplation, especially if you know the traditional *sones*. Those *sones* provide you an opportunity to think about the future, the present, and the past. Whatever happens to music is going to affect you directly or indirectly … Music is about learning how to enjoy a sound, to be able to identify a sound. That is identity; that is what music is for—for remembrance, our memories, our yearning. There are a lot of *sones* that are played in different ceremonies where we gather to have the opportunity to look at each other in the eyes; that is what we gather for. We gather together because we are bonded by respect and love. Without these two, there is nothing—it is not worthwhile to keep breathing … So, there are also *sones* for therapeutic purposes, to heal people, for the first ritual bath for a newborn, for the ritual in the mountain with a pregnant woman. Things like that are embedded in society in which music is necessary.

Cresencio pointed out that some *sones* have specific features that enable people to identify from which town the *son* originates.

> For those who are not specialists or musicians, we still can identify, for example, a "*Canario*", which is a particular *son* that is played during ceremonies. Even from one town to another, the key of the *son* changes, and people will say something like, "Oh, that is the Canario from Chauite, this is the Canario from Ixhuatlán [name of a town]." And it is true, every town has its own way of doing things.

Roman Güemes is aware that both identity and music emerge from worldviews, and, in the Mexican context, it is not possible to talk about one 'universal' or 'authentic' identity.

Nevertheless, Roman pointed out that it is important to be rooted to one's own local cultural identity when entering a new cultural context in order to have something to offer.

> Also, there is a right to universality [the opportunity to learn about everything in a globalized world], but it is universal only if you have access to your own identity. Otherwise, how can you enter a society that is not yours with cultural principles that are not yours? You enter with what is yours. I have an identity and that is why I can relate to others. I will learn from them and they will learn from me. What I learn from others, I am not going to use it in my own cultural context—I will learn it to enrich my perspective about the world. You have these cultures that are yours, and you have people like us who are the keepers of our cultural heritage.

Roman also reflected on the aforementioned situation in the context of music making. He called for creating bridges between knowledge rooted in peoples' identities and other forms of knowledge, in this case music knowledge, noting,

> Look, there is also yearning, memories, and remembering as part of identity because you connect with what is yours. You are not going around asking for someone to lend you something: "Can you please let me use your bluegrass so that I can learn music?" Even if I learn how to play it [bluegrass], it will not tell me too much. What I would need to do then would be to try to find some similarities [between bluegrass] and what I do [Huasteco music]. Then, yes, it would be a more compelling learning experience because I could probably see some of the commonalities between them [bluegrass and Huasteco music]. Maybe they have the same root. Maybe then, it transports you to something that you heard when you were a child.

Lessons from Music Making in the Huasteco Community as a Way to Envision Huasteco Music in Mexico's Educational System

Workshops, Festivals, and Encuentros: An Opportunity to Build Collaborative Relationships

During the interviews and Sharing Circles, participants shared their experiences partaking in different projects and events promoting Huasteco culture, both within and beyond the Huasteco region. Initiatives such as workshops, festivals, and Encuentros serve as opportunities for promoting local culture in culturally significant ways. Also, these events create areas of opportunity for collaboration among communities. For this study, it is important to understand how Huasteco community collaborations are established and fostered since these aspects can be crucial in creating a framework of culturally appropriate collaboration between the school system and Huasteco culture bearers in relation to music education.

Community Work at the Core of the Huasteco Worldview. Cresencio Hernández pointed out that community collaboration has long been one of the strengths of Indigenous communities; for generations, it has been an important way of living in society in the Huasteco region. According to him, the principle of community volunteer work can now serve to promote Huasteco culture both within and beyond the Huasteco region. An example of such collaboration is the work that Huasteco community do in Xalapa for *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso:*

> Why not recover community work? This collective work is the one that is done in Indigenous communities. I am from an Indigenous community. People in the community do not wait for a project to be approved [subsidized by the government] to do our patronal festivities [festivities usually done in honor of a Catholic saint]. Why can't we do

the very same thing? People can collaborate by giving what they have—for example, musicians need to play.

Cresencio addressed the process by which the group *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* tries to encourage people to collaborate in projects that promote Huasteco culture in the Xalapa area:

> When we meet with people, we say, "Okay, we are going to do this work; who is willing to do this and that?" Then, people start saying, "We can do this or that." For example, there are people who sell food. Well, if I am going to sell food, then I need to collaborate to find a way to get the audio equipment that we need for the event, or get the chairs for the event—all those things are necessary for the events. Well, if people get used to getting paid, then they do not want to do it for free anymore. That is what we are trying to address during our meetings for the events. Also, we try to do it on a one-on-one basis, in order to say something like, "Hey, give us a hand; we do not have monetary resources. Our interest is that the music, the traditions do not get lost, and this is a way to collaborate for this to happen. We do not have money; we are a non-profit association. If you want our culture to stay alive, and you want other people, other towns to get to know it, if you want people from Xalapa and towns nearby to get to know it, then please give us a hand. We do not have money to pay; we are a non-profit association—the main thing here is to do community work." We need to recover our community work, like our communities do. It has been proven that only if we get together can we get things done via community work. That is how our communities have built schools, have built walls, have built houses—we have done a lot based on community work. In our events, we want to do something similar, to recover that community work. That is the only way to go

> forward; otherwise, we are lost as a community. We need to make the common good for all, not just for artistic or academic events, but also for other things—for example, helping people in the community with health issues. We need to be with people.

Roman Güemes also recalled the times in his community when people had helped each other so that nobody was left behind:

> In a community, there are always going to be ways of having something, even if you do have not much yourself, right? There is mutual help, which is called *Komontekitl* (Community work—the entire community works in favor of everyone), the support between one and the other, also known as *Mahtlanilistli* (The action of asking for mutual help). The assistance (help) between two people. The assistance will be repaid by returning the favor, lending a hand or a hand-back [Roman used the expression *mano de vuelta* which I translate as hand-back. Mano de vuelta is an expression that refers to reciprocity. If you give your hand (work/help) to someone, you expect that one day the person that you helped is going to help you]. All the work was for the community in order to help everyone with the hand-back. For example, when we needed to make a house, how wonderful! It did not matter how weak your economy was; you will have a new house.

Community work as a principle in Huasteco culture is still very present in the communities and has moved with individuals to larger urban areas such as Xalapa. Huasteco people have found ways to maintain support networks via mano de vuelta and Mahtlanilistli, which is crucial in efforts to consolidate Huasteco cultural practices both inside and outside the Huasteca region.

Promoting Huasteco Culture in Culturally Significant Ways. As was expressed by Roman and Cresencio in the previous section, community work is at the core of the Huasteco worldview. Those collaborations are also present in projects that aim to promote Huasteco culture. In their narratives, Huasteco culture bearers reflect on their active participation in initiatives such as festivals, workshops, and Encuentros. Osiris noted,

> I started the project [workshop], partly as a job, but mainly as a way to keep conveying the music tradition from the Huasteco region and keep promoting the culture and identity in the children, particularly the culture from this region because this is the region where they live … Children are really happy because before, there was a music project here sponsored by the municipality, but a lot of those children came to me because there were too many [children], and the other project was not able to host them all. They had just one teacher who was trying to teach all the instruments; therefore, children were not learning.

When asked about the reason to create a group such as *Huasteco Unidos por un Progreso*, Cresencio replied:

> I like to do it. I care about my culture. We made a group of Huastecos who work to promote and strengthen our culture in general. Some of the things we look to promote are language, music, traditional dress, and crafts.

Cresencio also reflected on the need for an event to have as many components of the Huasteco culture as possible in order to be culturally significant:

> In the activities that we do, particularly in the workshops, we always call it "language in the Huasteco culture" or "music and culture." Music is not separate from language, the traditional dress, food from the region. In an event of a ceremony, the special music and food for that particular celebration are needed.

Cresencio noted that bringing people from the Huasteco region together in Xalapa has helped people from the Huasteco region, particularly students who arrive in Xalapa to complete their higher education. These newcomers to Xalapa find in *Huasteco Unidos por un Progreso* a group that helps them adapt to the new environment, while also enhancing pride in their own cultural heritage:

> The idea that youth keep preparing at a higher educational level, for me that is noble work; it is one of the activities that I like the most. There have been cases where people say, "I don't want to study anymore." And then, when we do some events then … mmm … It is like exactly a year ago, about this time of the year that is graduation time, I received a picture of an undergraduate thesis defense saying, "I finished my courses; look here it is. You might not remember me, you might not recognize me, but I attended an event that you organized, and you all really motivated me." We are not only focusing on sharing information; we work as well in motivating our Indigenous students. Students, professionals, men, and women, so that for example, women can say, "If she is doing it, and she speaks Otomí, Tepehua, Nahuatl, or Tenek [Indigenous languages] and goes to study and gets an education, why not me?" So, this is what we are trying to achieve in these events, the events that we do.

Cresencio's reflection is relevant given that he notes that organizing cultural events is not just for the sake of participating in them, but rather, the events have an intentional objective of contributing to fostering pride in youth in their cultural heritage, which has a positive impact in different areas of people's lives. In this particular case, he refers to university students who see members of *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* succeed in their studies, which then motivates them to accomplish their own educational goals.

Cresencio continues his recollection of events by talking about how young adults begin to participate more frequently in the activities that *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* promotes:

> Sometimes we have some fellows who feel ashamed of their own Indigenous culture, and their language and stuff like that. Some of these fellows have arrived in Xalapa to pursue higher education. So, what we do is an event, and we try to gather those guys from the Huasteco, and we tell them, "Hey, come here! We are having a meeting with Huastecos." They come and see people singing and dancing, and little by little they start getting more and more involved in the activities. After a while, these guys are the ones taking the initiative to do activities.

Cresencio explained that *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* has established collaborative relationships with educational institutions in order to promote culturally significant experiences for students in the Xalapa area.

> Yes, we, as *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso*, have worked with some educational institutions, mainly on the promotion of culture, sometimes with music, but mainly through [teaching] Indigenous languages … Sometimes, people ask us about teaching the music and the dance … because they say that they need [makes the gesture for quotation marks] "to make artistic presentations with music." Then they tell us, "Hey, I need someone to come to teach the children how to dance some *sones* Huastecos." Then, it is how both music and dance are linked to doing those artistic presentations, not really to learning [something is taught for a brief time, for a particular event, such as a Christmas festival, but is not part of the curriculum]. There have been different initiatives outside of the [educational] institutions— nothing really formal—to implement some courses about

> Huasteco culture, but unofficially. We have talked about the possibility of this [teaching Huasteco culture in schools], at least it has been proposed [to schools].

Even though it is important that some schools have reached out to Huasteco Unidos por un Progreso, these collaborations have only occurred sporadically and outside of the official curriculum. One then asks, why do the collaborations only occur on a limited basis, and mainly to put on a specific performance (for example for a Christmas event), rather than devoting enough time to dive deeper into Huasteco culture beyond a series of songs and dances?

Envisioning Huasteco Music Making in the Educational System: Potential Pathways and Challenges

One of the focal points of this study has been to begin the process of envisioning Huasteco making in the educational system. A crucial part of this process is to learn culture bearers' opinions regarding the potential embedding of Huasteco music making in the educational system. Huasteco music culture bearers shared their perceptions and opinions regarding potential benefits, but also some challenges that might arise due to internal and external factors in educational institutions.

Collaboration with Administration and Teachers. In their narratives, participants shared ideas about potential ways to include Huasteco music in the educational system, possible forms of collaboration with educators and music educators, and the importance of students having the opportunity to learn Huasteco music in their schools.

Enrique Melo, Margarito Zavaleta, and Román Güemes believe that authorities (policy makers and positions in higher administration) should take the first steps in this process through curricular change and encourage teachers to follow new policies. As Enrique noted:

> First of all, it is important to go to people in the high ranks [authorities] so that they can embed it in the curriculum. If this is not in the general curriculum, teachers will not do anything because there is no requirement for them to participate. I think it is important that people in the higher ranks pretty much make this an obligation for teachers to follow; otherwise, it will be hard to think that teachers might get involved, unless they like it [Huasteco music].

Margarito Zavaleta, a member of Trio Zontecomatlán, also pointed out the need for the educational system to persuade teachers to get involved with the local cultures of the places where they work:

> In every town, the government needs to foster in every teacher the importance of strengthening the local culture of each community—in every town. There are many cultures in every community and there should be more effort on the side of the state to persuade teachers to get involved in promoting the culture [the local cultures of different towns]. While the government does not say anything, teachers will not do it. The government has not tried to address the need to include local cultural knowledge of the communities and towns.

