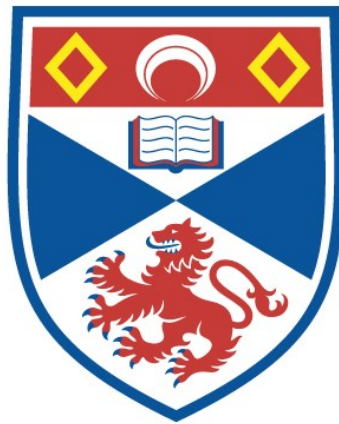


BAILANDO BAJO LA LLUVIA : DANCING AMONGST
MEXICANOS AND MEXICAN AMERICANS IN
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Margaret Loney

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews



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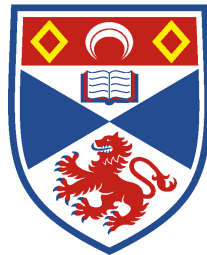
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Bailando bajo la lluvia:
**Dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican
Americans in Northern California**

Margaret Loney



University of
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD
at the
University of St Andrews

May 8th, 2017.

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of dancing and dancing events amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in northern California. The study posits that dancing can be approached as a broader form of activity which encompasses a variety of individual dance styles. In adopting this approach, the aim is to move the understanding of dancing away from a practice set apart from the everyday and used principally as a tool and site for the construction and maintenance of identification. Dancing instead emerges as an activity threaded through the everyday in a variety of forms, an activity in which practitioners engage for many varied and overlapping reasons throughout the course of their lives.

Three principal themes are explored in the work. The first addresses the practitioners' understanding of dancing and highlights the place of movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo* in this. This understanding is revealed to be flexible, multiple, and shifting, the result of attunement and responsiveness as the practitioners interacted with one another and the world around them. The second theme addresses learning and points to the presence of two different but interconnected experiences of dance enskilment, *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. These are principally differentiated through the intent of the practitioners but are further differentiated by the understanding and sensory experience of the learning, the subject of enskilment and the value this is given, and dynamics between the practitioners. The third theme looks at dancing and dancing events as a relational process and explores the variety of relations, both those experienced as 'positive' and those as 'negative', that practitioners foster and articulate within dancing and how they employ a range of concrete activity before, during, and after dancing events to do so. Together these themes provide an understanding of dancing as a broader activity and process that complements work which focuses on individual dance forms and specific issues related to these.

For my dear Mum and Dad
and my dear Daniel
for all their love and support

Table of Contents

Tabla de imágenes • Table of Images	4
Reconocimientos • Acknowledgements	5
1 Introducción • Introduction	10
<i>Mostrando el escenario • Setting the scene</i>	10
<i>Conociendo a la gente • Meeting the folk</i>	17
<i>Vamos a bailar! • Let's dance!</i>	20
<i>Trabajo de campo • Fieldwork</i>	23
<i>El resumen de la tesis • Thesis Outline</i>	30
Section I: Navegando el baile • Navigating Dance	32
2 Conociendo bailar • Meeting Dancing	33
<i>Los bailes y danzas • The Dances</i>	33
Ballet Folklórico	
Danza y danza Azteca • Danza and Danza Azteca	
Quebradita	
Baile social	
Otro baile • Other dancing	
<i>Mi enfoque • My Approach</i>	45
3 Mezclando • Blending	53
<i>Contexto • Context</i>	53
<i>Representación • Performance</i>	64
4 Ampliando • Broadening	72
<i>Integrando • Integrating</i>	72
<i>Uso • Purpose</i>	85
Conclusión • Conclusion	99
Section II: ¿Qué es bailar? • What is dancing?	100
Prefacio: Entendiendo • Understanding	101
5 Moviendose • Moving	104
<i>Sabiendo corporal • Bodily Knowing</i>	104
<i>Diferencias y valores • Differences and Values</i>	110
6 Música • Music	120
<i>Música • Music</i>	120
<i>Interacciones • Interactions</i>	123
7 Sentiendo • Feeling	136

	<i>Poniendo atención • Attending</i>	136
	<i>Sentimiento • Emotion</i>	140
	<i>Impulso de moverse • Urge to Move</i>	148
	<i>Corriente • Flow</i>	150
	Conclusión • Conclusion	158
	Section III: ¿Cómo aprendiste a bailar? • How did you learn to dance?	159
	Prefacio: Confusión • Confusion	160
8	Fines • Aims	165
	<i>Aprendiendo • Learning</i>	165
	<i>Bailando • Dancing</i>	171
9	Objetivos • Objectives	180
	<i>¿A aprender qué? • Learning what?</i>	180
	<i>Valuando • Valuing</i>	183
	<i>Se interrelacionando • Interconnecting</i>	187
10	Observando y imitando • Observing and Imitating	192
	<i>Observando • Observing</i>	192
	<i>Imitando • Imitating</i>	198
11	Guiando • Guiding	207
	<i>Dinámicas • Dynamics</i>	207
	<i>Guiando • Guiding</i>	214
	<i>Evaluando • Evaluating</i>	218
	Conclusión • Conclusion	228
	Section IV: Connectando • Connecting	229
	Prefacio: Estando juntos • Being Together	230
12	Se relacionando • Relating	234
	<i>Sabiendo compartido • Shared Way of Knowing</i>	234
	<i>Relaciones • Relations</i>	240
13	Actividades • Activities	251
	<i>Planeando • Planning</i>	251
	<i>Asistiendo a los eventos • Attending Events</i>	257
	<i>Bailando • Dancing</i>	270
	<i>Después • Afterwards</i>	277
	Conclusión • Conclusion	281

14	Conclusión • Conclusion	282
	Elenco de personajes • Cast of Characters	286
	Glosario • Glossary	294
	Referencias • References	298

Tabla de imagines • Table of Images

Image 1	<i>Dancing at a quinceañera</i>	8
Image 2	<i>Huapango presentation</i>	9
Image 3	<i>The main Latino commercial street</i>	13
Image 4	<i>A typical neighbourhood street</i>	13
Image 5	<i>View towards the main street</i>	14
Image 6	<i>Map of the East Bay</i>	14
Image 7	<i>Map of Mexico</i>	19
Image 8	<i>Ballet folklórico presentation at the County Fair</i>	36
Image 9	<i>Ballet folklórico at the Mexican Heritage & Mariachi Festival</i>	36
Image 10	<i>Danza at the Día de la Virgen pilgrimage</i>	38
Image 11	<i>Danza Azteca at the Día de los Muertos celebration</i>	38
Image 12	<i>Elena's quebradita presentation at her quinceañera</i>	41
Image 13	<i>Dancing at a baptism party</i>	43
Image 14	<i>Valentine's Day dance</i>	43
Image 15	<i>Dancing at Antonia and Diego's party</i>	44
Image 16	<i>Dancing to No Rompas Más at Camila's birthday</i>	44
Image 17	<i>Young women present their merengue number</i>	52
Image 18	<i>Ballet folklórico and bubbles at the Cinco de Mayo parade</i>	56
Image 19	<i>School group dancing to Coco-No at the Cinco de Mayo parade</i>	56
Image 20	<i>Samba dancers at the Cinco de Mayo parade</i>	57
Image 21	<i>Danza group at the Cinco de Mayo parade</i>	57
Image 22	<i>Alma Latina's ballet folklórico and bachata presentation</i>	60
Image 23	<i>Juan and his mother in pink dance on the tarima</i>	63
Image 26	<i>Website banner</i>	88
Image 28	<i>Danzantes protest home foreclosure outside of Wells Fargo bank</i>	89
Image 29	<i>César Chávez parade and celebrations</i>	89
Image 30	<i>Adriana and Eduardo during the father-daughter dance</i>	93
Image 31	<i>Ready for class</i>	170
Image 32	<i>Dancing at Mari's</i>	177
Image 33	<i>Watching and following Victoria</i>	196
Image 34	<i>Ángel's patio dance practice</i>	196
Image 35	<i>Casting an eye over the dancers</i>	197
Image 36	<i>Dancing with a babe-in-arms</i>	214
Image 37	<i>David leading his workshop group</i>	216
Image 38	<i>Evaluating their dancing</i>	222
Image 39	<i>Dancing at the Latino Arts Fair</i>	246
Image 40	<i>Padrinos listed on a wedding invitation</i>	253
Image 41	<i>Getting help from the instructor and an older dancer</i>	269
Image 42	<i>Me pleased to be a part of the inner circle</i>	269

*All images are my own unless otherwise noted.

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La vida no es esperar a que pase la tormenta, es aprender a bailar bajo la lluvia.

Life isn't waiting for the storm to pass, it's learning to dance in the rain.



Image 1 Dancing at a *quinceañera*



Image 2 *Huapango* presentation

So many people are without family here. When they go to parties they can be comfortable for a while. You know, it distracts from the big problems. You're not going to stay home and cry. You have to go out and live. So people drink, they dance, they live and the next day they're going to figure out how to survive day to day.

Beti

1 **Introducción**

Introduction

This thesis is about dancing practices amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the East Bay, an area north of San Francisco in California. It is the result of ethnographic fieldwork I carried out from September 2012 to December 2013 and during the summer months of 2014 with subsequent follow-up visits in July-August 2015 and January-March 2016. This chapter introduces my fieldsite and my companions,¹ those amongst whom I lived and danced and broke bread over the course of my research. It provides a brief history of the trajectory of Mexican migration into the United States to contextualize my study and offers a description of my time in field.

Mostrando el escenario • Setting the scene

The man at the grocery is carefully piling the oranges into tiered rows next to the plantain and the papaya outside the shop as I walk past. A woman fills a bag with limes and hangs it over the handles of the baby stroller she's pushing, saying to her friend in Spanish that she's planning to make ceviche for the party. The front window plastered with advertisements for phone cards to Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala.

There is always something to see on my walk from the elementary school to the arts centre. I'm still getting used to palm trees and the sound of roosters in such an urban space. As usual, a police car is parked out front with the two officers, half sitting on the hood.

The vaquero shop has a new selection of cowboy hats and boots, checked shirts and embroidered jeans on mannequins out front. Today

¹ From the Latin *com* (together with) and *panis* (bread), 'companion' as a descriptor of those amongst whom I conducted my fieldwork fits well. Apart from the fact that we did break bread together, 'companion' avoids the pitfalls of 'informant' which, for my companions, was a term associated with the sharing of privileged information with government authorities, a particular concern as so many were undocumented. 'Companion' also lies in parallel with *compañero*, a word in Spanish frequently employed by those I met that means not only 'companion' as in English but also 'partner', 'colleague', and 'mate' as in 'schoolmate'. This best suits my experience of working alongside, and becoming friendly with, others during the course of my research.

they're also doing a brisk trade in tickets for an upcoming social dance and concert. It's been advertised alongside a football match in the window for some days now, the huge banda group in matching purple suits hugging their instruments and barely squeezing onto the poster.

A vendor parks his trolley out front, waiting for the students who will be flooding out of the school on their lunch break. The vendor rings his bell occasionally, tempting people passing by into buying a frozen treat—lime, pineapple, tamarind, coconut.

The taco truck some way down is doing bisque trade. Men in their dusty and paint splattered boots and work clothes hunch over the folding tables and chairs in the still warm shade of the canopy, eating tacos in hurried bites and taking long draws from their glass bottles of coke. There's a little talking and lots of texting. These are the lucky ones, I think, recalling the men waiting in long lines for work on the sidewalk by the hardware store next to my house.

The side street's quieter. Many of the houses are fenced in, wrought iron keeping people out and barking dogs of all sizes in. Some of the gardens are filled with carefully tended rose bushes, others carefully tended cars and trucks undergoing repairs. Our Ladies of Guadalupe stand guard on porches up and down the street while Mexican flags hang in windows and appear in bumper sticker form on many of the cars that pass by.

I make the dangerous crossing by El Pollo Loco, the crazy chicken, which pumps the smell of frying chicken into the neighbourhood. There aren't crossing lights and I'm not surprised. So few people walk anywhere here and at noon I wish I didn't have to either.

I can hear the guitarrón and the jarana and the women's voices before I get to the centre and get the full blast of the plaintive ranchera when I open the door. The touring group is getting ready for their next concert. The two lead vocalists are on stage with the rest of the group and pad out footwork as they sing and play. They'll add in the heavy heel and toe stomps and taps into the performance on the day along with the twirls of their full skirts. I'm looking forward to it.

September 28, 2012.



Image 3 The main Latino commercial street



Image 4 A typical neighbourhood street



Image 5 View towards the main street

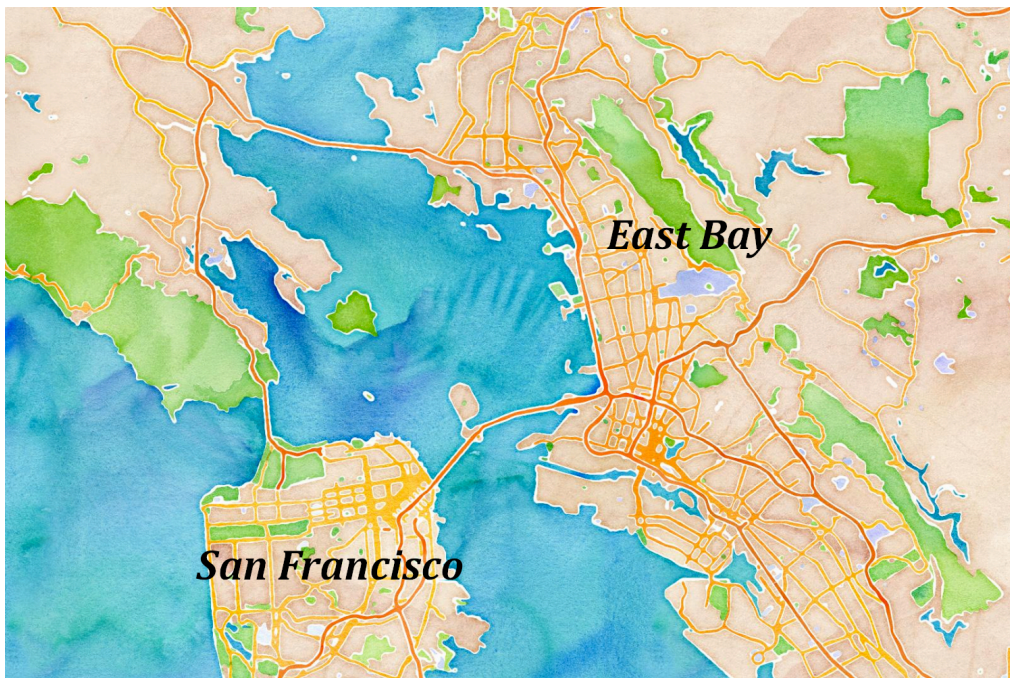


Image 6 Map of the East Bay

(Source: Stamen Maps 2017a)

The East Bay is an area along the eastern sides of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays (Image 6). It encompasses Oakland, which is its most populous city, as well as Berkeley and a dozen other smaller cities. Freeways and neighbourhoods of tightly packed homes, big box stores and strip malls, innumerable fast food restaurants and the raised train blend these cities together into a piece of urban lacework which stretches the length of both bays. I found myself in the northern most section, living and conducting my fieldwork in and around a city of some 30,000 people according to the 2010 US census. In contrast to the wealthy and predominantly Caucasian neighbourhoods in the hills behind, this city is a low-income area² with African Americans and newly arrived as well as long established migrants from Asia and Latin America and their families living closely and often uneasily alongside one another. More than 56% of the city's population self-identified as Latino in the 2010 US Census, with 41% of this same city-wide population more specifically self-identifying as being of Mexican origin, a figure which includes both those born in Mexico and those born in the United States (US Census 2010). This is higher than in California, in which, in 2012, 36% of its population was estimated to self-identify as of Mexican origin, and in the country as a whole where this figure was estimated to stand at 10% in the same year (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez 2013).

This strong presence of Latinos, Mexicanos, and Mexican Americans profoundly shaped life in area as the ethnographic vignette above suggests and pointed to the long history of movement back and forth across the border between Mexico and the United States. Much has been written about this movement back and forth across the Mexico-United States border (for more complete accounts see, for example, Durand *et al.* 2005; Zúñiga & Hernández 2005) and I offer a very brief overview here in order to situate my companions within this ongoing flow.

² The 2010 Census sets the unemployment rate at 15% with 20% of the population living below the poverty line (current estimates suggest an unemployment rate of 6.4% with 21% living below the poverty line, both above the estimates for the state which are 6.1% and 16.3% respectively (from Census and Labor Bureau, personal communication))

Several waves of large-scale migration from Mexico into the United States have occurred since the turn of the 20th Century. This began with the instability and job loss brought by the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910 which coincided in the United States both with an economic expansion in the agriculture industry and rail system and with a shortage in labour resulting from changes to migration policy for those arriving from China, Japan, and Europe. The 1929 stock market crash and the Depression that followed altered this pattern as Mexican migrants and their American-born children were relocated back across the border through a large-scale voluntary repatriation as well as a forced deportation program (see Massey *et al.* 2002). Another wave began with the *Bracero*, or strong arm, Program in 1942 which brought agricultural workers—single young men from rural areas—on six-month contracts to work crops in the United States. As demand outstripped supply and few qualified for these contracts, undocumented labourers arrived as well. The program was brought to an end in 1964 in part because of the burgeoning American civil rights movement which protested the exploitation of the *braceros* by their employers. Demand for inexpensive labour remained however and so the movement of undocumented migrants into the United States continued. At the same time amendments to the existing Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965 increased documented migration from Mexico into the United States as well. This latter movement changed the demographic patterns of Mexicanos in the United States. Where previously migrants were men engaged in circular migration, that is, returning home at some point, now more decided to stay permanently and legally in the United States with the above amendments facilitating the sponsorship of their wives, children, and other family members into the country, who in turn, through the process of chain or domino migration, sponsored their own families.

Another wave of migrants arrived in the 1970s and 1980s as a crippled Mexican economy pushed people back north at time when once again economic restructuring in the United States created an increased demand for inexpensive labour. Bolstered by growing anti-Mexican sentiment, in 1986 the Immigration Reform and Control Act was introduced in an attempt to severely reduce the

number of unsanctioned people entering the United States. As part of this act the border zone was fortified and an amnesty brought documentation to 2.3 million Mexicans in the United States, also allowing them to relocate their families to the country (see Durand *et al.* 2005; Borjas 2007). The strict measures this act imposed on migrants from Mexico and the increased fortification of the border had the unintended effect of increasing the number of those crossing into, and permanently settling in, the United States illegally as few wished to assume the risks of exiting and re-entering the country with the border increasingly difficult to cross. Increased anti-Mexican sentiment arrived with the economic downturn in the United States in the early 1990s. Two immigration acts were introduced in 1990 and 1996 to further control legal migration and to again reduce undocumented entry. These acts are still active policy in the United States. The goal of the first, the Immigration Act, was to stem the flow of people entering the United States through family sponsorship and thus placed a cap on visas for both permanent residence and family reunification. The second act, the Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act, made it more difficult for undocumented migrants in the country to legalize their status, increased the number of deportable offences, barred undocumented individuals caught in the United States from applying for legal migration for certain periods of time, and further increased the fortification and patrolling of the border area.

Despite these acts, migrants continued to move over the border into the United States although the number doing so has been in decline since 2006. This is as a result of the weakened economy in the United States since the financial crisis and the increased fortification of the border. There has also been a sharp increase in the number of Mexican-born (im)migrants and their families returning to Mexico which, as of 2012, has brought the net migration flow to the United States from Mexico to a standstill (Passel *et al.* 2012). In 2012, it was estimated that 11.4 million Mexican-born (im)migrants resided in the United States, over half of whom were undocumented, with a further 22.3 million American-born individuals self-identifying as of Mexican origin (Gonzalez-Barrera & Lopez 2013). The growth of this population is now attributed principally to births in the United States rather than to the arrival of Mexican migrants (*ibid*). In another

change to past trend, those identifying as of Mexican origin are increasingly settling in less ‘traditional’ areas in the United States, in New York, New Jersey, North Carolina, Illinois and Idaho, for example (see Durand *et al.* 2005), although the border states—Texas and California—still remain popular and are continue to be home to the largest numbers of people who self-identify as of Mexican origin in the country.

Conociendo a la gente • Meeting the folk

This long history of movement isn’t a history of a homogenous group of people. My companions exemplified this well.

Varying in age from Arturo at 18 months to Maria’s mother in her 70s, my companions were roughly split in half by the place of their birth, whether Mexico or the United States. Of those born in Mexico, some had been brought by their parents into the United States as young children and were, as a result, of the 1.5 and 1.75 generations, those raised principally in the United States who are seen to share in many of the same experiences as those who are second generation and American-born (see Rumbaut 2004). Another few of my companions were of the 1.25 generation, those born abroad who had entered the United States in their adolescence and who are thought to share experiences closer to first generation adult (im)migrants (*ibid*). The vast majority of those of my companions who had been born in Mexico, however, had arrived in the country as adults although here too experiences differed. Most of these companions had resided in the United States for more than ten years, some more than twenty, reflecting the trend towards long-term residence within this population (Passel *et al.* 2014). Some of my companions were relatively new arrivals and had been residing in the United States for fewer than five years. These tended to be men, either single or with their spouses and children still in Mexico. I only met a handful of people who had been in the United States for less than a year. Added to this group were my many second generation American-born companions, generally the children of those long-established (im)migrants mentioned above. I

met very few people who were third generation as they simply didn't move in the same circles as the rest of my companions.



Image 7 Map of Mexico

(Stamen Maps 2017b)

The places in Mexico from which my companions arrived and with which they maintained ties also varied (Image 7). The vast majority of my companions were from rural areas in Mexico's west-central region, from the states of Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Zacatecas. This region has been the origin of many Mexican migrants moving into the United States since the early 20th Century (see Massey *et al.* 2010). Some of my companions were also from Mexico City and its expansive suburbs, from the western coastal state of Sinaloa and from the southern states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Yucatan. In most cases my companions arrived in the East Bay as a result of chain migration, arriving to join friends and family already established in the area. As this hints, my companions' status in the United States also varied. The vast majority of those born in Mexico remained undocumented although one couple had taken advantage of the 1986 amnesty and during my time in the field had become naturalized American citizens. Some others had secured permanent residence whether through marriage or the

sponsorship of a documented parent or American-born child, this latter route the sole avenue open to many of my companions who anxiously awaited their eldest child's 21st birthday when an application could be submitted. Permanent residence could also be issued through the Visa U program, a program that aims to provide documentation to those who have been the victims of violence, usually domestic abuse. I only met one person who had received documentation this way. Two or three other companions had been issued with two-year renewable work permits, permitting them to work legally but not to exit and re-enter the country.

These types of documentation shaped the ways in which my companions were able to maintain their transnational ties. Those without documentation were unable to travel back and forth to Mexico. Some chose to send their children in their place to spend time with family on summer and winter holidays although this was a fraught decision given the increase in violence in many places. Those with documentation often travelled back and forth to Mexico at least once a year. Both groups kept in regular touch with family and friends in Mexico through phone calls, text, Facebook, Messenger, Skype, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms. The majority also sent remittances back to support younger siblings, aging parents, and/or spouses and children. Travel within the United States was also problematic for those of my companions without documentation. A change to motor vehicle law some ten years before I began my fieldwork made those undocumented ineligible to receive a driver's license. Although people continued to drive, they risked contact with the police, heavy fines and the impounding of the vehicle—making attending dancing events, my interest here, a potentially risky endeavour—and so tended to avoid heavily policed areas and kept within the state. Happily, in January 2015 driver's licenses were again made available to the undocumented and many of my companions took advantage of this small offer of security to travel further afield to Oregon and Texas.

My companions' documentation also shaped the type of work in which they were able to engage. Those with documentation often worked in larger businesses or for local government agencies. Those without documentation, even those few of

my companions who had attended some college in Mexico (most but not all had attended high school), tended to work more informally and enjoyed much less job, and so economic, security. Most of the men worked in either construction or landscaping, with three owning their own businesses and hiring others. Some men and many women worked in the service industry and in food preparation while many other women remained at home as *amas de casa*, housewives, or worked at cleaning and child-minding. At the time of my fieldwork only a very few people owned their own homes in the United States, although many were in the process of building or buying homes in Mexico with an eye to eventual retirement and more recently with the uncertainty brought by the new American administration. Prior to the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis, many more people had owned houses in the United States but these had been lost to the bank; at least six of the families I came to know had lost their homes some years before and were living, like the majority of my companions, in rented accommodation or squeezed in where they could with other family.

Vamos a bailar! • Let's dance!

It is within this context and amongst this group of Mexicanos and Mexican Americans³ in the United States that I situate this study of dancing and dancing events⁴ (see Kealiinohomoku 1974; Royce 1977). While this choice may seem incongruous given what I have written above about my companions and the hardships many have faced, my decision to focus on this theme reflects the continuing and often important place occupied by dancing and dancing events in the lives of the majority of my companions. Dancing and dancing events often formed the core of my companions' time spent socializing with one another, for example. They were a part of all public celebrations within my companions' community, were particularly valued for the ties they were experienced to

³ I employ 'Mexicanos and Mexican Americans' to describe my companions following their usage. A few of my companions did refer to themselves as Chicano/a (alternate spelling Xicano/a) but this is a more politicized term principally associated with those who are active in the Latino rights movement.

⁴ I employ the term 'dancing event' as opposed to the usual 'dance event' as the gerund, 'dancing', better reflects my interest in the activity as opposed to the product, 'dance'.

generate between those in the United States and those in Mexico, and were an integral part of certain rites of passage, making dancing and dancing events a recurring feature throughout my companions' lives. They were also something many of my companions profoundly enjoyed. While these make dancing and dancing events an important topic of study in their own right, in addition, as socially constructed and embedded, dancing and dancing events offered the opportunity to explore some of the processes at work amongst my companions, namely the development of concepts, learning, and the generation of interpersonal connections.

In focusing on dancing and dancing events amongst this group of Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States, then, I ask what place and significance dancing and dancing events held for my companions. How did my companions understand the activity of dancing and how was this understanding developed? How did my companions learn to dance and what processes did this enskilment involve? What role did dancing play in the fostering and articulating of my companions' relations with one another?

In working towards answering these questions I wander from the usual path in two respects. As readers will discover in the following chapter, a wide variety of dance styles were a part of my companions' dancing activity. I make my companions' experiences of dancing as a broader form of activity within a range of dancing events the subject of this thesis. In doing so, I move away from the more usual approach to be found in a great deal of contemporary work on dancing and on dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans, that is, the centring of study on an individual style of dance. In employing this broader perspective, I aim to demonstrate the benefits brought by adopting approaches which differ from the usual or expected, in particular the other understandings in operation for our companions that are masked by a focus on one dance form.

Readers will also note that the focus of my thesis is principally on my companions' dancing with the result that I haven't addressed themes readers may expect to encounter in an ethnographic study of Mexicanos and Mexican

Americans in the United States. I don't, for example, make the border and experiences of the border the centre of my work as so many studies do. Take, for example, studies of experiences of the physical space of the borderlands (see Vila *et al.* (2003) on Ciudad Juarez-El Paso, for example), studies on transnationalism which look at the role the geopolitical line plays in people lives (see Rouse's (19991, 1992) early studies on Mexican migrants and later studies on a wide variety of topics, Lopez's (2014) interesting study on 'remittance houses' and Derby's (2006) work on transnational mother- and fatherhood, for example), and studies that work with the metaphorical boundaryline that is often portrayed as accompanying Mexicanos and Mexican Americans wherever they go (see Paredes (1993), Anzaldúa (1999[1987]) and more recent work such Román's (2013) look at the Chicano middle class). The majority of contemporary work on dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States is a part of this body of work as well, focusing primarily on the issues of identification seen to be brought by the border and life on either side of it.

This isn't to say that issues connected to the border in its many forms weren't a part of my companions' lives and their dancing practice as quickly becomes clear in my thesis. Rather, I suggest, following Appadurai's (1986) discussion of gate-keeping concepts—that is, that anthropology has a tendency to associate particular regions, here a particular group of people, with particular subjects of study with the result that little work takes place in the region or with the people without reference to these—there is room for further research which highlights other themes. This broadening of research interests is important because it helps to bring other dimensions into focus, fleshing out our understanding of our companions' experiences as a result. It is my hope that this thesis makes a step towards this, offering another perspective of this much-studied group of people. The glimpse that it offers of an activity which frequently⁵ brought my companions joy is significant as well as often border-centered studies present readers with a discourse tinged with the notion of a suffering subject. Note the vocabulary Hutchinson (2011: 41) lists as routinely encountered in such studies: marginalized, contested, conflict, separateness, police, resistance, governing,

⁵ But not always.

officials, documents, disenfranchised. Again this isn't to suggest that these experiences weren't a part of my companions' lives as I know them to have been but rather that these experiences didn't represent the sum total. Robbins (2013: 459) warns against this tendency to replace the 'other' with the suffering subject and urges scholars to also pay attention to the ways in which our companions are 'pitched forward toward', and involved in creating and enjoying, a better world. Dancing and dancing events, for my companions, were often a part of this.

Trabajo de campo • Fieldwork

Initially I had intended to spend the entirety of my fieldwork at a Mexican arts centre, wanting to understand the place of 'heritage education' in the lives of the children who attended music, dance, and art classes at the academy and in the lives of their families. In the end I spent six months at the arts centre during which time I came to focus principally on dancing. In large part this was because I found the dancing particularly appealing but also because there were more of these classes and so more practitioners. My time at the arts centre was spent in part as a participant observer as I sat in on dance classes and chatted with the practitioners, students and instructors alike. With time, as I learned enough to be helpful, I began to engage in what Hsu (1999: 15) has called 'participant experience'. I helped with simpler tasks in the classes, getting the students into their places and assisting with costumes, for example, led and played the game that ended each class, and even filled in in the routines when someone was absent, much to the merriment of the rest of the class. These latter two went a long way in fostering my relationship with the students and instructors, mitigating to some extent the dynamics brought by my status as an outside researcher.

During my time at the arts centre I also did office work, made costumes, attended meetings, and assisted with student performances and fundraising events, learning while doing so more about both the ethos underlying such 'heritage education' organizations and the practicalities involved in keeping them afloat.

The arts centre also ran a professional musical group which involved a number of the centre's core staff and some of the older students. I was able to attend many of these performances with the group and through these performances, particularly those which were a part of larger festivals, began to learn of the other forms of dancing as well as dancing groups that were in the area. I was also able to accompany one of the dance instructors to her family's home in Jalisco, a state in central Mexico, where we spent Saint's week, a week of festivities (which included lots of dancing) to celebrate the town's patron saint. This trip helped me to get a sense both of the public festivities in Mexico that many of my companions mentioned during our conversations and of the experience of returning home for such celebrations, an event that figured large in the more recent experiences of my younger companions (sent by their families) and in the memories and hopeful imaginations of my older companions unable to travel. Being able to share in these experiences with my companions, however superficially, was extremely helpful and often led to my companions sharing their own reminiscences of these events and dancing at them.

After five months at the arts centre I moved in with a local family. With this move I learned much more about my companions' everyday lives, improved my Spanish, and, of vital importance for this thesis, was introduced to a wider world of social dancing. Particularly well-known and well-liked with a large extended family, this family was flooded with invitations to, and regularly attended, baptisms, *quinceañeras*,⁶ birthdays, anniversaries, and weddings, the festivities of which all involved social dancing. Tagging along to these events helped me to flesh out my understanding of dancing more broadly within the community, this social dancing complementing the 'presentational' dancing at the arts centre and the various festivals I attended. Indeed, through these experiences I was to learn

⁶ A *quinceañera* or *quince años* is a celebration that marks a young woman's fifteenth birthday and her transition into womanhood. It usually includes a mass and a celebration afterwards (which is often elaborate costing many thousands of dollars) to which friends and family are invited. Along with dinner, this celebration involves participatory dancing for the attendees as well as presentational dances performed by the *quinceañera* (the young woman) and her *damas* (female chaperones) and *chambelanes* (male chaperones). See Davalos 1996; Cantú 2002; and Rodríguez 2013 for their studies of *quinceaños* events although dancing is curiously underrepresented in their portrayals.

that social dancing was often a much more prominent and important part of people's lives than 'presentational' dancing, the former drawing far more numerous and diverse practitioners, the latter reserved for children and young people and those few adults with both the inclination and the disposable time and income necessary to participate. The dancing at these events also revealed to me that dancing was a part of my companions' lives regardless of whether or not they engaged in the activity.