Roman Güemes stressed the need to go beyond planning in order for ideas to become tangible projects:

> I think that it is possible to revitalize any music genre wherever a language existed as well. Any type of activity, craft, and art is possible to revitalize, isn't it? We have the people; they know the tradition. It is really easy [to learn the tradition]; it is just necessary for the design of curriculum to be clear and committed [to embracing the music

> tradition], and that it is not just a bunch of pages and pages that nobody is going to read, much less be committed to.

Another way forward proposed by Huasteco music culture bearers is the establishment of collaborations directly between educators and music educators. Arturo Fuentes, Trio Zontecomatlán said,

> The first thing is for teachers to be interested. If they are not interested, then there is not really a point, right? But if there were an approach from the teachers to my brother, Margarito, and me, then we would be more than happy to teach them, also to teach students the first steps to play the jarana, huapanguera, and violin. Students will then learn the style of *son* from Zontecomatlán, which is what we would really want. That is exactly what we want; we are not professional musicians, but we really want to do it because of the memory of my father Serafín, and also his father [Margarito's father] was a violinist too—everything fits together. We are willing to teach students.

Arturo's response is a clear example of the commitment that Huasteco culture bearers have to collaborating with educational institutions in order to promote local culture, but at the same time, he calls for teachers to take the step forward to reach out people like him or members of his trio. Eduardo Fuentes, also a member of *Trio Zontecomatlán*, pointed out that teachers and Huasteco music culture bearers would need to discuss and commit to the length of time required to ensure that the project fulfilled its objectives.

> They [teachers] need to open the space. They need to give the space, and we need to take advantage of that space to teach. They need to say, "We have this number of hours for working with students." They need to do exactly what they do with other subjects, to give a space for this subject.

Again, Eduardo highlights the importance of teachers welcoming music culture bearers into the classroom. It is important at this point to reflect on how teachers might use the 2016 policy component of Curricular Autonomy as an important piece of policy to advocate for the need to bring Huasteco music culture bearers into the classroom on a regular basis. Eduardo also reflected on the importance that Huasteco music could have in the life of children:

> Of course, music is joy. It would be wonderful if children from a young age and also older children could learn how to play an instrument. You may wonder, why or what do they need to learn? Music is something with no comparison. This is especially important because of all the negative things that are out there. For example, let's talk about cellphones. Now, children have a cellphone, and when you want to talk to them, they just respond with an "Okay, yes, yes," and then, they leave. That is a bad part of the technology. It is important to be in contact with technology and learn, but this should not become an illness, an addiction. Instead of just interacting with their cellphones, it would be better if they had an instrument. There should be someone who teaches them how to sing, how to paint. At this point, only God knows if, instead of getting a gun, they could get attached to a musical instrument. So, yes, I think this music [Huasteco music] should be in the educational system.

Enrique Melo also believes that it is highly important to connect with teachers in order to collaborate with them (since there is nobody doing this work in the educational system structure at this point), first to teach them Huasteco music making as the first step towards bringing this form of music making into the educational system:

> It is important that students get to know the rhythms, that they get to know their music. It is not about all of them becoming musicians but that they get to know their cultural roots.

> It would be a great idea to implement something where, for example, music educators can learn something from the same region where they are working so that the music instruments are connected to the same region. For example, if somebody told me, "You need to go to give a workshop to teachers," then I would do a project that first works with teachers, and then teachers can work with their students. I will do something that is easy to learn in order not to complicate things too much because I know that it is hard for people who have not have any previous contact with Huasteco music.

As expressed by Huasteco music culture bearers, it is important that different actors in the school system are willing to be involved with any proposed initiative. Another important way forward is to seek collaborative opportunities with teacher-training colleges or institutions that are in charge of delivering instruction to prepare future teachers. In this regard, it is important to learn of any previous collaborations that may have occurred between culture bearers and those higher educational institutions. Cresencio shared some experiences that he and *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* have had while collaborating with higher educational institutions for embedding Huasteco culture at that level.

> For example, here in Xalapa, we have worked with the Súarez Trujillo Normal School [teacher-training college]. We have done some conferences in order to sensitize people to Huasteco culture. Yes, we talk about the music, the importance of music, the importance of the gastronomy, the traditional dress, and language in general. Also, we have collaborated with the University of Veracruz in the intercultural area. We have even participated in curriculum design, as a group. I am currently taking part in a steering committee from the intercultural section in Ixhuatlán de Madero [name of a town]. I am

> taking part in this as a representative of the community, not as an academic, but as a social figure from the community.

Cresencio's comment regarding the collaboration that *Huastecos Unidos por un Progreso* has done with higher educational institutions brings higher educational institutions to the discussion, institutions which might be in a better position to support the education of teacher candidates so that they can be future advocates in welcoming not just Huasteco music culture bearers, but culture bearers from the locations where their future workplaces are located.

Benefits to Students from the Implementation of Huasteco music Making in the Educational System. Participants also reflected on the potential benefits to students from learning Huasteco music. Elba Acosta noted,

> I think that teaching this music [Huasteco music] will be a way to access learning about our most profound cultural roots; I think it will be a success. I believe it will contribute to raising our children to become better adults. I think to do this will contribute in the short and long term to fostering better adults. Music fosters discipline in people—this is key for success in life. It will be important for children and youth to be busy in something positive and important such as getting involved in music making. Also, this could serve to preserve cultural practices that children usually do not know. Also, music is connected to traditions such as traditional needlework, food, and orography [related to studying the topography of mountains].

Huasteco music culture bearers stressed the need for music making to be part of the curriculum, particularly paying attention to music making that is rooted in the local context in order for this to be significant for students. Elfego Villegas suggested:

> Depending on the region where people live, students need to learn that style of music. First, we start with towns in the Huasteco region, and then if any other region wants to learn this music [Huasteco music], they can do it. First of all, music in general and the music that is from their region. It is important to give priority to this type of music; then, if the student is also interested in other music that is also good.

Edgar Peña also addressed the need for music making to be an important part in the curriculum, specifically emphasizing the musics that are representative of the different regions of Mexico:

> Yes, of course, not just Huasteco music, but traditional music from the different regions of Mexico, or music in general, not just traditional music. I believe that music is something good for the heart and the soul. I believe that if there are more musicians, more people playing and thinking musically, artistically, maybe there will be fewer bad things out there.

Jorge Vera, a member of the Trío Son del Balcón, also reflected on the importance of music being significant for students' cultural contexts:

> I'm interested in this [Huasteco music] being accessible to people who want to learn it, but avoiding massification [standardization in terms of people playing Huasteco music just because it is a requirement]. I think that all of us here would be delighted if Huasteco music could be taught in all the schools in the Huasteco region. Then students would have a chance to better understand their context, then they are going to assimilate it better because it is familiar to them … I think it is important that people get to know their own context. I am going to give you an example. There is a *huapango* called Huejutleño from Nicandro Castillo. Then, in one of the lines of the song, it says, "From a leafy *ceiba*, a

> *tollo* is laughing, because I cannot see Rosa because they are protecting her." See, the *ceiba* is a tree that has an important meaning for people from this region. In this song, the *tollo* appears; the *tollo* is a bird that when it sings, it sounds sort of like laughing. That's why in a part of the song it says, "From a leafy *ceiba*, a *tollo* is laughing." In this case, those are elements of peoples' context. I wonder, how would someone who is external to this context understand this?

Humberto Soto, also a member of Trío Son del Balcón, believes that it is important for people outside of the Huasteco region to have access to this music, since it is sometimes difficult for some people to travel to the region to learn it:

> For me, it would be very interesting if this music could be taught because I know a lot of people with whom I have interacted with are really interested in learning this music, but they need to come all the way to these places. In many Encuentros, a lot of musicians arrive, musicians who already play and who come to learn—for example, professional violinists or guitar players who come to learn this music. It would be great if this music could be more accessible and if it could be taught in the educational system.

Osiris Caballero reflected on the potential effect of Huasteco music in promoting the local cultures and in embedding the use of local languages in music making.

> It would be great if this [music] could be taught in schools, also Nahuatl that is the mother tongue of this country. I think this would be such a good idea because then, children will be able to develop different abilities from the ones that they are currently developing in the curriculum that we have.

Kenia Melo commented on the importance of teaching beyond the artistic parts of music, to paying particular attention to promoting the local cultures, in this case Huasteco culture.

> I think that it is very important to learn it [Huasteco music] because I have noticed that a lot of Mexicans do not know our *sones* or the music from our country. Huasteco music is growing more and more, in the region and in the Huasteco community. It is really important to promote it because right now, we are bombarded by media with music, everywhere, on the radio, TV, and internet. Children are in contact with more music that is not ours; it is not from our country. I consider that it [Huasteco music] can be a really good tool to teach music, and not just to teach music, but also to teach students local traditions and the value of our cultures. I have had the chance to teach children in kindergarten, and it is what I tried to do. I sang *huapangos* to them, or taught them *huapangos*, they danced *huapangos*, and the children were really happy. I think that it is important to teach that to children because they see everything in a positive way. Then, instead of teaching them music without any cultural background, it is better to teach them *son* Huasteco.

Román Güemes stressed the importance of access to Huasteco music in the educational system, even if teachers needed to use some instruments that are not used in traditional Huasteco music. At the same time, he stressed that it is imperative that teachers know in which key (e.g., D Major, C minor) to play certain *sones* in order to avoid a particular key that is used for sacred purposes only. He was aware that even though experimentation can be done with different instruments, the root of traditional Huasteco music is strong.

> This music is our heritage from which you can learn dates, information, relationships. It allows you to put yourself on a timeline. Of course! It needs to be taught in elementary school, secondary school, high school, and university. This is the sound heritage of our communities … For example, with the use of the recorder [music instrument], it is not the

> instrument's fault [that it cannot be used in Huasteco music]. If the recorder could produce sounds such as [he sings a tune]—like La Petenera [a *son* Huasteco]—for example, to put together in a *son* a jarana, a huapanguera, and also a *redova* (a box-shaped percussion instrument made out of wood) so that they can play [he sings], it will not be a problem; it will not be intrusive. Once the student knows the melodies and harmonies, then it is easier to play the violin. Then, the teacher needs to say something like, "Okay, let's transpose it now to the violin." It does not hurt me or make me ashamed to do this; it does not hurt me that other instruments can participate in the music group. Do you want to hear how this sounds on the piano? Let's hear how it sounds, right?

In Román's reflection, he envisions Huasteca music tradition beyond a series of traditional instruments; he considers what might be accomplished with available instruments (either traditional or not) in terms of students' learning experiences regarding Huasteco cultural heritage. Perhaps, this idea of favouring and emphasizing cultural heritage can be useful for schools that do not have the necessary financial means to acquire a large number of Huasteco instruments. These schools might find ways of engaging students in the initial stages of the learning process (becoming acquainted with Huasteco music) using instruments that are easier for the school or parents to acquire. Román continues by ruminating about sharing music that might be considered sacred and what practices might contribute to colonialism:

> If people say "No, this is the Xochipitzahuatl, this *son* is sacred," I will say, "Okay, who told you that? It is sacred in this key but not in this one. And now, let's see how sacred this is." This *son* has been played with a keyboard, some of those cheap keyboards, also with a piano—it has been played by someone who really feels this music because this person knows the tradition. It does not take anything away from the *son*; it does not lose

> absolutely anything. Is a symphonic orchestra playing the Xochipitzahuatl? Yes, hopefully they decide to do this; it could sound beautiful. Also, this is not to become a generalization, not everyone will want to use the flute or the piano, no. There is a strong and important base of people who do things in the way that things need to be done. Using other instruments is like an adventure, a part of the creativity of people that we cannot stop. Also, the new instruments are not going to replace the other instruments; otherwise, that is called colonialism, right? The problem would be to say, "You know what? Traditional duos and trios, thank you very much for your contribution to the dance, the ritual, and the ceremony for over 550 years, now we are going to make a change."

Román was aware that this incorporation of instruments that do not belong to the traditional branch is possible due to the strong base of Huasteco music in its traditional form. But he also stated that experimentation cannot replace the way in which music has been traditionally played and taught for centuries. It is important to remember that he commented that if one *son* is lost, then the dance, the ritual, and the very social structures of the communities are in danger; therefore, it is crucial that the traditional branch of *son* Huasteco remains strong.