Attending these events also enabled me to make more contacts and, crucially, to dance. I had hoped to make a more formal apprenticeship in dancing a larger part of my fieldwork as a methodological tool (see Coy 1989; Wacquant 2004; Pálsson 1994; Downey 2005) and had planned to join the young adult class as a student myself at the arts centre. Unfortunately this was never offered as too few students enrolled. In the end, the slow learning in which I engaged at dancing events, fumbling my way along, served as an apprenticeship on the hoof and was in fact closer to the way in which the vast majority of my companions had learned to dance themselves. My lack of dancing experience before entering the field sets me apart from many contemporary dance scholars (see Kaeppler 1972; Ness 1992; Williams 2004[1994]; Wulff 1998; Bizas 2014). While previous training would have perhaps enabled me to enjoy the dancing more and to become a more proficient practitioner, my various bumbings still offered me a set of sensory experiences which I could share with others and through which I have attempted to understand my companions' somatic experiences of the activity (see Sklar 2000; Potter 2008). Feeling awkward and out of my own skin (a recurring experience throughout the duration of my fieldwork) also made me aware of the many people I encountered who felt the same, underscoring the diversity of experience to be had within dancing. The fact that I danced even when I so clearly had little notion about what I was doing (although the family did give me impromptu lessons at home) was useful too in that it facilitated conversation with many people who shared their own experiences and offered not advice or instruction but lots of encouragement and praise for my efforts.

Throughout this time I volunteered at a local elementary school twice a week assisting in an English as a second language class held for adults in the community. This was important for me personally, feeling that I was making a contribution to the community, but also ended up being important to my work as well. Through the class, the students all generally Mexicanos, I met a different range of people from those I encountered at the arts centre and at family gatherings. Many of those in the class had been in the United States a shorter length of time and so introduced me to a different range of experiences, often more fraught with instability as people worked to secure housing and employment. Through these classroom contacts I was invited to a variety of events, dancing and others, developing more contacts as people introduced me to their children, spouses, and friends. I was very fortunate in that the teacher of this class took great interest in my research and kindly invited me to her evening English class as well. There I made a brief presentation about my work and several of the students agreed to meet with me at other times to speak about their dancing experiences. The contacts I made through this evening class were interesting as they were principally with men (the daytime class principally women), a group I had difficulty including in my fieldwork at first simply because it was difficult to meet them.

After six months at the arts centre, I began to dedicate more time to social dancing, attending events—celebrations, social dances, and nightclubs—with the contacts I had established, and to exploring some of the other dancing groups in the community. I discovered a local high school dancing group and was permitted to attend their dance practices and performances. This group made an interesting contrast to the arts centre as well as unlike the arts centre, which received substantial funding through various government and non-governmental organizations, the high school group was completely unfunded. This group was also composed entirely of teenagers (although mostly young women), the demographic absent at the arts centre. Through the organizer of this high school group, I learned of a dance troupe in the same community and attended a number of their practice sessions and performances. I did the same with another not-for-profit group and a well-known dance academy and professional touring

company in two different cities in the area. During this time I also continued to attend the public celebrations in the community, most of which included both 'presentational' and 'participatory' dancing, and to spend time at the dancing practices my companions conducted as part of the preparations for larger private celebrations. At the same time I moved in with another family in the same neighbourhood, a family not from the centre-west region in Mexico but from Mexico City. This move offered me the chance to experience not only a different everyday life but also a different range of dancing practices (as these are regional) and dancing events. I found this more patchwork portion of my fieldwork stressful particularly because of the distances I needed to travel, either by public transport, which was time consuming and often meant I couldn't attend evening practices, or with a friend's car, which left me anxious because of the busy and high speed freeway driving. I decided not to continue to attend the practices at the well-known academy for this reason.

After the bulk of my fieldwork, I returned again to California on several occasions to help out with and attend some of my companions' particularly important celebrations. When the daughter of the first family was to celebrate her *quinceañera*, I spent a month with the family helping with the preparations. This gave me an insight into what went on behind the scenes of these dancing events while also giving me an opportunity to repay the family for their innumerable kindnesses. On another of these trips I attended a week-long dance workshop which gave me the chance to speak with a number of dance practitioners and instructors from different dance groups across northern California.

As I suggest above, I tried to make contacts where and when I could and often did so through those with whom I had already established relationships. This was an important step because as an outsider and visibly so, I was initially viewed with some suspicion. These introductions went a long way in allaying people's uncertainty about me as did discovering that my research was about dancing and that I was Canadian, not American, with, at one point, my own problems with immigration. In addition to the casual conversations I had with people while spending time with them at dancing events, socializing in their homes, even

running errands with them, I also conducted semi-structured interviews with approximately 100 people. In each case I obtained oral or written consent (from parents as well in the case of minors) and, with permission, took notes or made recordings. Throughout my fieldwork I took extensive and detailed notes first in small notebooks and then later on my mobile, many of my companions teasing me about this habit of always scribbling. I wish now that I had been a lot less concerned with getting everything down as closely as possible although this has meant that many of the quotations in this thesis, while not perfectly specific utterances, were noted moments after they occurred.

These conversations and interviews took place principally in English at the beginning of my fieldwork for while I had taken a year of Spanish classes during my pre-fieldwork preparations, I didn't feel my language skill was strong enough. As my Spanish developed as a result of living with the families and attending Spanish classes several times a week, I began to conduct these conversations and interviews in a mix of English and Spanish and finally solely in Spanish. The fact that many of my companions spoke both English and Spanish was a great advantage. All of the translations I provide here are my own and so are any errors contained within. In speaking with people I worked from a rough set of thoughts about dancing, intentionally keeping my questions broad without focusing exclusively on 'presentational' or 'participatory' (social) dancing nor necessarily on my companions' own experiences. I found such an approach useful as it elicited a wide variety of responses even from those who told me they didn't dance. In addition, I made it explicit to each of the people to whom I spoke that I was uninterested in their status in the United States and I didn't address the topic in either interviews or my more casual conversations with people. When such confidences were shared on my companions' own initiative, I left these out of any notes I may have made either at the time or in my evening fieldnote write-ups. These confidences were never shared during recordings. I have anonymized both the place and my companions' names in this thesis and altered identifying detail as a further safeguard.

In this thesis I offer readers ethnographic vignettes. In these I have combined and expanded my field writings, notes from observations and conversations, and my audio recordings of interviews and video recordings of events. More information on those companions that are a part of these vignettes can be found at the end of this thesis. The vignettes are presented in the present tense to convey a little of the vitality of the moments as I experienced them. I am aware that the ethnographic present has been criticized particularly when used in work with marginalized and indigenous peoples (see Hastrup 1990; Sanjek 1991) as it risks giving a sense of timelessness to the ethnographic material. To keep this timelessness at bay, I clearly note the occasion of the vignettes, tying each to dates in the past and employ the past tense in the discussion and analysis of the ethnographic material. My use of punctuation and capitalization in these vignettes at times doesn't follow standard practice but is intentional to preserve the flow of the moments. Readers will also note that I incorporate Spanish in these vignettes. This was often how conversation occurred and so this gives a sense of the fast-paced, bilingual community in which I conducted my fieldwork. In general, I offer a translation within the text or have made the meaning clear through context; a glossary appears in the appendix should this be insufficient. In addition, I don't employ dance notation in my work. While dance notation has been advanced as a way scholars can share movement sequences more easily and accurately (Williams 2004[1991]; Farnell 1994, 1995), it's time consuming to learn and often offers 'what should occur' (Guest 1989: 181) rather than what does. Instead, to describe dancing in my thesis I provide photographs and written description although here too I am aware of the difficulties inherent in writing about movement (see Ness 1992 Sklar 2000; Potter 2008). Like Bizas (2014), I also encourage readers to make use of the wealth of materials available online as these too help to generate a sense of my companions' dancing practices and dancing events.

El resumen de la tesis • Thesis Outline

This thesis is composed of 14 chapters tied into four larger sections around the central themes in this work. This chapter introduces my companions and, while situating them within the flow back and forth across the border between Mexico and United States, suggests expanding the scholastic view to encompass other topics of importance to this group, here dancing and the main themes addressed in this thesis—the place and significance of dancing, the development of an understanding of the activity, dance enskilment, and the generation of interpersonal connections through dancing and dancing events.

Section I is composed of three chapters and presents the broader story of my companions' dancing. In Chapter 2, I introduce my companions' dancing practices and my approach to dancing as a broader activity with an eye to the existing research. In Chapter 3, by examining how my companions encountered dancing and the performative nature of the activity, I demonstrate that for my companions dancing was an activity that extended beyond individual, isolated dance forms. In Chapter 4, my interest is in exploring the place of dancing outside of more formally organized dancing events and in asking why my companions danced. Together these problematize portrayals of dancing which position dancing as an activity outside of the everyday and as principally a tool for the development of particular identifications.

In Section II, three interconnected chapters, I explore my companions' understanding of dancing, revealing the key characteristics of this activity for my companions—movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm—and pointing to the important role played by attunement and responsiveness throughout. In Chapter 5, I address my companions' understanding of dancing movement and demonstrate this to be flexible, multiple, and shifting. In Chapter 6, I suggest that interactions generated between music and movement were seen to be key to dancing for my companions and that these interactions were multiple and overlapping. In Chapter 7, I begin to tease apart the many experiences of movement and music described by my companions' phrase *sentir la música/el ritmo*. These include

attending, emotional experience, an urge to move, and 'flow'.

In Section III, composed of four chapters, I turn to the way in which my companions came to dance and suggest that two interconnected processes, *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, were understood to be at work. In Chapter 8, I reveal that a key difference between these lay in the intent behind the activity while in Chapter 9 I suggest that this intent results in different learning objectives, although in these *learning to dance* and *just dancing* are shown to be interconnected parts of the same enskilment. In Chapter 10 and 11, I look more closely at the processes involved in enskilment—observation, imitation, and guidance. Here too I suggest that while *learning to dance* and *just dancing* present different enskilment experiences, similarities in the process involved bring these experiences together.

In Section IV, two chapters, I discuss the ways in which my companions connected with one another within concrete relations through dancing and dancing events. In Chapter 12, I argue that a shared way of knowing provided a shared framework through which my companions established a wide variety of relations within dancing events. In Chapter 13, I explore the actual activity involved in dancing and dancing events to demonstrate how my companions used dancing and dancing events to foster and articulate their relations with one another.

Lastly, in Chapter 14, I revisit the main themes discussed throughout this thesis and point to the significance of dancing for my companions as an activity through which they themselves emerged.

Section I

Navegando el baile

Navigating Dance

In this section I orient the reader. I offer an introduction to the dance forms that I encountered during fieldwork (Chapter 2) and demonstrate that for my companions dancing was an activity that extended beyond specific forms and contexts (Chapter 3). By taking this broader view of dancing, I show how the activity was woven into my companions' everyday life (Chapter 4).

2 Conociendo bailar

Meeting Dancing

In this chapter, I offer an outline of the principal dance forms I encountered during my fieldwork. While space precludes a lengthy discussion of each of these—the sources cited offer more in-depth study—this brief introduction underscores the variety of my companions' dancing practices. I also present my approach to dancing in this thesis.

Los bailes y danzas • The Dances

Ballet Folklórico

The lace-like papel picado flaps at the back of the stage. In two lines, the dancers wait, their hair, supplemented with dark braided yarn where needed, tucked neatly into identical buns ringed with flowers. Pressing their fists, which tightly hold two points on the hem of their full skirts, into their waists, they are ready and so are we.

The recording starts. The dancers strike the stage in close unison with the heels and toes of their shoes, stepping out patterns of footwork and percussive accompaniment as they dance in and out of lines and circles. Moving their arms and wrists through varying sizes of figure eights, the young women work their vibrant skirts into waves, leaning back to increase the drama of the flourishes. No matter how often I see this colourful rippling movement, I am always captivated. Someone whistles. I'm not alone in my appreciation.

The dancers mark the end of the piece with the usual full turn, skirts floating wide, and two stomps. There is cheering and clapping from the crowd. The dancers bow, now out of synch, and trot off the stage all smiles and glistening with their efforts in the hot sun. The MC reminds us of the tamales and other treats to be found at the food stalls along the side of the museum's central courtyard. And take a moment to admire the altar, he says. Feel free to put up your own photos.

*The next dance group, wooden rifles pressed to their sides and faces
painted up like catrinas, marches onto the stage.*

October 27, 2012.

The dancing described here is *ballet* or *baile folklórico*. This is a stylized, choreographed dance practice which, along with costumes and music, is used to represent different cultural regions and time periods in Mexico and other Latin American countries. While there are a wide variety of dances included in the *ballet folklórico* genre, characteristic to many of these, as in the example above, is *faldeo*, skirt-twirling, and *zapateado*, sharp percussive stepwork that adds to the rhythmic elements of the music. It is important to note that despite the use of the word *folklórico* meaning folk, these dances are not found as ‘participatory’ dances in the wider community as the word “folk” might imply. Rather they are, following Richard Bauman, ‘metacultural presentations in which members of society put their culture on display’ (1986: 133). As such, *ballet folklórico* is closely tied for many to notions of a Mexican identity (see Nájera-Ramírez 1989, 2012; Hutchinson 2009). It was presented in stand-alone theatrical presentations, as well as often being made a part of public events—those connected to the local area such as the Country Fair (Image 8), as well as those connected more specifically to the Mexicano and Mexican American community such as the local museum’s *Día de los Muertos* celebration⁷ in the ethnographic vignette above, and the Mexican Heritage and Mariachi Festival⁸ (Image 9).

⁷ *Día de los Muertos*, or *Day of the Dead*, is a celebration held the 1st and 2nd of November to honour the deceased. Photos of the deceased along with offerings of food and drink, *pan de muerto* (sweet bread baked in the shape of a skull or crossbones), sugar skulls, candles, and marigolds are placed on altars erected in homes and at some public events.

⁸ The Mexican Heritage and Mariachi Festival is an annual three-day festival offering workshops in both *ballet folklórico* and *mariachi* music to participants of all ages and a final performance on the last day showcasing the workshop participants and other local *ballet folklórico* and *mariachi* groups.



Image 8 *Ballet folklórico* presentation at the County Fair



Image 9 *Ballet folklórico* at the Mexican Heritage & Mariachi Festival

Danza y danza Azteca • Danza and Danza Azteca

Bundled, I stand on the sidewalk with the others who sip steaming atole, chat with friends, and take photos and videos of the floats and dancers.

d-d-d-DRUM-d-d d-d-d-DRUM-d-d d-d-d-DRUM-d-d-DRUM-d-d-DRUM-d-d

Cooooonch

Cooooonch

*Shaker-shhh Shaker-shhh Shaker-shhh Shaker-shhh Shaker-shhh
rattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattlerattleratt*

I hear Yolanda's dance group before I see them. They've swapped the running shoes, sweatpants, and laughter of their practices for leather huaraches, trajes - tunics of red, green, and gold embroidered with a picture the Virgen de Guadalupe - and seriousness. Along with the drum, seed rattles tied to the dancers' ankles and the shakers in their hands mark the side-side-forward steps of their pilgrimage from the high school parking lot to the community centre beside the Catholic church - almost two miles.

Behind them two drummers on the back of a pickup announce the spectacle that is the Conchero dancers. Dressed in elaborately embroidered trajes with the peacock and pheasant feathers of their headdresses bobbing far above them, the dancers step-step-hop or step-step-leap-and-turn. Some of the young men are bare chested and others are bare footed in their sandals. I'm happy for my woollen hat and mitts.

Finally, the priest and then, carrying banners embroidered with the Virgen, the riders and their horses - an unexpected sight in this urban neighbourhood. The police, blocking off the traffic, take photos. Gloria, rushing past with her granddaughter to join those walking with the priest, shouts a hello as I walk to my car.

December 14, 2013.

Danza, although the term is used in a variety of ways, refers most frequently (and in this thesis) to religious or spiritual dance practices, often viewed as rezos encarnados, or embodied prayers. These are choreographed dances which are



Image 10 *Danza* at the *Día de la Virgen* pilgrimage



Image 11 *Danza Azteca* at the *Día de los Muertos* celebration

seen to draw on traditions associated with indigenous groups, past and present. Generally *danzas* involve practitioners moving with percussive, rather than melodic, accompaniment, often provided at least in part by the practitioners themselves who tie seed rattles to their ankles and carry larger rattles in their hands. An important distinction is made by my companions between two genres of *danza*. The first, as in the example above (Image 10), is connected with the Catholic church (see Trevino & Giles 1994; Cantú 2009; Romero 2009). This type of *danza* is a part of religious festivals and pilgrimages, like that above on *Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe*⁹, and is often performed by practitioners in fulfilment of promises made during the year to particular saints. The second, often, although not exclusively, called *danza Azteca*, eschews connection to Catholicism and the European encounters of the past, centring instead on revitalized notions of indigenous (Aztec) identity (see Ceseña 2009; Huerta 2009; de la Torre & Gutiérrez Zúñiga 2013). This form of *danza* is used in combination with a broader set of teachings to engender and convey a sense of belonging to what practitioners perceive as their ancestral lineage. This form of *danza* is often included in events connected with the Mexicano, Mexican American, and Chicano communities and with those connected to wider indigenous communities (Image 11).

Quebradita

I'm not really sure what's happening until the DJ announces that it's time for the baile sorpresa. A group of some ten dancers, dressed in matching shiny red shirts and pants with fringes down the seams, hover at one end of the dance floor. Two step forward, a man and a tiny young woman – maybe a young girl?

With the first rapid notes of the song, the man squeezes the woman tightly to him and with her legs on either side of one of his, she jumps

⁹ *Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe*, or *Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe*, is a celebration held the 12th of December to honour Mary, the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. Pilgrimages are made in her honour and these generally include, as above, many groups of dancers.

from one foot to the other, lifted really and with hardly any contact at all with the floor. Suddenly, her partner vaults her upwards. She sits on his shoulders before tumbling forward headfirst. I gasp thinking she will misjudge the distance – her head seems so close to contact with the tile. Just in time, she presses her hands briefly to the floor and springs back upward, her partner swinging and twirling her again, around his back and upright for a few more of the basic jumping steps as rest.

There are shouts and cheers and lots of clapping from those gathered for the celebration. The young woman's long hair and the fringes on their costumes spread wide with the quick turns. Coloured lights dash about the room making the movements appear even quicker. The DJ warns the kids watching at the edge to back up.

After a few more daring turns and flips, the couple moves to the side, wiping their faces and breathing heavily. Aplauso! the DJ calls out, encouraging a round of applause for them. Another pair quickly take their place with new combinations of breath-stealing spins and throws.

July 13, 2013.

Meaning little break, referring to both the breaking in of wild horses and the deep back bending movements of the female practitioners, *quebradita* is an acrobatic form of choreographed dance (see Simonett 1996; Hutchinson 2006, 2007; Lipsitz 2007). Characteristic of this type of dance are both its daring flips, jumps, throws, and quick turns and the flashy Western style costuming adopted by practitioners—checked shirts, boots, and cowboy hats often embellished with sequins and fringes. *Quebradita* was particularly popular in the 1990s when it was a form of social dancing as well. It was associated, at least at that time, with a new wave of a notion of Mexicano and Mexican American identity which acknowledged ties to both Mexico and the United States and stressed the practitioners' unique place in a contemporary, transnational society. This type of dance was much less popular during the time of my fieldwork and appeared almost exclusively in presentations at events and celebrations such as the *quinceañera* celebration in the ethnographic vignette and photo above (Image 12).



Image 12 Elena's *quebradita* presentation at her *quinceañera*

Baile social

The six man banda – matching purple suits, topped and tailed by white cowboy hats and boots – is off, drawing the men in from the grilling meat outside and bringing a halt to the women’s conversation on the inside.

The dance floor fills - husbands and wives, partners, siblings, cousins, parents and godparents, infants and toddlers squished between them. Tables are moved to make more room. People, dancing and sitting, sing.

I accept Raúl’s outstretched hand and we squeeze onto a bit of momentarily empty dance floor. Already I can feel the heat of the other dancers. With one hand on his shoulder and the other in his outstretched hand we begin with an easy side-side step. I notice those around me pulse their bodies up and down twice for every step they take and I try to imitate them. I can’t get the hang of it and Raúl says not to worry about it. I begin to sweat. At this point, there are so many people dancing it’s a little like gentle bumper cars.

As the singer brings the song to an end, some stay loitering on the dance floor, others head to seats for a break. Men remove their sombreros to wipe foreheads, women fan at their faces with open hands. Damp shirts are pulled away from sticky bodies and dripping bottles of chilled water

and beer are handed around. Raúl returns me to our table but hearing the next song, one he likes, he holds out his hand again.

March 23, 2013.

The variety of *baile social*, or social dance, and the regularity with which I encountered it surprised me. *Baile social* included a wide variety of dance forms including *cumbia*, *salsa*, *rock en español*, rock'n'roll, *merengue*, *bachata*, *reggaetón*, and line dancing. It also included dances which reflected my companions' regional preferences such as *huapango*, *banda* (as in the example above), *norteño*, *balada romantica*, *duranguense*, *ranchera*, and *corrido* (although the usage of this terminology varied). My companions also danced to English language pop and hip hop music, even to Gangnam Style, a Korean pop song popular during the time of my fieldwork. In general, this social dancing is not choreographed. Practitioners instead draw their movements from the shared repertoire associated with each particular type of dance. This results in some variety on the dance floor as people make their own choices as to which step, bodywork, and partner hold, if any, to use while dancing to the same piece of music. An exception was the line dancing performed to the songs, *No Rompas Más Mi Pobre Corazón* and *Caballeros Dorados* in which practitioners dance in lines facing the same direction, use the same footwork and attempt to turn in time with one another. These different kinds of *baile social* were included in different combinations at private functions such as wedding receptions and birthdays, at public celebrations and social dances, and at nightclubs (Image 13, Image 14, Image 15, and Image 16).

Strangely, despite the prominence of *baile social* in my companions' lives, relatively little has been written about this kind of dancing. Hutchinson's (2007) chapter on *duranguense*, Rivera-Servera's work on *reggaetón* (2011), and Ragland's (2003, 2013) study of *sonidero*, or deejayed, dances are among the few recent studies dedicated principally to *baile social*. Some work on music also includes these types of dances—a brief mention in Simonett's (2001) otherwise



Image 13 Dancing at a baptism party



Image 14 Valentine's Day dance



Image 15 Dancing at Antonia and Diego's party



Image 16 Dancing to *No Rompas Más* at Camila's birthday

comprehensive study of *banda*, a few lines in Ragland's (2009) exploration of *música norteña*, and a few more in Chávez-Esquivel's (2010) intimate dissertation on *huapango*, for example—but these are exceptions. Most of this work is instead centred on tracing the development and transformation of the musical forms and dispenses completely with a discussion of dancing (see, for example, Broyles-Gonzalez (2001, 2002) on *ranchera* and Marshall *et al.* (2009) on *reggaetón*). This is surprising, as Renta (2004) writing on *salsa* dance also notes, given that these forms of music are intimately tied to dance and indeed are often labelled 'dance music' (Hutchinson 2007: 30).

Otro baile • Other dancing

Jorge takes the guitarrón and Adriana and Mía sit together to sing releasing Francisco, Mía's father, from his usual singing and playing duty. It's amazing to see how far the young people have coming with their singing and playing in the time I've known them.

They begin a little tentatively but are soon filling the kitchen with music. Caught up in this and the tequila, Eduardo begins to dance, a funny shuffle with his elbows up and swinging side to side. Francisco joins in, leaving their children shaking their heads in amused embarrassment.

Mira tu papí y tu tío! Look at your Dad and your uncle! Mira como bailan! Look how they're dancing! Lupita calls to Pedro, immersed in a video game on the sofa. When Pedro looks up, he joins the rest of us in laughing with Eduardo and Francisco who soon can't continue their routine for their own laughter.

November 24, 2013.

My companions also regularly engaged in dancing that didn't correspond to a particular style of dance—side-to-side stepping while washing the dishes, a shuffle at gatherings to entertain friends and family as above, even some shoulder shakes while seated in their cars when a favourite song came on the radio. This dancing was also a feature of the time my companions spent with

young relations—sons and daughters, younger siblings, nephews and nieces, godchildren. While this dancing might be described as “social dancing” in English, for my companions the term *baile social* was reserved for recognized styles of dance, as above. Despite the fact that often these dancing moments were brief and didn’t conform either to recognized dance forms or, in the case of car dancing, the notion that one had to stand to dance, they were still recognized as dancing by my companions as Lupita indicated. This suggested that a wide range of diverse movement was understood as dancing within the community, a topic I take up in Chapter 5. Again very little has been written about this kind of dancing with the exception of some work on children’s dancing although not specifically amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans (see, for example, Giguere 2011; Deans 2016; Massing *et al.* 2016).

I also wish to mention Zumba here. Zumba is a dance-based fitness program which incorporates dance movements from *salsa*, *merengue*, *cumbia*, *samba*, and hip hop among other dance practices into an aerobic workout. This was particularly popular form of exercise for many of my female companions (see Nieri & Hughes 2016).

Mi enfoque • My approach

As I did during my fieldwork, readers will encounter all of the dance practices described here during the course of this thesis. This isn’t the usual approach.

Many scholars instead choose to focus their work on single styles of dance. This is the approach taken in much contemporary work on dance more generally and in that on dance amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States and Mexico more specifically. Many scholars thus focus on single, established forms of dance—principally *ballet folklórico*, *danza* and *danza Azteca*, and *quebradita*. These studies of single dance forms have contributed much to our understanding. From work on *ballet folklórico* written by Booth (1969), Nájera-Ramírez (1989, 2012), Smith (1991), and Hutchinson (2009), for example, we

learn how the post-revolutionary Mexican government used *ballet folklórico* to forge a sense of national unity and how this application has changed with the dance form's move across the border into the United States. From Goertzen (2009) and Hellier-Tinoco's (2011) studies we learn of the changes tourism has brought to particular dances within *ballet folklórico* and *danza* respectively, while Garner (2009), Shay (2006), Ceseña (2009), and de la Torre and Gutiérrez Zúñiga (2013) document the development and use of *danza Azteca* as a 'political tool' (Ceseña 2009: 85) and as part of a growing cultural and spiritual movement often called *Mexicanismo*. Finally, from these studies we also learn how practitioners use particular dance styles to develop and support a number of different ethnic and/or national/regional identifications¹⁰—a *mexicanidad*, or Mexican-ness in *ballet folklórico* (see Nájera-Ramírez 1989, 2009, 2012 and Hutchinson 2009), a pre-Colombian indigeneity and link to Aztlan, the mythic homeland of *Nahuatl*-speaking people in *danza* and *danza Azteca* (see Romero 2009; Ceseña 2009; Luna 2011), a connection to transcultural, transnational identifications in *quebradita* (see Simonett 1996 and Hutchinson 2006, 2007), and more regional identifications in various forms of *baile social* (see Peña 1980; Simonett 2001; Ragland 2003, 2009, 2013).

I wasn't in the field very long before I began to realize that my interest was quite different from the focus in this body of work.

What kind of dancing do you like? I ask the sisters shortly after we've discussed becoming DREAMers¹¹ and their plans to attend college to train in translation.

¹⁰ While *identity*, the term and concept, has been widely used within scholastic work, Hall (1990) and more recently Brubaker and Cooper (2000) have pointed to the ambiguity of the notion—the many and often contradictory ways it is employed as both category of practice and of analysis—and the problematic way in which the concept is often imbued with a sense of unity and permanence. *Identification*—a term that better conveys a sense of an ongoing and multiple process—has been advanced as an alternative and I adopt it here.

¹¹ The DREAM Act (the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) is a proposed legislative bill that would allow undocumented immigrants who entered the country before the age of 16 to apply for permanent residency. The bill was introduced in 2001 but has yet to be passed.

I like cumbia, Rubi says and Marisol nods, sipping her iced coffee. It's like my favourite to dance. Salsa, I like it but I really don't know how to dance it. And rock'n'roll, I like dancing it with my dad.

My favourite one is merengue, says Marisol. I love merengue. It's more like, how do you say, you feel more sexy dancing it, you know what I mean? With my mom's family, they dance more like banda.

And corridos, I don't really like those, says Rubi. I don't like the dance, I don't like how they dance, you know, they carry their partners.

We did classes too, says Marisol. Hula for two years, classes and performances and everything.

Thinking of their father, I understand the three jobs he currently holds.

I want to try hip hop now, says Rubi, shaking the ice free in her drink. I'm looking for classes around here.

November 23, 2015.

The difference, I realized, was one of focus. My interest was, and remains, in my companions and their experiences of an activity they identified as “dancing”, an activity which they indicated encompassed a range of dance practices as Rubi and Marisol demonstrated above. In contrast, the majority of studies on dance amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans, although drawing on the experiences of practitioners, make the dance style itself the focal point of the work. This difference in focus makes for significantly different studies. As indicated above, the aforementioned literature tends toward tracing the history of a specific dance form, its development over time and geography, and the ways in which people variously employ it. In contrast, I'm most interested in my companions' own personal experiences—their own doing—of dancing. This includes the ways my companions engaged in dancing (the focus of the chapters in this section), the way they understood dancing (the focus of Section II), the way they learned dancing (the focus of Section III), and the way they connected with others through dancing (the focus of Section IV). This approach, one which focuses on the broader activity of dancing, is important because it was experiences of this broader activity of dancing and the understanding of the

activity that these experiences generated that informed my companions' experience and understanding of all of their more specific dancing practices and experiences. This makes the approach I adopt here complementary, rather than an alternative, to the existing literature on individual dance forms.

It becomes immediately apparent that this dancing approach (as opposed to a dance style approach) necessitates knowing just what dancing was for my companions and which practices were encompassed by the activity. Briefly, dancing for my companions was moving with music and/or a rhythmic beat.¹² While my companions indicated that the majority of the practices above fell within the scope of my study of dancing given this definition, *danza* and *danza Azteca* gave them—and me—pause.

Is danza dancing? I ask Martha as she washes the dishes.

She pauses, leaning her bubbly hands on the edge of the sink. Well, she says, not really. It's more like religious or something. It's different, it's more like a ritual, I think.

So it's not dancing? I ask.

No, it's dancing but it's just different, it's not the same a ballet folklórico or something.

Is danza dancing? I ask a ballet folklórico instructor as she rolled up the cord on her portable stereo after class the next week.

Ya, it's dancing, more simple than what we do and it's more connected to religion but ya, it's dancing.

March 25 and April 2, 2015.

My companions divided their dance practices into two categories, *danza* and *baile*, both of which translate into the English word “dance”. *Danza*, the category, usually referred to dances of a religious or spiritual nature—*danza*, having the

¹² While this definition works for my current purpose in these initial chapters, readers will discover that this simple definition belies a much more nuanced understanding of the activity, something I explore in-depth in Section II.

same name as the category, and *danza Azteca*. *Baile* referred to the rest—*ballet folklórico* and *quebradita*, *baile social*, and other kinds of dance including the Eduardo and Francisco’s kitchen dancing above as well as the hip hop, jazz, tap, and ballet in which some of my companions were involved. The fact that my companions hesitated, as above, in labelling *danza* and *danza Azteca* as “dancing” gave me pause as it reminded me of the problematic nature of the category of “dance”, the roughshod application of which risks including or excluding in studies practices otherwise understood by the practitioners (see Kealiinohomoku 1976; Royce 1977; Kaeppler 1972, 1978, 1985; Grau 1983; Williams 2004[1994]; Farnell 1995). While I was reassured by my companions as above, that *danza* might be included in an umbrella study of dancing, I still wondered about my companions’ hesitations. Kaeppler’s (1985) work on Tongan movement practices offered an explanation. This suggests that at the heart of these hesitations was a difference between those dance practices my companions viewed as ends in themselves, practices usually understood as entertainment—those found within the category of *baile*—and those practices my companions saw as elements in other processes—*danza* and *danza Azteca* which were used to bring about a connection between the practitioners and indigenous ancestors or Our Lady of Guadalupe. While my companions thus considered both *baile* and *danza* as dancing by in that they involved moving with music and/or a rhythmic beat, my companions’ general association of the word “dancing” with the notion of a light-hearted practice that was an end in itself meant they hesitated to describe *danza* and *danza Azteca* in the same way. This difference between *baile* and *danza* is significant here as it means that in including a range of dance practices that differ in style—*ballet folklórico*, *danza*, *danza Azteca*, *quebradita*, *baile social*, and other forms of dancing—this thesis also includes dance practices (although admittedly much less of *danza*) which differ in their principal associated function.

Within these different forms and functions of dancing, this thesis also encompasses both ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ dancing.

Every year I start off really shy. You know, all those people watching and you have to remember the steps and pay attention to the music and everything. I'm always worried I'm going to forget or make a mistake or something. But then I get used to it, used to performing again and it feels good, Rachel says of dancing with the performance group. I get into a zone and then I'm like, it's over already?

And how about at fiestas? I ask.

Oh ya, Rachel says. Our family loves music and dancing.

At those parties, Rachel's mother adds, we all dance together. I just get up there with Rachel or my sister or anybody. It's just nonstop. We love dancing, she concludes with a smile at her daughter.