Potential Resistance to and Challenges for the Implementation of Huasteco Music Making in the Educational System. Even though there is optimism about potential ways to move forward with the implementation of Huasteco music making in the educational system, participants acknowledged that there might be possible resistance at different levels of the educational system as well as in society at large. Their opinions were based on previous experiences collaborating on projects with schools or their own experiences in the school system as students. The most frequent comments concerned potential standardization in the process of teaching, the lack of flexibility of the Mexican educational system (and hence, the national

curriculum), and the lack of continuity and support for projects in the medium- to long-term. Jorge Vera, member of Trio del Balcón stated:

> What I would be concerned with would be standardization. When you talk about the educational system, I think that, based on experience, we know that institution-based projects usually show a lack of flexibility and awareness. It is a complex process because it is necessary to see what you win and what you lose. There are some aspects of the music that are hard to convey—there is a potential challenge. I would not name them, but there are other types of musics that are well-known, that are played widely, and that are also taught a lot, and sometimes in those cases, there is a loss because quantity is more important than quality. I think it needs to be taught where it is useful, where it belongs to the context. For me, it is not important that this becomes really popular.

In this case, Jorge is in favour of using Huasteco music mainly in places where Huasteco music is relevant for the cultural context in order to avoid standardization of this music in other regions where Huasteco music is not present in cultural practices (e.g., trying to teach Huasteco music in the south of Veracruz where there is a strong *Jarocho* music tradition). Luis Olivares, also a member of Trío Son del Balcón, agreed with Jorge in terms of the need to avoid standardizing Huasteco music making because of the potential implications of favoring numbers of students over a well-conducted process of embracing Huasteco perspectives through music making:

> I agree with Jorge in that part regarding access for anyone to this music. It is not about saying, "Okay, you must learn this because it is necessary." Like this, it becomes something kind of complicated. It would be great if this music could be used, but without approaching it in a really institutionalized way. For example, not everything needs to be

> written down [using music notation]. I have studied music [using music theory], and obviously, this [music theory] is a different approach than the ones that are used to learn in this context. Like Jorge mentioned, this goes beyond music, beyond the *huapango*—all this is embedded in the socio-cultural context. So, it is not that we want tons of children learning music in the schools who, at the time of playing, do not transmit anything, because music is about transmitting your feelings, the feelings that are generated inside every one of us due to the context where we live.

Even though Luis is also in favour of teaching Huasteco music in the educational system, he calls for a well-carried out teaching process in places where Huasteco music is relevant, rather than teaching it in every school of the state of Veracruz just for the sake of having more Huasteco musicians. Rather, Huasteco music should be meaningful for students' own cultural context. Schools in different parts of Mexico should ideally seek collaborations with the music culture bearers of their own regions in order to envision music education projects that are meaningful to students' own social and cultural contexts.

Meanwhile, Víctor Ramirez spoke of the potential lack of continuity and support from institutions and parents in embracing projects such as embedding Huasteco music- making in educational institutions:

> It is really important that they [students] are exposed to Huasteco music in elementary and secondary schools. They need to hire someone who can go to teach the students. I worked for a while with the SEV [Secretariat of Education of Veracruz]. We used to go to teach in primary and secondary schools. We taught jarana, guitar, and violin—they really liked it. Honestly, we did have a good number of people. But they [the students] were into this for a while, while they were there, but then, they go home, and there is a

> lack of support from parents. It is important to do a good project to raise more musicians to have the support from parents too, so that parents could get together to hire an instructor who could teach music to their children once a week or after classes for one hour. We used to do that and we had several students … But like I said, there is not the support; students need jaranas and violins in order to continue learning. This is not just about one week—this takes time, time to learn; they need to continue playing so that they do not forget how to do it.

Victor's statement notes the necessity of broader support from parents and institutions. At the same time, one must ask why parents and educational institutions are not committed to supporting Huasteco music in the schools. Perhaps, this lack of support is connected to the underappreciation of musics with Indigenous roots both in the school system and society at large due to the discrimination throughout history towards knowledge that is connected to Indigenous peoples. Part of the resistance also might be linked to teachers realizing that it would be necessary for them to do more work than they already do, consuming more of their time, as Cresencio commented:

> For example, if I am a teacher, and I do not know the culture, the music, the language, and the worldview of the community where I live; then, it is better for me that the community is not interested in having me teach the music, the language—that is better for me, that means less work to do because also, the community will not see me in a strange way; they will not say that I don't belong to this place. The more they realize that I do not know things, it will be the best for me, also because the educational system does not require me to know this stuff … There are a lot of things that the educational system is not interested in. We Indigenous peoples, do not know our own rights, we do not know

> our traditional medicine, the music, the language—those are as important as any other style of music, language or medicine. There is a lack of value attached to this knowledge because we assume that this is less worthy, right? We have not done many things; we have not addressed the usefulness of this knowledge—what do I need to learn Nahuatl for if I need English to do a graduate program? Why do I want to learn Huasteco music if I can learn the music of the great European composers?

Again, Cresencio identifies the lack of value accorded to knowledge connected to Indigenous peoples. In his comment, he mainly addresses the lack of importance given to Indigenous knowledges at the national level, from those in charge of the educational system policymaking (at all levels, from basic to higher education) who are the ones in charge of creating the curriculum and deciding what is necessary for students to learn in order to pass a grade or get a degree. Víctor Ramirez remembered and reflected on some of the situations where educators and institutions reinforced the sense that Indigenous knowledge lacked relevance:

> There are a lot of Nahuatl speakers—it is not lost. Well … it gets lost once the kids go to school. Teachers force them to speak in Spanish, and that is why the use of the language has been decreasing; nevertheless, once the kids go home, they speak Nahuatl with their parents. They start losing it, but there was a time when it was prohibited at school to speak Nahuatl. It was prohibited mainly because teachers did not understand what the kids were saying, and because of that, teachers prohibited Nahuatl in the classroom.

Victor's testimony reflects how educational institutions are responsible in part for the lack of appreciation for knowledge connected to Indigenous peoples, instead of being a force for the opposite (fostering appreciation of this knowledge). This lack of appreciation is evident when young students reject their cultural heritage (for example, language) because the institution

(school) that reproduces the "real" knowledge refuses to embrace Indigenous perspectives. Again, all the responsibility cannot be placed on teachers since teachers only reproduce their own educational journey both in basic education and during their teacher training. In his narrative, Osiris Caballero mentioned the potential resistance that might arise not just in the institutions, but in society at large:

> I think that this is a good idea [to embrace Huasteco music in the educational system]. I think a lot of people would agree with this idea, but also, there will be people who would disagree. For example, the other day, a teacher from this area contacted me because his daughter wants to learn how to play the violin. But he told me that his daughter wants to learn nice music, Western classical music; she does not want to learn Huasteco music. Then, I told him, "You know what? I don't think I am the right person. I do not teach Western classical music, even though I have to study it sometimes. What I teach is Huasteco music. Sorry that I cannot help you with this." That is what I am telling you—there are a lot of people who would agree with this project, I think the majority of people. But at the same time, there will be some, maybe just a few, who would not agree with that project.

Osiris' statement is a clear example of how even in the Huasteco region, the perception of what "nice" music is has started to change. This perception exemplifies one of effects of a narrative that deems Western culture as the standard for how culture should look (or rather sound) in order to be called "nice" or "valid."

Chapter 6: Discussion and implications (*Sintlakualtilistli* Part 1: The time when the harvest has concluded)

In this chapter, I discuss the key themes identified in the data. The chapter begins with a discussion of the concept of Indigenous Epistemic Resilience with regards to centering the Huasteco worldview over the 'tools' (pedagogies) that are used to teach Huasteco music. The conversation then moves to discuss the potential implications of adopting either a music education or music instruction approach in Mexico's educational system. The following section addresses the need to foster collaboration between the educational system and culture bearers. Finally, the last section is a broader discussion regarding short- to long-term initiatives using the present curriculum as well as envisioning potential changes in future curriculum reforms which center Indigenous perspectives as a core part of the national educational system for basic education (grades 1-9).

Indigenous Epistemic Resilience at the core of teaching and learning Huasteco worldview via music making

For my research participants, music is not an 'object' that is outside of their lived experience; music is part of who they are and is inseparable from their community. In all cases, either the participants' families or people in their communities helped them to become music culture bearers. All participants mentioned that they use the same pedagogical tools that people used to teach them. In this case, oral tradition is still in place; it is still used to convey the way in which music instruments are played, how the verses are sung and improvised, and the meaning of the worldview embedded in music making and dancing (since dancing has always been connected to music in Huasteco culture). At the same time, all participants mentioned that they

incorporate new pedagogical approaches into their teaching methods. The youngest participants, such as the Trio del Balcón (Jorge, Humberto, and Luis), Kenia, Edgar, and Osiris, mentioned that they use both the traditional way of teaching (mainly by oral means) and Western art music theory principles to teach their students when appropriate (depending on the age of the student and the context in which they are teaching). They use Western art music theory because they have had the chance to access postsecondary education in music where Western art music theory is part of the curriculum. Therefore, they are able to use Western art music theory as part of their 'toolbox' to teach and communicate the principles of Huasteco music to fellow musicians who are not familiar with Huasteco music. Osiris Caballero, who completed a Bachelor's degree in Arts Education, mentioned "I teach in the same way that I was taught. I learned from a lot of people, and I think that based on learning from different people, I have developed my own methodology to teach" (see p. 159). Additionally, Kenia Melo's statement notes her use of her lived experiences of learning and education to inform her teaching practice: "I use the same methods that my father used with me. At the same time, I am trying to use the tools that I have learned in my music education degree" (see p. 162) Osiris's and Kenia's statements show that both traditional ways to convey Huasteco music making and their higher educational academic journeys have been important in influencing their current pedagogical approaches to teaching Huasteco music.

Senior culture bearers such as Victor, Elfego, Román, and Enrique also mentioned that even though they continued the teaching methods of the people who had taught them Huasteco music, they also implement their own pedagogical approaches. An example of this is Elfego Villegas's statement: "sometimes in my teaching, I modified some things, but always in the cornerstones of the tradition. I always try not to lose the flavour of the style, the flavour of the

Huapango." The modifications in the way in which Huasteco music culture bearers use to teach, compared with the way in which they were taught, led me to reflect on what 'authentic' music with Indigenous roots pedagogy actually means, and how music making has transformed over time and used 'new utensils' to keep reproducing. Young music culture bearers use the pedagogical tools that they received from the previous generation of knowledge culture bearers, just like senior culture bearers had developed their own pedagogical approaches, while also continuing pedagogical principles that they had learned from their ancestors. In both cases, for young and senior music culture bearers, keeping the sound heritage of their communities (the sounds that rooted and connect them to their culture and with their environment, both symbolic and natural) is the most valuable part of their pedagogical endeavors. Based on participant narratives, it seems that Huasteco culture bearers feel strongly that their sound heritage needs to be preserved and maintained, since music making (in this case *sones*) is one important way to keep their worldview strong and vibrant, although the tools used to achieve that might change over time. It could be argued that Western art classical music is "invading" the realm of Huasteco music; nevertheless, based on the narratives in this study, the adoption of some Western art classical music tools (namely music theory) is a collective decision supported by a significant number of Huasteco music culture bearers. Only a limited number of participants took part in this study; therefore, it is not possible to generalize widely, but the narratives here do provide a collection of statements from Huasteco music culture bearers in the region.

Perhaps a reason for embracing certain aspects of Western art classical music theory in Huasteco pedagogical practice is the need to find tools that maintain not just the root of Huasteco music making, but the very base of the Huasteco social sphere. As Román Güemes noted, "if one or two *sones* are lost, then the dance is lost, and then the ritual is in danger; the very social

structures of the communities are in danger" (see p. 175). Sturman's (2016) aforementioned statement (see p. 87) is also relevant here; in the past, Indigenous groups in Mexico adopted instruments and music forms from Europe and used them to keep their traditions and worldviews alive. Both the literature and participants' statements build on the idea that historically, and also currently, there are efforts to keep worldviews present and relevant even if that means adopting new 'tools' to preserve and maintain the traditions over time. However, who decides what is "authentic" or not? Martinez (2002) calls for recognition that Indigenous cultures are not static or encapsulated in the past and urges readers to leave behind their conceptions of what an "authentic" or "traditional" Indigenous person must be or do. In this regard, I align myself with Martinez' position in the particular case of Huasteco music making; only the bearers of the tradition are in the position to decide the means by which their cultures are represented, maintained, and conveyed. Opinions from outside of the community (e.g., external ethnomusicologists or composers) are not relevant.