October 23, 2013.

As Rachel and her mother suggested above, dancing for my companions included practices experienced as 'presentational' and others experienced as 'participatory'. 'Presentational' dancing, principally *ballet folklórico*, *danza*, and *quebradita* although also some forms of *baile social* (Image 17) for my companions, is dancing which has been planned and rehearsed and is presented before a group of people, often on stage or in a location which similarly allows some physical distance between those dancing and any spectators present. Those dancing are not free to leave the dance space during the presentation nor are spectators normally encouraged to join them. For my companions, presentational dance was generally associated with organized groups of practitioners who ideally moved—and when using *zapateado*, percussive footwork—sounded together. This reflects the strong focus in much 'presentational' dancing on the product—the presentation and its visual and aural appeal. In contrast, 'participatory' dancing, for my companions *baile social* and those forms of dancing that didn't fit into a particular style, is dancing that hasn't been pre-planned or rehearsed with a specific presentation in mind, although practice or repetition is still a part of the experience in learning as these movements, following Heidegger (in Leder 1990), become ready-to-hand and –to-foot. In 'participatory' dancing practitioners move as they wish, often choosing from a repertoire of movements which are associated with the rhythm of the

music. In general, practitioners dance on the same level and often close to those not dancing. Those gathered—whether dancing or not—are free to join in or leave the activity at any point. In ‘participatory’ dancing, there is more of an emphasis on the process of dancing and the experience of the practitioners than on the dance as a visual and/or aural spectacle.



Image 17 Young women present their *merengue* number

It should be noted that as conceptual categories along a theoretical continuum ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ aren’t actual separate dancing practices (see Turino 2008; Nahachewsky 1995, 2011). Despite this, these categories remain useful in my work, pointing as they do to variations my companions’ identified, as Rachel and her mother did above, within their experience of dancing. This isn’t to suggest, however, that dancing considered ‘participatory’ was somehow not performative while dancing considered ‘presentational’ was. While ‘presentational’ dancing was more readily associated by my companions with the notion of a display of skill presented by practitioners to spectators in particularly delineated roles, I suggest in the following chapter that dance practices of all types, whether ‘presentational’ or ‘participatory’, shared in a performative nature. Speaking to the many different understandings of ‘performance’, all of these dance practices were also performative in that they involved the display of

recognized and culturally shaped patterns of behaviour, behaviour through which, Goffman (1990) suggests, we continually present ongoing performances of ourselves to others.

In sum, in this chapter I've introduced the various dances that were a part of my companions' dancing practice, highlighting not only their diversity in style but also in function and in their 'presentational' or 'participatory' forms. I make use of all of these practices in my approach to dancing in this thesis, one which focuses on dancing as a broader activity rather than as individual dance styles. It is to the blending of these various dance styles into the broader activity of dancing that I turn in the next chapter.

3 Mezclando

Blending

In this chapter, I examine some of the contexts in which my companions encountered the dance styles presented above as well as some of the performative elements shared across these styles. I demonstrate that while my companions recognized individual, separate dance forms as they are presented above, they also experienced these forms to blend together on both a contextual and an experiential level. This points, I suggest, to the presence of dancing as a broader activity in my companions' lives, supporting the approach to dancing I advocate and adopt here.

Contexto • Context

A flotilla of emergency vehicles, lights and sirens, starts things off. Firemen and police officers lean out of windows to wave at kids sitting along the curb.

Behind them follow marching bands, politicians waving from antique cars, school groups on the floats they've decorated in green, white, and red. There are Bernie Sanders supporters canvassing for votes (do they realize their audience and how few are eligible?), crowned beauty queens riding on the hoods of pick ups, and bandas and mariachi playing from flatbed trucks.

I'm here for the dancing and I'm not disappointed.

Groups of ballet folklórico dancers skip and spin down the street in their colourful costumes. There are zumba groups and a modern Latin dance troupe. An elementary school group pauses in front of me and is led in a choreographed dance to the Coco-no song. This song is a favourite and kids on the side lines jump up and dance too.

Vendors wander by selling ices, roasted corn, and bubble guns. The parade space is suddenly filled with a flurry of bubbles. It's like magic, a girl of 8 or 9 says down front.

The people standing next to me elbow each other and smile as a group of women dancing samba come into view, their costumes not giving them much protection from the midday sun. There is a huge group of danzantes, a danza group. The wind whips their feathered headdresses to and fro and blows the smell of burning sage into the neighbourhood.

A long line of low rider cars - people cheer as these roll by on three wheels - and then a huge group of horse and riders - two men riding bulls draw gasps and giggles from the onlookers - bring the parade to a close.

We follow the riders to the church grounds where the bands play again, giving us a chance to dance too.

April 30, 2016.

The first and most obvious of contexts in which my companions engaged in, and with, dancing were dancing events. As the vignettes in this and the previous chapter suggest, the dancing events that my companions encountered were varied and included not only public celebrations such as the *Cinco de Mayo*¹³ festivities above but also social dances, nightclubs, the dance classes at academies and clubs, the dance presentations produced by these groups, and private functions such as baptisms, *quinceañeras*, and weddings. These dancing events were rarely the domain of any single dance style but rather included multiple dance forms. This was true of those dancing events centred around ‘presentational’ dancing—at the *Cinco de Mayo* festivities above, for example, we were treated to presentations of *samba*, *ballet folklórico*, *danza Azteca*, *zumba*, and a modern pop routine (Image 18, Image 19, Image 20, and Image 21). Even

¹³ *Cinco de Mayo*, or May 5th, is a celebration that marks the 1862 victory of the Mexican forces over those of the French at the Battle of Puebla. While in Mexico *Cinco de Mayo* is not a very celebrated occasion, in the United States it has become very popular with its festivities—parades and parties—easily rivaling, and often drawing a more diverse crowd than, those used to mark Mexican Independence Day, September 16th.



Image 18 *Ballet folklórico* and bubbles at the *Cinco de Mayo* parade



Image 19 School group dancing to *Coco-No* at the *Cinco de Mayo* parade



Image 20 *Samba dancers at the Cinco de Mayo parade*



Image 21 *Danza group at the Cinco de Mayo parade*

at *ballet folklórico* ticketed presentations and exhibitions at schools, dance events that newcomers might assume to be the domain of a single dance style, a number of dance forms were encountered as *ballet folklórico* was a genre that encompassed a variety of different practices including, in some professional troupes, *danza*. A variety of dance forms was also to be encountered at those dancing events centred around ‘participatory’ dancing—social dances, nightclubs, and private celebrations—at which my companions easily encountered *cumbia*, *merengue*, *corridos*, rock’n’roll, *baladas románticas*, and pop, for example. The careful planning of the music and so dance styles that were a part of these ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ dancing events along with the complaints I heard about musical groups and DJs who played the same type of music repeatedly—meaning those on the dance floor danced the same style of dance repeatedly—suggested that my companions expected a variation in dance style at dancing events. This planning of, and complaining about, a general dancing experience at these various dancing events also lends support my suggestion that my companions thought about and experienced dancing not just in terms of individual dance styles but also in terms of dancing as a broader activity.

Significantly, although the dancing events my companions attended were often centred principally around either ‘presentational’ or ‘participatory’ dancing, my companions often encountered both of these forms of dancing within the same event. In addition to the parade and presentations of ‘presentational’ dance at the *Cinco de Mayo* celebration above, for example, as was a common practice the festivities also included performances by popular musical groups. The music these groups played was generally music for dancing and the crowd, with the encouragement of these musical groups and with the seating arranged to create a dancing space, usually danced. This made these dancing events occasions of both ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ dancing. The same occurred at private celebrations which were generally centred on ‘participatory’ dancing. At times at weddings and almost always at *quinceañeras*, dance presentations—usually given by the celebrant(s) and/or a paid dance group and involving *vals*, *ballet folklórico*, different kinds of *baile social*, or *quebradita* (Image 12)—were

sandwiched between rounds of ‘participatory’ dancing, making ‘presentational’ dancing a part of these dancing events as well. This blending within the same context of ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ forms of dance and as we’ve seen above of individual dance styles becomes even more commonplace when we broaden our view to include moments of dancing which weren’t planned parts of these events. In *ballet folklórico* dance classes, for example, I observed my companions to fill pauses and breaks with new hip hop moves while at celebrations as above I watched as people danced to the music pumped out over the venue while waiting in line for their food orders. For my companions, then, many dance styles and both ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ forms of these dance styles were encountered blended together within the context of the various dancing events they attended. This pointed to my companions experiencing dancing not just as individual dance forms but also as a broader, encompassing activity.

The blending that was a part of my companions’ encounters with dancing within dancing events also occurred on a smaller scale within some of the single dance pieces incorporated into these wider events.

With the first few notes of Mi Burrito Sabanero, the young women step onto the stage, long skirts and embroidered blouses. The children in the audience are already clapping along, more excited about the performance and the pageant than their high school counterparts the day before.

The dancers hold candles in one hand and use the other to stir their long skirts into waves and figure eights. They move in and out of lines and circles, meeting in pairs and in groups of three or four in front of the Christmas tree backdrop.

Part way through, male vocals, synthesizer, and a heavy bachata beat slide in to replace the child’s vocals and the strings of the first version of the song.

Two couples, the young women in short, form-fitting skirts, join the others on stage. The folkloric dancers move to the back, the bachata hip

work muffled by their long skirts but still there. At the front, the pairs of dancers sway their hips back and forth, adding in turns, body waves, and a flip that draws ooos from the children.

December 18, 2014.



Image 22 Alma Latina's *ballet folklórico* and *bachata* presentation

While scholars acknowledge that dance styles incorporate elements from other forms of dance—Spicer (1965), Hutchinson (2009), and Nájera-Ramírez (2009), for example, note that *ballet folklórico* makes use of movements, even whole dances, appropriated from *danza* and *baile social* while *quebradita*, according to Hutchinson (2007), draws movements from line dancing and hip hop—different dance styles were also combined in sequence to form single, composite dance pieces. This was the case with the dance presented by Alma Latina above as this combined *ballet folklórico* and *bachata* in a sequence in one dance piece. This cutting and pasting of different forms of dance into a single presentation was also a frequent feature in *baile sorpresas*¹⁴, or surprise dances. In these young women

¹⁴ *Bailes sorpresas*, or surprise dances, are presentational dances which are a part of *quinceañera* celebrations and in which the celebrants attempt to impress their guests. These usually employ more modern styles of dance in contrast with the more traditional and conservative *vals*, or waltz, which is also a part of these festivities.

chose three or four styles of music and dance—*corrido*, hip hop or pop, and *cumbia*, for example—to incorporate into a single presentation. These composite dance pieces were interesting because they linked together dance practices that my companions associated with different times, places, and groups of people. Alma Latina’s presentation thus linked Mexico and a notion of tradition and the past to an idea of a more contemporary, urban life through the mixing of *ballet folklórico*, associated with the former, and *bachata*, associated with the latter with the juxtaposition and combination further emphasized by the instrumentation of the music and the practitioners’ costumes. Likewise, in *bailes sorpresas*, my young companions often combined dance styles which spoke to their ties to Mexico (*corrido* and *cumbia* above for example) with styles which spoke to their ties to the United States (hip hop). This was at work as well within broader dancing events in the choices people made as to which types of music and so dancing to blend together within the occasion—*corridos* and *rancheras* performed by a *banda* interspersed with pop or hip hop from a DJ, for example, spoke to the different groups of people present and ensured there was something for everyone. This meant not only that my companions encountered and generated a blending of dance styles within individual dance pieces as well as broader dancing events but that they also blended these dance styles in these contexts to convey and reinforce particular associations. This indicated that my companions made use both of individual dance styles and of dancing as a broader activity.

My companions also encountered diverse dance styles blending together alongside one another within the same moments of dancing.

When they realize what’s happening, people begin squeezing back a bit as they dance to give Flaco, Laura, and the other couple more space.

*Flaco, in his late forties, has switched partners with the younger man. The younger man has Laura, also in her forties, in his grasp and is doing his best to get her hopping from foot to foot over his leg, even attempting to pick her up to execute one of the daredevilish *quebradita* throws.*

Not to be outdone, Flaco tries to do the same with his much younger partner—or pretends at least—before bending at the waist, massaging his lower back with one hand, and holding up the other in mock defeat, exhaustion, and backache. People laugh and return to their attention to their simpler banda step.

Lots of people used to dance like that, my partner says to me over the omp-pa-pa of the sousaphone. Now we're too old, he adds with a laugh.

August 10, 2013.

There are two dance styles that can be used with *banda* music, a simpler, less physically demanding step and the acrobatic *quebradita* dance form. On occasion, as above, both of these bumped up against one another on the same dance floor within the same moment of dancing. This was interesting not only in that it demonstrated different dance styles blended together within the context of the same dancing moment but also in that it pointed to a blending within the same context of different periods of dancing as these two dance styles represented dance trends from different eras—the simpler step more popular during the time of my fieldwork and the *quebradita* popular some ten or fifteen years before. My dance partner's reminiscences about his *quebradita* practice were interesting as well for they highlighted the fact that dancing events, dance pieces, and dancing moments were contexts which saw a blending of the dance styles being practiced at that moment along with a blending of lifetimes of other dance styles and experiences through the memories and bodily knowing that the dancing practitioners brought with them to the dance floor. This points to another, even broader context in which individual dance styles blended into the broader activity of dancing for my companions: their lifetimes. While the limits of this thesis mean I leave this avenue unexplored, my conversation with Rubi and Marisol in the previous chapter hints at this, at the place of dancing as a broader activity running through the breadth of people's lives.

In addition to encountering the blending of dance forms within particular contexts, on occasion my companions also encountered the blending of contexts

as 'presentational' and 'participatory' experiences of dance merged together within the same dancing event.

With the next song Juan and his mother move to the tarima, a raised platform, in front of the stage. People pull out their mobiles to record. On the tarima, Juan's rapid and sharp stepwork contrasts with his mother's who seems to glide and float through their turns.

The dance floor is slow to fill around them – maybe people are afraid of the comparison - but it does eventually. With the next song Juan and his mother move to the dance floor, two kids taking their place on the tarima in their best impression of what they've just seen.

July 31, 2014.



Image 23 Juan and his mother in pink dance on the *tarima*

Here Juan and his mother (Image 23) presented a 'presentational' form of *huapango* on the *tarima*, a wooden box that both raises the practitioners and amplifies the sound of their footwork, while the rest of us danced alongside them, engaged in the 'participatory' form of the same practice. This meant not only that some dancing events hosted both 'presentational' and 'participatory' forms of the same kind of dance as Dadoo (2010) also notes in her work with the

pizzica in Italy but also that at times ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ dancing contexts combined together within the same dance moment, piece, or event. This was often the case at concerts and social dances during which practitioners on stage danced while those in the audience did the same. The blending of the ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ dancing contexts during such times blurred the roles played by dance practitioners and spectators (a theme I take up below). Interestingly, this blurring continued even after Juan and his mother took to the dance floor to dance alongside us with other partners as people continued to orient themselves so as to be able to watch them. This pointed to the existence of different kinds of ‘presentational’ dancing within my companions’ dance practice and suggested that the blending of ‘presentational’ and ‘participatory’ contexts might also take place in a more localized manner—not just within a whole dancing event but also around a pair of dancers as in this case. This was something I witnessed on other occasions as well as people gave space to and watched particularly skilful dancers all while dancing themselves. This meant that ‘participatory’ dancing events always had the potential to become sites of a blending of ‘participatory’ and ‘presentational’ contexts.

As these examples demonstrate, for my companions’ diverse dance styles blended together within the same contexts—dancing events, dance pieces, and single dancing moments—so pointing to the presence of dancing as a broader activity within my companions’ lives. This meant that dancing for my companions wasn’t just individual, discrete dance forms in isolation from all others as studies of single dance styles inadvertently suggest but that it also a encompassing activity that moved beyond the boundaries between these dance forms and contexts. The variation inherent in this broader, encompassing activity of dancing was important for, as we’ve seen above, it meant diverse groups of people—those of different generations either in age or in time spent in the United States and those with ties to different places—engaged together in the same endeavour, in dancing. This meant that dancing as a broader activity involved not only the blending of different dance forms and contexts but also a blending together of different people within the same activity.

Representación • Performance

I went to their performance and you know what? I sat in the front row, right there at the front with my daughter, Victoria says with a defiant flick of her chin. That way I could see them and they could see me. I watched them, but I never smiled. They saw me, I know. And you know what? The performance? It was terrible. Very bad, Victoria says underlining the thought with a horizontal swipe of her hand. They didn't know the steps, even they used the wrong steps in the wrong dances. Since I left, it's bad. They don't know what they're doing, she says with a shake of her head. And you know what? They charge even more money.

April 17, 2016.

• • • • •

*I find it a little hard to imagine Manuel cutting up the dance floor as I watch the gangly young man fidget with his phone on the other side of the table but I've been surprised before at people's dance floor transformations. *Manuel*

I love it, he says, turning the phone over in his hands. I love when people watch me. I'm good. They see I'm good. It makes it fun and I want to do more. The women, they see you dance good and they want to dance with you. If you ask, probably they'll say yes.

October 20, 2013.

Just as context blended diverse dance styles together into dancing as a broader activity for my companions so too did the shared performative nature of these dance forms. Here I explore some of the performative characteristics of dancing to highlight how these further blended individual dance styles together into my companions' broader activity of dancing as this shared performative nature generated similar experiences and understandings of dancing across diverse dance forms and contexts. Beginning here with Victoria and Manuel, we discover that for my companions dancing was an activity which involved a sense of

dancing *for* someone, that is, being witnessed to dance, a feature Carlson (2004[1996]) suggests is common to all performance. In speaking about a presentation made by the *ballet folklórico* group she used to lead and about his own dancing at parties and nightclubs, Victoria and Manuel indicated that this understanding and experience of dancing as an activity witnessed by others was a part of dancing regardless of the dance style and of whether this dance style was ‘presentational’ or ‘participatory’ in form. That this was a shared characteristic across my companions’ dancing was confirmed in my conversations with people as the topic of others observing—whether more formal audiences at organized dancing presentations, casual onlookers present at ‘participatory’ dancing events, or fellow practitioners on the dance floor—surfaced again and again in relation to a wide variety of dance practices.

I hated people watching me so I didn't dance, Tenosh says over the music at Gayle's party. But it made me jealous, you know, watching everybody have fun and I was just sitting. So one day I just danced crazy. My whole town was there, it was like at a town festival, and I got in the middle and danced like a crazy person. People laughed at me but after that I don't care. I don't care if people watch now, I just dance and do my own thing. That's what you have to do if you want to have fun. You can't be thinking about people watching you all the time.

October 25, 2013.

Here Tenosh’s comment is revealing as it pointed to the fact that dancing, when observed by others, involved both others watching and, importantly, the practitioners experiencing this observation. This speaks not only to the two interconnecting dimensions of experience that emerge through dance—our material body as visible to those around us and our lived experience of being-in-the-world (see Heidigger 1962; Jackson 1989; Huges-Freeland 2008)—but also to another feature of my companions’ dancing. This was the management of the experience of being observed, of being aware of oneself as a social actor (see Chapter 7). Many of my companions, as Tanosh did, suggested that this was key to enjoying dancing and, as Victoria told me in a later conversation, being able to dance anything well; Tenosh’s initial reluctance to dance because of not being

able to manage this experience, an explanation I encountered frequently, hinted that this management wasn't just a part of enjoying dancing and dancing well but may also have been a more fundamental component in my companions' basic involvement in the activity. These three features—that others witnessed their dancing, that my companions were observed, and that they needed to manage the experience of being observed—were common to my companions' experiences of dancing regardless of dance style or context.

This was true too of the participation of those witnessing my companions' dancing. While the dancing *for* someone aspect of dancing as a performative activity may seem to suggest that those witnessing my companions' dancing played a passive role, scholars problematizing the performer-audience duality (see Carlson (2004[1996])); Schechner 2013; Newton 2014) indicate that this wasn't so. Instead, those observing played an important part as they recognized and validated the practice of those dancing.

Just in front of her father or maybe an uncle, a girl of about 3 pulses up and down with the music, knees bending deeply. She begins to alternate these dips with some spins that bring her out some distance from her minder.

Eso eso, a man says looking down at her as he passes by with five dripping cans of beer balanced in his hands. Así es, that's it, he says again, pausing to watch the child. Baila! Baila! he calls. Dance! Dance!

This sends the girl to bury her face into her minder's pant leg but as the man finds his seat, she's off dancing again.

March 23, 2016.

In recognizing and validating the practitioners' dancing, those witnessing (who weren't always as vocal in their responses as here) helped to create my companions' dancing performance, making dancing a collaborative event taking place between those participating—those observing, those dancing, and at times those doing both. As this witnessing was a part of dancing across its varied forms and contexts for my companions, this collaboration between dancing

practitioners and observers in the creation of dancing as performance was likewise and so served as another shared performative feature blending these different styles of dance in varying contexts into the broader activity of dancing. This understanding of dancing practitioners and observers as co-creators of dancing also blurred the line between dancer and spectator, a blurring I observed as well in my companions' interactions with the music and the dancing practitioners at dancing events.

As we sit watching the dance floor, Eric taps his phone against the table with the rhythm and I notice his foot is tapping too. Our glasses giggle. Eric's older sister sways from side to side in her seat and joins in with the chorus, tilting her head back and closing her eyes to enjoy it all the more.

Aaaaayyyyyeeee aye aye aye aye ah ha ha haiiii,

someone calls out, the grito loud enough to be heard over everything else.

I can do that too, says Adriana with an impish gleam in her eye. Almost as soon as she starts out with the long aaaaaa she collapses into coughing and giggles. I need practice, she says, before taking a drink of water, gargling slightly, and trying again. Her efforts are met with smiles and nods around the table.

August 14, 2013.

In clapping and singing, swaying, drumming their fingers on a convenient surface, tapping their feet, even issuing, as above, a *grito*, a long, loud cry that signalled excitement and appreciation, my companions came to share in, and contribute to, the dancing they observed. To some extent, in addition to blurring the line between dancer and spectator, this partaking in rhythmic activity blended dancing and watching together as well. This blurring and blending is reflected in a lovely phrase, "*bailando con los ojos*".

Si estuviera allá ahora, if I were there now, Eduardo says wistfully of the yearly dance festival in his home state, I would wrap myself in a big

blanket, find a seat, y bailar con mis ojos toda la noche, and dance with my eyes all night.

December 28, 2015.

Used to speak of watching others attentively instead of dancing oneself, the phrase “*bailando con los ojos*”, or dancing with your eyes, underscored the blending and blurring both of the roles of dancers and spectators and of the activities of dancing and watching, suggesting a much less firm division between the roles and the activities within dancing as Polak (2007) also observes in his work dancing and drumming celebrations in Mali. The active part taken by spectators, then, was a performative feature of dancing which didn’t only blend varying dance styles from varying contexts together into my companions’ broader activity of dancing but also blended the roles my companions’ played and even the activity they engaged in within dancing.

Before continuing with this discussion it is important to note that my companions also danced in times and places where they weren’t observed by others. In these instances the performative aspect of dancing *for* someone, of being witnessed, wasn’t absent but rather this role was filled by the dancing practitioners themselves.

It’s another experience for me, Yolanda says, leaning forward at her desk. Like yesterday when we were performing, I thought to myself, this is my life, it’s all me. I don’t think about my problems at all. I’m there dancing but even when I’m dancing folklórico, it’s me. I feel open, like I’m flying. In that moment, it’s just my moment. I don’t think about putting myself in front of the public. Sometimes I might feel a little nervous but it’s fun to feel that way when you’re performing.

November 19, 2013.

As Yolanda suggested, dancing could also be a performance made for the practitioners themselves, making the dancing practitioners the ones to engage in the recognition and validation which brought dancing as performance into being. This occurred on occasions when my companions danced all alone, for example,

but wasn't, as above, limited to these times. As Yolanda indicated, when practitioners danced amongst others, even in 'presentational' contexts which suggested performing *for* others, being witnessed by others, they also danced *for* and witnessed themselves. This, then, blended my companions' experiences of dancing alone with those of dancing in the presence of others and indicated that an even further blurring of the line between dancer and spectator occurred at times.

Returning to Victoria and Manuel, their description of dancing, both 'presentational' and 'participatory', as a demonstration of skill highlighted two other related performative elements shared across my companions' dancing practices and contexts. These were a desire to dance well and the employment in dancing of an embodied sense of a potential, ideal, or previously experienced way of dancing.

Silvia stands in front of the class and begins to work through a sequence of steps. She pauses a few steps in and tries again before stopping again.

That's not right. What's wrong with me today? she says as her feet stutter out a few more steps before she pauses again. I just can't get it. I must be tired. Or maybe it's these shoes, she says looking down at her strappy sandals. I just can't dance in these shoes.

October 17, 2012.

Silvia's dissatisfaction with her dancing indicated that she wanted to dance well, and that she was aware of and guided by a sense of how dancing should be done. This was an embodied sense which suggested to her not only what the sequence of steps should have looked and sounded like but also how the same sequence should have felt. This embodied sense of guiding form is identified by Bauman (1989) as characteristic to performance. He describes this awareness as a 'consciousness of doubleness, according to which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action' (Carlson 2004[1996]: 5). While this suggests a comparing against a mental blueprint, recent work suggests that

meaningful thoughts are generated through bodies and action and don't rely on mental representations (see Caracciolo 2012; Chemero 2013). This meant that in engaging with an embodied sense of a potential, ideal, or previously experienced way of dancing as Silvia did above, my companions engaged in a process of an integrated body-mind in action rather than a series of separate steps involving envisioning the desired action, acting, and then mentally weighing the action. Despite my companions' desire to dance well and this embodied sense, there was no guarantee that this integrated body-mind in action would bring about the desired dancing as Silvia demonstrated. This speaks to another performative aspect of dancing which brought different styles and experiences of dancing together, the uncertainty of any performance.

We're crowded around Norma with the ipad watching a video of the kids dance at the festival. Natalia standing on a chair near her mother sways tentatively to the music but comes to a stop and twists her face into her mother's chest when someone says, mira! La niña está bailando! Look! The child is dancing!

There is more talk of the festival and Jorge says, I messed up!

There is an exclamation of surprise from everyone. That hardly ever happens, his mother says and Jorge nods.

And the funny thing was that I messed up and then just as I got back Mía did the same thing!

January 10, 2015.

Even for those like Jorge and Silvia above, experienced dance practitioners, the outcome of any given dancing could never be predetermined; it was instead always uncertain. This made dancing for my companions, following Pye (1995[1968]), a workmanship of risk, 'the quality of the result [...] continually at risk during the process of making' (Pye 1995[1968]: 20), that is, at any time my companions could falter and the dancing could come apart. While practice helped to limit this risk, it could never entirely be eliminated leaving my companions to continually negotiate their dancing using what judgement, skill, and care they

possessed. This made dancing—regardless of whether or not it was ‘presentational’, and so well planned, or ‘participatory’, and so less so—an improvisational activity (see Hallam & Ingold 2007), a topic I address again in Chapter 5. The desire to dance well, the use of an embodied sense of this, and the uncertainty and improvisation inherent to dancing along with the performative features examined above—that others witnessed their dancing, that my companions were observed, that they needed to manage the experience of being observed, and that observers played an active role—meant that dancing, regardless of the style of dance, whether it was ‘presentational’ or ‘participatory’, or its context, presented similar experiences for my companions. As a result of these similar experiences, my companions’ diverse styles of dance for a range of contexts blended together for them within the broader activity of dancing.

In sum, in this chapter I’ve demonstrated that my companions, while recognizing individual forms of dance, experienced these various dance styles to also blend together through context—dancing events, dance pieces, and dancing moments—and through the experience brought by the performative nature of dancing—performing for someone, desiring to do well, and the uncertainty and risk inherent to performance. This suggests that another view of dancing isn’t only possible but reflects my companions’ layered understanding of the activity. Dancing for my companions, then, was both individual dance styles and a complex activity which spanned these individual forms and contexts, bringing together different people as well as places and moments in time and blurring the lines to some extent between practitioner and observer, dancing and spectating. Working with this latter understanding of dancing offers new insight into the place and function of dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States as the next chapter indicates.

4 Ampliando

Broadening

In this chapter, working with dancing as a broader activity, I demonstrate that dancing was a part of my companions' everyday lives beyond formally organized dancing events and that my companions had many reasons for engaging in the activity. The picture of dancing which emerges from this discussion differs from that presented in many contemporary studies with their focus on dancing within dancing events and on dancing principally as a tool for, and site of, the construction and maintenance of particular identifications.

Integrando • Integrating

When I arrive Arturo is dancing in Beti's spotless kitchen. She turns the radio down so we can chat but Arturo is having none of it. He moves towards the stereo and holds a hand up, making a winding motion.

Beti laughs. He'd dance to this a thousand times, she says of the Co-co-no song on the radio.

Arturo wobbles from side to side, arms in the air, and begins to jump around in a circle. Beti catches him as his dizziness tips him over.

Baila, Arturo, baila! Beti says as she claps along to the music. Dance! She laughs, holding out her arms to catch him as he almost falls over again in his enthusiasm.

Crazy dancing, Arturo, she says as she smiles down at him and he up at her.

September 19, 2013.

While my companions, at least in part because of the performative nature of dancing, set the experience of dancing apart from the experience of much of the other activity of everyday life—a fact which appears to support portrayals of dancing as 'contrast[ing] with normal everyday life' (Spencer 1985: 28; see also

Cowan 1990)—this didn't mean that the activity of dancing was absent from my companions' everyday. Rather than sequestered within more formally organized dancing events, dancing was a regular part of my companions' everyday lives in both action and thought in a range of contexts. As Beti and Arturo demonstrated, my companions thus took advantage of favourite songs on the radio, for example, or visits from family or friends to dance together, at times combining this dancing with other quotidian activity so that my companions danced while minding children, cleaning, washing the dishes, getting dressed, and preparing food. While these examples point to dancing at home, my companions danced in other contexts as well—at school in the hallways while waiting for class and while working, for example.

I dance when I'm at work, Norma says with some shoulder shakes some weeks later. Everyone thinks I'm crazy but the time goes fast that way. It keeps me warm. We're not allowed to wear hats at the packing plant.

November 14, 2014.

As Norma's co-workers' reaction suggested, not everyone made every context and activity an opportunity to dance. That Norma still danced at work although this was unconventional hinted, however, that given the inclination, many of the contexts and activities that my companions' encountered during their day were imbued with dancing potential. As I became more familiar with my companions' dancing movements, I began to see evidence of this, finding hints of dancing in an even wider range of everyday activity and contexts—steps padded out as a friend waited in line at the supermarket, shoulder shakes and taps on the steering wheel as we sat at the stoplights, even dancing movements playfully added into conversation.

Pedro sits in his chair, nibbling on a tortilla wrapped around a chunk of queso fresco. He shakes his head in exaggerated disagreement to something his brother has said. Just as he replies, no! no! no! his uncle José arrives. Co-co-no, co-co-no, José chants as he plops a kiss on the top of Pedro's head and leans in beside him to shake his shoulders and smile into Pedro's face. Shooting a hand and a cheese taco above his head in

excitement, Pedro follows his uncle, pulsing up and down in his chair and shouting out the lyrics of his favourite dance song, No! No! No! Co-co-no! Co-co-no!

July 3, 2012.

These smaller moments of dancing movement suggested not only that my companions danced in a variety of contexts outside formally organized dancing events—here in bedrooms, at the kitchen sink, in cars, at supermarkets, in the line of a tomato packing plant—but also that they engaged in dancing in a number of ways—full on dancing alone or with others, a few phrases of stepwork, even just a sway back and forth and a few shoulder shimmies. Approaching dancing more broadly, then, encourages us to think more about what dancing is for our companions, a theme I take up in Section II, with the application of a broader notion of dancing revealing more of the activity's presence in our companions' lives.

While often viewed as inconsequential by my companions, the dancing in which my companions' engaged outside of more formally organized dancing events as above played a significant role in my companions' experience of dancing.

There's plenty of space in the garage now that the van's been moved. Erika is singing with some shouted atonal la-la-la accompaniment from the two youngest kids who wrestle for the second microphone. Dancing and singing along beside them, Martha and a visiting aunt make easy turns and quick steps to the cumbia beat.

You sing something, Erika says, handing me the microphone at the end of the song, already being pulled away by the aunt to dance.

August 10, 2014.