Sousa Santos (2014) warns us that "[t]here is no global justice without global cognitive justice" (p.43). Part of moving toward to a global cognitive justice is to acknowledge the right of Indigenous peoples to represent themselves and their cultures in ways that are significant for their present and future. It is not acceptable for non-Indigenous people to tell Indigenous people to use or not use pedagogical tools such as Western art music theory, instructional videos, platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, podcasts, and any other available tools to keep their culture vibrant and present in 2021.

It is necessary to acknowledge Indigenous peoples' agency to preserve their worldviews using the tools and means that they see as most appropriate. It is crucial to overcome what Rosabal-Coto (2016) defines as *recolonization from within*, which has contributed to

undermining Indigenous perspectives in the context of Latin America in favor of a narrative that argues for national identities, identities that leave behind the perspectives of Indigenous cultures. This narrative is supported by a depiction of Indigenous perspectives as obsolete and framed in a static past.

The most significant implication of this study regarding the disruption of what constitutes "authentic" Indigenous ways of knowing and being is a concept that I coined called *Indigenous Epistemic Resilience* (IER). I define IER as a concept that acknowledges the importance of Indigenous ways of knowing in current times, avoiding the depiction of Indigenous perspectives existing solely in a static past. IER is a call to respect the agency of Indigenous peoples to live and shape their present, as well as to envision and forge their future, thereby avoiding romanticizing portrayals of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. IER takes it as a given that Indigenous peoples are the ones in charge of representing their cultures, avoiding and resisting imposed misrepresentations of what Indigenous "must" or "need" to be. Muratalla (2020) reflects on the ways in which Indigenous peoples in the context of Mexico used the instruments that Europeans brought to this continent to keep their worldviews present and relevant throughout time. He mentions that resilience is a characteristic that Indigenous cultures have developed to resist and endure during colonial and present times. He notes that in current times, new generations are using technological tools to produce music that reflects the influence of Indigenous cultures, especially by embracing Indigenous languages.

I argue that it is important to advocate for IER within the educational system so as to use context-meaningful ways to relate and transmit Indigenous knowledges in contemporary times. Music making in the Huasteco region is a clear example of IER. It is important that the educational system offers sites for IER in praxis, where educators are informed of meaningful

opportunities to engage with ways of knowing and being of Indigenous peoples in the present, instead of perpetuating the depiction of Indigenous peoples only in those chapters in history books that describe pre-colonial times. Indigenous perspectives are alive and it is important that they be part of education for children and youth in Mexico in order to disrupt the narrative that has placed Indigenous ways of knowing and being as something located only in the past and does not acknowledge the relevance of Indigenous peoples in present-day Mexico.

Based on the findings of this study, I argue that, in the context of Mexico, and in the particular case of music with Indigenous roots, Indigenous perspectives are not static, but rather adaptable to include "new" tools in order to reshape the ways in which knowledge is transmitted while keeping Huasteca traditional knowledge and worldview firmly grounded in and at the core of teaching practices. Resilience is an important characteristic that Indigenous people and their cultures have demonstrated for centuries. The pedagogical approaches of the Huasteca culture bearers I interviewed are an example of how Indigenous peoples in Mexico have overcome and endured more than 500 years of internal and external colonialism by adapting and adopting tools to protect and transmit their ancient knowledge.

Music instruction and/or music education for the current Mexican educational system

Based on the current context of Mexico's educational system and what might be attainable (instead of what might be promised, especially at the federal level), I propose to focus efforts towards strengthening a music education program over a music instruction program based on an orchestra model. At this point, it is necessary to recall the distinction that Bowman (2002) makes between music education and music instruction. According to Bowman, music instruction mainly focuses on outcomes linked to developing music abilities, while music education is

devoted towards developing abilities that will be transferable to other areas of life outside of music performance. This means that the emphasis and goal of music education is to use music to foster a well-rounded person rather than devote the whole time and effort to produce 'excellent' performers.

The educational system needs to reconsider what a realistic project and approach to fostering students' relationship with music might be, and how music might fit into the larger picture of national curriculum. The current curriculum reflects an epistemology based on hierarchy of knowledge, deficit thinking, and "elevation" of the masses as the means to promote "equity" to show to international evaluation agencies, instead of attending to the needs of children and youth in their daily lives.

It is important to challenge the idea of an educational system that promulgates a dichotomy that separates knowledge into "useful" or "useless" in fostering better human beings. As I discussed previously in chapter 3 (see p. 59), Mexico's new music curriculum will embrace an orchestra model based on Esperanza Azteca (SEP, 2019a). The rhetoric explaining this direction uses the language of equity; such a model provides all children in Mexico the opportunity to participate in Western art classical music, considered by many the pinnacle of a hierarchical taxonomy of artistic practice (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013; Rosabal-Coto, 2016b). This rhetoric is based on a perspective that views the majority of students through a deficit lens. It is fairly common to hear the narrative that music makes better people. It is important at this point to reflect on the concept of the rhetoric of effects (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013), which warns about the very common assertion that arts in general (and music in particular) make people good just because people are in contact with the arts, as if people will automatically become better just from being 'touched' by music (see p. 84).

As mentioned in chapter 3 (see p. 52), the national educational system emphasizes the importance of students acquiring better scores in international standardized tests (e.g., PISA), which serves the Mexican government as a political argument to portray progress and well-being among its population. Nevertheless, Mexico's government fails to acknowledge that before focusing on achieving better scores, there are more basic and important matters to attend to in the reality of children and youth in the country—something as basic as children not starving. British Columbia has the second highest poverty rate in Canada at 13.2% (Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2017). The poverty rate in Victoria, BC is slightly higher at 14% (United Way Greater Victoria, n.d.). Meanwhile, in the context of Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, 86.3% fall into the category of poverty, 12.6% fall into the category of vulnerable (a step before poverty), and only 1% of the population falls into the category of *no* poverty (State of Veracruz, 2018). These statistics make clear that the aim to achieve international standards via tests such as PISA is not congruent with the realities that people face in their daily lives. Would all communities not benefit more if education focused on improving everyday lives instead of aiming to compete on standardized tests with countries that have a more robust social security net?

Apart from philosophical questions regarding the rationale behind implementing a program based on an orchestra model imported from Esperanza Azteca, there are also other practical arguments regarding whether it is viable in the short, medium, and long term to promote a program based on the Esperanza Azteca Model. In terms of financial viability, I foresee three basic potential obstacles in the immediate and medium term: lack of funding to offer music specialists job security, lack of funding to acquire instruments for an orchestra, and the concentration of funding in metropolitan areas over rural areas.

First, this particular approach requires a large number of music specialists (performers) trained in Western classical music, given that several musical instruments are required for an orchestra. It is difficult to anticipate that during this current federal administration (2018-2024), it will be possible to consolidate a project based on a model that will necessitate contracting a large number of music specialists when the system is not even able to hire sufficient generalist teachers. If SEP were to hire music specialists (as the Esperanza Orchestra model does), it can be inferred that the music specialists would be hired on an hourly basis and contracted with most of the benefits that other staff hired on hourly-basis contracts have. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine that these music specialists would be able to access long-term positions, which in the context of Mexico are commonly known as *bases* (base, similar to a tenured position). *Bases* are similar to long-term contracts that assure personnel that they will almost never be fired because they are very well protected by their labor union. It is difficult to imagine that SEP would be in favor of offering base positions to music specialists (performers) since it would require that every school hire between three and twelve music specialists (depending on the type of orchestra that it is envisioned in each school) to carry out a music program based on the Esperanza Azteca model.

The second obstacle is the lack of funding (previously mentioned) for schools to acquire musical instruments, music stands, sheet music, and other material requirements that are needed for orchestral programs.

The third obstacle is that the bulk of available financial resources may be depleted by large schools located in cities, leaving little for rural schools. Similarly, metropolitan schools are where it is more likely that, for example, parents will be able and willing to financially support schools in buying musical instruments for their children and perhaps even support the music

specialist to be paid to teach more hours. In the context of Venezuela, Baker (2014) has already reported on the disproportional amount of capital that goes to metropolitan orchestras when comparing metropolitan and rural El Sistema youth orchestras.

Moreover, most of the music specialists live in urban areas; therefore, those music specialists will be more inclined to accept hourly positions without having the additional anxiety of eventually obtaining a base position. Music specialists would likely see these short-term contracts as a 'gig' rather than employment that would cover all of their financial needs. Meanwhile, in more rural areas, it would be more difficult for parents to have the financial means to support their local schools in buying orchestral instruments. Bringing music specialists into the school might be difficult due to the possible lack of interest from music specialists to go to rural areas on hourly contracts that would not cover a living wage, especially as they might need to move to the rural community or travel there every day from a larger centre. Ultimately, it is likely that the only successful cases for this music instruction approach based on an orchestra model would be those established in urban areas, perhaps with some rare examples in smaller rural communities.

In the context of Mexico's national curriculum, it is important for policy makers to decide what the main purpose of music making should be: the development of music skills or the development of skills (beyond music) through music making? In other words, is it the purpose of the school curriculum to foster the production of as many music performers as possible, or is music a tool to foster different abilities via music making?

Marker and Hardman (2020) argue that a relevant question is similar to having the right net to catch a particular type of fish. They discuss this idea in the context of addressing a mathematical problem from an Indigenous perspective:

> Think of this question about Aboriginal math in the same way we might think of a fishing net for catching salmon. The strands are woven just tight enough to capture salmon. However, this net will not work if you are trying to catch oolichan, which are much smaller fish. The oolichan would simply swim through the holes between the filament in a salmon net. Just as one can use the wrong net for catching fish, one can use the wrong question for catching … truth. (p. 295)

Using Marker and Hardman's idea, it is important to question whether the educational system has the right 'net' (music making program/strategy) to catch the right 'fish' (meaningful learning experiences for students). Adapting this analogy to developing a music making program, does the educational system have a large enough 'net' to catch a country-wide orchestral model? It is important for the educational system to develop a strategy regarding implementing music education programs that best fit the Mexican context; otherwise, down the road the educational system might discover (and perhaps too late) that they did not have the right 'net' (project) to catch a rather complex 'fish' (Mexico is a country with many disparities from North to South, especially with regards to Indigenous populations).

Flexibility in the curriculum to make space for Indigenous knowledge and their bearers

The Mexican educational system is built on the idea that only Western knowledge (e.g., classical music) and subjects on international standardized tests are worthy of inclusion in education. However, the curriculum should address local needs and contexts as well. For example, Indigenous languages should not be deemed inferior when compared to other languages required in the educational system (e.g., English). Kovach (2009) argues that historically, one of the main approaches to erasing a culture is to attack the language because it

"holds such insight into the social organization of people. Without language to affirm knowledge daily, it is easy to lose cultural memory" (p. 60). The narrative that Indigenous languages are not as important as other languages perpetuates the idea among children and youth—and in society in general—that Indigenous perspectives are not worth knowing. This resonates with what Cresencio mentioned (see p. 202) regarding the lack of recognition that Indigenous languages receive: "We have not addressed the usefulness of this knowledge—what do I need to learn Nahuatl for if I need English to do a graduate program?" This comment clearly shows the unequal representation and value conferred to Indigenous perspectives at all levels of education. The undermining of Indigenous perspectives is also reflected in Osiris's story, when a person told Osiris that his daughter wanted to play 'nice music' (classical music) instead of Huasteco music (see p. 203), or in Cresencio's experiences with Indigenous young adult students who feel ashamed of their cultural heritage when they emigrate from their home communities to Xalapa and encounter a clash between their culture and that of mainstream Mexicans (see p.187). Victor's story regarding the prohibition of Indigenous students using their Indigenous languages in their classrooms (see p. 202) is part of the bigger puzzle that shows the incapacity of the education system to embrace and celebrate features of Indigenous cultures. The educational system is not willing to provide the necessary means for students to see themselves represented in the school, which is an institution that is the 'keeper' of the knowledge 'worth' nurturing in students. Prest et al. (2021) reported in their study that Indigenous students in the context of BC have expressed that embedding Indigenous knowledge in the classroom via music making has contributed to appreciating their culture, fostering pride in their cultural heritage, and increasing their self-esteem. The presence or absence of knowledges (e.g., music making, languages) in

schools has a direct impact on the validation of those in society at large, since schools are considered a place where 'true' knowledge is present and promoted.