Dancing such as in this garage session and Beti and Arturo's kitchen session above were important because they offered those of my companions with few opportunities to attend formally organized dancing events the chance to dance. For Beti and Arturo, for example, their kitchen dancing sessions (along with

Beti's dancing while cleaning) were frequently the full extent of their dancing as the day-evening-weekend hours of Beti's husband's job as a chauffeur in the city meant they attended few dancing events. Dancing outside of formally organized events also allowed people the chance to dance with those they might not otherwise. The garage dancing session for the visiting aunt and her nieces was just this as they rarely had the opportunity to dance together otherwise—in part because the aunt lived at some distance and so didn't often attend the same dancing events and in part because at dancing events the women chose more conventional partners: Martha danced with cousins her own age, the aunt her husband, and Erika not at all, if she even attended. The dancing that occurred in my companions' homes and in other similar spaces, then, was significant not only in that it indicated that dancing extended beyond more formally organized dancing events, but also in that this dancing provided a chance to engage in the activity for those who, perhaps because of a lack of opportunity, didn't dance or didn't dance together at other times.

My companions' 'at home' (or in a space in which my companions felt equally comfortable) dancing was also significant because it provided a 'safe' time and space in which to dance.

I reluctantly leave the tales being told in the kitchen—Alma and her family's two-year exile back in Mexico when they lost their house not far from here—and join the girls in the living room where they have moved the sofa and started up Just Dance.¹⁵ They hand me one of the controls as we stand in front of the TV and we're off. It's not long before almost everyone is up and dancing and even Jacki takes the controller although with the stipulation that she dances at the back. I like being at the back, she says, then no one can see me if I make a mistake.

Adriana comments to me that her mother gets mad at her when she dances Just Dance and when I ask why she explains that she doesn't dance in the same way at parties as she does when she's playing the Wii.

¹⁵ Just Dance for the Wii is a game in which participants try to match their own movements with the dancing movements of characters on screen. It was very popular amongst my companions, both for children and adults.

What do you mean? I ask and she gives a demonstration – throwing herself into the Wii version of her dancing with wild and energetic abandon while the fiesta version is much, much more sedate.

July 1, 2014.

Dancing ‘at home’ or in a similarly experienced space provided a ‘safer’ context in which to engage in the activity in that fewer people watched (see Chapter 3) and those who did were close friends and family whose judgement was generally less feared, this limiting some of the risk that was seen to be involved in dancing. For some of my companions like Jacki, a shy young woman who never danced otherwise, this context was the only one in which they felt comfortable enough to dance. As Adriana suggested, the ‘safer’ context provided by this dancing ‘at home’ was also significant for others who did dance in other contexts as it offered a space in which they experimented with dancing in ways they were unlikely to in other contexts. This was especially true when my companions spoke of dancing alone.

When my mom goes out to the store or something, then I put my music in and start, Andrés says, taking a bite of his sandwich as we chat during the lunch break. Usually I’ll be cleaning or something while she’s out. If I’m cleaning my room, I’ll put the music and I’ll just start dancing. I just go crazy, doing whatever.

November 17, 2013.

Andrés indicated that dancing on his own ‘at home’ gave him the chance to dance as he wished—with more energy and using movements he wouldn’t otherwise. As this hints, dancing ‘at home’ or in a similar space was often an important part of my companions’ dancing practice as it was during this dancing, alone or with close family and friends, while washing the dishes or simply dancing, that my companions’ tried out new moves—of their own invention and those they’d observed on video or at other dancing events—and practiced old ones. This dancing work—leading to a building of my companions’ repertoire as well as an ease of movement—was often then integrated into my companions’ dancing at

more formally organized dancing events. Both the 'at home' context, providing a time and space in which some of the risk involved in dancing was limited, as well as the potentially less conventional dancing that was a part of it, then, shouldn't be perceived as separate from more formally organized dancing events and the dancing which was a part of these as these different contexts and dancing practices clearly fed into one another.

Dancing was also a part of my companions' everyday lives without them moving an inch.

I saw them putting up the speakers in the courtyard this morning and the jumper too. I'm not sure whose party it is or what they're celebrating but it must be someone in one of these apartments. The music is pulsing through the neighbourhood. No one can escape it given the thin walls and how close all the blocks of housing are. I'm always amazed more people don't get annoyed with each other but it seems like everyone at some point holds a party. Now it's the old favourite, No Rompas Más Mi Pobre Corazón, and the sped up version that follows. Even though I can't see them, it's easy to imagine all the women dancing downstairs, racing through the moves in those impossible high heels.

July 9, 2013.

In my companions' neighbourhoods, music drifted regularly, as above, from celebrations, from the dance practices held in backyards, from the open windows of cars driving by, from where people worked outside or in their garages. This music was usually the same encountered on the dance floor meaning that this drifting music, in addition to the sights and sounds of people dancing and the vibrations from powerful speakers, brought sensations of dancing along with thoughts and imaginings of the activity, even specific dances and types of dance practitioners as above, to my companions. In some cases, this drifting music even resulted in those listening at a distance padding out steps as well. The same occurred within dance classes and practices and zumba sessions. Parents and older siblings drove younger practitioners to practices and, as was the custom, waited, watching and listening, throughout the practice to take them home again

afterwards. Younger siblings came too, playing on the sidelines. At zumba sessions, mothers brought their children, stationing them along the edge of gymnasiums to play with others or, for a fortunate few, with their mothers' cell phones. This meant that for many of my companions the sights, sounds, vibrations, and even heat of dancing were a regular part of their everyday even if they didn't actively engage in the activity themselves.

That dancing was a part of my companions' lives outside of formally organized dancing events and without their having to engage in the activity is even more evident when social media was taken into account. As almost all my companions were armed with smart phones, videos and photos of family and friends dancing were frequently taken and shared through text and social media (Image 16 & Image 17). The posting of these videos and photos along with other posts which referenced dancing—funny videos, videos taken at concerts, memes commenting on different aspects of Mexican culture, for example—were such a common occurrence that my companions regularly encountered dancing, their own and others', as they used Facebook, Facebook Live, Snapchat, and Instagram. Frequently they responded to these posts with 'likes', reposts, and/or comments of their own.

Juana gets a notification on Facebook that someone has commented on a photo of the kids she'd posted. Juana smiles and begins to tear up. Her son says she always cries when someone compliments their dancing and I've seen this too. Juana passes the message around for us to read.

Congratulations on your children, it reads. They are great huapango dancers. You can see they dance with heart. I've seen them dance in different events. It is great to see that even through they grew up in another country they haven't forgotten their roots.

This last line makes Juana's son tssssk and he says he feels as Mexican as he does American, maybe more.

January 10, 2015.

Posts about dancing often became forums of sorts for talking about specific dancing events and presentations, even an individual's own way of dancing (see Image 25 for my dancing), for sharing their own experiences, and for praising and encouraging others. This meant not only that dancing was a part of my companions' lives in a variety of ways but that they engaged with the activity of dancing in a variety of ways as well, this engagement extending at times beyond movement with music as here to texting and Facebook 'likes'.

Dancing was also a part of my companions' lives as thought through my companions' imaginings and remembrances.

How's the planning going? I ask Erica, whose quinceaños is in July, during a commercial break.

Good, she says. We're going to have a banda and a DJ too 'cause our family is coming from Mexico.

From D.F.? I ask, taking another handful of popcorn.

Ya, I know they're not going to want to dance banda. We're going to have huapango too, she adds, but during dinner. There's no way they'll dance to that. Adriana and I are doing the baile sorpresa. We'll start practices in April.

March 20, 2016.

As Erica revealed above, dancing events required a great deal of planning. Decisions about what type of music (and so what kind of dancing) to have at celebrations, how many and which musical groups to employ, and which songs to use for special dances began many months in advance of the actual event. These decisions involved my companions, as Erica did, thinking about and anticipating the dancing practices and preferences of others as well as their own, employing what Kind and Kung (2016) call the 'instructive use' of imagination in planning and predicting. As these plans and predictions were rarely made by the celebrant(s) alone, imaginings of this future dancing became a part of the lives of a variety of people, in a variety of contexts, and combined with a variety of



Image 24 Facebook post admiring someone's dancing



Image 25 Facebook post about my dancing

activity as families and friends discussed and debated these dancing decisions during dinner, on breaks between classes, driving to and from school and work, and while watching TV as above. Dancing also featured in the lives of my companions in this way as they made plans not to host these events but to attend them, frequently speculating about/predicting the type of dancing they might encounter at celebrations and nightclubs so as to decide whether to go and what to wear, for example, if they did attend¹⁶. These considerations seeped into other decisions as well as my companions made choices about purchases (shoes or handbags, for example) with an eye not to a specific event but to dancing events in general.

Dancing was also brought into my companions' everyday through their daydreaming or fanaticizing about dancing events, a 'transcendent use' of imagination according to Kind and Kung (2016).

Have you thought about your quince? I ask.

Yea, Valeria says in the passenger seat. First I wanted to go to Hawaii or Disney or something but Erica told me I could have, like, everything all on the same day and that's way better. You know, like I get a fancy dress, we have a big party, we get a limo, maybe like one of those, you know, the big ones? Like an SUV but big.

And what about the dancing? I ask.

I want do a ballet folklórico baile sorpresa, Valeria says. And then maybe banda for the dance, she says, her voice rising to suggest her uncertainty.

I guess you have a little bit of time to decide, I say.

Yea, she says and we both giggle.

¹⁶ Certain types of dancing was associated with particular clothing and footwear. Events featuring *huapango*, for example, frequently saw my companions dress in *vaquero* wear—checked shirts, jeans, and boots, while those event featuring *cumbia*, *salsa*, and pop were more likely to see my companions in dresses and high heels, slacks and dress shoes.

June 20, 2014.

Here Valeria spoke of her plans for her *quinceañera*, plans more akin to daydreams than actual decisions made as at just turned eight, Valeria's *quinceañera* was some seven years in the future. Speaking to other young girls it soon became clear that *quinceañeras* and so also dancing were the subject of much of this type of imagining. Falling somewhere between these fantasies of 'transcendent' imagination here and the plans and predictions of 'instructive' imagination above were my companions' other imaginings about dancing in their future.

I hope I'm going to be dancing for the rest of my life. I can be in my wheelchair rolling back and forth and that's fine. I'll still be dancing.

August 8, 2013.

As Sonia indicated, dancing was also a part of my companions' desires and visions—present and future—for themselves and for others. Many of the young single men and women to whom I talked spoke of dancing as a quality they hoped would be a characteristic of their future partners and so relationships while others expressed hopes that their future children or grandchildren would take up the activity. Dancing was, then, a part both of my companions' concrete plans for approaching events and of their more ephemeral visions of and hopes for their future.

Dancing was also a part of my companions' remembrances.

Half way to her mouth, Rosie puts the forkful of doctor prescribed lettuce down and smiles at Gabriela. Turning to me, she says, Gabriela's ex-husband used to love to dance to this song. And Rosie sings a few words.

Gabriela joins in and then says to me, my ex-husband was horrible.

Horrible, Rosie repeats. And a horrible dancer, Rosie adds with a laugh.

He used to dance like this, Gabriela says and, casting an eye around the restaurant, quickly mimes licking a finger and circling it around a nipple. Rosie guffaws with a mouth full of salad and I smother a snort in my napkin. Yeechhh, Gabriela concludes, sentence cast on the dancing and on the man.

July 10, 2015.

Dancing emerged in my companions' remembrances of people, events, and even particular times in the past. Given what we know about memory, that it is 'a reconstruction of the past using data taken from the present' (Halbwachs 1992: 119; see also James & Mills 2005) rather than a pulling into the present of some preserved element of the past, this suggests that my companions made dancing anew in their present in these moments of recollection, sometimes even sparking new moments of dancing. The same could be said of my companions' imaginings of dancing above. This made my companions' everyday not just home to a range of present dancing but also home to both past and potential future dancing as well. What I found interesting about these memories and imaginings of dancing was that they were often fused with, as here, particular songs and/or people, even locations. This fusing is of significance because it resulted in a dancing dimension to my companions' surroundings—in the places they passed by on the way to work, in the songs they listened to on the radio on the way home, within the people they met while at the grocery store. This dancing dimension meant, then, that my companions could potentially encounter dancing at any time and in any place through innumerable memories and imaginings of the activity sparked by their journey through the day, an observation Lund (2005) also makes about walking.

As this sampling suggests, more formally organized dancing events weren't the sole bastions of dancing for my companions. Instead, dancing, as actual and varied activity and as thought, seeped into my companions' lives in a wide variety of ways and contexts ensuring that dancing wasn't set at a distance from the everyday but rather was a part of it for both practitioners and non-practitioners alike. This commonplaceness of dancing is an understanding and

experience of the activity particularly accessible when a broader approach is adopted.

Uso • Purpose

It became clear in teasing out some of the various ways that dancing emerged in my companions' lives that my companions danced for many reasons. This is important as so many contemporary studies, following Stokes, present dancing as a 'means by which ethnicities and identities are constructed and mobilised' (1997: 5), leaving the other reasons people dance underrepresented in the literature. In what follows I present a small selection of the reasons my companions suggested they danced—reasons tied to the development and expression of my companions' various identifications and reasons tied to the more immediate experience of dancing. Significantly, the reasons my companions danced further pointed to dancing as a regular part of my companions' lives, continuing and affirming the argument I present above.

Turning to the first, I encountered ample evidence to support the notion presented in a burgeoning body of literature (see Chapter 2) that dancing was used by Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States as a tool for, and site of, the construction, maintenance, and expression of various ethnic and/or national/regional identifications.

I snag Roberto for a few minutes between classes. We sit in the academy's closet-like office, squeezed between the stacks of papers and CDs that lean into our conversation from the desk and chairs.

Most families who come here are of Mexican decent, he says. They want their kids to have the same experiences as their grandparents, they want their kids to learn to dance, to learn ballet folklórico, to get connected with their culture.

When Roberto leaves to teach the older group, I chat with Alexis, asking about how she motivates some of her more reluctant students. It helps,

she says, to know where dances come from. I tell them this is where you come from, this is your culture. This is who you are. That helps.

June 14, 2013.

Roberto and Alexis indicated that dancing—here *ballet folklórico*—was an activity within which practitioners could ‘get connected with [Mexican] culture,’ that is, identify with, and be a part of a group of people who were linked, in this case, by a notion of shared culture. This was true too both of ‘participatory’ dancing as many styles were associated with particular places and groups of people—*cumbia* with Mexico City, for example, and *huapango* and *corrido* with the western states of Mexico—and of dancing in general.

Refusing the grilled chili I offer her from the griddle, Gladys says in her just loud enough for everyone to hear voice, don't you know? I'm a bad Mexican. I don't eat chili and I don't dance. No one rises to her bait. As usual it's as if no one heard.

November 25, 2016.

This identification (or not) through dancing was possible at least in part because cultural knowledge, as Novack (1990), Sklar (1991) and Ness (1992) among many others have argued, is embodied in movement and so in dancing. This meant that by dancing (or not) my companions inscribed into themselves (and at the same time also produced) cultural knowledge and, with this, an identification with others—Mexicanos and/or Mexican Americans, for example. This understanding and experience of dancing was not only a part of conversations with outside researchers but was also to be encountered within the discourse aimed at my companions as this link between dancing and identification was made a part of academy publications (Image 26), introductory dance classes, and the commentary that accompanied presentations at public events. Dancing also featured prominently at celebrations (and in the related advertising and media coverage (Image 27) connected to the community—Mexican Independence Day and *Cinco de Mayo*, for example—and was used to represent the Latino, Mexicano, and Mexican American populations to the wider populace at regional



Image 26 Website banner

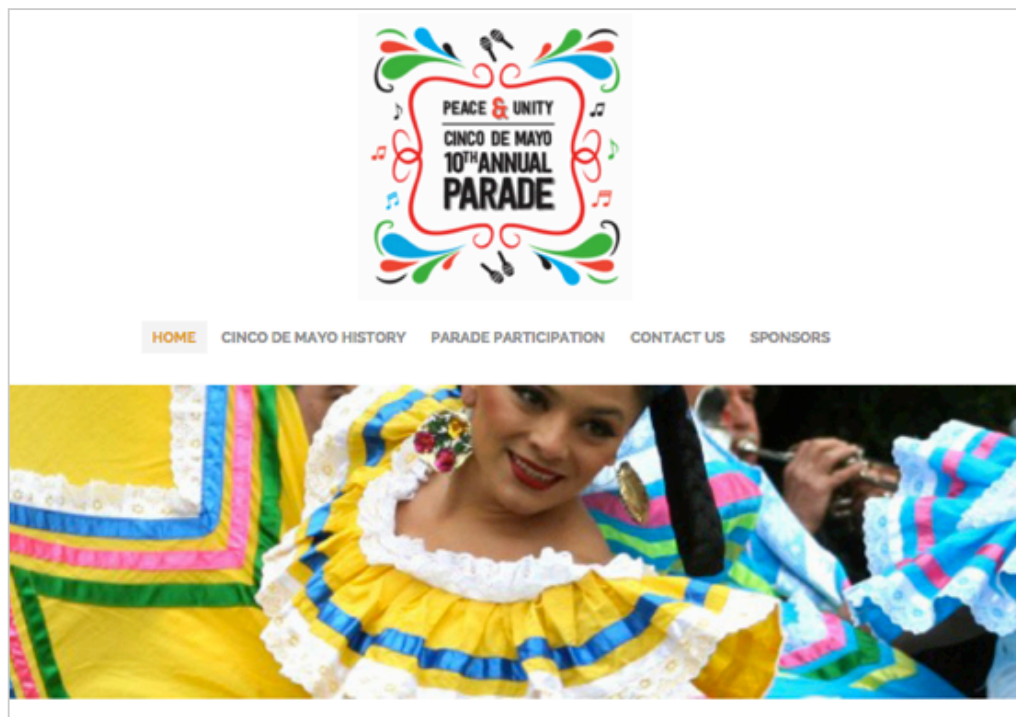


Image 27 Advertising for the local *Cinco de Mayo* parade



Image 28 Danzantes protest home foreclosure outside of Wells Fargo bank
(Source: Los Angeles Indymedia la.indymedia.org/news/2015/04/267984.php)



Image 29 César Chávez parade and celebrations

and state fairs (Image 8) and in local performance series (Image 9). As this suggested, my companions used dancing as an instrument of ethnic and/or national/regional identification, in, as Hughes-Freeland notes, representing themselves both to others and to themselves (2008: 1).

As this suggests, dancing, particularly the ‘presentational’ forms of *danza* and *ballet folklórico*, served as a highly charged and visible identity marker for practitioners and non-practitioners, Mexicanos, Mexican Americans, and others alike. As such, my companions’ dancing was imbued with political power and was used not only to generate a sense of identification but also for political action. Following de Certeau (1984) and echoing Bird’s (2016) finding in her work on ‘protestivals’ in Melbourne, by dancing in spaces designed for other purposes, my companions created places of resistance, even if just for the length of their performance. During public celebrations such as *Cinco de Mayo* or the pilgrimage on the *Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe*, for example, streets were closed and filled with dancers and musicians along with other participants. These celebrations and the dancing that was a part of them were visual and aural declarations of cultural and national pride—even acts of defiance for those undocumented who usually tried to live without drawing attention to themselves—in spaces normally administered and controlled by the (predominantly non-Latino) state. While the political aspect of these gatherings and the dancing was concealed behind a veil of celebration, this wasn’t always the case. Dance practitioners also danced as part of more overtly political events—during parades to celebrate the life and work of César Chávez, a civil rights activist and labour leader who campaigned for farm workers’ rights, and during protests against, for example, the foreclosure policies enacted by particular banks. My companions, then, danced to occupy and recast the spaces that they encountered, using dancing as an instrument to resist the cultural, economic, and political hegemony of the state and to advance their own agenda, an observation both Hutchinson (2006) in her work on *quebradita* and Max Harris (1997) in his work on *danza* also make.

While the vast majority of the existing literature tends to focus on dancing as a way Mexicanos and Mexican Americans develop and express ethnic and/or national/regional identifications, it shouldn't be assumed that these were the only identifications that my companions fostered through dancing.

I danced a lot when I was younger, ballet folklórico you know. Now my kids do it, even my son. I made them do it, it's a family tradition – me, my mother, and now them – but they like it. They don't complain.

July 22, 2015.

• • • • •

Our whole family dances. me, my husband, and my daughters too. Everybody. My family and my husband's too, Rocio adds. My dad loved to dance, Rocio says as she curls her legs under her on the sofa. We were all girls and he danced with all of us. We didn't always go to parties but he put music on in the living room and we would dance. Those were good times. He was strict sometimes but we had fun too, she adds, dabbing at her eyes with a tissue. Normally my mom didn't dance but sometimes she dressed up and pretended to be like an old lady and we would dance with her like crazies in the kitchen, Rocio laughs, sniffing.

October 12, 2013.

As Tonya and Rocio suggested, my companions also danced because it was an activity and experience characteristic of their particular family, a hereditary pattern Finnegan (1989) also notes in her work on music-making. This revealed a desire on the part of my companions to engage in dancing not because, or not only because, it fostered an identification with an 'imagined community' (see Anderson 1983) of Mexicanos and Mexican Americans, for example, but also because it generated an identification (and, as in Chapter 12, way to connect) with, and sense of continuity within, more immediate groups of people—their own family (and so across generations), even friends and peers. Similarly some of my companions only danced particular styles of *baile social*, avoiding others, so as to foster an identification with a particular social class (see Limón 1983;

2011 and Peña 1985), or, as in the case of some of my companions who were Jehovah Witnesses, a particular religious group and their ethos. As this suggests, not dancing also played a part in my companions' identifications.

Some guys don't dance I guess because they feel like it's not cool, like their lose their masculinity or something, Arnold says. They're going to get called names and stuff so they don't give it a chance.

Sometimes their dads are like, men don't dance, so they don't want to dance for that, Mercedes adds. They don't want to be judged or that people will laugh.

November 16, 2013.

With a high premium placed on being *macho*, some men chose not to dance to distance themselves from an activity that was often perceived as a more feminine past time, so emphasizing in the process, in their minds at least, their masculinity, their identification with manly men (see Rivera-Servera 2011 for an interesting study of dancing, masculinity, and queerness). This played out particularly clearly in 'presentational' dance as men often avoided dancing *ballet folklórico* for fear of being labelled 'gay', opting instead for *danza Azteca*, a dance form viewed as more masculine in which practitioners are often associated with, if not called, *guerreros*, or warriors. As these examples indicate, through their dancing, or not dancing, my companions' fostered a variety of identifications—familial, class, religious, gender, and sexuality—along with ethnic and/or national/regional identifications. As might be expected and as Tonya and Roberto' statements about *ballet folklórico* and family hinted, when dancing my companions didn't foster and/or express just one of these identifications, but multiple.



Image 30 Adriana and Eduardo during the father-daughter dance

My companions also danced as they moved from one stage in life to another as part of their rites of passage.

I don't like to dance, I'm kind of like, nervous, Luis says over the noise at Starbucks. His English pronunciation is amazing, because his first language is Maya he tells me, which has similar sounds.

So what about at your wedding? I ask.

Oh then I had to, you know, with my wife at the beginning. I had to. It's part of it, Luis says.

So no choice? I say.

No choice, Luis says laughing. I made my wife happy. If not, aye! Luis says, flicking his hand at his wrist and snapping his fingers in a gesture I've learned means 'big trouble'.

July 15, 2013.

As Luis indicated, my companions danced at the festivities which marked their inscription into new forms of identification. These dances included the first

dance between husband and wife at weddings and the father and daughter dance at *quinceañeras* (Image 22). While a key element of these celebrations, this dancing wasn't so much a part of the transformation of my companions within the liminal phase of such rites, this taking place during mass, but was instead a part of my companions' reintegration into, and recognition by, their community as, here for example, newly minted husband, wife, or grown woman (see van Gennep 1960; Turner 1995[1969]; Schechner 2013). This reason for dancing is particularly significant as it highlights the fact that, in addition to dancing threading through my companions' everyday lives as the reasons explored here and the section above suggest, dancing also threaded through my companions' lifetimes, as the marking of particularly important life events through dancing indicated. What is also revealing in Luis' statement is that he hinted that at times my companions danced because they felt pressured or obliged to do so, by societal expectation or by a particular person, Luis' new wife here, or both. This highlighted the fact that the reasons my companions danced weren't always their own reasons alone. Parents and grandparents often spoke of this when talking about a child's involvement in dance academies and clubs.

She joined to make her mother happy, Fernanda's aunt says to me with a nod towards the young woman at the front of the ballet folklórico class. Now she comes because she loves it. She's really good. She's a natural, Fernanda's aunt adds with a glow of pride.

March 8, 2015.

What is also interesting here is that Fernanda's aunt described a change in Fernanda's reasons for dancing, the young woman at first dancing as an obligation to her mother and then with time because she enjoyed it. This indicated not only that at times my companions danced because they felt compelled by others to do so but also that my companions' reasons for dancing weren't fixed but shifted over time, indeed this shifting was even expected as a person matured for example.

In addition to the development and expression of various identifications, my companions also danced because of the more immediate experiences that dancing offered.

Why do you dance? I ask turning to Claudia, just seven and competing with the rowdier, older kids to have her opinion recorded.

Because it's fun, she says, sweeping some hair off her forehead. It's exciting and fun. You can dance with your friends or your mom. It's fun.

August 16, 2014.

At the top of many of my companions' lists of reasons to dance was the pleasure that it brought them. As Claudia suggested, this pleasure derived from two elements of dancing. The first of these was the actual moving involved in dancing—movement for the sake of moving and not for some other purpose. Sheets-Johnstone argues that the pleasure derived from this type of movement is the result at least in part of what she describes as the 'consonance of the physical and lived body [being] close to the surface', that is that dancing provided my companions with an experience in which 'the lived body [rose] up as *wholly* physical [...in which] the felt body [was] felt as a *consummately* physical presence' (1986: 234; original emphasis). As Yolanda's statement much further above indicated, for some of my companions this consonance led to an experience of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi 1990) or, following Bergson (1913; see also Foley 2013), of time as duration, topics I return to in Chapter 7, which both point to the pleasure to be found in losing oneself in an activity. Even without an experience of flow, the ease and efficacy of movement in dancing can bring pleasure, Sheets-Johnstone (2000) as well as Garcia (2005) on electronic dance music argue, as it generates 'a felt sense of rightness in what one does...[and] a felt sense of the dynamics of one's movement' (Sheets-Johnstone 2000: 361). The pleasure that my companions derived from dancing was also the product of being able to spend time with others.

Marcus looks so tired on the other side of the table. I feel guilty for having asked him to meet me when it looks as if he should just be going to bed early.

I work every day, Saturday and Sunday too, he says, closing his eyes and drawing a hand down his face. You know, I try to save money. I want to go home, see my family. My parents and my sister want me to find a wife and start family.

So you're not going dancing these days? I ask, a little disappointed.

No, no, I'm going! he says and begins to brighten. Every weekend. It's the only thing fun for me here. Friday and Saturday night, sometimes in Emeryville, sometimes in Hayward.

What about work? I ask.

I come back 4 or 5 in the morning and sleep a little bit and then I go. No problem, Marcus says with a smile when he sees my disbelief. I begin to rethink the bags under his eyes.

September 19, 2013.

Implicit in Marcus's statement here was that going dancing offered him the opportunity to socialize with others. While true for all my companions, this was particularly true of people like Marcus, for whom dancing and dancing events provided one of the only chances they had—given that they worked long hours, six to seven days a week and lived in rented rooms—to socialize with others. Marcus went on to tell me of his good luck in meeting a woman who danced well, how they danced the evening together, and that he got her number and planned to ask her out again. Implicit here was the fact that dancing permitted my companions to touch one another and to move together, generating a pleasurable intimacy (a theme I take up again in Chapter 12), even the hope of which, in Marcus's case, brought my companions back to dancing week after week. As Claudia indicated, this wasn't limited to romantic encounters but could also be a part of dancing with friends and family. My companions also often cited socializing—the chance to meet others, to chat, joke, and share a drink with

friends and family—as one of the principal reasons that they attended dancing events. This suggested to me that my companions' reasons for dancing were often intertwined with their reasons for attending the dancing events which hosted the activity. This means that while I present my companions' reasons for dancing separately here this only for the purposes of discussion as in practice these reasons often extended to my companions' attendance at the events themselves.

My companions also danced because they felt it was an activity that had many health benefits.

I'm trying to lose weight, Nerida says, so I dance. It's good for that, for your health. For your mind too. It takes out all your stress, all your worries. I push back the furniture in the living and I put on my music loud and I just dance. I go crazy! I'm just sweating like crazy, you know? Sometimes my daughters come out and say, Mami, what are you doing? and then they join too. It's good for them too and it's nice we can dance together.

September 23, 2013.

As Nerida indicated, dancing was seen by my companions to be good for both one's mental and physical health with my companions joining zumba classes and dancing at home, freely or using videogames and DVDs, for the purpose of exercise. That older family members still danced was often used as proof of their good health as they aged. This link between dancing and health assumed by my companions is supported by a growing number of studies (see Lima & Vieira 2007; Marquez *et al.* 2014; Murrock & Graor 2015) which demonstrate both the physical and mental health benefits of dancing—improved balance, a lessening of chronic pain, improved cognitive function, and a reduction in symptoms of depression, for example. My companions also suggested that they viewed dancing as aiding in children's development.

I wish my Mom put me in classes, Natalia's mother says to me before calling across to her daughter, con ganas! With enthusiasm! It's a way

of getting her to know the dancing and music of Mexico, to give her some Mexican, Latino flavour, she says as she turns back to our conversation. It's good for her memory and for her body too. When she goes to Mexico and sees this, she'll say, I know this. This is part of my culture, part of me.

October 20, 2015.

This suggestion that dancing helped Natalia to develop socially, cognitively, and physically is supported by research in the area. Deans (2016; see also Giguere 2011), for example, finds that through dancing young practitioners hone a wide range of skills—perceptual, aesthetic, and emotionally based reasoning, creative and collaborative thinking and problem solving, for example, and, with the help of their peers, push themselves beyond the expected level of development while developing dispositional qualities such as curiosity, perseverance, and commitment. Dancing, then, provided my companions with an activity that helped them to keep cognitively and physically sharp throughout their lifetime.

The reasons described here represent only a small selection of the many that my companions indicated led to their dancing. Importantly, these reasons were rarely singular.

So danza is more a religious practice? I ask a friend later to confirm.

Ya, says Raúl. Pero se disfruten tambien los danzantes. But they enjoy it too, the dancers. Otherwise why do it? he adds.

September 12, 2014.

As Raúl suggested here and as Natalia's mother did above, my companions danced not only to identify with a particular group, or even multiple groups, of people—an indigeneity in the case of the *danzantes*, *danza Azteca* dancers or with Mexico as in Natalia's case—but also because dancing was fun, because it was good exercise, because it offered a chance to have one's voice heard, because it meant spending time with family and friends, because it was an obligation and/or a family tradition. My companions had, then, varied, multiple, and shifting

motives for dancing. This is a valuable finding not only because it supplements the principal portrayal of dancing as tool of identification found in so much of the literature but also because it demonstrates that dancing brought multiple forces—the social, the physical, the political, the ritual, the religious, for example—together within a single activity and its surrounding event, dancing becoming akin, then, to Mauss' (1990) 'total social fact'.

In sum, in this chapter I've established that dancing as a broader activity was a thread that wove through my companions' everyday in both action—dancing at home, while attending to daily tasks, socializing on social media, and spending time in the neighbourhood—and in thought—when planning, daydreaming, and remembering. I've also shown that dancing was an activity in which my companions engaged for a variety of often overlapping reasons—to foster certain identifications, resist and advance causes, mark important points in the life cycle, keep mentally and physically fit, and to enjoy oneself, reasons which further suggested the regular presence of dancing in my companions' lives. Together these discussions point to a commonplaceness about, and variety within, dancing for my companions that problematizes the portrayal of dance as set apart from the everyday.

Conclusión

Conclusion

In this section, I've advocated for a move away from a focus on individual dance styles to an approach that addresses dancing as a broader form of activity. Through the discussion of context and performance, I've demonstrated that this isn't an academic exercise but rather an approach that reflects my companions' layered understanding and experience which included dancing not only as individual dance forms but also as a broader activity. While the wider perspective this approach proposes has often felt unwieldy, the insights it has offered—principally here the ubiquity of dancing within my companions' lives both in their everyday and throughout the course of their lifetimes—point to the benefits of looking at dancing in ways beyond the safety of well defined individual dance forms. It behoves scholars, then, to take seriously the essence in the argument presented in work on 'dance culture' (Kealiinohomoku 1974) and 'dance events' (Royce 1977), that is, that dancing extends well beyond individual performances and forms, as well as the entreaty from Kealiinohomoku to examine dancing in its 'entire configuration' (1974: 99). With this latter in mind, approaches to dancing as a broader activity and as individual dance styles may simply reflect two of the many possible ways that my companions understood and experienced the practice.

Section II

¿Qué es bailar?

What is dancing?