Based on the literature I reviewed and the data I gathered for this study, one of the main implications of this study's findings regards the envisioning of a meaningful collaboration between the educational system at all levels (government officials, school districts administrators, and school staff) and local culture bearers in order to foster appreciation for Indigenous perspectives in Mexico's educational system. Enrique Melo (see p. 192) and members of the Trio Zontecomatlán (see p. 190) indicated their interest in instructing teacher candidates about Huasteco music approaches so that they might embed them in their future teaching practices. The involvement of music culture bearers is an important factor in avoiding standardization and a tokenistic approach to Huasteco music. As expressed by participants, one of their main fears is that Huasteco music might be standardized, resulting in music making losing its meaning entirely and being nothing more than a cultural artifact.

Some of the culture bearers with whom I interacted mentioned that at some point, they had taught Huasteco music at some workshops to students from kindergarten to secondary school. It is important to understand not only the reasons behind establishing these projects, but also why they were terminated. As Victor Ramirez mentioned, sometimes there is not enough support from school authorities or from the parents. It is interesting that in towns such as Zontecomatlán, with a large tradition of music making, the local school has not reached out to music culture bearers to invite them to be involved in music projects in the schools. Trio Zontecomatlán mentioned that they were highly interested in supporting a school project. It caught my attention that even though the trio Zontecomatlán includes two sons of Serafín Fuentes (arguably, the most historically important musician of Zontecomatlán and in whose

honor the Encuentro in Zontecomatlán is held), there is still no connection between the family of Serafín and the school system. Nevertheless, the family is open to being involved in a potential project.

This lack of motivation on the part of school officials and some teachers is perhaps one of the reasons why Margarito argues that government policies are needed to persuade teachers to support the embedding of local cultural knowledge in their classes (see p. 189). From my interactions with participants, I perceived that they do not completely trust the educational system—or rather, the people who work in the educational system at a local level—in terms of fostering collaborative projects. The suggestion that this requirement (teachers supporting the embedding of local cultural knowledge in their classes) must come "from above" is a clear sign that there is a need for a policy that directs educators to embrace local cultural knowledge. The lack of recognition beginning at the policymaking level (mainly in the curriculum) creates a domino effect that reverberates throughout the whole structure of the educational system and the curriculum, placing Indigenous ways of knowing and being firmly and literally outside of the walls of schools.

The lack of will to embrace Huasteco music culture bearers in the school system is evident to participants such as Eduardo Fuentes (member of Trio Zontecomatlán), who called for teachers to devote a certain number of hours to collaborate with local culture bearers (see p. 190). This is a clear example of how people at the district and school levels have not used Mexico's Curricular Autonomy component from 2016 (discussed on p. 54), which provides the flexibility to create learning opportunities that are meaningful for students in their particular contexts. It is possible to infer that the lack of explicit guidance in regard to embracing Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum impedes educators from using the meaningful space

provided by the 2016 curriculum for potential meaningful learning experiences in the classroom based on local cultural knowledge.

Educators who wish to make use of Curricular Autonomy to cultivate these learning experiences may not know how to proceed. Thus, it is important to educate teacher candidates and provide ongoing training to teachers who are already working in the educational system. In their meta-analysis of "the relationship between mainstream music education and indigenous performing arts traditions" (p. 139), Locke and Prentice (2016) reported that in several sources that they had consulted, they found that, as a response to the shortcomings of pre-service training regarding teaching Indigenous musics in the context of Australia and New Zealand, some tertiary music educators have developed initiatives to promote immersive learning experiences for music education students in which they spend weeks of their programs learning from Indigenous communities and their bearers. These immersion experiences went beyond music making so that music education students could understand the devastation that has been inflicted on Indigenous peoples since colonial times. These immersion experiences might provide a model for Mexico's music teacher candidate programs, particularly in the State of Veracruz, as most of the teachers who currently teach in the educational system in the state were trained in in-state teacher education colleges.

It is worth exploring the possibility of a research partnership between Huasteco culture bearers and a teacher education college in the State of Veracruz or the School of Music at the University of Veracruz to do a pilot project to send a delegation of teacher candidates to participate in an immersion program with both Huasteco music culture bearers and culture bearers in general. The literature reviewed for this study suggests that it is important to foster collaboration between the school system and local culture bearers in order to embed meaningful

learning experiences into the classroom. Collaborative efforts often help to prevent misrepresentation and misuse of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Students should be able to learn important 'universal' subjects, but at the same time, the educational system should prepare students to have an awareness of the unique features of their contexts and to value the local cultures and knowledges (Marker, 2015). Otherwise, a narrative that 'progress' is something that occurs solely outside of these communities will only contribute to dismantling the traditional support networks in the community, since people will follow the narrative of "what is in the community is not worthy."

In our conversation, Román Güemes reminisced that children and youth viewed people in the community who taught them how to plant corn, play music, and share stories with them as teachers. For Román, people in the community were his first teachers, teachers whom he respects and is grateful to for the teachings that he received from them. This begs the question, how might people within the school system (represented by the school) and within the social context (community) collaborate to support a meaningful and holistic educational experience for students?

Perhaps the educational system can be a relevant component in fostering the idea that knowledge is present in and beyond the structure of 'formal' schooling, acknowledging that there are teachers (such as culture bearers in the communities) who do not hold an official university degree, yet are validated as teachers in the community because they are in charge of transmitting the ancient knowledge of Indigenous cultures through their stories, dances, music, connection to the land, and cultural practices in general.

Music culture bearers see in music more than a collection of sounds for entertainment, but rather crucial parts of the very societal structures in the community. It is important to reflect

on Román Güemes's comment: "whatever happens to music is going to affect you directly and indirectly." This comment references the ways in which music serves to gather people together, to relate with one another as a community. As Román further explained, "What really mattered was the dance and music that brought us together, that used to foster cohesion and still does." Disrupting the music making that communities have embraced, adopted, created, and relate to in their lived context might disrupt the very root of community work.

While attending the Encuentro in Zontecomatlán, Veracruz, I observed an important part of the Encuentros. Close to the main plaza where the Huasteco musicians were playing to the people dancing in the main *tarima* (wooden platform), there was another important component of the Encuentros, probably the reason Encuentros are so named. In any given spot, Huasteco musicians come together to play. To one side, I could see and hear a group of perhaps 20 or 30 adults playing, improvising, singing, and dancing. Meanwhile, about 50 meters away, I could see and hear another group of 20–30 teenagers doing the very same thing: playing, singing, improvising, and dancing. Some of the people who gather in these smaller groups might or might not know each other; nevertheless, they gather together to do what Small (1998) describes as *musiking* in which the 'format' of the performance is broken; there is no distinction between audience member or performer, as all of the participants are both performer and audience members. It is a time to see friends who have not been seen since the previous Encuentro, but it also a time when new friendships are made.

Encuentros are a clear examples of community work, where people in the community or town organize themselves to receive hundreds of visitors (mostly the musicians) who need to be fed and lodged. This is a collective project in which participants have the flexibility to create a communal 'song' that will never be created again since it contains a great amount of

improvisation; therefore, this creation is unrepeatable and at the same time community-owned. Would not the educational system benefit from such rich experiences of learning and sharing via community work in the classrooms? An important outcome of this study is the enthusiasm that Huasteco music culture bearers expressed to be the cultural bridges and links to our ancestral knowledge. As Roman Güemes asserted, "you have people like us who are the keepers of our cultural heritage." It is necessary to reach local culture bearers, it is time to build bridges and not walls.

Envisioning a Shift in the Curriculum While Addressing the Current Context of Mexico's National Curriculum

It is clear that curriculum reform does not automatically change the reality of Indigenous peoples' everyday lives. Nevertheless, a curriculum that addresses the relevance of Indigenous perspectives is an important step towards embracing the importance of Indigenous peoples in present-day contexts. It is necessary for Indigenous peoples to see themselves represented in meaningful ways across the whole educational system in order to disrupt the narrative that Indigenous perspectives are not worthy of being part of the official curriculum. If children and youth (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) are exposed to Indigenous perspectives, then there is a greater likelihood that they would be more appreciative of and have greater respect for Indigenous cultures and their bearers (Prest et al., 2021).

Developing meaningful learning experiences for students is a job that requires collaboration among policymakers, curriculum designers, government officials, teachers' unions, administrators, teachers, culture bearers, and parents. It is necessary to shift the conversation from a top-down model (from policymakers and government officials to classroom teachers) towards a horizontal model where all stakeholders are involved in the process from planning and

designing the curriculum, to its delivery in the classroom. The educational system in Mexico faces disparities in terms of infrastructure, school budgets, diverse Indigenous languages, student populations, and number of personnel. Some of the aforementioned structural disparities might arise in part from the location of the school; for example, the physical infrastructure and the ease of access to a music educator might differ widely between an urban and a rural school, or between an inner-city school and a school in the suburbs.

In this section, I draw from the unique features of the curricula from Australia, British Columbia (Canada), Aotearoa/New Zealand, and Bolivia (which I explored in chapter 3), all of which might serve as important points of reference for developing a plan to embed Indigenous perspectives in the Mexican national education system. I am aware that all of the aforementioned countries have specific characteristics that differ from Mexico, and that it might be argued that drawing from those countries' experiences is pointless because of those differences. I suggest that it is relevant to learn and reference what other countries have done in this area, as there may be information that is relevant to the Mexican case. Based on my own lived experiences, informal conversations with different people in the educational system during the last few years (teachers, administrators, government officials, and teacher unions), and of course, the ideas and opinions expressed by culture bearers (which are at the core of this study), I use the following section to highlight some particularities from the curriculums of these other nations and reflect on the Mexican educational system's current strengths in terms of the potential flexibility in the 2016 curriculum that would enable the embedding of Indigenous perspectives. In the following section, I envision both the national- and school district-level structural support required to introduce Indigenous perspectives in local schools and classrooms via collaboration with local cultural bearers.

Acknowledging the voices of local culture bearers

One factor common to the Australian, Bolivian, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and British Columbian curricula is that Indigenous peoples have a voice in the planning and designing of the curriculum through Indigenous councils, advisory groups, steering committees, and community members. In the context of Mexico, it would be useful to follow this consultative approach that embraces Indigenous voices in the creation of the curriculum. In the particular case of music making, SEP could form a national advisory group with culture bearers that are knowledgeable about musics with Indigenous roots in the different regions in Mexico. The outcomes of this advisory group would be the foundation for creating a series of base principles that would be ideal for each region to follow. Those base principles would then serve as a foundation for developing further actions at the regional and local levels. For example, in the case of British Columbia, the First Nations Education Steering Committee designed the First Peoples Principles of Learning, which serve as a pedagogical guideline for teachers to embed Indigenous perspectives in their classroom, and aim to frame ways of teaching common to approximately 200 Indigenous communities in BC (Prest et al. 2021). According to the Ministry of Education:

> Because these principles of learning represent an attempt to identify common elements in the varied teaching and learning approaches that prevail within particular First Peoples societies, it must be recognized that they do not capture the full reality of the approach used in any single First Peoples society. (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 11)

A similar approach might be followed in the context of Mexico in order to create a set of principles that are wide enough to embrace general features nation-wide, while also

acknowledging in the document (as the BC policy does) that those principles do not aim to cover every single perspective of all Indigenous groups in Mexico. In the case of Mexico, it is up to SEP to call for the creation of an Indigenous advisory group in music or in arts, or even to call for a broader conversation that might serve to shape Indigenous perspectives across all of the subjects in the curriculum (rather than only music). Again, it is up to SEP as the body that represents the educational system in Mexico to take the first step towards the creation of an advisory group, and the promotion of principles that emerge from the Indigenous advisory group's conversations across the country. SEP needs to create a strong case among the state education secretariats (which are accountable to the federal one), school districts, and schools about the importance of embedding the principles at the classroom level. The principles of learning would be the touchstone and rationale for the creation of a series of projects that would be meaningful to and attainable by educators at the state, regional, and local levels.

Negotiating flexibility with responsibility for bringing what is stated in the curriculum into the classroom

Based on the set of principles that could be developed by an Indigenous advisory group (or similar), a second phase would be to bring the Indigenous advisory group and federal-level curriculum designers together. At this juncture, these two groups would need to make an important decision about how the curriculum would be framed regarding space for Indigenous perspectives. One option might be a mandatory number of classroom hours devoted to cross-curricular activities in which Indigenous perspectives are embedded in the classroom every week. Another option would be to follow an approach that calls for embedding Indigenous perspectives in all subjects without a specific mandatory amount of time devoted for this

purpose. This second option would require fostering a sense of intrinsic motivation and responsibility towards embracing Indigenous perspectives in district administrators, school administrators, and teachers at individual schools. Based on what Huasteco music culture bearers expressed, the first option is more feasible at this point in time because of the lack of value currently given to Indigenous perspectives in society at large. Thus, Indigenous perspectives must be presented to government officials, school directors, and administrators as an essential part of a student's educational journey rather an option. Otherwise, it is unlikely that the embedding of Indigenous perspectives promoted on paper would actually occur in the classroom. I recall what Roman Güemes mentioned: "the curriculum should not just be a bunch of pages and pages that is written for nobody to pay attention to." Rather, the curriculum should be an important tool to promote and engage Indigenous perspectives.

In other words, curriculum documents should reflect a certain degree of flexibility regarding modes of implementation at the state and local levels, while maintaining an uncompromising and inflexible schedule for the embedding of Indigenous perspectives in the classroom. In practice, teachers would know that while it is their legal obligation to embrace the principles conceived by the national Indigenous advisory group in their teaching, they have autonomy in implementing this obligation according to their school's context. For example, depending the location of the school, the teacher would embrace the local culture of that place and seek to foster collaboration with local community members and the district Technical Pedagogical Advisor (see next paragraph). Additionally, the 'how' is directly connected to the unique features of the school in terms of infrastructure, budget, personnel, and so on. It is necessary for there to be structural change that is both negotiable in some ways and non-negotiable in others to build solid and durable foundations.

Bridging curriculum to praxis

Once a national set of principles is established, and a curriculum is created, these two resources would guide the actions of all 32 state education secretariats. The secretariats would oversee the implementation of the principles and curriculum at regional and local levels. At this point, school districts (*supervisiones escolares*) have an important role to play in ensuring that what is stated in the curriculum regarding the embedding of Indigenous perspectives is actually delivered by teachers at local schools. The school district Technical Pedagogical Advisor (TPA) is a crucial figure who links teachers and school district initiatives and projects. According to SEP (2017c), as part of their professional responsibilities, the TPA is to provide teachers across the school district with ongoing pedagogical and methodological support for teachers to acquire strategies to improve their implementation of the curriculum at the school and classroom level. TPAs are required to identify and appreciate the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity of the communities in which the schools are located in order to bridge the features of the context with the advice that they offer to their fellow educators. TPAs have the responsibility to foster collaborations with local social organizations that have the potential to enhance students' learning experiences.

In order to design meaningful activities in schools properly, it is necessary for the school district TPA to seek the guidance and support of local culture bearers to co-design the potential activities in which teachers might engage across the school district. Then, teachers can obtain guidance from both the district TPA and local culture bearers about the ways in which they might implement the activities in their classrooms. Teachers already carry a large number of responsibilities given the time restrictions that they face in their teaching and planning, despite

often lacking necessary educational support materials. Hence, it is crucial that teachers have as much support and guidance as possible from the district TPA in order to foster long-lasting collaborative relationships with local culture bearers and local organizations that have agreed to providing useful support for initiatives at the school and classroom levels.

One of the potential responsibilities of TPAs in this envisioned collaborative approach might be the creation of annual reports for submission to state and federal levels regarding both the successes and struggles that the school district experienced at the local level. This inventory of occurrences might serve as a catalyst for curriculum updates. It is necessary to track the experiences at district and state levels so that any future curriculum reform is based on actual lessons learned, rather than changing political views and political agendas when a different party comes into power.

The potential relationship among the TPAs, school teachers, and local culture bearers might be a key feature in bringing what is stated in the national curriculum into practice. The school districts already have TPAs; therefore, this would not require a new position to be created at the district level. A medium- to long-term project might have a chance of success so long as it is implemented across the whole country, regardless of school location and infrastructure. TPAs, educators (or music educators more specifically), and community members are already present in every school district. It is also necessary to envision how community members might be invited and welcomed into schools to offer cultural learning to students. According to my conversations with culture promoters and music culture bearers, the lack of invitations (and sometimes rejection) from school personnel has been the main impediment for local culture bearers to actively participate inside of the school walls. The walls should not serve as both a physical structure and a symbolic barrier separating desirable and non-desirable forms of knowledge. I am

confident that with the support of TPAs and openness from teachers, it would be possible to overcome historical refusal to accept local ways of knowing as valid and meaningful for all students (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous).

Planting the seeds, a proposal for envisioning the future while also addressing the present need to embrace Indigenous perspectives in the classroom

Based on what I have discussed up to this point regarding the lack of representation of Indigenous perspectives in the current curriculum (that came into effect in 2016) and based on the ongoing plan to adopt the Esperanza Azteca orchestra model into the educational system, I consider it necessary to note both short-term and medium- to long-term goals.

The discussion of this dissertation regarding the medium- to long-term goals contributes to envisioning the creation of a curriculum that directly calls for embracing Indigenous perspectives as a priority, something similar to what is reflected in the cases of curricula in Australia, Bolivia, Aotearoa/New Zealand, and British Columbia (Canada). I am aware that in order for something to change at the national level, more than a single study such as mine is required. For a major change to occur, it is necessary to shake the very social structure both inside and outside the educational system. I am hopeful that a meaningful place to start that 'shaking' is from an important part of society: the educational system, and more specifically, the educators. Educators should be aware that they have an important role in Mexico's educational system. In Mexico, teacher unions have major political influence on the national political agenda, including the ways in which education is delivered. This reality signifies that a long-lasting curriculum project must have the support of teachers and those who represent them.

Short- to medium-term goals are to engage actively in conversations with educators in order to use what is stated in the current curriculum to embed Indigenous perspectives into the educational system. I do not think that it is feasible to hit a 'homerun' that will immediately transform the educational structure. Instead, I believe in a "guerrilla" approach, fighting educational battles at the classroom, school, and district levels. If these educational battles work at the local level, then it might be possible to extend from school to school, and school district to school district, until teachers and communities are convinced of the importance of embedding Indigenous perspectives in the educational system. I label this a "guerrilla educational approach" because a guerilla style of battle calls for small actions for maximum effect and for local support from society that eventually becomes a major movement that is strong enough to expand to a greater magnitude. I believe that in the future, Indigenous perspectives would be a priority in the national curriculum as part of a natural journey, from a desire that would come from the very 'base' of society (ordinary citizens) to the 'top' (government officials and policymakers). I hope for a major change in the curriculum in the medium—rather than the long-term. Nevertheless, it is important to begin the guerilla educational approach with what is at hand, at the local level, and begin now.

As stated in the previous section, it is important to start with what is at hand. It is necessary to plant the 'seed' into the present curriculum in order to have the potential for a 'tree' in a future curriculum. In this section, I map out a route for embedding music with Indigenous roots using the present curriculum as well the current structure of a school district in the basic (grades 1 to 9) educational system in Mexico.

I propose to use the time in the classroom that Curricular Autonomy (CA) opens for school personnel to decide what subjects or projects are useful to enrich students' learning

experiences, which can be up to 20% of the time in the classroom. It is true that the 2016 curriculum does not directly call for the embedding of Indigenous perspectives; nevertheless, there is nothing against embedding Indigenous perspectives so long as it is accepted and supported at the school level. CA opens the perfect door to bring Indigenous perspectives into the classroom. Taking this part of the national curriculum as an entryway, I now outline the procedure or series of steps for introducing music with Indigenous roots at the school district level.

The following plan of action centers the Huasteco region. Having the case of the Huasteco region as a context, I will again draw on the Chikomexochitl conceptual framework that contains seven layers of cultural principles in order to stay rooted in the worldview of Huasteco people (see figure 16). As stated earlier in this section, it is the responsibility of the Technical Pedagogical Advisor (TPA) to consider the socio-cultural diversity of the locations in which they work. The Chikomexochitl conceptual framework will also serve to develop the five stages in which the plan grows from the "kernel" (the very desire to embed local Indigenous perspectives in the classroom) all the way until the "harvest" concludes (obtaining feedback from the community and students). This strategy also synthesizes what has been learned throughout this study and applies those findings in a short-term scenario in which I envisage using curricular and school district structures that are already in place.

Figure 16

Chikomexochitl a Process to Embed Indigenous Perspectives in the Classroom

Note. Design Hector Vazquez, illustration Esau Perez, and digitalization Genaro Martínez.

Embedding Indigenous perspectives in the classroom. The first, and perhaps the most important step in the whole process is the conviction of the importance for students to have access to learning Indigenous perspectives in culturally significant ways. I believe that this conviction is the 'seed' that needs to be planted in the classroom, school, and community. Conviction on the part of all stakeholders is necessary in order to overcome both internal and external negative pressures that might arise from the very idea of fostering Indigenous ways of knowing in the classroom.

Technical Pedagogical Advisor (TPA) reaching out to educators and culture bearers at the local level to form a working group. There are three important groups that would need to collaborate in order to overcome any potential challenges: school district administrators and personnel, teachers, and community members. In the Mexican educational system structure, school district administrators would need to put forward a plan of action for implementation since the school district is the link between the curriculum as policy and the school setting as

place for practice. The role of the school district TPA in this endeavor is crucial, as they are the connecting link between educators and community members. Their commitment to the project is essential to the success of this plan. First, the TPA should develop a strategy to identify the music educator at each school within the district. In some cases, schools do not have a music educator, but there may be one or more educators (generalists) who are likely to lead the artistic activities at the school. Those who teach music or the arts would be the official contact at each school, and play a part in developing a plan according to the school's unique features (e.g., number of students in their school, average number of students per grade or per teacher). For the purposes of this section, I label the music educator or point educator Project Partner at the School Level (PPSL). In every school, there is a parent advisory board that organizes fundraising initiatives. Based on their previous experiences, the PPSL would be in the position to let the TPA know how likely it would be that the parent advisory board would be able to support the project in terms of fundraising for musical instruments, brainstorming what potential actions might be taken at the local level to acquire the musical instruments, and/or communicating how the PPSL and the TPA might go about seeking the support of music culture bearers. In some cases, the parent advisory board, with the support of the school administration, might reach out to the local municipal authority for support for a particular project (e.g., building a new classroom or buying a set of guitars). A parent advisory board member may know a music culture bearer in the community whom they could introduce to the TPA and the PPSL. Once a Huasteco music culture bearer is identified, contacted, and invited to be a partner in the project, then, if they accept, the next step would be for the working group (TPA, PPSL, and Huasteco music culture bearer) to meet and envision the best way to move forward with the initiative. The TPA would repeat this process in the various communities under the school district's jurisdiction.

Working group plans initiatives that are relevant for a given cultural context. At this point, the working group (TPA, PPSL, and Huasteco music culture bearer) would discuss two main topics: how to obtain the necessary instruments and how music making would be delivered in the classroom context.

In the case of finding a way to obtain instruments, it would be important that the working group reaches out to the parent advisory board to create fundraising activities towards the acquisition of musical instruments. One potential strategy for the parent advisory board would be to contact a local instrument maker (luthier in this case) who would be in charge of fabricating the instruments. The board might negotiate a financing plan with this luthier for acquiring a given number of instruments. In this case, the parent advisory board, with the support of the working group, would negotiate with the luthier to make monthly payments to purchase the instruments and would organize a series of fundraising events in the community to raise the money for the instruments. It is important to remember that in the case of the Huasteco worldview, the collaboration of different members of the society to get things done is important; therefore, it is very likely that the community would help support instrument acquisition. Also, the luthier would probably be inclined to help facilitate a flexible payment plan since the luthier is also part of the community. It could even be possible to ask the luthier if they owned a set of instruments that could be used to commence the project while the new instruments are built. Luthiers often have a set or a couple of sets of instruments that could be lent to the school during the period while the luthier constructed the school set. Again, community support is key to moving the project forward since the musicians and luthiers live and work in the very community. This place-based education project is an example of schools working with the local community to enhance learning (Prest et al., 2021).