In this section I address my companions' understanding of dancing. I identify movement (Chapter 5), music (Chapter 6), and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm (Chapter 7), as the central characteristics of dancing for my companions and suggest that together these characteristics point to the importance of attunement and responsiveness in the activity of dancing.

Prefacio: **Entendiendo**

Preface: **Understanding**

Much contemporary work on dance acknowledges the importance of working within our companions' notion of dancing as this notion both informs and reflects the experiences of those engaged in dancing, anthropologist and companions alike (see Royce 1977; Spencer 1985; Williams 2004[1994]; Shay 1995). Oddly, despite this acknowledgement, few scholars explicitly set out the understanding of dancing they and their companions employ. Centring their studies on individual and widely recognized forms of dance, many scholars—Wulff on ballet (1998, 2008) and Skinner on *salsa* (2007), for example—leave the reader to make inferences about both the scholars' and the practitioners' understanding of dancing through what is seen to be provided by the established conventions surrounding each dance form. This is problematic. Readers may not share in the same experiences as the practitioners and scholars, who are often trained in dance themselves, (see Neveu Kringelbach & Skinner 2012) and so do not approach the work with similar understandings either of the particular practices or of the more general activity of dancing. This use of established convention also masks the potentially diverse ways practitioners understand dancing, a critical issue given many contemporary scholars address dance practices across different sites and through different types of practitioners. As the activity and concept of dancing are learned not given, the variety of practitioners included in these studies potentially represents diverse understandings of dancing. When the established conventions of a particular dance form are used to frame a study, this potential diversity of understanding is masked and we lose an element of complexity in our work.

Even when scholars address the concept of dancing employed in their work, this is often drawn from generic scholastic discussion and not from the practitioners themselves. Bizas (2014) begins her interesting study of Senegalese *sabar*, for example, by defining dance, following Kaeppler (1971; 1985), as 'a structured movement system' (2014: 8). While I understand the importance of clearly

outlining the categories of analysis we, as scholars, use, this definition does little to guide readers, and belies Bizas' acute sense of her companions' understanding of dancing and how this can differ across contexts. Indeed, although generic definitions of dance—Wulff suggests anthropologists have settled more or less on dance as 'bounded rhythmical movements' (Wulff 2001: 3209)—are intended to help scholars avoid the pitfalls of more ethnocentric understandings, these broad definitions can still result in scholars classifying as 'dance' activity that is otherwise understood by practitioners. This is what Shay (1995) has found in his work on rhythmic movement practices in the Middle East which, although conforming to generic definitions of dance, are viewed as prayer practices by the practitioners.

This returns us to the importance of working within the practitioners' own understanding of dance, the focus of this section as I tease out my companions' own understanding of the activity. Mapping this out, while worthwhile, was not, I discovered, an easy task. Rather naïvely and never having had to answer the same question myself, I asked my companions,

¿Qué es bailar?/What is dancing?

This question was usually greeted by silence, my companions telling me that they had never been asked the question, never had to think about it before. Their struggle to verbalize what they clearly understood through embodied experience—'*Le Coeur a ses raison que la raison ne connaît point*'¹⁷, wrote Pascal—corresponded to what has been written about the difficulty of rendering verbal what is experienced through other modes of knowing or reasoning (see Blacking 1985; Bloch 1998). This difficulty is compounded, some scholars (see Farnell 1999; Marchand 2007; Downey 2007) have suggested, by the fact that much of an activity, while deliberate, takes place beyond awareness (Harris 2007: 5–6) and so is more difficult to access and verbally articulate.

¹⁷ The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing.

Despite these challenges, my companions *were* able to speak about their understanding of dancing. This I have combined with what I learned through less directed conversation, observation, and eavesdropping during my time in the field, to present here a working notion of what dancing was for my companions. This is not a definitive exploration but rather a loose collection and elaboration of those components that emerged as key for my companions. The openness of this working understanding is not a fault but instead stands more closely to the way in which such conceptualizations, pliable and dynamic, make space for change and variation as they are employed outside of academic study (see Bloch 1998, 2001[1992]).

Three central characteristics of dancing emerged from the time I spent with my companions. These were movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, or feeling the music/rhythm.

5 **Moviendose**

Moving

In this chapter I examine my companions' dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement as well as the variety to be encountered within these. I posit that these practices and understandings were a bodily knowing that my companions developed as they interacted with—that is, attuned and responded to—the people and world around them; I also suggest that this understanding was shared by my companions.

Sabiendo corporal • Bodily Knowing

I have come to the loud Starbucks to meet very busy Tomás on one of his few days off from painting ships with his uncle. We sit on tall stools at a tall table by the window and suck at our overly-sweet frappés through larger-than-average straws.

What is dancing? I ask, after hearing of his studies at university, his border crossing and re-crossing, and his hopeful pursuit of a young woman at a local nightclub.

Dance is action, moving your both feet, Tomás replies with little hesitation. He pads out some steps on the rung of the stool as he talks, his upper body follows unbidden, betraying what I soon learn to be long years of dance experience in the short years of his life.

Moving feet, when you are listening to any music, at the sound of music, at the rhythm of music. That is dance, he concludes.

Some days later and several tables over, I ask Rubi and Marisol the same thing. They too point to movement.

You move your hips, ya, move your hips a lot, Rubi, the younger and more assertive of the sisters, tells me. Ya, you feel the rhythm in the hips.

*Bobbing her head a little experimentally to an imagined rhythm,
Marisol adds, ya, and in your head.*

December 16, 2013 & December 19, 2013.

During these conversations, in both moving and speaking of moving, Tomás, Rubi, and Marisol made it clear that physical movement was a key component in their understanding of dancing. Movement is commonly defined as a continuous changing of position and/or posture in contrast to stasis (Zlatev *et al.* 2012: 427). This, Sheets-Johnstone (2009) reminds us, is an understanding of movement drawn from a third-person, observational perspective. It should be supplemented with an understanding of movement drawn from a first-person perspective which suggests that movement is a complex combination of tension, line, amplitude and projection (Sheets-Johnstone 2009: 205). For my companions, dancing movement was associated particularly with the feet and hips but, as Tomás' fluid movements on the other side of the table indicated, the torso, shoulders, and arms as well. Marisol's inclusion of 'in your head' in this discussion was significant as well as it indicated that while my companions listed the parts of their bodies involved in dancing movement, dancing was an activity that was understood to involve an integrated body-mind. Asking more pointedly about this in a conversation with another companion, I was told that dancing was '*everything all together,*' a statement that supported the integrated view of the body-mind at the heart of work on embodiment which places our being-in-the-world as the foundation of all of our experiences (see Heidegger 1962; Merleau-Ponty 1962; Csordas 1990, 1994; Leder 1990).

The movement that my companions associated with dancing was not just any movement but particular movement.

Emily, Jenny, and Melissa, three vivacious 16-year-olds, talk over each other and the frequent PA announcements, peppering the conversation with laughter and seeming in constant motion as they tease each other and share jokes.

What is dancing? I ask. My question is greeted with some two or three seconds of silence and then giggling.

An expression, a movement, Melissa says hesitantly.

This! Emily says interrupting, moving her shoulders forward and back rhythmically, soon to be joined in the movement by Jenny. We laugh. Gesturing towards the recorder and moving her shoulders again, Emily quickly adds, You won't see but this!

It's a movement that expresses yourself I guess, says Melissa trying again.

A way to express yourself through ... moving ... the ... parts ... of ... your ... body, Jenny says, stretching out the last few words, her voice rising in intonation, asking for confirmation from her friends.

In certain ways, Emily adds. Jenny repeats this, again stretching out the words and raising the tone of her voice.

You should be a dictionary, Melissa says showing her approval. We should make our own dictionary.

The other two young women agree and begin to laugh.

November 9, 2013.

In certain ways, Emily told me, suggesting that while some movements were perceived as dancing, others were not. What set one apart from the other—dancing movement from non-dancing movement—intrigued me. In their work on musical gesture, Leman and Godøy (2010) suggest that this difference, a difference between simple movement and action, can be explained by intention. Practitioners imbue movement with particular expression and meaning, making certain movement dancing instead of, for example, idle shuffling. While this understanding is common and found in work by Gell (1985), Williams 2004[1994], and Wendy James (2000)—although the relationship these scholars envision between dance and non-dance differs—I couldn't help but find this explanation rather vague and uninformative. Instead, perhaps, the difference

between dancing and non-dancing movement lies at least in part in the performative nature of dancing movement, that it involves performing the movements *for* someone, with a rough sense in body-mind of what's hoped for, and with no guarantee of achieving this (see Chapter 3). Furthering questioning of my companions on this topic repeatedly yielded, '*they're just different*', and I soon came to feel, as Desmond (1993: 60) suggests, that mapping the division between dance and non-dance movement was of far less importance to my work and to the experience of dancing than I had initially imagined.

What did come to interest me was how my companions recognized, understood and produced the movements they considered dancing. Here Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* provides a helpful beginning in suggesting that bodily knowing—as above involving the integrated body-mind—is produced and embodied through practice with this practice in turn generating enduring patterns of bodily knowing. Bourdieu's *habitus*, however, relies on an external 'structuring structure' with which people are to interact and so incorporate into themselves in the development of their bodily knowing. This is problematic as it hints that a structure exists apart from us, suggesting a separation of the body-mind from the world around it, and portrays bodily knowing as the internalization of external sets of rules¹⁸. This is at odds with the understanding presented through phenomenology which, as above, more convincingly positions us as fundamentally being-in-the-world, that is, embedded and immersed within the world (see Merleau-Ponty 1962; Heidegger 1962). From this perspective, bodily knowing is produced not through people's interactions with an external structure but through their interactions, their attunement, and responsiveness to each other and the world around them (see Lindsay 1996; Ingold 2000, 2011). This leaves us with a much more fluid and dynamic process of bodily knowing, one which makes space for both continuity and change.

¹⁸ More recent readings of Bourdieu's work by Wacquant (2005, 2008, 2014a, 2014b, 2015) have attempted to soften this reliance on the 'structuring structure' by placing more emphasis on role of people's interactions with one another.

This notion of bodily knowing provides a way in which to understand how my companions recognized and produced the movements that they considered dancing. In making their way through the world and interacting with others, my companions attuned themselves and responded to one another coming to develop a bodily knowing which was shared with others. This shared bodily knowing encompassed bodily skill, that is, my companions' dancing practice, as well as the ways in which they came to think about and understand dancing. This enabled them to dance in ways that they and others recognized as dancing and to understand the movement of others, that is, to classify it, as dancing or not (see Neveu Kringelbach & Skinner 2012). I saw evidence of this shared bodily knowing in my conversation with the Emily, Melissa, and Jenny. A shared understanding and practice of dancing guided Emily's choice of movement—her playful shoulder shakes—while sharing in a similar notion and practice of dancing enabled Jenny, Melissa, and I to understand Emily's movement as she had intended, as dancing. I want to stress that this isn't to suggest that in shaking her shoulders Emily progressed through a differentiated process that involved weighing her movement options, choosing from among them, and then moving. Rather, following Sheets-Johnstone (1981, also 2009), I suggest that Emily was engaging in 'thinking in movement', creating dancing from the possibilities open to her at that moment in an experience in which 'movement and perception are seamlessly interwoven; there is no "mind-doing" that is separate from a "body-doing"' (Sheets-Johnstone 2009: 422; see also Lindsay 1996). This is important to keep in mind moving forward with this discussion for in exploring my companions' understanding of dancing movement below I am not implying that this was anything other than an integrated part of my companions' dancing, their 'thinking in movement'.

As this discussion suggests, my companions' bodily knowing, here specifically in regard to dancing, was developed as my companions interacted with, that is, spent time, and spent time dancing and attuning to, others and the world around them. This understanding of the development of a dancing practice and a notion of dancing movement was something that my companions also shared.

My nephews, Mimi says. They don't know how to dance. At parties I say, come to dance, and they say, oh, I can't.

Mimi shakes her head slowly.

You know, they're growing up here in the US. They don't dance like us. When we grew up, we went to dance all the time, with my sisters, my father, my cousins from when we were small. There was always music, parties.

Pues, Mimi says, pausing and shrugging. My nephews, they dance another kind of music, music from here.

July 24, 2013.

Here Mimi attributed her dancing to the time she spent with her family and to her immersion in a music- and dance-filled life in Mexico with her nephews' time in the United States spent dancing infrequently not with family but with friends to blame for both their resistance to the activity and the difference in their dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement. As this suggested, my companions often viewed the development of their dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement at least in part as the product of their early life experiences. These experiences weren't seen to be intentionally plotted nor intentionally geared towards learning to dance but rather occurred as a consequence of the circumstances, activity, and interactions in which people engaged and were immersed as they navigated their way through their young lives (see Wacquant 2014a). As the proliferation of dancing academies and clubs in my fieldsite suggested, this wasn't the only way that my companions understood their dancing practice and notions of dancing movement to develop. Dance academies and clubs, lessons given by friends, and videos on YouTube all presented my companions with opportunities to intentionally shape their dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement through the instruction and training, that is, interaction with instructors and fellow learning practitioners, that these offered. For my companions, then, one's dancing practice as well as one's understanding of dancing movement could be and were

developed both intentionally and less intentionally through interactions with others.

Diferencias y valores • Differences and Values

As Angela indicated, my companions pointed to differences in these interactions and in the contexts in which they took place to explain differences in their dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement.

All my family dances, says Marcus. The table wobbles - our drinks slosh - and we spend some minutes with sugar packets levelling it out.

My brothers and sisters dance, he says, but the generation is different, because it's a different kind of music now. Everything changes. They like vals and balada romantica. My generation for D.F., Mexico City, we like música sonidera. The next, they changed too. They like something like now, like what they like here, different from me.

You mean like pop or hip hop? I ask.

Yeah, Marcus says. And then my brothers and sisters, they're older, they like more vals, the music is more romantic. For me, it's not so...it's not my...my legs are a little more crazy! I need music with energy!

September 3, 2013.

As Marcus suggested, differences in times and places brought differences in styles of music, forms of movement, and even the social mores governing appropriate behaviour. Interacting with, and so attuning to, others, that is both in dancing and in spending time engaged in other activity (as this was also influential), during these times and in these places shaped my companions' dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement as did my companions' gender, age, class, and religious leanings. These were also shaped by the particular academy and/or instructor with which my companions spent time (see Downey 2005; Bizas 2014).

What's your basic for Jalisco? Kimberly asks Martha as they stand in the kitchen.

Like this, says Martha and taps out a set of steps in her converse on the tiled floor. What's yours?

Kimberly pads out another series of steps.

Aren't they the same? I ask.

No, they're different, Martha says. Different step, same sound. Look, she says and the young women work through the steps side by side.

When we dance Jalisco, we put our toes up in this step, says Kimberly, slowing the step down so I can see. You don't, right? she says turning to Martha who shakes her head.

Why not? I ask.

It's just how we learned it at the Arts Centre, Martha says with a shrug. That's just how they teach us. It's different depending on the place you learn.

July 24, 2014.

As these vignettes suggested, my companions frequently grouped practitioners according to these factors—place, time, gender, age, class, academy, etc.—and the practice and understanding of dancing movement they produced. This recalls Lave and Wenger's (1991; see also Wenger 1998) 'communities of practice', groupings of people who share in a particular practice whether as a result of intentionally learning together, as in Kimberly and Martha's dance academies, or as an incidental outcome of their interactions with and attuning to one another, as in Angela's description of her nephews and herself. As this latter example suggested, participation in different communities of practice was an issue of significance for many of my companions, principally parents and other older family members. As the dancing which was a part of their community of practice was seen to serve as a way both to identify and connect with a sense of

Mexicanidad (see Chapter 4) and to build relations with those around them, family and friends, for example (see Chapter 12 and 13), the young people's different dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement, that is, their membership in a different community of practice, was lamented with some families enrolling their children in dance academies and clubs to avoid or remedy this. This not only set up an interesting dynamic between my companions' communities of practice but also made my companions' dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement emotion-laden bodily knowing.

Although my companions shared in dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement with one another as above, they were still quick to note that each person had their own style, their own particular way of moving.

Dancing is just movements, Lupita says in tired response to yet another of my questions. Everybody dances their own way. We don't go to the same academy, let's say, so don't learn the same technique.

She squeezes a few more dishes onto the impossibly full rack. As she flicks the soap from her gloves and pulls them from her wrinkled hands, she concludes, Everybody likes different kinds of food, everybody has their own way to dance.

August 1, 2014.

Lupita, like the majority of my companions, indicated that people each had their own way of moving. This was true even in presentational dance groups in which practitioners aimed to move together using the same movements with dance instructors listing this individual style as a particularly desirable element of performance. This meant that while my companions came to share in dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement through their interactions with, and attuning to, others, this didn't result in a homogeneity. As Lupita suggested, at least in part this diversity was because no two people went 'to the same academy', that is, no two people interacted with, and attuned to, the same people under the same conditions. This personal history, the result of each

person's own unique life experiences, made each of my companions and their bodily knowing different from one another, their 'history made body' (Wacquant 2014b: 131) and, I would add, practice. Differences in dancing movement were also attributed to personality.

When there are too many people, I don't like to dance. I can't dance the way I like, Beti says, refilling my glass with agua de pepino. When there's no space, I can't dance the way I am. I dance like the way I am.

With arms outstretched and mapping out large turning circles overhead, she shows me what she means but I've known Beti long enough not to need this. I understand that she wants to dance without having to compromise. This is how she is in life, how she likes to see herself too - someone who's straight-talking and takes shit from no one. I'd want her on my side in barroom brawl.

August 26, 2014.

Beti emphatically linked the way she danced to her personality, reading her wide turns and voluminous arm movements as an expression of her confidence and her own unwillingness to compromise. These personality traits, Beti indicated, were the result of both the many hardships she'd had to endure in her life and a kind of essence that she felt she had been born with. This made my companions' dancing movements a manifestation of both their unique 'history made body' and this deeper essence. As the body, and so dancing movements, are not just a part of being-in-the-world but also representational, that is, following Hughes-Freeland, 'seen-in-the world' (2008: 19), my companions' dancing practice, particularly their own style of movement, was thus experienced as a revealing activity, one which was seen to offer a glimpse into the practitioners themselves.

As Marcus, Lupita, and Beti suggested, my companions' interactions with particular people in particular circumstances meant that their dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement wasn't identical. That this wide variety of movement was nonetheless understood as dancing movement suggested that my companions' understanding of dancing movement was flexible.

Yolanda is sitting across from me in her warm, windowless office. Terracotta knickknacks guard the corners of her desk: Guerrero – Veracruz – El Salvador, recuerdos from the trips students have made to visit grandparents, cousins, aunts. On a table by the door, a bright pile of costumes hints at the upcoming performance.

What is it that children do? Is that dance? I ask, thinking of her boys, 7 and 3, spinning and jumping to the music at the last dance practice.

That's dancing, vibrant Yolanda says. No, I mean, because in their mind they're dancing and they feel like maybe dancing better than Mommy's dancing, so yeah, no, in their mind, they're dancing and doing it perfectly and it's nice and they have fun.

Some time later I ask the same question to Berta and Kati over coffee.

Berta scoffs. No, that's not dancing, she says. Watch them. They're just jumping or turning or whatever, no steps. It's just playing, having fun. Verdad? Right? asks, turning to Kati for confirmation.

Mmm... Kati hesitates and spins her cup in her hands. I think it is dancing, she says. At least it's a kind of dancing, she concludes.

November 14, 2013 & September 24, 2013.

Yolanda's sons' dancing, their spinning, jumping, and pulsing up and down, contrasted with Yolanda's neat steps and turns in time with the music. Despite this, Yolanda indicated that both she and her sons recognized both forms of movement as dancing. This indicated that the understanding of dancing movement that my companions employed was flexible, allowing a range of movements of varying complexities to be experienced as dancing. This supports Bloch's assertion that concepts shouldn't be regarded as cemented lists of definitive features; rather they are 'merely loosely bound mental associations and bits of knowledge according to which we can recognise certain phenomena as similar to each other and others as different' (1998: 49). The example of Yolanda's sons, however, also pointed to the fact that the recognition of this movement as dancing depended not solely on the movement itself but on a range

of factors, here who was moving and in what context. Had an adult executed the same jumping and spinning as Yolanda's sons, my companions were less likely to have recognized it as dancing nor, I suspect, would Yolanda's sons movements have as easily been viewed as dancing outside of the context of a gymnasium awash with music and full of dance practitioners. This speaks both to De Certeau's (1984) proposal that practice creates place with this place coming to shape our understanding of the happenings, here spinning and jumping, that occur within it and Best's (1978) suggestion that to understanding meaning particularly for him in the arts we need to look at the broader context in which it is situated. The mild disagreement between Berta and Kati was significant as it underscored the fact that my companions' understanding of dancing movement wasn't only elastic but also multiple, at times conflicting and contested.

Often these different dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement bumped up against one another on the same dance floors and in same kitchens.

Margarita pulls her sweater closer and leans over the bowl of steaming frijoles charros on Chui's back patio. At the beginning with everyone with the same step following Chui, it was like zumba, she says with a laugh. They don't know how to dance, how to move themselves. They just dance with themselves.

Juana agrees, adding, they don't dance with their parents so they don't know how.

Well, they know how to dance in their own way, Margarita says and then laughs as Juana throws her arms in the air and begins to wiggle giving not a terrible impression of the group of teenagers I saw dancing two weeks earlier under the strobe lights.

August 3, 2013.

For my companions, dancing events often brought different groups of people into contact with one another, different because of their generation (both in age and in length of stay in the United States), and because of their differing connections

with Mexico (both in amount of time spent and in which region and era). As a result, some events were home to significantly different dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement. At larger celebrations, for example, DJs playing hip hop or pop took over, bringing young people, often American-born, to the floor, as the bands playing *huapango* or *banda* took breaks, sending the older, Mexican-born guests to their seats. These contrasts, as Margarita and Juana indicated, made my companions aware of their own dancing movements and the difference between these and those belonging to others, a less frequent occurrence when those dancing shared in the same dancing practice and understanding of dancing movements. These sorts of dancing events, then, were sites not just of dancing but also of thinking about dancing movement, sometimes talking about it, and, as Margarita and Juana's joking demonstrated, making judgements about it. As Bizas (2014) also suggests in her work and as Margarita and Juana made clear, types of dancing movement weren't valued equally. They were judged according to complexity or difficulty as the women suggested and as whole dance styles according to their sexual provocativeness and the socio-economic class with which they were associated—one companion, Eva, sneered that she wouldn't be caught dancing that '*hat and boot music*', *banda*, associated as it was with *campesinos*, farmers or country folk thought poor and uneducated. These value judgements, as Eva hinted, didn't colour only particular movements or dance forms but were often passed onto the practitioners themselves. My companions questioned the morals of the young women who twerked, a dance style that involves hip thrusts in a low squatting position, for example, while praised the pride in a Mexican identification seen to be exhibited as young people danced *ballet folklórico* and *huapango*. As this suggested, dancing movement could be influential for my companions as the judgement passed on dance practitioners through this movement frequently extended to life beyond the dance floor.

In speaking of this valuing of dancing movement, my companions revealed that they shifted their dancing practice according to context.

How about twerking? I ask and the young women giggle.

At parties, you know, at school or at a friend's, then maybe, Melissa says.

How about at a quince or something? A family thing? I ask.

The young women look at one another and laugh.

Oh no, no way, says Emily.

Definitely not in front of family. No. Like, no! Melissa says emphatically, eyes wide and shaking her head side-to-side with exaggeration.

Hecka no, Jenny says. In front of my grandma and my mom and everybody? No way. My mom would be like – and Jenny plants an imaginary open handed slap across an imaginary cheek.

Emily and Melissa nod, laughing.

November 9, 2013.

As Melissa, Jenny, and Emily did, a number of my companions confessed to twerking but were adamant that they didn't dance using these movements at events at which their families also were also present. This indicated that my companions shifted their dancing movements according to context as they engaged in an on-going dialogue between themselves and the people and world around them. Significantly, my companions indicated that they were active in these shifts, strategically employing their understanding of dancing movement in response and/or anticipation to what and who they imagined they'd encounter. My companions' dancing practice and understanding of dance movement shifted in more enduring ways as well.

When I started to dance cumbia, it was more slow, Marcus tells me. But when I went back to Mexico for the first time, it was more fast and the second time, it was even more fast and more turns. It's a different kind of music. You know, things change. Before it was cumbia guachara, now it's chiki cha. All the time it changes. It's more fast, the turns more fast, it's more nice. Before it was only dance together and you make two or three turns, but now it's a lot of turns. When I go there, I was surprised.

Oh my God! I look at everybody dance but you know, with time, I try to dance then I can dance like that too.

June 30, 2014.

As Marcus's description indicated, dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement were open to intentional, goal-oriented change—here Marcus's intentional work to catch up with the dancing of his friends and family—as well as to less consciously intentional change over time—the gradual change experienced by Marcus's friends and family, for example. It should be noted that this change wasn't a grafting of a new bodily knowing onto an existing one. Rather following Lindsay (1996) on hand-drumming and Downey (2005) on *capoeira*, this was a 'gradual attunement of movement and perception' (Ingold 2000: 357) as my companions' dancing practice and understanding of dancing movement, their bodily knowing, slowly shifted. What is particularly significant about the latter kind of change is that it indicated that dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement weren't just open to change but that change to these was an inevitability and was seen to be so for my companions as Marcus indicated. This made my companions' bodily knowing not fixed but plastic, constantly developing. Indeed, Hallam and Ingold's (2007) work on improvisation suggests that change is a constant in our activities at every moment with variation and difference characteristic of all action, even habitual and repeated movement, as practitioners respond to the continually shifting conditions in which they find themselves. This means that while my companions' bodily knowing, their bodily skills and their understanding of dancing movement, guided their dancing, my companions' practice wasn't constant and uniform but rather a set of ever changing movements.

In sum, this chapter identifies movement as one of the key features of dancing for my companions. I've revealed my companions' dancing practices and understandings of this dancing movement to be flexible, multiple, differently valued, and constantly varying. I've suggested that this is as a result of my companions' dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement being a form of bodily knowing, an integrated body-mind in action. This bodily knowing

developed as my companions attuned and responded to others and the world around them. Differences within these interactions resulted in differences in my companions' dancing practices and understandings of dancing movement which, as these interactions were ongoing throughout my companions' lives, weren't fixed but shifting. This is an understanding that my companions shared. We turn now to the next characteristic in my companions' understanding of dancing, music.

6 Música

Music

In this chapter I explore the role of music in my companions' dancing practice. Here again I point to the important role played by attunement and responsiveness and argue that through this process my companions generated a number of interactions between movement and music that were seen to create dancing.

Música • Music

I text Marcus.

Necesitas música para bailar?

Do you need music to dance?

A few moments later, his response arrives.

Sí, necesitas música para poder bailar por que así, sin música, no.

Yes, you need music to be able to dance because like that, without music, no.

Así sin música solo para enseñar, para enseñar los pasos.

Like that, without music only for learning/teaching, learning/teaching the steps.

Pero necesitas música para bailar bien.

But you need music to dance well.

October 12, 2014.

Dancing was more than movement for my companions; it involved music as well. This became particularly clear when I asked my companions whether dancing was possible without music. Marcus, like many of my companions, was adamant that music was needed in order to dance. Even the exception he noted—*‘without music only for learning/teaching the steps’*—supported this as he spoke not of learning *to dance* without music but of simply learning *the steps*. This indicated that music was viewed as a key component in my companions’ understanding of dancing. Given that music, its practice, interpretation, and conceptualization, are seen to vary from society to society (Blacking 1969, 1973), it’s unfortunate that I never thought to ask just what music was for my companions. My fieldwork observations did offer some hint, however.

You’ve got to tie both ties extremely tightly or it’ll fall, the instructor tells Natalia’s mother as she yanks on the strings of the skirt, digging into Natalia’s belly.

Waiting for the class to begin again, Sara begins to tap and stomp through a seemingly random collection of beats.

You’re supposed to make music, not noise! Daphne, laughing, calls over, and she begins to run through the same footwork which emerges with her as a sequence from one of the dances. The clarity of the sound of her steps announces the three years of experience she has over new-comer Sara.

You’re just making noise, Daphne repeats. You have to make music!

In answer, Sara begins to spin in circles. No footwork. Neither noise nor music.

April 14, 2016.

Daphne indicated that *zapateado*, the toe and heel taps and stomps characteristic of *ballet folklórico* and *huapango*, produced music when executed properly. This suggested that my companions understood music as sound and indicated that

this sound needed neither melodic nor harmonic features in order to be considered music—*zapateado*, after all, produced percussive, not tuneful sound. As Daphne's criticism of Sara's dancing made clear, what sound did need in order to be considered music was to be arranged in rhythmic patterns. This conceptualization of music as rhythmically organized sound corresponds to and supports Blacking's more general definition of music as 'humanly organized sound' (1973: 3). What I found interesting was that for my companions this sound didn't need to be audible within the physical environment to be either considered sound or experienced as music.

Of course, Yolanda responds when I ask about dancing without music. You can dance with the music that's in your head, she says touching her fingers to her temple and moving her hand to her chest Yolanda adds, and in your heart.

Later in the afternoon, I ask Mercedes and Samantha the same.

I don't think you don't need music, Mercedes says. You always have the music in your head. People might say, oh, what are you doing without music, but you have it in your head, you know? You just dance with something you have in your head.

Ya, says Samantha beside her, nodding. Like in your mind. My baby brother is always dancing and my mom says he has the music inside him. It's so cute, she says smiling.

Or you could dance to that if you wanted, Mercedes says tapping a steady beat on the table. Or to that, she adds beginning to snap her fingers. To whatever.

November 14, 2013.

As Yolanda and the two young women suggested, music existed for my companions both as sound audible in the physical environment and as sound experienced internally. Again returning to recent work which suggests that meaningful thoughts are generated through bodies and action and don't rely on mental representations (see Caracciolo 2012; Chemero 2013), this inner music

wasn't musical imagery or a mental representation of music as it's described in some literature (see Bailes 2015) but music itself. The acknowledged existence and use of this inner music in dancing allowed movement to be interpreted as dancing even in the absence of audible-to-others music as Samantha suggested. Mercedes' comment—'*you always have music in your mind*'—suggested as well that this music was perceived as an ever-accessible resource. In my work, this ability to generate music internally at any time pointed to an underlying and constant potentiality for dancing as my companions could theoretically dance to their own internal music when and where they wished. This leaves us with a more complex field in which music as rhythmically organized sound may or may not be audible to others and dance practitioners may or may not be involved in the production of the sound with which they dance. This problematizes both the commonly held portrayal of dance practitioners—which tends to emphasize the practitioner's role in generating movement rather than music/sound—and the current notion of self-accompanied dancing which is usually addressed as a separate type of practice and is understood principally as dancing involving audible percussive sound (see Kealiinohomoku 1965; Mason 2014).

Interacciones • Interactions

Within dancing my companions understood a number of interactions to take place between movement and music,¹⁹ whether audible or not. Perhaps the most obvious of these interactions was the association of certain dancing movements or repertoires of movement with particular types of music.

You know, says Victoria as she scoops eggs, cheese, and beans neatly onto a piece of bread, the music, the rhythm, it's telling you the movements, the steps. If it's rock'n'roll, you can't dance merengue. It doesn't fit. You have to follow what the rhythm tells you.

¹⁹ Here I speak specifically of the music my companions associated with dancing. A wide range of other non-dancing music was also a part of life for my companions, a fact that leads Broyles-Gonzalez to describe music in these communities 'as a central fact of daily life' (2001:181). See Broyles-Gonzalez (2001, 2002) on *ranchera*, Sheehy (2006) on *mariachi*, for example.

November 23, 2015.

As Victoria indicated, certain movements—steps as well as bodywork and partner holds—were linked with particular kinds of music, defined by the type of rhythm these involved. *Merengue* music, then, was associated with a repertoire of movements which differed from the repertoire of movements associated with rock'n'roll which differed again from those associated with *banda*, *huapango*, or *cumbia*, for example. The same was true at dancing academies and clubs in which choreographed routines were set to certain pieces of music with specific musical phrases matched with specific dancing movements. In both cases, the connection—whether between specific music and specific choreography at dancing academies and clubs or between types of music and associated movement repertoires within my companions' more widely held general dancing practice—endured outside of the moment of dancing. This suggested that this type of relationship between movement and music was more-or-less permanent for my companions as Felföldi (2001), Damsholt (2008), and Spiller (2010) also note on Hungarian social dance, the Danish *Lancers*, and Sundanese dance respectively. What was significant about the permanency of this connection was that my companions recalled and engaged in this correspondence between particular kinds of music and particular movement repertoires off of the dance floor as well, tapping out footwork with fingers on the steering wheel when the music came on the radio, for example. This suggested, as Jordan (2011) notes, that experiences of dancing shaped the way that my companions understood, experienced, and responded to music even when not dancing.