Regarding how and when music making would be delivered in the classroom, the TPA and PPSL would look into and decide on the amount of time that could be devoted to this activity on a weekly basis. Based on their analysis, the TPA and PPSL would then engage in a conversation with the Huasteco music culture bearer to negotiate potential time slots in the weekly schedule. For example, the Huasteco music culture bearer might suggest that it would be better to meet on a daily basis for a relatively short period of time, or twice a week over a longer period of time. The Huasteco music culture bearer would need to have flexibility in this schedule so that they would be able to engage students actively in culturally significant ways. Meanwhile, the PPSL would begin to familiarize themselves with Huasteco music making by learning how to play the music instruments. It would be important for students to see the PPSL as a role model within the school who takes the first step to learn the local music (Huasteco music in this example). The PPSL would ideally start the learning process before bringing the Huasteco music culture bearer into the classroom in order to show both the students and the Huasteco music culture bearer the level of commitment necessary when truly engaging in the process of learning.

Implementing initiatives at the school and classroom level. In this stage, the Huasteco music culture bearer would conduct activities in the classroom with the support of the PPSL, who would also be actively participating in the activities. Music making is not only about learning how to play the instruments, but also learning how to sing, improvise, and dance, plus learn the role of music in the Huasteco worldview. All of these components are embedded in music making. Since an important component of music making in Huasteco culture is about sharing and fostering social interactions, it would be important for the PPSL and the TPA to dialogue with school administrators in order to find opportunities for students to perform inside and outside of the school. In this case, the working group could reach out to the municipal

authorities, for example, to find public places for the students to showcase their music making to the community. These public appearances would strengthen the position of the music making project in the community since the students would give back to the community by music making in a public space. Community members would take into consideration this and other forms of reciprocity when assessing whether they should continue to support or perhaps even enhance the project. It is necessary to plant in order to harvest. Reciprocity is an important feature of Huasteco culture and can be easily identified in how music is played in rituals for giving thanks for a good harvest and in *Mahtlanilistli* (the action of asking for mutual help) (see p. 184).

Ongoing feedback from community members and students. At this point, it would be important for the working group to reflect on the activities after a semester or a school year to see if the activities provided a meaningful experience for students. The working group might obtain informal or formal feedback from students to see if they learned not only to play music, but also about their culture—the goal would be to hear how they experienced their learning during the learning journey. It would also be important to hear from parents, the parent advisory board, and school administration in order to get their impressions of the project and suggestions for improving student learning experiences. It would be necessary for all to understand the spiral shape or iterative pattern of this learning—there is no end, only new beginnings. Once the land has been harvested, people begin planning for the next planting season, and the process continues over and over again. The working group would always return to the community to seek help but also to seek feedback. Only by centering community work at all phases is it likely that projects at the school level would find ways to grow in the very heart of the community. Community involvement would allow the project to be rooted and supported in the medium- and long-term

by parents, advocacy groups (such as the parent advisory board), teachers, the school district, and educational officials at all levels.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and conclusions (*Sintlakualtilistli* Part 2: The time when the harvest has concluded)

Recommendations for Further Study

As I conducted my data gathering, attended cultural events, engaged in the process of analysis of the information, wrote the findings, and reflected on my research, it became evident that there are meaningful topics that could be studied in future research projects. In this section, I am particularly interested in reflecting on projects that could be carried out in both local and global contexts. At the local level, one topic that Huasteco music culture bearers brought to the conversation especially resonates with me. Particularly relevant is to understand how technology (and mainly the internet) will impact Huasteco music making and its transmission (teaching) in the near future. In some way, the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for experimentation with more technology to maintain important activities such as Encuentros. This study could be important to understanding how technology might influence and shape the relationship between culture bearers and youth who wish to learn Huasteco music. Youth may have begun to use technological learning strategies by consulting online materials on platforms such as YouTube, which might eventually decrease the support that they receive from culture bearers via face-to-face teaching.

This avenue of using more technology in transmitting Huasteco music making may permanently change the way in which people interact with and through music. An analysis of the ways in which the use of technology might have an effect on the social dynamic of Huasteco culture might be necessary, since historically, events such as Encuentros have focused on people gathering together in a physical place to be socially connected.

At a national level, I consider it necessary to conduct research regarding the current music education programs in higher education institutions in the context of Mexico. During this research, I came to understand that music educators (and educators in general) have an important role in shifting perspectives toward promoting the appreciation for music with Indigenous roots and all music making. Nevertheless, if the current music education programs do not have at their core a component that addresses music education beyond a Western paradigm, it would be unreasonable to expect that future music educators would be able to engage in decolonial efforts to embrace music making in their classrooms outside of what they were educated to teach. I believe it is important to understand the current educational programs of music education in universities across Mexico in order to understand what kind of education music teacher candidates are receiving, and therefore, what teaching activities they will most likely implement throughout their future professional lives.

At the global level, I consider it important to engage in a conversation regarding what decolonizing and Indigenizing means in the context of Latin America, especially with regards to music (music education, music performance, musicology, and related subjects) and in other areas of knowledge such as the social sciences. Based on the sources that I consulted, even though there is information regarding the topic of decolonizing music education, there is not a clear strand of research on the topic of Indigenous music or music with Indigenous roots in music education in the context of Latin America, particularly concerning its connections and implications in educational systems. I consider it important to conduct further research in the area of Indigenizing and decolonizing music education in the context of Latin America. This will facilitate an opportunity to find potential commonalities and differences in this region of the world compared to others. Going through that process might provide those of us in Latin

America with opportunities to engage in a more meaningful conversation with researchers from other regions across the globe who focus on decolonizing music education.

A Final Reflection Before Concluding

Potts and Brown (2005) posit that it is important that we, as researchers, "never ask questions of others that we are not willing to answer and share about ourselves" (p. 240). But I wonder, who is willing to leave behind their privileges (whether they be many or few)?

If I ask myself whether I have done enough to leave my privilege behind, my answer is "no." I write my experiences from a place of a privilege; regardless of the color of my skin that clearly reflects my Indigenous heritage, I was raised as an only child with the support of both of my parents. My parents had difficult journeys to obtain higher education, but they managed to complete it. Their education allowed them to secure stable employment, which provided me with the necessary financial means to have an easier path than most people in Mexico who have the same color skin as mine but not the same opportunities to succeed in life. I am aware of that privilege.

People have made assumptions about me because of the way I look, but unfortunately, I learned that those assumptions do not only occur in my own country (which in some way was a relief, as I learned that not only Mexicans are racist and classist). I learned that if someone spits on me, it is not about me; it is about the assumptions that people have about me based on my appearance. Perhaps those assumptions are something that connect me with the older man who was wearing Indigenous clothing at the pre-talk concert (the experience I described in my introduction). Without knowing him personally, I can see two similarities in our lives, one negative and one positive. We both experience the assumptions of others because of the way that

we look. On the positive side, we both like music, and we both are musicians. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that I cannot compare my life experiences to those of a person like him in the context of Mexico. A person like him likely lives their everyday life facing microaggressions when interacting outside of their comfort zone (i.e., family, friends, community). I have had the privilege to spend most of my life in 'safe' places, first studying and then working in a higher education institution, and I have been backed up by significant cultural capital. I am the product of having had access to classical music instruction, which Bourdieu (1984) argues, is one of the most irrefutable ways of some to position themselves favourably in the social sphere. Even though I acknowledge my own challenges because of the assumptions that some people have made about me, I have a 'shield' that protects me. However, it makes me wonder: why do people endorse a society in which it is necessary for individuals to have a shield to defend themselves against the prejudices that are present in everyday interactions?

Questions only for the sake of questioning?

Why is it a problem if Indigenous ways of knowing and being are not properly represented and embedded in the national curriculum? A Mexican educational system that fails to acknowledge Indigenous peoples' ways of knowing denies the cultural identities of 26 million people. This denial ignores modern Mexican society's historical debt to its Indigenous ancestry, and its complicity in maintaining the prejudice that contributes to the challenges that Indigenous peoples face in their everyday lives.

It is important to acknowledge the reality that in many rural Indigenous communities, people no longer have access to clean water because of ongoing environmental degradation carried out by multinational—often Canadian—mining and other resource extraction companies,

who have acquired through ‘legal’ means ‘properties’ that once were communally owned by Indigenous communities. Now, many of the communities no longer have access to land or clean water, and pollution and dispossession are the result. This reality is not discussed in schools. In educational institutions, Indigenous peoples are considered part of the past so they cannot be currently suffering from dispossession; they suffered 500 years ago, but that is “finished business,” isn’t it?

In the context of metropolitan environments, I have seen Indigenous peoples selling their products (e.g., vegetables, embroidered skirts and shirts, flowers, wooden toys) on many street corners in downtown Mexico City, Puebla, San Cristobal, Xalapa, and other cities around Mexico … I have seen children jumping onto cars to clean windshields when the cars are stopped at a light; two or three children cleaning windshields, speaking Zapotec or Nahuatl (Indigenous languages). Some people give them a coin for their work; others gesture “no,” they don’t want the cleaning, or express a rude word. For many Mexicans, Indigenous peoples are only present at Chichén Itzá, one of the ‘new’ Seven Wonders, performing for tourists. In their view, these performers are Mexico’s ‘authentic’ Indigenous ancestors, not these people wandering on the streets, people who have left their homelands because there are not any places to grow corn, or the corn is not cheap enough to compete with large, corporate agricultural operations using American Monsanto genetically modified seeds.

In the news, I recently heard that another massacre occurred in an Indigenous community. This time, a drug cartel carried out the murders because that community was on the cartel’s trafficking route, and people in the community did not agree with their illegal activities. Yes, this time it was a Cartel, but last time, it was the army, and next time, who knows? Nevertheless, this piece of news did not make it to the front page, and it did not remain in the news for even three

days. No, my "true" ancestors are those who appear very happy in a video with the caption "Welcome to Mexico," "Bienvenido a Mexico," or "Bienvenue au Mexique" when I am waiting to go through customs at the Mexico City international airport. They are "my" ancestors; they are the ones that Mexican society would like tourists to see because they constitute the "reality" of Indigenous peoples in Mexico, the ones who we are really proud of claiming as ours. If you addressed a random Mexican driving their car and waiting at an intersection, "Hey, you, indígena/indio (Indigenous person)," it is very likely that the person would take serious offense. They might get out of their car and try to initiate a physical altercation, swear at you, or just make a rude gesture. This is the everyday reality in Mexico today. Are these few examples sufficient to answer the 'so what' question regarding the need to embed Indigenous ways of knowing and being in a meaningful way in the national curriculum for public education? Or should we have a selective approach to tokenize Indigenous perspectives in the classroom? I believe that it is necessary to foster cross-cultural empathy.

In television advertisements, I do not see familiar faces, the faces of an average Mexican with *moreno* (brown) skin. Broadcasters with those faces do not present the news on national networks, and Indigenous peoples are not appropriately represented on famous Mexican soap operas. If an Indigenous person appears on the screen, they are usually depicted as naive or not very smart. This contributes to people not wanting to identify with or see themselves as these deficit characters as they are depicted in television programming. People in positions of power, those who are respected, and those who are considered beautiful or sophisticated frequently do not look like the average Mexican. *Malinchismo* (word that expresses appreciation and high value for everything that comes from outside of Mexico) is everywhere in daily life. We do not want to look like the oppressed; instead, we prefer to mimic the oppressor and deny our own

cultural heritage, the heritage that is still very much present in our everyday lives when we look in the mirror, when we look at our family or community, or when we walk on the streets.

I believe that if we Mexicans cannot put ourselves in the shoes of the so-called other, and if we cannot see ourselves in the so call-call other, we will not be able to escape from the shadow of coloniality. I am certain that this is not news; colonialism is not over, so what can we do not only to combat it, but to overcome it, and also to heal? This is a question that has been on my mind since the beginning of my research journey.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, I conclude that in order to embrace Indigenous perspectives in the music class, it is necessary for several factors to align so that students might be provided with meaningful learning experiences. A music curriculum that creates space for meaningful representations of Indigenous ways of knowing and being is the foundation for embedding Indigenous perspectives. The curriculum is a crucial document in educational policy that reflects governmental commitment (or lack thereof) to validating Indigenous perspectives by embedding them in the educational system in meaningful and relevant ways. Indigenous perspectives are not central to the 2016 Mexican national curriculum; nevertheless, the present curriculum offers the flexibility to develop projects and initiatives at the school level, and so is an important tool in seeking collaborations between the school and culture bearers. In this dissertation, I argued that music making can be a meaningful experience for embracing Indigenous perspectives in the classrooms, since Indigenous worldviews have been historically transmitted and presented in Indigenous musics and music with Indigenous roots. Based on the information provided by Huasteco culture bearers, it is evident that music making for Huasteco

people goes beyond performance and is an important vehicle for preserving and maintaining social structures and ways of being. Based on the importance that music making has for Huasteco people, I argue that Huasteco music can be a meaningful way for students to actively engage in learning their culture while also developing their music abilities. As this study addresses the particular case of Huasteco culture and Huasteco music making, the conclusions of this study may not necessarily be generalizable to other places in Mexico or elsewhere. Nevertheless, this study serves as an example of the relevance of reaching local culture bearers to envision together potential ways forward to embed Indigenous musics or music with Indigenous roots in the educational system.