In addition to this more-or-less permanent relationship between movement and music, my companions also generated other kinds of interactions between these elements within the immediacy of dancing.

Now for a hard question, I say to Victoria. What is dancing?

It's a...a, she begins hesitantly. Es una actividad donde coordinas el movimiento de tu cuerpo con la musica, she says. It's an activity in which you co-ordinate the movement of your body with the music.

This understanding is emphasized few moments later when I ask about the surprise dance on Saturday.

Oh my God, says Victoria, looking down, squeezing her eyes shut, shaking her head. It was hhhhhorrible, hhhhhorrible. Never in my life so bad. The DJ wasn't a professional and had the volume down. When he turned the volume up so we could hear, the song had already started. Then the kids started but in the wrong place, like 16 counts behind or something. They didn't go with the music at all. They were doing the moves but with no connection to the music. They didn't listen. It was horrible. I was going to record it but it was sooo bad, Victoria says, shaking her head again. The family paid a lot of money for that party but they took a free DJ, a friend or something. That's what you get. What a waste. It was horrible. Hhhhhorrible!

November 23, 2015.

As Victoria's definition indicated, my companions understood interactions between movement and music to take place while practitioners danced. Victoria's choice of verb, *co-ordinate*, along with her description of the disastrous surprise dance suggested that one of these interactions was a correspondence²⁰ between my companions' movement and the rhythmic elements in the music, an interaction between movement and music that has been described as *analogue* (see Ungvary, Waters, and Rajka 1992) or *congruent* (see Giurchescu and Kröschlova 2007). This meant that my companions moved in such a way that they 'creat[ed] frequent points of conjunction' (Bull 1997: 282) between their movements and the rhythmic phrases, working towards synchronizing²¹ these movement with the music's rhythmic elements. Significantly, this analogue interaction between movement and music is just one of a possible range of

²⁰ Following Haga, 'correspondence' here isn't an exact matching but a 'qualitative judgement of the relation between music and [movement] where the relation is characterized by the way music and [movement] are perceived as being similar' (2008: 10).

²¹ I agree with Bluedorn (2002: 149 in Clayton & Will 2005: 11) who suggests that synchrony shouldn't be viewed as an exact matching of rhythmic patterns but a consistent relationship between or among them.

interactions (see Hoerburger 1960; Kealiinohomoku 1965; Giurchescu 2003) as these relationships aren't given but produced by the society in which the practice is developed (see Toepfer 1997; Mason 2012). Work on Ghanaian dance (Bull 1997) and Senegalese *sabar* (see Neveu Kringelbach 2013; Bizas 2014) demonstrate, for example, how in these practices dance practitioners maintain their own rhythmic patterning in steady dialogue, but not in synchrony, with the rhythmic patterning of the music. In my fieldsite while many dance forms were associated an analogue interaction between movement and music as above, in those dance forms which involved *zapateado*—*huapango* and many of the dances subsumed within *ballet folklórico*—practitioners often worked within the rhythmic structure of the music but interlaced this with their own rhythmic patternings, creating a dialogue of sorts between their movement and the music. As Section I suggests, many of my companions if not practiced, at least observed different dance forms, sometimes at the same dancing event. This meant that my companions experienced and generated varied interactions between movement and music, music thus offering those of my companions with this cross-competency (see Hughes-Freeland 2008) not a single affordance for movement but multiple in an experience Lindsay (1996) also notes in his work on hand-drumming.

My companions created these interactions between movement and music within dancing by attuning to rhythmic elements within the music.

Silvia puts on some banda music and there are 'Yes!'s from some of the kids. In lines in front of the mirror, Silvia leads them in clapping to the beat of the music.

clap clap clap clap clap clap clap clap clap clap

First with their hands, then against their thighs. Next bending their knees then in shifting their hips to side-to-side, pushing their chests out and in, alternating shoulders forward and back, and finally nodding their heads, all with the beat of the music.

This done, Silvia builds on the choreography from last week. The kids try to follow Silvia as much as possible but the class is now a chaos of bodies moving at different rates, the music superfluous.

Listen to the music, Silvia calls, clapping out the rhythm, stressing when their feet should fall most heavily.

clap-clap-claaap clap-clap-claaap clap-clap-claaap

You've got to listen to the music and move with it, she says. First find the rhythm, try to feel it, and step. You've got to be in time with the rhythm.

When it's clear a few are still having difficulty, Silvia stops them. Watch again, she says, running through the steps and vocalizing the rhythm she hears in the music and wants to see in the students' stepwork.

tak-tak-taaaak! tak-tak-taaaak! tak-tak-taaaak! tak-tak-taaaak!

When it's the students' turn again, Silvia begins to clap out the rhythm of the steps as they move, calling out,

right right leeeft! left left riiight! tak-tak-taaaak! tak-tak-taaaak!

Better, she says casting an eye over the slightly less chaotic class and nodding, better.

September 26, 2012.

As Silvia's class above demonstrated, practitioners generated an interaction between movement and the rhythmic elements in the music—both beat (here the steady metre or periodic pulse of a piece of music) and rhythm (here the patterns of beats of changing frequency, duration and stress that is played, sung, and/or stepped above and within this steady pulse or metre)—by attuning to these elements in the music and responding, matching and/or intertwining the beats and rhythms of their movements with them (see Hodgins 1992; Jordan 2000). This attunement involved not simply the practitioners' glancing acknowledgement of the presence of music but a concentrated directing of their listening towards particular elements—often, as above, the rhythmic elements—

in the music and responding to them. This form of listening corresponds with Pierre Schaeffer's category of hearing (*entendre*), 'paying attention to certain inherent aspects or qualities of the perceived sound' (Tuuri & Eerola 2012: 139; see also Chion 1983), and indicated, as Downey (2002) and Becker (2010; see also Tuuri & Eerola 2012) have also observed, that a number of different modes of listening existed for my companions. These modes of listening were variously employed according to, for example, the type of music present, 'the expectations of the musical situation' (Becker 2010: 129), and the training and habits of the particular group (Downey 2002: 490), these capacities and tendencies including those involved in attunement and responsiveness in dancing developed and maintained through time and activity spent with others as I suggest in the previous chapter.

Added to, and a key element of, this attunement and responsiveness was anticipation. As Silvia's comment—'*you've got to be in time with the rhythm*'—suggested, the rhythmic elements within music were patternings of time with the relationships my companions generated between their movement and these rhythmic elements dependent on predictive timing (see You 1994; Madison *et al.* 2011). By this I mean that my companions drew from their experience of previous rhythmic cues (so constructing a past in the present following Bergson (2004)), anticipated the rhythmic elements to come (so constructing a future in the present following Whitehead (see Tucker 2012), and moved (so combining this past-present and future-present in present action). As this suggests, dancing, generating a relationship between movement and the rhythmic elements in music, was an ongoing process for my companions that involved a continuing understanding of sound and movement in time. Here again, as Bergson (2004), Gibson (1979), Sheets-Johnstone (1981, 1999), Ingold (2000), and Whitehead (in Tucker 2012) amongst others suggest, this process of attunement and anticipation wasn't a sequential progression of thought then movement but rather a direct experience of an integrated body-mind in action.

Through attunement and responsiveness my companions generated other interactions between movement and music as well. These included dynamic and

structural interactions. A dynamic interaction refers to amplitude, the volume of the sound matched in the size of the movement, ‘the relative amount of distanced covered or space enclosed by the body in action’ (Hanna 1987: 36), while a structural interaction refers to phrasing.

You got boots, Miri mouths, eyes wide with approval and pointing down at my feet. I am about to reply when Guillermo comes to the end of his verse. There is a smattering of laughter and the rest of the band begins to play and sing. We are off dancing again – the low shuffle stepwork I can do comfortably. Then it’s the instrumental section, the musicians giving it their all and a chance for me to really make some noise with my new boots. I abandon all hope of the complicated pattern that goes with this rhythm and stomp my heels into the floor as hard as I can. My feet ache. Many of the men draw their knees up high, elbows pumping, and bring their feet down to strike the floor with such force it sounds like gunshots. We’re all dripping with sweat. The music from the stage has all but been drowned out.

July 23, 2015.

While dancing *huapango*, practitioners matched the dynamics of their movements to the volume of each of the three sections of the song—quiet side-to-side steps, even standing, during the sung storytelling, louder, more animated stepwork during the louder sung chorus, and vigorous, loud stepwork during the loud instrumental portion. Practitioners thus used the volume and vigorousness of their stepwork to generate a dynamic correspondence with the music. Practitioners generated structural correspondence as well by employing convergent phrasing. They began and stopped moving when the music did and altered the pattern of their footwork to reflect the phrasing in the music. DJs and musical groups exploited the practitioners’ tendency to create these dynamic and structural correspondences between movement and music in dancing to encourage more animated participation. Groups, particularly *bandas*, used moments of intense sound, all of the musicians playing together loudly, to increase excitement on the dance floor (see Simonett 2001) as practitioners almost always responded to an increase in volume with amplified movements. Likewise, on occasion DJs started and stopped certain popular songs repeatedly,

those on the dance floor starting and stopping along with the music to the laughter and teasing of those around them.

My companions also generated an interaction between movement and music through the use of space.

You're too slow, Yolanda calls to the dancers on stage. Look, it's like this, she says as she takes the dancers place at the wing. With her hands on hips holding the hem of an imagined skirt, Yolanda begins to sing the song and dance across the stage. She sings the last few notes of the phrase more loudly, punctuating these la la la's with heavier footwork.

See? she says. When we get to this part – and Yolanda sings the last few notes again – you have to be here already, she says, stamping out the footwork and pointing to her spot on the stage. Yolanda begins to sing again continuing on with the choreography and repeats her loud singing and stamping at the end of the next phrase.

And now you have to be here, she says, pointing again at the stage. You need to know where you need to be and who you're beside. Okay? Let's try it again, Yolanda says with a clap, sending the dancers to their places.

November 10, 2013.

As in this example, certain musical phrases were associated with a particular use of the dance space. This was a common component of my companions' 'presentational' dances and suggested that in addition to the more widely explored temporal interactions, my companions also generated spatial interactions between movement and music within dancing as Giurchescu and Kröschlova (2007; see also Damsolt 2008) also note in regard to square dancing. What I found interesting was that these spatial interactions between movement and music, while at times tied to the specific physical dance space, the places Yolanda pointed to on the stage, for example, more often involved the space between, and relation of, the practitioners to one another regardless of the physical space in which they moved as Yolanda indicated in reminding the practitioners of the need to remember who they danced beside. The fact that my

companions' fellow practitioners played a part in their generation of this interaction between movement and music was significant as it suggested that my companions cultivated interactions between movement and music within dancing not only as individual dancing practitioners—one practitioner attuning to the music and generating an interaction between it and his or her movement—but in and through their relations with others as practitioners also at times generated interactions between movement and music by attuning to those other dancing practitioners moving around them. Also important in the vignette above is that in emphasizing the co-ordination of the last few steps with the rhythmic elements of her song, Yolanda pointed the practitioners to the rhythmic interactions they also had to generate in their dancing. This indicated that my companions generated several different types of interaction within their dancing at once, making dancing an activity of overlapping resonances.

These interactions between movement and music, of which the rhythmic, dynamic, structural, and spatial interactions explored here are a sample, were a vital part of my companions' understanding and experience of dancing.

How's your partner? I ask Jorge, turning to see where he sits squished in the back seat.

She's terrible, he says, laughing. Did you see her? She just walks. She doesn't even try to get with the music. Nothing. Just walking.

I took a video, Jorge's mother says. She passes me her phone and I watch as Jorge dances with his partner indeed walking beside him.

May 14, 2013.

As Jorge's experience with his dance partner indicated, so important was the interaction of movement and music to dancing that without it movement was viewed by others at best as bad dancing—'*she is terrible*'—and at worst as not dancing at all—'*she just walks*'. The fact that the presence or absence of an interaction between movement and music was used to distinguish dancing movement from other types of movement suggested that my companions'

viewed the activity of dancing as generated through these interactions. This meant that my companions understood and experienced the relationship between movement and music within dancing as a generative interaction, speaking to Hodgins' portrayal of movement and music as 'act[ing] in synergy' (1992: 214) to produce the practice. Jorge's comments also suggested that my companions used the interactions between movement and music, as they were observable visually and at times also aurally, to evaluate practitioners' dancing. This indicated that, in addition to generating the practice of dancing, interactions between movement and music within dancing were key components in my companions' dance aesthetics—as defined by Kaeppler (2003) as evaluative ways of thinking—and were used as a result as evaluative measures (see also Giurchescu 2003; Grau 2003; Kaeppler 2003). Here too attunement played a role as my companions accomplished this evaluation by attuning to the music as well as to the movements of others, indicating that attunement was both a part of dancing and a part of evaluating the activity.

As the above exploration of the interactions my companions generated between movement and music through attunement and responsiveness suggest, for my companions the general relationship between movement and music within dancing was understood as one in which people moved in relation to, that is, *with*, music (see Carroll & Moore 2008; Hughes-Freeland 2008). This suggested a mutual dependence, a roughly equal emphasis and contribution within dancing of music and movement. This is as opposed to dancing *accompanied by* music—a phrase which prioritizes movement (Kealiinohomoku 1965) and suggests practitioners remain detached from the music—or dancing *to* music—a phrase which prioritizes music and suggests practitioners move in response to what they hear. Experiences of this moving *with* music weren't homogenous, however, but differed with the way in which the music arrived.

The dancers wipe their foreheads on their sleeves, breathing hard after the dance, their second time through.

Okay, okay, says David, standing at the front of the stage flagging for the music to be turned off. We're getting there. Most of you have got the

steps. Don't forget that it's – and he stomps out a complicated pattern, emphasizing the stronger steps by exaggeratedly leaning into them with his upper body. A few on stage move so they can see him better, padding out the combination as they move back to their places.

Y...y...tengan que escuchar, says David. You have to listen, he says again, switching to English. You have to listen to the music. Try to feel it. Right now you don't connect to the music. You're not listening. Some of you are too fast, some of you too slow. The zapateado isn't clear. We need to be together. Think of the musicians at the performance. They're going to be like, What beat are they dancing to? And then there's going to be a mess. We don't want that. Listen to the music and listen to each other. We want it be like there is only one dancer here.

July 23, 2015.

As this and the other vignettes in this chapter suggest, the music with which my companions danced varied in form. My companions danced with recorded music and with live musical groups. They also danced with music they produced themselves through the use of rattles tied to wrists and ankles in *danza*, and through the percussive footwork of *zapateado* in *huapango* and *ballet folklórico* as above. My companions also danced to the music they produced internally. These different forms of music offered different experiences of moving with music within dancing. Music produced by a live musical group wasn't fixed but could vary, on purpose and as a result of the fact that it was imbued with the same risk characteristic to moving within dancing, the outcome of the musicians' movements, that is, the music, not guaranteed (see Chapter 3 and Pye 1995[1968]). In generating the interactions between movement and music needed in dancing both the dancing practitioners and the musicians had to attune themselves, their movement and music, as well as respond to one another as David indicated above. This suggested that in dancing with live music a mutually influencing relationship existed between the dancing practitioners and the musicians (see Mason 2014). This brought a dynamic responsiveness (see the band's use of intense sound above) and a potential for variation and change into the experience of dancing—'*the musicians can change it up and us as dancers are not used to that way of playing,*' one companion told me—which my

companions pointed to as the reason for their preference for dancing with live music.

The other ways music was encountered within dancing offered other experiences of moving with music. Very often dancing to live music wasn't possible and instead my companions danced to recorded music. Recordings didn't offer the intersubjective encounter between dancing practitioners and musicians that moving to live music did. As a result, moving with recorded music involved an experience of attunement and responsiveness not as a joint endeavour between responsive participants, dancing practitioners and musicians, but as more of a one-way moulding of movement to fit within a fixed frame. The lack of responsiveness inherent to recordings along with their use in 'creat[ing] predetermined fixed choreographies' (Spiller 2010: 67) in my companions' 'presentational' dances meant too that frequently moving with recorded music involved moving within a 'delimited range of movement possibilities' (Mason 2014: 221). In dancing that involved self-accompaniment, including music generated internally, another experience of moving with music emerged as practitioners attuned themselves to their own movements and to the sound they themselves generated. The dance forms that involved audible-to-others self-accompaniment—*danza*, *huapango*, and *ballet folklórico*—actually fall into the third of Kealiinohomoku's (1965) self-accompanied dance taxonomy in that they were generally also performed in, speaking to another type of interaction within dancing, sonic interaction with music provided by an external source as well—a drummer in *danza* and a recording or musical group in *huapango* and *ballet folklórico*. This meant that my companions concurrently moved with the music that they produced themselves, the music that recordings or musical groups offered, and, as in the *ballet folklórico* practice above for example, the music produced by other dancing practitioners moving and sounding alongside them, each of these potentially involving a slightly different experience of attunement and responsiveness. This multiplicity further contributed to the complexity of my companions' dancing, making it an activity of overlapping resonances not only in that my companions generated multiple types of interaction between movement and music within their dancing but also

in that in generating these interactions they engaged simultaneously in a variety of experiences of attunement and responsiveness.

In sum, in this chapter I've shown that for my companions vital to dancing was not only music in a variety of forms but also an ongoing interaction between my companions' movements and this music. This interaction was often multiple, including not only a more permanent relationship between certain types of music and certain movement repertoires but also more ephemeral interactions generated within the moment of dancing including rhythmic, dynamic, structural, and even spatial interactions. I've suggested that my companions' generated these varied interactions through, pointing again to its importance in dancing, a process of attunement and responsiveness although. Significantly, in exploring differences brought by the way music was delivered, I posit that experiences of this process of attunement and responsiveness weren't universal but rather also varied. We turn now to the next characteristic in my companions understanding of dancing, *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm. We turn now to the next characteristic in my companions understanding of dancing, *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm.

7 Sintiend

Feeling

In this chapter, I unpack *sentir la música*, feeling the music, or *sentir el ritmo*, feeling the rhythm. I argue that for my companions this encompassed a variety of different but interconnected experiences related to music and movement within dancing including attending, emotional experience, the urge to move, and 'flow'. I suggest that together these point to *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm, as an ongoing dynamic experience generated by the dancing practitioners.

Poniendo atención • Attending

My texted conversation with Marcus continues.

El baile para mi es una distracción donde olvido todo.

Dancing for me is a distraction where I forget everything.

Solo es la música y una chica y sentir la música.

It's just the music and a girl and feeling the music.

Tienes que sentir la música. Necesitas entrar en la música y sentir el ritmo y es como a empezar a bailar.

You have to feel the music. You need to enter into the music and feel the rhythm and that's how to start to dance.

October 12, 2014.

As Marcus did, my companions often mentioned something they described as *sentir la música*, feeling the music, or *sentir el ritmo*, feeling the rhythm²², in conversation about dancing and alongside movement and music in their definitions of the activity. While these phrases were common, my companions used them in a variety of ways to describe a number of different concepts and experiences relating to music and movement within dancing. This varied usage was confusing and has made it impossible to provide a single definition of *sentir la música/el ritmo*. Instead, here I present a few of the ways in which my companions used the phrase *sentir la música/el ritmo*—this discussion is not exhaustive—so as to give a sense of the varied dimensions of my companions' experience of music and movement within dancing.

When you're listening to the music, Yolanda tells me, when you're feeling it, your whole body is moving. You feel it in your body. But you have to feel it here in your heart so you can express it. If you're happy, your heart is happy, your whole body is going to express it. It has to be here and here, Yolanda says, pointing first to her head and then to her chest. Mind and heart. You need to feel the rhythm and you need to feel the music in the heart. It starts here, Yolanda says, pointing again to her chest, and goes all the way to my body.

November 16, 2013.

As Yolanda's comment suggested, the 'feeling' in the phrase 'feeling the music/rhythm' (likewise the '*sentir*' in '*sentir la música/el ritmo*') refers to a range of phenomena including attending, emotion, and to some extent Geurts' (2005; see also Potter 2008) 'feeling in the body', which speaks to the bodily sensations involved in dancing. This is how I use both 'feeling' and '*sentir*'. As Yolanda's statement also hinted, while I present different experiences of *sentir la música/el*

²² In conversations about dancing conducted in Spanish, my companions often used '*música*', music, and '*ritmo*', rhythm, interchangeably meaning that here *sentir la música* and *sentir el ritmo* reflected a different choice in terms rather than two different experiences.

ritmo separately, this is for ease of discussion only. In practice my companions indicated that the varying experiences indicated by *sentir la música/el ritmo* overlapped and combined in their experiences of music and movement within dancing.

Turning to the first of my companions' uses of the phrase, my companions employed *sentir la música/el ritmo* to refer to the process of attending within dancing.

The young practitioners break from their bunches at the edges of the room, abandoning their conversations and their stretching sessions to stand in lines in front of the mirrors.

Roberto starts the music and watches the group intently, hands on his hips.

Con más seguridad, más sabor, he calls out after a few moments. With more assurance, more feeling. And you need to feel the music.

Roberto stops the stereo and demonstrates the posture and footwork he expects, pointing out as he does so the correct hold of the chin and chest, and the power of the kick. The class watches intently and many lightly echo Roberto' movements as he talks.

Roberto switches the music back on.

*tak tak **TAK** tak tak **TAK***

he calls out and claps, even emphasizing with a pulsing of his body where the feet should fall most heavily as the group begins to step.

Feel the music, he says again, turning the volume up a notch. Feel the music.

June 14, 2013.

An appeal from instructors to '*feel the music*' was frequently given in dance classes and practices in combination with attention paid to the rhythmic

elements in music, for example. This indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* was used to refer to attending, that is, the process of attunement, responsiveness, and anticipation through which my companions generated the various interactions between movement and music so key to dancing. As Roberto' combining of the phrase 'feel the music' with his clapping, vocalization, body pulse, and augmenting of the volume suggested, in particular *sentir la música/el ritmo* was used to refer to and highlight the embodied nature of this process. Used in dance instruction, it thus drew the practitioners' attention to the embodied experience of dynamic potential, or action readiness in which practitioners attuned and anticipated²³ with the intent of moving, in effect listening and patterning with expectant and readily responsive muscle, tendons, and bone. This meant that in these contexts at least the phrase *sentir la música/el ritmo* was frequently used to generate an embodied awareness of a underlying process that was usually in operation without the practitioners being explicitly mindful of it, moving practitioners, according to Leder (1990), from an experience of 'disappearance', in which the corporeal background disappears from explicit awareness, to an experience of 'dys-appearance', in which corporality is brought into explicit awareness. This is an experience associated not only with pain but also with the development of skill, as here. This awareness brought by the phrase *sentir la música/el ritmo* is key to developing the ease of movement necessarily for the experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow. This points to the first of many interconnections between different forms of *sentir la música/el ritmo* for my companions, an interconnection made all the more interesting in that it involved a connection between an explicit awareness of corporality and an immersive experience of which the absence of this awareness is characteristic. *Sentir la música/el ritmo*, then, in this first usage was used by my companions to describe the embodied and potential-filled process and experience of attuning to, anticipating, and responding to music and movement within dancing.

²³ Again, while presented here as distinct from one another, I follow Merleau-Ponty (1962), Gibson (1979), and Ingold's (2000) work to suggest that these were indivisible 'aspects of functioning of the whole body in movement' (Ingold 2000: 262), fused within moving practitioners as they strove towards the generation of interactions between movement and music.

Sentimiento • Emotion

My companions also used *sentir la música/el ritmo* to refer to an emotional experience of music. Here I use the term ‘emotion’ to describe my companions’ subjective—or valenced—feelings. In doing so I’m not subscribing to a particular position in the debate which surrounds emotion—its definition as well as its source—in either the field of anthropology (see, for example, Rosaldo 1984; Lutz & White 1986; Lutz & Abu-Luhod 1990; Milton 2002; Beatty 2013) or in work on music (see Juslin & Zentner 2002; Davies 2010; Juslin & Sloboda 2010; Lamont & Eerola 2011; Juslin 2013) but instead employ the term and definition following my companions. Many of my companions told me that in *feeling the music/rhythm*, they experienced emotion.

When you’re dancing and you’re feeling the music, you feel it inside, Abril says when I ask about how dancing feels. In a way it comes from the heart, it’s throughout your whole body as a whole. I think you feel the music from inside. It brings, like, joy. You’re dancing and you’re feeling the music. It’s happy and it makes you happy.

November 14, 2013.

The emotion that my companions experienced in *sentir la música/el ritmo*, as Abril suggested, was understood to be sparked (at least in part) by the music. This stirring of emotion by music is important for while music is generally ascribed emotional expressiveness (see Lamont & Eerola 2011; Eerola & Vuoskoski 2013), some formalist scholars, most notably Kivy (2007; for debate, see also Scherer & Zentner 2001; Evans & Schubert 2008), have suggested that emotion is not actually produced by music and that what is experienced is instead an enjoyment of the musical content itself. Abril’s description of her emotion while dancing and *feeling the music/rhythm* hinted that she didn’t make this distinction, indicating that my companions felt themselves experiencing what they understood to be emotion and not (or not only) musical appreciation while moving with music. This suggested that music was understood and

experienced by my companions to have the capacity not just of expressing emotion but also of arousing it.

My companions understood the emotion they experienced in *sentir la música/el ritmo* to be generated through music in a number of ways.

You know babies, before they're born, they can hear music, Mimi tells me. It's true. When I was pregnant with my second daughter, it was bad. Me and my husband, we had troubles and I left. I listened to sad music all the time. All the time. Then, when my daughter was born, when I played that music, she cried! She did! She remembered that music from before.

July 24, 2013.

With her daughter too young to understand the lyrics of the songs, Mimi indicated as many of my companions did that emotion was generated through the structural features of the music. This is supported in the literature which attributes the production of emotion through music to features such as duration, amplitude, pitch, and harmonic structure of the individual sounds as well as systematic changes to sequences of these sounds over time—melody, tempo, rhythm, and harmony (Scherer and Zentner 2001: 362–364). Many of my companions also pointed to the lyrics of the songs with which they danced as contributing to this generation of emotion through music. In some music, particularly *rock en español*, *huapango*, *corridos*, and *rancheras*, the lyrics addressed difficult life experiences such as poverty, heartbreak, and nostalgia for Mexico (see Paredes 2012). My companions saw this music with its lyrics as expressing the emotions—sadness, frustration, and yearning, for example—associated with such events and circumstances and they indicated that they found themselves experiencing similar emotions as they interacted with the music.

A veces te sientes el dolor de la música. Sometimes you feel the pain of the music, Raúl says. Te de ganas de reirte, de llorar, de gritar, de salir

corriendo. It makes you want to laugh, to cry, to shout, to run out of the place.

January 25, 2015.

Interestingly, my companions most often spoke about this connection between music, lyrics, and emotion in reference to those songs which, as above, dealt in 'negative' emotions, supporting Ali & Peynircioglu's (2006) study which suggests that lyrics have the most effect within this type of music. Although why this should be is uncertain, the fact that my companions' experiences often corresponded to the events documented in these lyrics suggested that my companions' memories and imaginings played a role in the emotions sparked by music, in particular by its lyrics. This indicated that the emotions my companions found generated through music weren't produced solely through the music, its structure and lyrics, but also through my companions' past experiences and remembrances in combination with these. This is significant as it suggested that *sentir la música/el ritmo* as an emotional experience, while experienced within a particular moment of dancing while my companions *felt the music/rhythm*, could have its roots in other places and times. This pointed to a historical depth in *sentir la música/el ritmo* as an emotional experience easily overlooked given it usually referenced a relatively short-lived experience.

That the structure and/or lyrics of certain music meant that it was associated by my companions with particular emotions didn't mean, however, that these were the emotions my companions necessarily experienced when *feeling the music/rhythm*.

Do you know what this song is about? David asks the group in front of him. While there are a few nods, most of the practitioners on stage shake their heads slightly.

This song is about our grandfathers and our great grandfathers, David begins. It talks about how they left their homes and their families to come and work here and how when they went back, they could only spend a short time there before they had to come back here. It's

important that you know what the song says, David adds, that way you feel it and express it in your dancing. It's what you're dancing.

July 25, 2015.

By familiarizing themselves with the lyrics and the emotions these were seen to express, it was suggested that practitioners might also come to experience and express these emotions in and through their dancing. As David's repeated calls to '*Feel the music!*' and '*Express the music!*' later in the practice revealed, however, perceiving the emotional content of a piece of music through its lyrics and/or structural features was different from having one's own emotions aroused by it. This speaks to a distinction made by Gabrielsson (2002; see also Evans & Schubert 2008) between perceived emotion—emotional expression that is expressed without necessarily having an effect on the listener—and felt emotion—a subjective emotional response experienced by the listener. David's calls to '*Feel the music!*' after having explained the emotional content of the song suggested that my companions viewed only the latter—the felt emotional response to music rather than the perception of the emotions expressed in the music—as *sentir la música/el ritmo*. It's also interesting to note that while frequently, as with Raúl above, the felt emotion my companions generated through music corresponded with the perceived emotion associated with the music, this wasn't always the case.

When I dance rock [en español], it's like when you feel, Marcus tells me as his cologne drifts across the table. You listen to the music and the songs, what the music says, you feel it. I listen, it's part of life, sometimes I remember my life. It's nice. When I dance rock, I dance by myself. It's more fun when you dance only you, because you can jump and be crazy. The music, it talks about the life and when people is poor, and sometimes it feels, Marcus pauses. Oh my God, you feel it, it's about your life.

August 20, 2014.

Pointing to the complex dynamics between music, poetics, and emotion was the fact that while music was perceived as expressing emotions considered 'negative'

by my companions, this music brought them pleasure, stirring ‘positive’ emotion. This was indicated in Marcus’s comment—‘*It’s nice*’—and the evident pleasure he took in dancing with music that addressed difficult experiences. Scholars (see Zentner *et al.* 2008; Davies 2010; Eerola & Vuoskoski 2013) suggest that this is because these ‘negative’ emotions in these contexts have no ‘material, negative effects on the listeners’ well-being’ (Eerola & Vuoskoski 2013: 312) and so ‘can be peacefully savored like the bitter taste of whiskey’ (Zentner *et al.* 2008: 513). Practitioners who interacted with this type of music as Marcus did—by jumping and ‘*be[ing] crazy*,’ behaviour that suggested he was having fun and so experiencing emotions considered ‘positive’—were no less likely to be described as *feeling the music* than those who sang along soulfully, swaying and brushing away tears. This indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* was a phrase used to describe an emotional experience or connection with the music in general rather than specifically referring to emotional experiences of music in which practitioners’ emotional responses reflected the emotion perceived in the music.

My companions indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* as an emotional experience of music was also produced through movement as they moved with the music.

You know when I feel bad, Victoria tells me, I put on music and I dance. Me levanta la estima, me quita el cansancio, me motiva. It raises my self-esteem, it takes away my tiredness, it motivates me. It makes me feel better.

April 4, 2015.

As Victoria did here, my companions often attributed their emotional experience of music at least in part to their movement with it. This supports William James’ (1890) proposition that movement is the generative force behind emotion and Sheets-Johnstone’s argument that a dynamic relationship, something she labels *dynamic congruity*, exists between emotion and movement (see Sheets-Johnstone 2009; 2010). Interestingly, my companions linked different kinds of movement with different emotional experiences.

It feels different with rock dancing, Marcus says. My stress goes out. You can jump, it's more jumping. When you dance cumbia, there's the turn but the step is little, no jump or nothing. When you dance rock, you can jump. Fights come with rock music.

November 23, 2015.

Marcus indicated that he understood movement to have the capacity to generate emotion and suggested that different forms of movement—the jumping in *rock en español* versus the 'little' step and turn in *cumbia*, both products of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as attunement and responsiveness—were seen to potentially spark different types of emotion. This supports a number of studies which, based in William James' work, examine the emotion-generating capacity of movement to demonstrate how particular movements can spark, enhance, and/or regulate different felt emotion (see Duclos & Laird 2001; Carney *et al.* 2010; Shafir *et al.* 2013). Marcus's comment about the frequency of fights amongst rock dancers indicated, as Carney *et al.* speculate, that the emotions generated through movement had consequences beyond the dance floor. This suggested that at times *sentir la música/el ritmo* had an effect that endured beyond the actual moment in which my companions *felt the music/rhythm*, again pointing to a depth in *sentir la música/el ritmo*, this time one which extended to my companions' future action.

The fact that my companions' emotional experience of music was produced not only through the structural features, the lyric content of the music, and past experiences but through a combination of these elements and movement is important for two reasons. First, the role of movement highlights the active role that my companions played in the generation of their own emotion and their experiences of *feeling the music/rhythm*. This understanding is lost in many studies of emotional arousal through music, as these tend to focus on the experiences of isolated, static listeners (even in studies of 'strong experiences' see Gabrielsson 2010; Lamont 2011) thereby overemphasizing the importance of the musical content in the generation of emotion and casting the listener as a

passive recipient. Second, the inclusion of movement here suggested an interconnection between *sentir la música/el ritmo* as an emotional experience of music and *sentir la música/el ritmo* as attunement and responsiveness to music as above. In speaking of dancing, I feel assured in saying that Maria, a long-time dance practitioner and instructor, moved through attuning and responding to the music. In indicating that this movement generated emotion for her, Victoria tied different experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* together. This revealed both that these different experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* weren't mutually exclusive, explaining the difficulty I've had in pulling them apart for discussion, and that a generative connection could exist between them as in attuning and responding to music (*sentir la música/el ritmo*) and so moving, my companions generated emotional experiences (*sentir la música/el ritmo*).

While this generative merging of these different experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* was very often the case, it's important to not assume it was universal.

You should see my son-in-law, Berta giggles when I ask about the importance of moving with the music.

He moves whatever he can but it's not the same. He doesn't go with the music at all. My youngest daughter laughs at him all the time. She's like, This is Marco dancing! – and now Berta thrashes her arms about like unwieldy tentacles. But at least he tries, she says as she concludes her impression of her daughter's impression. And he has fun, she adds. He always dances with us.

September 24, 2013.

As Berta's comment and impression suggested, while her son-in-law didn't *feel the music/rhythm* in the sense of attuning and responding to it so as to generate an interaction between his movements and its rhythmic elements, he did experience what Berta interpreted as 'positive' emotion through his movement. This indicated that for my companions movement with music generated emotional experiences, one form of *sentir la música/el ritmo*, even when this

movement didn't involve the attunement and responsiveness, the another form of *sentir la música/el ritmo*. The same was true in reverse.

And when you're up there don't be looking at your feet, Maria tells the group in advance of Saturday's performance. Pick someone and look at them, she says. Smmmile! And move con ganas!

To make her point, Victoria widens her eyes, adopts a Cheshire grin, and strikes out a crisp, quick phrase with her feet and ending with the usual twirl and two stomps. Her exaggeration makes the group laugh.

It's better than this, Victoria replies, and more taps out a couple of languid steps while staring at her feet. You know what I mean, she says, bringing herself upright again. It's no good. You need to look and smile and move, she says, making clear waves and ripples with an imaginary skirt. That way you show you're enjoying and they will too, she concludes.

November 4, 2015.

In urging practitioners to smile and to dance *con ganas*, with enthusiasm, to suggest to the audience that they were *feeling the music/rhythm* emotionally, my companions revealed that attuning and responding to music—an integral part of dancing presentations—didn't automatically generate an emotional experience of *feeling the music/rhythm*. This also indicated that my companions experienced a difference between that movement which was a part of the emotional experience of music and that movement—*kinetic form* according to Sheets-Johnstone (2009: 209)—which expressed this emotional experience but wasn't necessarily a part of it—the difference between a spontaneous smile and an instructed one, for example. While onlookers might come to view kinetic form an emotional experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo*, there was no ambiguity for the practitioners themselves. The capacity of movement to generate particular types of emotion as above is significant, however, as it hints that by moving—*con ganas* and with a smile as many instructors urged—practitioners could potentially arouse emotional experiences of *feeling the music/rhythm* through a 'fake it 'til you make it' process. This serves as a rebuttal to Langer's (1953) well-known

argument that dance involves not the expression of felt emotion but the presentation of 'imagined feeling' (1953: 177) for it suggests that by moving and by moving in certain ways, practitioners may come to experience particular emotions. Recent work on the mirror neuron system also indicates that that seeing someone experience emotion activates the same parts of the observer's brain used in experiencing the those emotions (see Gallese *et al.* 2004; Iacoboni 2009). This means that by moving in ways that suggest they are *feeling the music/rhythm* emotionally, practitioners generate those emotions in those observing, a fact Victoria acknowledges with her statement, '*you show you're enjoying and they will too*'. This is of significance because it hints that experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* affect each other not only within the individual practitioner but across practitioners, pointing to the influence of others in my companions' experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo*.

Impulso de moverse • Urge to Move

Sentir la música/el ritmo was also used to describe another affective experience of dancing and music—an urge to move. Here I use affect as 'an umbrella term which covers all evaluative—or 'valenced' (positive/negative)—states' (Juslin and Sloboda 2010: 10). While this term is generally used to denote emotion and mood, Carroll and Moore (2008: 415) argue that it should also be understood to include kinaesthetic sensation such movement impulse as discussed here.

For me naturally, you need to feel music, Gabriela says and with an audible slapthud, she places her flat hand on the centre of her chest. Tapping above her heart a couple of times, she adds, you need to feel it here. I feel it, I feel happy, and my shoulders move, and my feet move...just move! The music just makes me move, Gabriela says, now dancing in her seat. They play salsa and I don't pay attention and all of a sudden I hear the music and I'm like oh...then my feet move then I'm like okay, let's dance, let's go dance.

June 28, 2013.

Gabriela, like many of my companions, described feeling prompted to move by the music. This music-induced urge to move, she indicated, was accompanied by an experience of 'positive' or pleasurable emotion with these together constituting an experience that my companions also called *sentir la música/el ritmo*²⁴, pointing again to the fact that my companions' various experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* were rarely distinct from one another. Work on the urge to move with music suggests that it's dependent on the perception of movement in music. While this perceived movement is attributed to structural features in the music—pulse, rhythmic patterning, phrasing, melodic and harmonic lines, and changes in dynamics (see Clarke 2005; Carroll & Moore 2008)—just why these features suggest movement to listeners is debated. Some, Carroll and Moore (2008; see also Fitch 2016; Madison *et al.* 2011) for example, attribute this sense of movement to the temporally structured nature of music: as a succession of beats temporally related to one another, music is perceived as progressing through time; it's argued that as time is experienced as moving in one direction (this argument ignores the experience of time as duration), so too is music. Others, such as Clarke (2001, 2005) drawing from Gibson (1979), point to the human auditory system which, 'for the obvious adaptive reasons of getting around and surviving in an unpredictable environment, [...] is highly attuned to the motion-specifying properties of sounds' (Clarke 2005: 222). Just as listeners interpret the emotional characteristics of the sources of everyday non-musical sounds, so too then do they perceive movement in musical sound. I find the latter argument particularly persuasive as it doesn't separate sound from music. It also includes a temporal component, although less explicitly than the former argument, in that time both as duration and sequence are used to determine through sound the direction or velocity, for example, of the sound-producing object.

Corriente • Flow

²⁴ Work on *groove*, defined 'the coupling of a desire to move with positive affect' (Janata *et al.* 2001:54), suggests a certain parallel with my companions' *sentir la música/el ritmo* in this sense although space permits me from exploring this further.

Sentir la música/el ritmo was also used by my companions to speak about experiences of flow.

I love dancing, all of it, Mercedes says. For me, my mind is blank. I leave all my problems. Like passing through the door, my problems are gone. I focus on my dancing, my mind is just, like, I leave it blank. I'm just feeling the music and dancing.

When you're feeling the music, you don't think about it, Samantha adds. It just happens. You forget about everything. Unless they give you choreography then you have to think about the choreography and be counting.

Later in the day I ask Yolanda. When I'm feeling the music it feels like I'm flying. It's me, in that moment, it's just my moment. I don't think about myself, but it's me. Dancing is me, it's the person I want to be in that moment.

November 16, 2013.

The experience described by Mercedes, Samantha, and Yolanda of *sentir la música/el ritmo*, being caught up in the process of dancing, corresponds with flow. This is a concept, developed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), which is defined as an 'optimal experience' (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2002) in which people are fully absorbed in what they are doing. Mercedes and Samantha indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow was characterized by a number of features: a desire to engage in the dancing simply to enjoy the process; an intense focus on the activity at hand; a sense that the involved movement was automatic or didn't require attention; and an absence of the awareness of the concerns associated with everyday life. Yolanda's evocative description of her dancing added to this list of features, suggesting that *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow also included a loss of a reflective self-consciousness which resulted in a stronger sense of herself. My own limited experience of flow in dancing indicated that this form of *sentir la música/el ritmo* also involved an alteration in the experience of time with long periods seeming to pass unnoticed. These characteristics have been

documented in work on flow (see Csikszentmihalyi 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2002; Zagorski 2007).

Similarity between my companions' experiences of *sentir la música* as flow and Bergson's (1913; see also Foley 2013) work on time suggests that what my companions and, on rare occasions, I accessed in *feeling the music/rhythm* as flow was *duration*. We return to my texted conversation with Marcus.

El baile para mi es una distracción donde olvido todo.

Dancing for me is a distraction where I forget everything.

Solo es la música y una chica y sentir la música.

It's just the music and a girl and feeling the music.

October 12, 2014.

Marcus described his experience of *feeling the music* as one in which he was lost to the activity of dancing, absorbed so completely by the music, the movement, and his companion that awareness of his surroundings, the passing of time, and his day-to-day concerns dropped away. This corresponded with an experience of Bergson's *duration*. *Duration*—pure duration, *la durée réelle*—is the inner lived experience of an indivisible time, in which 'our ego allows itself to *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former state' (Bergson 1913: 100, original italics). This involves a merging of action and awareness so that 'several conscious states are organized into a whole, permeate one another, [and] gradually gain a richer content' (Bergson 1913: 122) and results in an experience of freedom, or as Yolanda described it above, flying.

Key to the generation and maintenance of this experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as an immersive state (see William James 1890) was an ease of movement.

Being able to attend and respond (pointing yet again to the interconnection between different experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo*) to music with ease allowed my companions to pass from monitoring the dynamics of their movements to feeling these dynamics (Sheets-Johnstone 2014: 261; see also Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2002), experiencing dancing, as Samantha said, as just happening. This could be disrupted as Samantha's comment about counting and recalling choreography suggested if the practice at hand presented too much of a challenge bringing the dynamics of the practitioners' movements to their attention. Likewise, this could occur when the practice didn't present a sufficient level of difficulty.

Around the table over cups of atole and pieces of sweet bread, the family is picking apart the events of Consuela's quinceañera party the night before.

What was up with that group? Lupita says, dunking a bit of bread. They played the same music all night. Aww no. Me cansó mucho. I got really tired. I wanted to dance but...aye...the same, the same.

August 1, 2015.

As Lupita suggested here, an experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow escaped her as her attention was drawn to her actions because of the repetitiveness of the movement and rhythm. This indicated that there was a push and pull at work within the ease of movement necessary for an experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow. This push and pull was centred around resistance for in order to reach a level of skill that permitted the necessary ease of movement, my companions had to work through the resistance they encountered as they learned to dance (see Chapter 10; also Sennett 2008) while the need for a level of challenge to avoid boredom in movement suggested that some degree of this resistance within an ease of movement was desired. This is interesting on two fronts. It indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow was an experience of balancing a tension within my companions' dancing ability. It also indicated that experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow weren't fixed but shifted with changes to this dancing ability.

The experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow also involved the practitioners' ability to lose awareness of themselves as social actors.

It's also psychological, Victoria says. The girls, they need to lose vergüenza, how do you say, they're embarrassed, they're shy. When you dance, it doesn't matter what you do, just do whatever you do. You can't think about other people, that they're watching, what they're saying. The girls love to dance but nunca dejan la pena, they never lose their embarrassment. Aguantan y saben hacer, they have the stamina and they know how to dance but they need to learn not to have vergüenza because like that, with vergüenza, they can't really feel the music.

December 2, 2015.

Victoria indicated that a reflexive self-consciousness prevented the practitioners from becoming fully engaged in dancing and so impeded the *feeling the music/rhythm* as flow by drawing the practitioners' attention away from the immersive experience of the activity and towards anxiety-inducing thoughts of how they might be perceived by others. What was needed, Victoria suggested as did many of my companions in attempting to help me with my dancing, was a letting go; practitioners needed to take the risk (see Pye 1995[1968]) of leaving behind an awareness of themselves as a social actor and of the task at hand and allow themselves to draw on their skill—'*when you dance, it doesn't matter what you do, just do whatever you do*'. Some of my companions sought assistance in this achieving and so giving themselves a better chance to experience this *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow—for this experience couldn't be reliably anticipated—by drinking alcohol, dancing only on crowded and darkened dance floors, and choosing footwear and clothing they felt comfortable in. As Victoria suggested and as Tenosh's experience at the town festival in Chapter 3 demonstrated, my companions understood this letting go and taking of risk to be something that could be learned although often it was also associated with particular personality types.

I ask Rocia about her daughters, Elena and Verónica.

I think the youngest is like me, she replies. She really feels the music and she likes to dance. She feels it. And the other one says, okay, I can dance, I know how to dance, but I don't want to dance right now. She doesn't feel it as much. She's more shy.

August 18, 2015.

Rocio suggested, confirmed in my later conversation with her daughters, that Elena's shyness, that is a more pronounced self-consciousness, affected her ability to immerse herself in dancing. In contrast, Verónica's more outgoing personality was seen to foster her ability to push aside concerns about how she was perceived. This connection between personality and flow is noted in Csikszentmihalvi's work (1990; see also Nakamura & Csikszentmihalvi 2002). As this discussion suggests, my companions understood people to vary widely in the frequency and degree to which they were able to experience *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow.

This variability in the experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* as flow highlights a variability that was present for my companions across all of the overlapping and interconnected forms of *sentir la música/el ritmo*.

On a rare moment of rest between his three jobs, improbably light on his feet Heri idly passes his cracked phone between his hands. When you feel the rhythm, you start to moving even though you yet don't know the basic step, he says. The music moves you. My friend says okay first, try to listen to music. Don't start moving all around. Try to listen to the music and you try to feel it. If you feel like it's good for you, it's going to be easy because you feel the music and it will make you start moving.

July 2, 2013.

As Heri indicated, not all music induced experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* in everyone. Instead, as his comment, 'If you feel like it's good for you,' suggested, experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* were seen to be highly individual.

For me at least, Heri continues, you can listen to music you don't like, but you don't feel it, you don't feel the rhythm. It doesn't make you move. Okay, you can learn, you can dance, but it's not the same because you don't really enjoy.

Music gives you the feeling to dance, so you have to feel the music in order to dance, Heri's daughter Marisol says. If you don't like the music, you wouldn't get the same feeling as if you liked it.

Beside her Rubi, her sister, says, when I dance, it's because I feel it. When I listen to the music and I like the song, then it makes me want to get up and dance.

July 2, 2013.

Marisol and Rubi along with their father suggested that *sentir la música/el ritmo* was understood to depend in part on the practitioners' preferences and their connection with the music with attuning and responding, an emotional experience, an urge to move, and flow more likely if the music was to the practitioners' taste. These experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* were also seen to depend on practitioners' moods and the context—location, event, and other practitioners—in which and with whom my companions found themselves.

When you're having a bad day, you want to dance to forget about it, Sonia says. But sometimes you're tired or sad or you're not just feeling the music. It's the vibe I get from the music, or wherever we are, if there's nobody dancing, I don't feel it but if there's a crowd of like 50 people, oh ya, I want to be part of it too. They're all having fun, why can't I, so I get into it.

October 23, 2013.

Sonia highlighted the importance of other practitioners in my companions' varied experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo*, a role that becomes more prominent when we look to how my companions attuned to one another within dancing (Chapter 5 & 6) and in their interactions within experiences of learning to dance (see Section III). The musical performance also played a role in

experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo*, speaking to the differences noted in experiences of music in Chapter 6.

The dance floor is empty and I am not surprised. The group on stage is really dreadful...screechy and not together at all. I see Francisco whispering with some of the other organizers and then he heads to the edge of the stage. A few moments later the musicians are packing up and the first group takes to the stage again. It's not long before couples make their way onto the dance floor.

Ernesto told us they were good, Francisco says later, so we hired them for the fundraiser dance without hearing them first. What a mistake. Did you see? Nobody wanted to dance.

August 4, 2013.

As these vignettes indicted, various factors—preference, mood, location, event, other practitioners, and musical performance amongst others—affected my companions' actions in regard to music including the generation and maintenance (or not) of experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo*. This underscored the fact that *sentir la música/el ritmo*—as attuning and responding, as an emotional experience of music, as an urge to move, and, as flow—was an experience (albeit one often unobservable) produced by my companions in relation to music rather than a experience affixed to and generated by the music itself. Importantly, as the factors listed above shifted across contexts and times as well as within single events, even within single moments of dancing, my companions' actions shifted in response meaning that so too did their *feeling the music/rhythm*. This is important as it indicated that *sentir la música/el ritmo* in all of its forms wasn't an end state but a fluid experience that was experienced and is best understood as an oftentimes fragile process enacted and maintained (or not) by my companions as they navigated within their surroundings.

In sum, in this chapter I've demonstrated that the phrase *sentir la música/el ritmo* was used by my companions to refer to a wide range of experiences of movement and music within dancing. These included attending and the

embodied experience of this, emotional experiences sparked by movement or the structure and/or lyric content of the music, an urge to move, and flow, an immersive experience of duration. Importantly, I've shown that these different experiences of *sentir la música/el ritmo* were interconnected and mutually influencing, producing a dynamic experience that my companions generated and maintained through their ongoing interaction with music. In effect, then, *sentir la música/el ritmo* in all of its forms was an experience of attunement and responsiveness as my companions attuned and responded to the rhythmic elements in, the emotion aroused by, the movement felt through, and the sense of duration encountered, within the music.

Conclusión

Conclusion

In this section I've established that movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm, were the central defining characteristics of dancing for my companions. I've revealed each of these to involve a process of attunement and responsiveness as my companions interacted with one another and the world around them, making flexibility, multiplicity, and ongoing transformation qualities of these three elements of dancing. As I hint in Chapter 5, this was true not only of my companions' movement, attending to music, and experience of *sentir la música/el ritmo* but also of their understanding of dancing as a whole as this too was developed through attunement and responsiveness as my companions interacted with one another, so also imbuing my companions' understanding of dancing with flexibility, multiplicity, and ongoing transformation. This indicated that my companions' understanding of dancing was a process as well, what might be called a working understanding employing a loose collection of components which my companions brought to bear on situations as they encountered them. This brings my endeavour here—the development of a working notion of my companions' understanding of dancing—into a parallel as I too worked through my interactions with others to develop a similar loose collection of these components with which to understand my companions' practices and understandings. With this the benefits of moving beyond the use of generic definitions or conventions in scholastic work on dancing becomes clear for in attempting to develop a working notion of my companions' understanding of dancing, I've revealed not only the nuanced elements of my companions' practice but also some of the process involved in their development of their understanding of this practice.

Section III

¿Cómo aprendiste a bailar?

How did you learn to dance?

In this section I address how my companions came to dance, highlighting the differentiation my companions made between *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. Differences and similarities between these two experiences of enskilment emerge in intent (Chapter 8), what is learned (Chapter 9), the use of observation and imitation (Chapter 10), and how practitioners were guided (Chapter 11).

Prefacio: **Confusión**

Preface: **Confusion**

Yolanda taught me, Selina says when I ask how she learned to dance. You know, I joined the club and we learned and did performances and stuff, like they do now.

Do you still dance? I ask.

Well, now I'm in college, she says, swivelling back and forth slightly in the meeting room chair. I still come back and like, volunteer but I don't dance. But I'm thinking about joining Yolanda's other group, you know, Danza Tonanzin.

I nod and describe how much I enjoyed their performances. And what about other kinds of dancing? I ask. Have you learned anything else?

No, just ballet folklórico. They have jazz here but I never took the classes, Selina tells me.

So you don't dance with your family or friends, I mean out of school? I ask.

Oh, you mean at fiestas and stuff? Selina asks and when I nod, she says, Ya, I dance a lot. I really like banda. I could dance it all the time.

And how did you learn to dance banda? I ask.

Uh, I didn't learn. I was just like, you know, I just watched and followed, tried to do it myself. Nobody taught me. My mom, she always took me to dance with her at parties. Sometimes at home she put on the music and we danced. Like that.

November 16, 2013.

The confusion I encountered here with Selina was two fold. Like many of my companions, she assumed that as a researcher I would be most interested in *ballet folklórico* and expressed surprise, as many of my companions did, at my

interest in the casual and everyday practice of *baile social*, an experience Hutchinson (2006: 1) also notes when she chose to focus on *quebradita* instead of a 'nice' practice. Even when this confusion cleared, however, the seeming contradiction between Selina's statements—that she purportedly never learned to dance but loved to dance *banda*—remained and was something I encountered again and again in speaking with other companions. When I asked how they learned to dance *baile social*, replied,

I didn't learn.

Just dancing.

No one taught me.

Just following.

Just practice.

As these companions all engaged in *baile social* with some regularity, it was clear that they had all learned, that is, built the skill needed, to dance. Their reluctance to characterize as 'learning' this coming to dance, skill-building, or enskilment—defined as the 'embodiment of capacities of awareness and response by environmentally situated agents' (Ingold 2000: 5)—puzzled me. Simpson (2006) documents a similar experience in his work with shipbuilders in Gujarat. These shipbuilders described their apprenticeship activities not as 'learning'—a term reserved for schooling or training involving manuals of regulations and numbers—but instead as 'easy knowledge'—a term used to describe skill gained through non-reflexive practice and repetition (2006: 164). The conclusion Simpson comes to is that his understanding of learning as a scholar is at odds with the understanding of 'learning' held by his companions. This was the conclusion I came to as well.

I had approached my companions' dance enskilment through the understanding of learning widely utilized in the field of social anthropology. This understanding

holds that learning is a socio-cultural process as well as a cognitive one (see Dewey 1916; Vygotsky 1978). Learning is seen to be tied to the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs and to be as much about shifts in participation in these social and cultural groups as about changes in skill and ways of thinking (see Lave & Wenger 1991; Rogoff 1991; Wenger 1998; Lave 2011). Viewed as a fundamental element of all practice, learning is increasingly understood as an essential and unavoidable part of life (see Rogoff 1984, 1991; Lave 1993, 1996; for overview, see Pelissier 1991). This theory challenges the division of learning into separate categories—as was the case in the past (see Scribner & Cole 1973; Childs & Greenfield 1980; Greenfield & Lave 1982; Lave 1982; Strauss 1984)—and suggests instead that diverse experiences of learning share in a common process.

While this has been a profitable approach in that it encourages the study of learning in diverse activities (see, for example, Lindsay 1996 on hand drumming; Wacquant 2004 on boxing; Downey 2005 on *capoeira*; Walls 2012 on kayaking), the conversations I had with my companions suggested that the uncritical application of this theory of a common process of learning could also be problematic. Adhering to the understanding of learning as a process common across different enskilment experiences led me to assume that my companions would likewise recognize and experience all of their enskilment efforts in a similar way. This was not the case as Claudia indicated. Instead, my companions associated 'learning', or *aprender*, with a particular set of enskilment circumstances and experiences. They differentiated these from the enskilment circumstances and experiences that comprised their coming to dance, in Claudia's example, *banda*. In sum, where I had seen a single process—learning—to be at work and where I had assumed this process to be experienced similarly across all contexts, my companions saw very different types of experience. I was curious as to whether this differentiation was a product of language but my conversation with Claudia, conducted in English, suggested it wasn't. My blanket application of an understanding of learning as a common process with, importantly, a common aim and experience, risked obscuring my companions'

own understandings of enskilment and the different experiences of coming to dance that were informed and shaped by these understandings.

In this section, then, I turn my attention to my companions' own conceptions and experiences of enskilment (see Herzfeld 1995; Dilley 1999; Simpson 2006). I explore two types of experiences—and here it is important to note that there may be more—of dance enskilment as identified by my companions. These are *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. Briefly, *learning to dance* referred to an experience of enskilment characterized by an openly acknowledged intent to develop dancing skill and was associated with the more structured contexts of lessons at dancing academies and with various dancing groups in which intentional and purposeful guidance was present. In contrast, *just dancing* referred simply to dancing. Here enskilment occurred within, and as a consequence of, participation in the activity of dancing rather than through express practices directed at, and with the intention of, learning. The experience of enskilment through *just dancing* was associated with the more casual contexts of social gatherings and involved exposure and practice outside of any formalized structure and in which guidance was seen to play a minimal role.

At first glance the exploration of *learning to dance* and *just dancing* that I offer here may appear to be a revisiting of the distinction once drawn between 'formal' and 'informal' education (see Scribner & Cole 1973; Childs & Greenfield 1980; for critique, see Greenfield & Lave 1982; Lave 1982). Certainly some of the features that I discuss do overlap with elements found in this conversation. What is important, however, is that the differentiation of learning experiences into *learning to dance* and *just dancing* was a differentiation made by my companions and wasn't, as it was previously, a system of categorization imposed from the outside. As well, my companions indicated that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* weren't understood to be two distinct approaches in a dichotomous relationship with one another, but instead were both a part of the wider process of dance enskilment within the community. That said, my companions suggested that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* formed different experiences within this wider process, with the vast majority of my companions noting that they had

experienced both. In order to better grasp my companions' understanding and experiences of dance enskilment, then, it was vital to consider both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*.

This examination of my companions' dance enskilment—*learning to dance* as well as *just dancing*—is important. Despite the popularity of dance as a subject of ethnographic study, learning to dance has received relatively little attention. While dance enskilment is oft mentioned in work on dance, this is usually done in passing, with learning appearing as an acknowledged part of the process of dancing but not the subject of investigation (see Wulff 1998; Wolfram 2006; Baily & Pickard 2010). This is the case in much of the work on dancing in the Mexicano and Mexican American community (see, for example, Hutchinson 2007; R. Garcia 2009). In work which does focus on learning to dance, the experiences of the researcher, usually employing the understanding of learning widely used in scholastic work, are often made central (see emerald and Barbour 2015) and/or there is an emphasis on what my companions called *learning to dance* over experiences of *just dancing* (see McIntosh 2012; Bizas 2014). To help address this gap, in the following section I turn my attention to my companions and their different experiences of dance enskilment through *learning to dance* and *just dancing*.

8 Fines

Aims

In this chapter, I begin to tease apart my companions' experiences of *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. I argue that a principal difference between the two experiences lay in the intent with which my companions engaged in *learning* or *just dancing*. This difference resulted in a difference both in my companions' perception of the enskilment practices and in the sensory surroundings of learning. I also suggest that this difference in intent highlights an issue with widely adopted notion of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger 1991).

Aprendiendo • Learning

I learned to dance when I was a boy. There was dance class in school and my mom, she enrolled me and my sisters. But you know what it was? Heri asks, a twinkle in his eyes. Ballet!

You mean ballet folklórico? I ask.

No! Ballet, ballet. You know, with those - and Heri waves his hands over an imaginary tutu. All girls, no boys. I was so...so embarrassed! Then they started ballet folklórico and they needed boys. Right away, I went. I didn't like it but still I went and we performed. My mom, she was really proud.

And how about other kinds of dancing? Gayle says you dance cumbia really well. Did you dance with your family when you were young? I ask.

No, my family, they didn't dance. I didn't know cumbia, salsa, nothing. But my friend, he knew and he says, I'm going to teach you how to dance, to make turns, and all those things. So I learned from him. We met at his grandparents' house after school, after work, because it was close. A group of us, all boys, sometimes one has to be the girl. Nobody wanted that! Heri laughs. We did that maybe four or five times and we

learned. And we went to the clubs. My friend, he knew all different clubs, all the different music. We went, enjoyed the time, met new people, danced.

July 25, 2013.

Once I realized that my companions divided their experiences of dance enskilment into *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, I set about trying to understand the difference. Statements like those made by Selina made reference to the presence or absence of instruction and suggested that the distinction between *learning to dance* and *just dancing* was a didactic one: *learning* involved explicit guidance, *just dancing* didn't. In these statements my companions also frequently linked *learning to dance* with forms associated with 'presentational' dance—*ballet folklórico*, *danza*, and *quebradita*—and *just dancing* with forms associated with 'participatory' dance—for Selina *banda*, for example. This led me initially to conclude that *learning to dance* was defined by the presence of guidance and addressed 'presentational' dance while *just dancing* was defined by the absence of guidance and addressed 'participatory' dance. While this was frequently what I encountered, I also discovered that this division was too neat. As Heri's description of his *cumbia* lessons indicated, at times learning 'participatory' dance forms involved *learning*. Likewise, although much less common, learning 'presentational' dance forms could involve experiences of *just dancing*.

How did Ana learn to dance ballet folklórico? I ask Victoria as we speed through the rain to a quince dance practice she is about to lead.

Oh, I never taught her, Victoria says of her daughter halting our conversation briefly to give me directions. When I was dancing, she was just watching, following, Victoria continues. I never told her what to do. She just wanted to join, do what mommy was doing. When I saw she wanted to do it, when I saw she was moving, I started teaching her. Right away she got it. She already knew from watching, from following.

November 10, 2015.

Victoria's suggestion that her daughter came to dance *ballet folklórico* through *just dancing* and Heri's comment that he had *learned cumbia* indicated that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* weren't simply differentiated according to the particular forms of dance to which they were applied. Likewise, Victoria and Heri hinted that the presence or absence of explicit guidance—what I read as the difference between *learning to dance* and *just dancing*—was actually an outward indication of a more profound and affecting difference between the two experiences of learning: the principal intention of those involved in the activities. By this I mean that my companions understood the primary aim of the two experiences to differ—*learning to dance* was principally connected with an intent to learn while *just dancing* was not. These different aims in turn shaped what practitioners focused on during the activity (attention) and how practitioners understood their actions (awareness), further differentiating the experiences of *learning to dance* and *just dancing*.

Heri's experience learning *cumbia* provided an example of *learning to dance*. Wanting to learn the dance form, Heri helped to plan and then took part in lessons offered by his friend with the express intention of developing his *cumbia* skill. He described this approach to dance enskilment as *learning*, indicating that for my companions *learning to dance* was an activity deliberately directed towards developing a degree of competency or capacity in a particular practice. This is not to say that my companions didn't give other reasons for engaging in *learning to dance*.

I make my daughter dance, Patricia tells me, smiling and looking a little guilty as we watch the group. She wasn't doing anything, no sports, no guitar, nothing, just staying home by herself so I looked in the phone book. Now my younger daughter comes too. She loves it, Patricia adds, pointing to a young teenager, presumably her younger daughter, folding herself over her extended legs just beyond us. It's good for them to learn. It's our culture.

September 20, 2013.

Patricia touched upon many of the reasons my companions gave for *learning to dance*—to fulfil an obligation, to have fun, to socialize, to exercise, to follow an interest, to continue tradition. Regardless of these myriad reasons for *learning to dance*, however, my companions—from Patricia and Heri to the youngest of practitioners—indicated that they saw dance enskilment as the primary and deliberate purpose of *learning to dance*; in essence, practitioners engaged in *learning* with the intention of learning how to dance. This association of *learning* with developing skill was reinforced in discourse.

Today we're going to learn a new step, Silvia says as she asks the intermediate class to form lines and watch her closely. She runs through the new pattern of steps and the students give it a try.

In the back row Amy gets her feet tangled and she almost falls—at first legitimately and then finding an audience in her classmates again with dramatic flailing. There is giggling and the usual wide impish smile from Amy.

If we start laughing and losing focus and concentration, it'll take longer to learn, Silvia says, turning from the mirror and eyeing the offenders. Remember there is time to relax and time to have fun. Right now is the time to work. Let's go. Try it again.

October 16, 2012.

Explanations about what was to be learned and questions about what had been learned in previous sessions were a regular part of the pedagogical technique used in more structured *learning* contexts and highlighted skill development as the principal aim of *learning to dance*. Even in more casual *learning* contexts such as Heri's *cumbia* lessons, the notion that the aim of *learning* was enskilment was reinforced through statements such as '*I'm going to teach you how to dance, to make turns, and all those things.*' This objective, Silvia and Heri suggested, shaped the practitioners' attention, as practitioners were understood to focus their energies principally on learning dance skill and not, for example, on learning something else or engaging in another activity such as playing or socializing. The enskilment objective also shaped the practitioners' awareness of their activity, as

they were seen to be aware of their actions as learning, that is, they understood themselves to be primarily engaged not in dancing or exercising, for example, but in learning to dance. *Learning to dance* as an approach to dance en-skilment, then, was characterised by an acknowledged objective of skill development, the practitioners' attention directed towards learning dance skill, and an awareness on the part of these practitioners that they were engaged in learning. Importantly, this meant that in *learning to dance* contexts my companions experienced learning activity as a distinct and special activity, separate and decontextualized from the targeted activity—dancing—which was to be learned.



Image 31 Ready for class

Learning as this development of skill—at least in the more structured contexts—was understood as work, requiring effort from the learning practitioners.