It is necessary to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Indigenous cultures in the context of Mexico and to foster a sense of pride for local cultures among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. It is important for the school system to reflect Indigenous perspectives in meaningful ways that are in line with the realities of the contexts in which Indigenous peoples live in the present. Such action will affirm Indigenous people's resilience, and ensure that their worldviews and identities are alive, vibrant, and valued by all in Mexico's present.

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Appendix A: Ethics Certificate of Approval

University of Victoria
Office of Research Services | Human Research Ethics Board
Michael Williams Building Rm B202 PO Box 1700 STN CSC Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
T 250-472-4545 | F 250-721-8960 | uvic.ca/research | ethics@uvic.ca

Certificate of Approval - Annual Renewal

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	**Anita Prest** (Supervisor)	**ETHICS PROTOCOL NUMBER** Expedited review - delegated	**18-1216**
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT	**Hector Vazquez Cordoba** **PhD student**	ORIGINAL APPROVAL DATE	28-Jan-2019
UVIC DEPARTMENT	**Curriculum and Instruction EDCI**	APPROVED ON	12-Jan-2021
		APPROVAL EXPIRY DATE	27-Jan-2022

PROJECT TITLE **Building an appreciation for Indigenous cultures in Mexico via music education**

RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS **None**

DECLARED PROJECT FUNDING
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, University of Victoria

DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THIS APPROVAL
Questions for Sharing Circles.docx - 04-Dec-2018
Huasteco culture promoters Interview Questions.docx - 08-Dec-2018
Interview questions for Huasteco knowledge holders.docx - 10-Dec-2018
Recruitment letter for Sharing Circles.docx - 24-Jan-2019
Recruitment letter for interview.docx - 24-Jan-2019
Consent Form for music Huasteco music knowledge holders Sharing Circle.docx - 24-Jan-2019
Consent form for music Huasteco music knowledge holders interview.doc - 24-Jan-2019
Consent Form for Huasteco culture promoters.docx - 24-Jan-2019

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the protocol.

Modifications
To make any changes to the approved research procedures in your study, please submit a "Request for Modification" form. You must receive ethics approval before proceeding with your modified protocol.

Renewals
Your ethics approval must be current for the period during which you are recruiting participants or collecting data. To renew your protocol, please submit a "Request for Renewal" form before the expiry date on your certificate. You will be sent an emailed reminder prompting you to renew your protocol about six weeks before your expiry date.

Project Closures
When you have completed all data collection activities and will have no further contact with participants, please notify the Human Research Ethics Board by submitting a "Notice of Project Completion" form.

Certification

This certifies that the UVic Human Research Ethics Board has examined this research protocol and concluded that, in all respects, the proposed research meets the appropiate standards of ethcis as outlines by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Participants.

Appendix B: Consent form (English and translated to Spanish)

University of Victoria

Participant Consent Form for music Huasteco music knowledge holders Sharing Circle

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Building appreciation for Indigenous cultures in Mexico via music education

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Building appreciation for Indigenous cultures in Mexico via music education* that is being conducted by Hector Vazquez.

As a graduate student currently enrolled at the University of Victoria (Canada), I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for my PhD in Education.

Purpose and Objectives
My research will serve as a framework for embracing music with Indigenous roots in Mexico's national educational system. In this study, I will examine how cultural principles are transmitted through music making in the Huasteca culture in Mexico in order to enhance pride in Indigenous cultures among Mexican youth.

Importance of this Research
This framework will contribute to a world-wide music education research effort to embed Indigenous content, pedagogy, and worldview in school music activities.

Selection of participants
You are being asked to participate in this study because of your knowledge and expertise in Huasteca music and Huasteca culture.

What is involved
If you consent to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include meeting with me once for a two to three hour Sharing Circle in a location that is convenient for you and other participants.
During our meeting, I will take video and audio recording of the interview in order to make a transcription.

Inconvenience
Participation in this study will require an average of two to three hours of your time.

Risks
There are no known or anticipated risks to you by taking part in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the possibility starting a discussion about the potential use of Huasteco music in school systems as a way to promote appreciation for Huasteca culture.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this research is completely voluntary and you have no obligation to participate in this research. If you participate, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences or explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, the information that you gave and what you said will not be used, and that information will be destroyed at the end of our study.

On-going Consent
To ensure your ongoing permission for your participation in this research, we will talk with you on multiple occasions.

Anonymity
Your name will appear in the research. Video, audio, and photos will be use for analysis and presentation of findings. However, you can decide if you would like your name and identity to be anonymous. In terms of photos and videos, you can decide as well if you want your identity to be anonymous. If this is the case, I will not use video or photos in which you appear.

Confidentiality
To make sure that your information and the things that you say remain private and safely stored, I will ask you for permission to take and use any digital recordings of your participation for the researchers to study. Then, I will store all information and material collected in locked cabinets in my personal address for five years and then they will be destroyed.

Dissemination of Results
I will present the findings in my dissertation, and also in international music education conferences where I will be presenting initial and final findings.

Disposal of Data
Data from this study will be disposed for five years on an external hard drive that will be password-protected.. Information also will be stored in a personal password-protected computer.

Contacts
If you have questions about this study, please contact these individuals:

• Hector Vazquez, PhD Candidate, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, hvazquez@uvic.ca

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, Canada (1-250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Name of Participant	*Signature*	*Date*

Visually Recorded Images/Data Participant or parent/guardian to provide initials, *only if you consent*:

- Photos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____
- Videos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____
- Audio may be taken of me for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____
- I wish to remain as anonymous as possible. Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____

*Even if no names are used, you may be recognizable if visual images are shown in the results.

Waiving Confidentiality: Participant to provide initials, only if you consent:

I consent to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I wish to remain as anonymous as possible _____

Future Use of Data

I consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I **do not** consent to the use of my data in future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

I consent to be contacted in the event my data is requested for future research: _____ (Participant to provide initials)

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

University of Victoria

Carta de consentimiento de conocedores de la música Huasteca para círculos de conversación

Fomentando el aprecio de las culturas indígenas a través de la educación musical

Se le hace una invitación para participar en el estudio titulado *Fomentando el aprecio de las culturas indígenas a través de la educación musical* el cual está conducido por Héctor Miguel Vázquez Córdoba.

Como estudiante de posgrado inscrito a la Universidad de Victoria (Canadá), se me requiere llevar acabo investigación como parte de mis requisitos para obtener mi doctorado en educación.

Propósito y objetivos
Mi estudio servirá como marco de referencia para poder adoptar música de raíces indígenas en el sistema educativo de México. En este estudio estaré examinando como son transmitidos aspectos culturales a través del hacer música en la Huasteca, esto con la finalidad de que esto pueda ser aplicado al momento de plantear un programa que contemple a la música Huasteca dentro de las escuelas que pertenecen al sistema educativo.

Importancia de esta investigación
Este marco de referencia contribuirá a un esfuerzo a nivel mundial que busca plasmar contenido de saberes indígenas, pedagogías y cosmovisiones dentro de las actividades musicales en escuelas.

Selección de participantes
Se le ha hecho la invitación para participar en este estudio debido a su conocimiento y experiencia en la música Huasteca y la cultura Huasteca.

Qué se requiere de usted
Si usted voluntariamente acepta participar en este estudio, su participación incluirá reunirnos una vez por espacio de dos o tres horas para participar en un circulo de conversación en un lugar conveniente para usted y otros participantes. Durante nuestra reunión, yo estaré tomando audio y video de nuestra entrevista a fin de poder transcribir lo que se trate en esa reunión.

Inconvenientes para usted
Participar en este estudio tomará dos o tres horas de su tiempo

Riesgos
Este estudio no tiene ningún riesgo que se pueda anticipar, únicamente dedicar de dos a tres horas de su tiempo.

Beneficios
Los potenciales beneficios de su participación en este estudio es el contribuir en llevar a cabo una discusión acerca del potencial que puede ofrecer el uso de la música Huasteca en el sistema educativo mexicano como forma de promover el aprecio por la cultura Huasteca.
Participación voluntaria

Su participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria y no tiene ninguna obligación de participar en este investigación. Usted puede dejar de participar en este estudio cuando usted lo decida, no necesita dar una explicación para dejar de participar. Si usted decide dejar este estudio, la información proporcionada por usted no será incluida dentro de la investigación, por lo cual se destruirá la información que usted ha brindado.

Acerca de este consentimiento
A fin de asegurarme que su participación, estaré en contacto con usted a lo largo del estudio.

Anonimidad
Su nombre aparecerá en esta investigación. Video, audio y fotos serán usadas para análisis y presentación de resultados. Sin embargo, usted puede decidir si quiere que su nombre e identidad sean anónimos. En el caso de video y audio, usted puede decidir también si usted quiere mantener anonimato de su identidad. De ser este el caso, no usaré fotos y videos en las que usted aparezca.

Confidencialidad
A fin de asegurar que su información y las cosas que usted dijo se mantengan privas y guardadas de forma segura, pido su permiso para tomar y usar grabaciones digitales de nuestras conversaciones. Yo mantendré guardada esta información en mi archivo personal por cinco años, después la información será destruida.
Diseminación de resultados
Presentaré los resultados en mi disertación de grado, así como en conferencias internacionales de educación musical donde estaré presentando resultados finales y preliminares.

Archivo de la información
La información de este estudio será resguardada por cinco años en una memoria digital que estará protegida con contraseña. La información será guardada en una computadora personal que tiene contraseña.

Contactos
Si tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio, favor de contactar a las siguientes personas:

• Héctor Miguel Vázquez Córdoba, PhD Candidate, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA, hvazquez@uvic.ca

Usted puede verificar la aprobación de ética de este estudio o si necesita saber más de lo aquí expresado, puede contactar a Human Research Ethics Office en la University of Victoria, Canadá (1-250-472-4545 o a través de ethics@uvic.ca).

Su firma en la parte inferior indica que comprende las condiciones arriba expuestas de este estudio, que usted ha tenido la oportunidad de manifestar preguntas al investigador y que éstas han sido contestadas, y que da su consentimiento para participar en este proyecto de investigación.

Nombre del participante	*Firma*	*Fecha*

Información visual de imágenes/Información Participantes ponen sus iniciales *solo si* dan su consentimiento:

- Pueden ser tomadas fotos de mí para: Análisis _____ Diseminación* _____
- Pueden ser tomados videos de mí para: Análisis _____ Diseminación* _____
- Pueden ser tomados audios de mí para: Análisis _____ Diseminación* _____
- Mantener tan anónima como sea posible Análisis _____ Diseminación* _____

*Aún si los nombres no son usados, usted podría ser identificado si las imágenes visuales son presentadas en los resultados.

Consentimiento de confidencialidad: Participantes ponen sus iniciales solo si dan su consentimiento:

Yo doy mi consentimiento para ser identificado por nombre/que se me dé crédito en los resultados de este estudio: _____ (Participante ponen sus iniciales)

Yo doy mi consentimiento de que mis respuestas se me atribuyan mencionando mi nombre en los resultado: _____ (Participante ponen sus iniciales)

Yo deseo permanecer tan anónimo como sea posible _____

Futuro uso de la información

Yo doy mi consentimiento para que mi información sea usada en una investigación futura: _____ (Participante ponen sus iniciales)

Yo no doy mi consentimiento para el uso de la información que proveo para una investigación futura: _____ (Participante ponen sus iniciales)

Yo doy mi consentimiento para ser contactado(a) en caso de que la información que proveo para una investigación futura: _____ (Participante ponen sus iniciales)

Una copia de este formato se dejará con usted y una copia será llevada por el investigador