Clusters of women, teenagers, and children jog the border of the chilly gymnasium, cutting corners and padding through the pools of sunshine that flood in through the two-story windows. Apart from the youngest children, everyone is dressed for a serious workout – sneakers, t-shirts, sweatpants, long hair pulled back and piled high out of the way.

Now in a circle, enlarged so that all fit, Yolanda leads the group in a vigorous stretching session. There is laughter as a couple of the women, balancing on one leg, teeter and reach out for support from their neighbours. After some minutes, Yolanda straightens, gives herself a shake, and asks the group, Listos? Seeing nods, she claps her hands once and says, Right, let's start.

An hour in, Yolanda claps again and says, I can see you're getting tired. If you are, you don't need to bounce so much with your upper body. Just move your feet and not up here. She demonstrates, her torso quiet in comparison to her feet.

Anyway, it's time for a break, she says. This sends the dancers, thankful, shiny with sweat, to their water bottles and cell phones, to sit and stand together for a few moments of rest before being called back to the practice.

November 10, 2013.

The understanding of *learning* as work and requiring effort was conveyed not only through explicit statements like that made by Silvia above—'*right now is the time to work*'— but also as here through the practitioners' dress, preparation, and rest. Practitioners involved in *learning* through clubs, classes, and academies were frequently required to wear athletic clothing (Image 31) and time was usually set aside for stretching. As well, as Yolanda demonstrated, efforts were made to teach practitioners how to manage the physical challenges brought by learning and practitioners were offered or asked for breaks to rest and drink water. This work and the effort it required of the practitioners was not expected to be painless.

We learn by watching. We learn by listening to the sound. We learn by hard work, David says to the class. Hasta que duele todo! Until everything hurts! he adds, punching a fist into the palm of his other hand dramatically and making many in the class smile.

July 20, 2014.

As Wulff (1998) also notes, pain was seen to be a part of learning in *learning to dance* contexts with my companions encountering and having to move past blisters and sore muscles in the course of their enskilment. David suggested, however, that this was part and parcel of the *learning* experience and could be read along with sweat and thirst as proof of the practitioners' hard work. Together athletic wear, stretching, rest, and experiences of pain, thirst, and sweat supported my companions' conceptualization and experience of dance enskilment within *learning to dance* contexts as physically and mentally demanding work, requiring a great deal of concerted effort from the practitioners.

Connected to this notion of *learning* as work was the fact that my companions frequently spoke about *learning to dance* as an enskilment experience tinged with a sense of coercion or force. This marked an important difference between *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. Many of my companions had been compelled as children to participate in *learning* by parents, as Patricia admitted, and, as participants of all ages, coerced into joining in the enskilment practices within *learning to dance* contexts through cajoling, encouragement, promises of rewards, and even threats of punishment dolled out by instructors (see Chapter 11). Despite the prevalence of this coercion and its association with *learning*, my companions agreed that ultimately it was of very limited use as willing participation was understood to be the vital ingredient in enskilment, whether through *learning* or *just dancing* with this willingness, or a lack of, used to explain improvements (or not) in skill and the continued participation (or not) in dancing, whether on the dance floor at celebrations or in classes and practices.

Bailando • Dancing

Turning now to *just dancing*, Victoria's description above of Ana's experience of coming to dance *ballet folklórico* offered an example of this other experience of dance enskilment. Her comment—'*when I was dancing, she was just watching, following. I never told her what to do. She just wanted to join, do what mommy was*

doing—suggested that Victoria saw her daughter to be self-motivated in her involvement in enskilment, driven by her own desires to participation, a feature which contrasted with the coercion associated with *learning* as above and a characteristic of *just dancing* for many of my companions. Victoria's evident pleasure in this fact pointed to the pride my older companions often exhibited when their children chose to dance which was read not simply as choosing to dance but choosing to be like and value the same things as their parents. This directs us to the other important point Victoria made here, that is, that she saw her daughter's dancing skill developed not through activity deliberately directed (at least initially) towards her enskilment but as a consequence of Ana's wish to do what her mother was doing, to be like and spend time with her (see Paradise & Rogoff 2009). This indicated that *just dancing* was understood not primarily as an experience of learning but rather, as the term I adopt suggests, as an experience of dancing and of the socializing that was a fundamental part of this activity for my companions. This corresponds to what has been variously labelled 'intent participation' (Rogoff *et al.* 2003), 'intent community participation' (Rogoff *et al.* 2007), and 'observing and pitching in' (Paradise & Rogoff 2009), which all speak to an experience of learning that 'is often an unmarked, fully integrated, almost invisible, part of everyday interactions' (Gaskins & Paradise 2010: 87; see also de Haan 1999). This understanding of *just dancing* was evident in the general absence of any explicit mention of learning or practicing dancing skill during these moments.

Ven a bailar, Lily says, stretching out her hand to Natalia who shakes her head and crawls back on to the chair her mother has just vacated. She watches her parents dance a few feet away.

¡Natalia! ¡Natalia! ¡Ven! ¡Ven! Mía calls from where all the younger cousins dance in a circle, beckoning her over to join them. Natalia takes a moment to consider the invitation and then wanders over. She is soon swaying back and forth, one hand held by Mía who experimentally turns her a few times, smiling down at her. Soon Natalia's in the centre of the circle hopping, swaying, spinning, no assistance needed.

Her father calls over to the table where we sit and raising his eyebrows and nodding his head in Natalia's direction asks his brother to take a video of Natalia in all her dancing glory.

December 10, 2013.

Unlike in Silvia's class above—'Today we're going to learn a new step,' in *just dancing* moments my companions—in conversation and in action—didn't posit the activity at hand as an opportunity to learn or practice dancing skill. Instead, *just dancing* was a chance to dance as well as to have fun with others and in some contexts to meet new people. As Natalia and her cousins demonstrated, this immediate purpose affected where practitioners' attention was understood to be directed in experiences of *just dancing*—principally towards dancing and spending time with others rather than developing skill—and how practitioners were seen to understand their activity during these experiences—as dancing, socializing, and having fun. *Just dancing*, although acknowledged to involve learning as Claudia and Victoria indicated, was thus seen to be centred primarily on the experience of dancing as opposed to learning, a characterization which served to differentiate it for my companions from *learning to dance*.

While an accepted and even expected part of *just dancing*, then, learning was seen as a by-product, secondary rather than the focus of activity. This made learning within *just dancing* incidental. I use the word 'incidental' here to convey both the fact that learning was an accompanying, but not primary, feature in my companions' notion of *just dancing* and the fact that my companions saw this learning as a natural consequence of the activity of dancing. This understanding of learning as incidental within experiences of *just dancing* contrasted with the understanding of learning as intentional within experiences of *learning to dance*. This idea of intentional and incidental learning has been useful in understanding the differentiation my companions made between *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. In the literature, the phrase 'intentional learning' is used to refer to a process which has learning as its goal and in which learning practitioners are conscious of learning and make some effort to control and maintain their learning activity (see Bereiter and Scardamalia 1989; Blumschein 2011). The

phrase ‘incidental learning’ is used to refer to unplanned learning which takes place as practitioners engage in other activity (see Marsick & Watkins 2001; Kelly 2011). In some work intentional and incidental learning are held in parallel with explicit/conscious and implicit/unconscious learning (see Marsick *et al.* 2006; Kelly 2011; Simons 2011; Wolf 2011). These pairings generally posit the latter type of learning—implicit/unconscious—as a process and product of which learning practitioners are unaware. While my companions suggested that often this was their experience of learning in *just dancing*, they also indicated that at other times they were aware of this learning in these contexts.

Sometimes you’re dancing together with friends, Rachel says. And then someone starts doing something and you’re like, I want to do that, so you try it. And then everybody’s doing it.

October 23, 2013.

‘Incidental learning’ in my work, then, shouldn’t be read as a synonym for implicit/unconscious learning but rather, following Schmidt, as ‘learning one thing [...] when the learner’s primary objective is to do something else [...]’ (1994: 16). It’s also important that incidental learning and intentional learning not be thought of as exclusively tied to *just dancing* and *learning to dance* respectively. Rather, my intention here is to suggest that while my companions might have experienced and been aware of other types of learning in these contexts, they principally associated the notion of *learning to dance* with experiences of intentional learning and the notion of *just dancing* with experiences of incidental learning.

Experienced in this way—essentially as, and fully integrated into—dancing, learning in *just dance* contexts was understood and experienced differently.

Beside me a woman in towering heels dabs at her hairline with a paper towel she’s just soaked in cold water.

It’s hot out there, I say looking at my own flushed face in the mirror.

Ya, the woman says. I'm totally soaked but it's worth it. I love to dance.

And how do you manage in those shoes? I ask as we move to the hand dryers.

Oh, I'm used to it, she says. It's not so bad. Tomorrow I'll have blisters and my legs will hurt. But it's worth it, she adds smiling and picking up her bottle of water from the counter.

March 8, 2013.

Although dancing (and so learning) in *just dancing* contexts also required effort and brought with it sweat, thirst, and pain, it wasn't understood and experienced by my companions to be the work that learning was in *learning to dance* contexts. In part this was because practitioners were able to dance as much or as little as they liked and could take breaks when desired. Sweat, thirst, and pain in this context then instead became signs of enthusiastic participation and enjoyment rather than enskilment hard won (although this isn't to say that those of my companions involved in *learning* didn't also enjoy their efforts). Another difference brought by the integration of enskilment into dancing in *just dancing* contexts was the sensory experience surrounding the learning.

We squeeze onto the dance floor to dance next to Gabriela and her husband. There are so many people it's impossible to move without bumping someone else. We make space to let a father and a crying child pass through and on their heels, taking advantage of the brief opening, are some twelve year olds conveying plates of cake and dangerously full bowls of fruit salad back to their seats. Gloria spots me and, pointing to her daughter, the bride, mouths, mi hija.

Raúl and I dance a couple of songs. I am so hot that I need a break. I motion towards our seats and a few moments later he joins me carrying dripping bottles of chilled water and beer and a plate with four tamales. I apply the cold bottle to my forehead and cheeks and Angela laughs at how pink I am. From the stage the singer shouts, Baila sexy! Dance sexy! The bride and groom in the centre oblige, pretending to dance around a pole. Those around them clap and cheer and grab their mobiles to record the moment.

August 2, 2013.



Image 32 Dancing at Mari's

Enskilment in *just dancing* contexts was a part of a wide variety of activity (Image 32) and with a cacophony of smells, tastes, and sounds a part of the experience. This contrasted with a sensory experience (and expectation) of quiet and order encountered in most *learning to dance* contexts (Image 31): in general learning practitioners stood in lines facing the same direction, didn't chat during instruction, were required to turn off mobiles and spit out gum, and weren't allowed to eat. Even when experiences of *learning to dance* involved a sensory experience similar to *just dancing*, when practices took place in backyards (Image 34), for example, the actual activity of learning was often bracketed off from any other activity with instructors encouraging quiet, orderly, and learning-directed activity by instructing learning practitioners to line up, face the same direction, and focus on the activity at hand. For my companions, then, *learning to dance* and *just dancing* were associated with different sensory experiences with these different sensory experiences a part of the differentiation made between

them. This is important because it encourages an understanding and examination of dance enskilment as an ‘enviored activity’ (Bizas 2014: 125), that is, an activity that occurred not within a vacuum but within complex smell, taste, sound, and feeling-filled contexts. It is also important as it encourages the inclusion (and recognition of the significance) of sensory experience in scholastic work (see Jackson 1989; Stoller 1989, 1997; Okely 1992, 1994; Pink 2009).

An exploration of both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, of both intentional and incidental learning not only offers a fuller picture of my companions’ experiences of dance enskilment but also problematizes the widespread application of the apprenticeship model onto varied experiences of enskilment. The apprenticeship model positions enskilment as the dominant focus and aim of activity that involves learning. My companions’ experience and understanding of *just dancing* challenges this assumption for while *just dancing* was seen to involve learning, this was not the primary focus or aim of activity. The uncritical application of the apprenticeship model risks emphasizing aspects of activity not viewed as particularly prominent or important for practitioners and so also risks distorting our understanding of our companions’ experiences and conceptualizations (see Stoller 1989). The apprenticeship model also ties participation in practices and practicing groups to skill development. The notion of legitimate peripheral participation suggests that practitioners move from the edges of the practice and practicing group into ‘full participation’ (Lave & Wenger 1991: 37) in both as they develop skill. This wasn’t so for *just dancing*.

It doesn’t matter if you’re good or not, Gabriela says, if you know the steps or not. Who cares? The important thing is that you’re dancing with everyone. That you get up and move and have fun.

June 28, 2013.

As Gabriela indicated, practitioners were seen to ‘participate fully’ in both dancing and the dancing group simply by joining in in *just dancing* contexts. This was because the principal aim of *just dancing* was dancing and spending time with others, making ‘full participation’ not dependent on skill but on dancing

together with others. This is not to say that my companions didn't experience shifts in participation in *just dancing* contexts.

Did you dance a lot? I ask as Adriana tells me about a concert she attended with her crush.

Yeah, most of the songs, she says and then with a scrunch of her nose, but not the romantic ones, though, 'cause, you know, awkward!

July 21, 2014.

Dancing to romantic music at some social events was reserved for those practitioners in romantic relationships. This meant that regardless of skill, practitioners without a partner (or in the awkward early stages as Adriana above) weren't a part of the practice nor the group dancing. This indicated that changes to participation in *just dancing* contexts didn't depend on changes in skill as suggested by the apprenticeship model but could instead result from changes in the practitioner's life. Lave (2011) acknowledges this in her review of her earlier work with Liberian tailors and expresses a wish that she had also attended to changes to other aspects of practitioners' lives in understanding their shifts in participation in the practice and the practicing group. Examining both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, intentional learning and incidental, then, moves us away from making assumptions about the place and importance of enskilment in our companions' experiences and encourages us to acknowledge the variety of ways in which participation in practices and in practicing groups—along with changes to this participation—are understood and experienced by our companions.

In sum, in this chapter I've demonstrated that the fundamental difference which lay between *learning to dance* and *just dancing* was intent. *Learning to dance* was a process of intentional enskilment in which practitioners purposefully directed their attention and efforts towards learning to dance with an awareness of their actions as learning. In contrast to this decontextualized process, *just dancing* was an experience of incidental enskilment in which my companions learned to dance while participating in the activity, usually guided by a desire not to learn

but to dance and spend time with others. Accompanying this difference were differences in how my companions viewed the process of enskilment—as work or not and as coerced/forced or not—and in the sensory experience of learning. These begin to highlight the variation in my companions’ experiences of dancing enskilment, variation which encourages us to re-examine some of the core assumptions such as legitimate peripheral participation that scholars have made about learning as a result of their own interest in the activity. We turn now to what my companions learned through *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, a discussion which further illuminates the variation inherent in my companions’ experiences of dance enskilment.

9 Objetivos

Objectives

In this chapter, I demonstrate how the different intents associated with *learning to dance* and *just dancing* shaped what my companions learned during these experiences and I show that these products of enskilment as well as the enskilment processes themselves were valued differently. While this discussion serves to further differentiate *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, it also points the fact that these experiences of dance enskilment were interconnected, a fact that has implications for research that singles out individual learning experiences for study.

¿Aprender qué? • Learning what?

Daphne, Sara, and Aileen swirl and plop down in front of us like heavy blossoms, making a game of getting their skirts to lay in a perfect wreath around them.

I started learning ballet folklórico when I was 13, Blanca says as we watch. I'm 17 now so, I've been learning, like, almost five years. I started classes with Victoria when she was with the other group, learning, like, the steps, how to move my arms, different dances, stuff like that.

I hope I can keep going this year. I'm going to college so I don't know if I'll have time. But it's good exercise and it's easy now – it's just practice, practice, she adds.

Did you dance before you started folklórico? I mean, like, at parties and stuff? I ask.

Oh ya! I always loved dancing. When I was little, I would dance anywhere...I'd like, do my moves in the supermarket! She laughs with a shake of her shoulders.

How'd you learn to do that dancing? I ask.

With my Mom and my aunties, not like classes or anything. They love to dance. You just follow and do it. We always have fun dancing together.

What do you dance with them? I ask and she bubbles about banda before peeling away to help Daphne to tie her skirt more tightly as the class begins.

July 21, 2015.

While my companions associated both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* with the development of dance skill as above, Blanca indicated that these learning experiences were linked to different subjects of enskilment. Supporting the connection between it and intentional learning, *learning to dance* was associated with learning a particular something. This ‘something’ was a component of dance—stepwork, bodywork, and, in ‘presentational’ dance, the choreography attached to specific dance routines—as well as these components linked together into individual ‘presentational’ dance pieces and wider dance practices. I described these dance components, pieces, and practices as ‘particular’ to highlight the fact that they generally belonged to recognized forms of dance; that is, that they weren’t random movements but instead could be identified as (elements of) particular dance styles, *ballet folklórico* or *cumbia*, for example. ‘Particular’ also highlights the fact that in their execution these dance components, pieces, and practices were to closely correspond in form to the examples offered by the model. Taking Blanca, for example, her experience of *learning to dance* was attached to her enskilment in *ballet folklórico*. This involved her developing a repertoire of particular stepwork and bodywork along with choreography set to certain pieces of music. These were all identified by Blanca and those around her with *ballet folklórico* and were all closely modelled by Blanca on the examples provided by Victoria, her instructor. *Learning*, then, was principally associated with learning a particular and identifiable style of dance.

Learning ‘presentational’ dance, particularly *ballet folklórico* and *danza*, usually involved learning other elements of dance practice as well.

It's important that the students know the history of the dances, César says between thirsty draws on his water bottle. They need to know about that and about the costumes. It's part of ballet folklórico. It helps the students to appreciate the dance if they understand where it came from, to appreciate the dance and their culture because that's where it comes from. As a teacher you don't want them to go to university or something and join a dance group and then they don't know anything about the history. It comes back to you, you know, as the teacher. There are some groups, more like entertainment groups. There people learn to dance but that's it. It's just for entertainment, pure entertainment.

July 23, 2015.

César, a *ballet folklórico* instructor, indicated that in some groups along with the stepwork and choreography, practitioners were expected to learn about the origin of the dances and costumes as part of their dance enskilment. Learning practitioners were taught the names of the some of the stepwork combinations. In *danza Azteca* classes learning practitioners were encouraged to learn a few words in Nahuatl, usually enough to count in the dancers and drummers, and how to smudge before presentations. César suggested that these elements—understanding the history of the dances and costumes and developing some basic language faculty, for example—influenced the practitioners and their practice. This made these elements an integral part of coming to dance particular dance forms and so important components in *learning to dance*. The dismissiveness with which César spoke of the '*pure entertainment*' groups, those groups which didn't include these elements, hinted at the fact that not all experiences of *learning to dance* were valued equally. Another instructor spoke contemptuously of practitioners who had mixed stepwork from one region into a dance from another, suggesting that the judgement passed on the quality of a particular *learning* experience also came to rest on the learning practitioners who developed their skill through that particular experience.

Where *learning to dance* addressed specific dance elements and forms, *just dancing* was more frequently associated with the development of a basic dancing ability. I use 'basic dancing ability' to refer to an ability to move with (and for

some also feel) the music (see Section II). This basic ability was implicit in Blanca's description of her experiences of dancing as a young child—'when I was little, I would dance anywhere...I'd like, do my moves in the supermarket'. Devoid of qualifiers such as *ballet folklórico* or *cumbia*, this description indicated that my companions didn't link this basic dancing ability to a specific type of dance nor, as 'my moves' suggested, to a repertoire of recognized steps, bodywork, and choreography. Instead, my companions viewed this basic dancing ability—the co-ordination of movement with music—as an ability on its own, something that could be applied to any dance form. This didn't mean, however, that my companions didn't learn particular forms of dance through *just dancing* for tied to the development of this basic dancing ability within *just dancing* was the development of skill in a particular type of dance. Blanca, for example, indicated that through her experiences of *just dancing*, 'just follow[ing] and do[ing] it', she not only developed her basic dancing ability but also learned to dance *banda*. This was because the music through which my companions developed their basic dancing ability in *just dancing* contexts wasn't random sound but specific types of music associated with particular forms of dance. As Blanca's parents were from states in which *banda* was popular, *banda*, both the music and the dance form, made up a good portion of the music and movement Blanca encountered in her experiences of *just dancing*. At the same time as she developed her basic dancing ability within this particular *just dancing* context, Blanca developed skill in *banda*. Experiences of *just dancing*, then, provided my companions with the opportunity to at once develop a basic dancing ability and skill in particular dance forms.

Valuando • Valuing

While my companions developed skill in particular dance forms through both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, this skill, even when addressing the same dance form, wasn't viewed as identical.

What's the difference when you learn cumbia in a class and when you learn, like, just yourself? I ask Marcus over the phone.

Well, everybody learns from somebody else, he says. If you learn like in a class, it's more nice, more professional when you dance. When someone teaches you, you're more co-ordinated, more precise, and it's more elegant. But if you learn from the street, it's, well, it's not so professional. Everybody does whatever you want, it just depends on the people, how they feel the music. They just go with the music.

October 10, 2015.

Marcus suggested that although a model was often provided by another practitioner in experiences of *just dancing*, practitioners weren't expected follow this model particularly closely. As a result, my companions saw skill developed through experiences of *just dancing* to be more open to individual variation and invention—it '*depend[ed] on the people*'. This contrasted with what was to be learned in *learning to dance* contexts.

An experienced dancer and long-time instructor, Roberto surprises me when he speaks of his discomfort with social dancing.

I feel shy, he says, everybody doing their own thing. With ballet folklórico, there's structure. You're told what to do and you do that. Everyone the same, he adds, so no judgment.

September 20, 2013.

As Roberto indicated, practitioners involved in *learning to dance* were to produce movements that closely corresponded to the model offered by the instructor or guiding practitioner. Developed in this way, the dancing that resulted from *learning to dance* experiences was seen to be '*more co-ordinated, more precise*' and was judged at times to be '*more nice, more professional...more elegant*' than that developed through *just dancing*. *Learning to dance* and the skill developed through it wasn't always judged this way, however.

She is a good dancer but, you know, she learns in classes so she only knows that. I try my moves and she doesn't know them, she can't follow. She says teach me but I want to dance so I only do simple stuff, simple turns, that she knows.

July 2, 2013.

As Heri indicated in this complaint, *learning to dance* at times was also seen to encourage a certain rigidity in form that contrasted with the flexibility, improvisation, and '*go[ing] with the music*' according to Marcus, that is, moving as inspired by the music, that was associated with practitioners who developed their dancing skill through *just dancing* experiences. This suggested that my companions valued the skill that resulted from *learning to dance* and *just dancing* differently.

In regard to the development of a basic dancing ability, *learning to dance* and *just dancing* as enskilment processes were also valued differently.

So I hear you're taking classes at the centre, that you're learning to dance, I say to Daniel as we trail his mother to the van. That's great!

From the look on Daniel's face, I can see instantly that something I've said is not quite right.

Well, Daniel says hesitantly. I already know how to dance from before.

Of course, I say quickly. I've seen you dancing at all the parties. You've probably been dancing since you were little.

Ya, Daniel says nodding. From before I can remember. Now I'm just taking classes to learn more, you know, more zapateado. Silvia's teaching me some different steps but I already knew how to dance from before.

November 20, 2015.

Experiences of *just dancing*, which usually began at an early age—'*before I can remember*' for Daniel—and through which most practitioners developed their

basic dancing ability, were generally understood to precede experiences of *learning to dance*. While this suggested that dancing was a skill valued enough within the community to be made a part of the majority of my companions' lives from a young age (see Rogoff 1991), this fact also explained why my companions rarely attributed their basic dancing ability to experiences of *learning to dance*. *Learning to dance*, then, was directed towards the development of a basic dancing ability only in those cases in which practitioners had been prevented from developing this ability in *just dancing* contexts by a lack of aptitude, opportunity, or, worse, interest.

Beti squeezes Erica tightly from behind, pinning her arms to her torso just above her elbows and making it difficult for Erica to stir the pan of frying rice in front of her.

I don't know why, Beti muses, placing her cheek on her daughter's back. Maybe we didn't dance with her enough. Tipping her head back and laughing, Beti adds, Now she has gringa²⁵ feet!

I dance, Erica says a little defensively as she shrugs her way out of her mother's embrace. Just not salsa and stuff.

We tried to teach them once when they were younger, Beti says. We pushed back the furniture and did, like, a lesson.

It was horrible, Erica says. Everybody got mad.

June 30, 2014.

Here Beti suggested that the lack of a basic dancing ability brought into question one's identification as a Mexicano or Mexican American, tying the development of this basic dancing ability to this identification and made the need to *learn* it something that was read by my companions as a sign of a lack of such an identification. This explained Daniel's reaction to my comment. This association between a basic dancing ability and identification imbues *just dancing* with a

²⁵ A slightly pejorative term meaning someone—usually Caucasian—from the United States.

particular significance. As my companions saw enskilment through *just dancing* to be fuelled by the practitioners' own desire to participate and learn, this meant that when my companions or their children developed a basic dancing ability through *just dancing*, it was an indication of their desire to identify as Mexicano or Mexican American. This adds another dimension to the pride that Victoria exhibited in her daughter's enskilment through *just dancing* for she read this as a sign of her daughter's desire not just to be like, and engage in an activity with, her mother, but also to identify as Mexicano or Mexican American. As this suggests, even though *learning to dance* was frequently and openly connected to the development of certain identifications, for my companions *just dancing* assumed a particular degree of significance not always found in *learning to dance* which was instead often associated, as above, with the practitioners having to be coerced into learning. This connection between enskilment, desire, and identification, hints that likewise my companions viewed identification as something that couldn't be imposed on others but had to be desired to be developed.

Se interrelacionando • Interconnecting

What is also important about the comments made by Daniel and Blanca is that while they suggested that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* were associated with different subjects of enskilment, that is, that *learning* was connected to learning a particular something and *just dancing* a basic dancing ability, the two young people also suggested that in practice these learning experiences overlapped and influenced one another and the skill developed through each. Victoria confirmed this.

Usually it's like half who don't know, Victoria says of the young people she works with when teaching dance routines for quinceañera parties. Some can move with the music but others, they can't. So for some it'll be easier and for others, Victoria pauses and shrugs, it's hard. Some they don't get it. Ever. It's hard. I make the dance and when I see the group, I know. If they can move, if they can feel the music, it's going to be easy

for them. If they can't, sometimes I change it, you know, make it easier. Like this group on Saturday, I changed some of the moves. I know they're never going to get it. One or two can move, but most, no. You'll see.

March 13, 2016.

Victoria indicated that the practitioners' previous *just dancing* experience and basic dancing ability—or lack of—was seen to affect how easily the practitioners learned in their experience of *learning to dance*, even what they learned, as Victoria adjusted her choreography to fit the abilities of the practitioners. The same was true of *learning* experiences.

Flopping on the sofa and uncapping a bottle of water after the couple's private cumbia lesson, Silvia says, that guy hasn't got a clue. He can't even find the beat. I might have to make the routine simpler. At least the woman's okay. She's taken some salsa lessons so she gets it.

March 29, 2013.

Together Victoria and Silvia indicated that preceding learning experiences, whether associated with *just dancing* or *learning to dance*, were understood to effect practitioners and the skill that they were intended to develop in later experiences of enskilment. That is, previous 'meanings and experiences [were understood to] influence all subsequent learning' (Baily & Pickard 2010: 375; see also Rogoff 1995; Sheets-Johnstone 2000). While generally these preceding experiences and forms of skill were seen to assist practitioners, this wasn't always the case.

How's the salsa going? I ask Marcus as we make a hasty left in front of a truck loaded with landscaping tools.

Aye, it's hard, Marcus replies, shaking his head and slapping a hand down on the steering wheel.

How can it be hard? I ask with some incredulity. You've been dancing cumbia your whole life. I didn't think it was that different.

It's not but it is, Marcus replies. With salsa I have to count, you know, with the music. I have to remember the steps. With cumbia, I don't think. I just do it. I just dance. It's easy.

April 7, 2016.

Marcus suggested that at times experiences of *just dancing* negatively affected learning practitioners' experience in *learning to dance* as practitioners became frustrated by the fact they weren't able to arrive at the ease of movement they experienced normally. This was often the case when practitioners were required to count and to move in ways and on beats which weren't typically a part of their *just dancing* experiences. The fact that learning experiences were seen to influence each other, whether positively or negatively, is significant as it indicated that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* weren't separate experiences for my companions but were both a part of a wider process of coming to dance. This is important for while drawing lines around a session of dance lessons might be useful to the researcher, it's clear that these boundaries don't represent the beginning or ending of enskilment for practitioners. Lancy (1980; see also 2012), in his work with Kpelle apprentice blacksmiths, notes the same, finding that children learned a great deal about blacksmithing through observation and play long before they began *learning* as apprentices while Sheets-Johnstone (2000) points to infancy as the source for those learning skills essential to apprenticeship. Those scholars interested in the development of a particular skill, then, need to be mindful of this pre-apprenticeship learning and approach the subject holistically, incorporating experiences that might fall outside of the chosen apprenticeship or lesson into their understanding of the process of enskilment.

My companions' recognition that previous learning experiences affected later ones is also important as it indicated that practitioners weren't seen to have identical experiences of enskilment within the same learning context.

Jorge mugs for the camera and I try not to jiggle it as I laugh. The practice is going okay although it's easy to see who dances frequently and who doesn't. Jorge, Daniel, and Gianni have time to mess about – it seems it's just a matter of memorizing the choreography for them. For Brandon it's another story.

I never dance, Brandon tells me. I'm more into sports.

Brandon stumbles through the stepwork and the choreography. Other members of the group push and pull him into place, correcting his steps, point out where he's supposed to go and who he is to partner with next. Angel stands close to him clapping out the beat and emphasizing the heavier steps by pulsing his body forward. Just concentrate on the steps and where you need to be, he says. We'll worry about the arms later.

June 20, 2014.

As the practitioners' life experiences differed—Jorge, Daniel, and Gianni danced regularly and took classes whereas Brandon did not—so too did their experience of dance enskilment, including what they were to learn. More experienced practitioners who were familiar with a variety of stepwork and had already developed a basic dancing ability concentrated on learning the choreography. Less experienced practitioners were tasked with learning not just the choreography but also the stepwork and other movements as well as the ability to find and move with the beat of the music. Angel's close work with Brandon indicated that he recognized a variation of skill existed within his practitioners and that although on the surface all of the practitioners were to learn a dance routine for Adriana's quinceaños celebration, the learning experience, as well as the goals and activities of this experience, varied from practitioner to practitioner. This highlights the heterogeneity of practitioners, learning goals, and learning activity within learning contexts, whether *learning to dance* or *just dancing* (see Lave 1993). It also suggested that while my companions generally associated *learning to dance* with enskilment in a particular dance form and *just dancing* with a basic dancing ability, they also recognized that in practice a range of experiences existed within each of these enskilment contexts.

As might be expected, my companions learned much more through their experiences of *learning to dance* and *just dancing* than I outline here. As the notion of situated learning (Lave & Wenger 1991) suggests, all learning takes place in specific situations which influence what is learned, with what is learned in any given situation extending well beyond the generally acknowledged target of learning activity (should there be one). In the context of my work this means that my companions developed a wide range of capacities and understandings through *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. My point here, however, is not to offer a full exploration of these innumerable practices and conceptualizations but to suggest that the principal subjects of enskilment associated with *learning to dance* (the development of skill in particular dance forms) and *just dancing* (the development of a basic dancing ability as well as skill, although looser in form, in particular dance practices) were for my companions another dimension of the difference they experienced between *learning to dance* and *just dancing*.

In sum, in this chapter I've demonstrated that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* were associated with different learning objectives—*learning* principally associated with learning a 'particular' something while *just dancing* a basic dancing ability and general skill in certain dance forms. These experiences of dancing and what my companions produced through them weren't equally valued with this difference revealing not only that my companions valued both precision and flexibility/creativity within dancing but that an important connection existed between enskilment, identification, and willingness. Importantly, I've shown that *learning to dance* and *just dancing* weren't independent from one another but were instead mutually influencing, making dance enskilment a complex and compound process for my companions. We turn now to the ways in which my companions learned through *learning to dance* and *just dancing*.

10 Observando y imitando

Observing and Imitating

In this chapter, I suggest that another of the features differentiating *learning to dance* from *just dancing* was to be found in the way in which my companions observed while learning in both contexts. This observation, although different in form, was employed in imitation. I argue that while this imitation was viewed as an activity key to learning in both *learning* and *just dancing* experiences, my companions didn't perceive it as generating exact copy but a practice of variation and improvisation that also extended into later life.

Observando • Observing

Make two lines, Silvia calls out and the children make one line of girls and one of boys behind Silvia in front of the mirrors. Give yourself space and make sure you can see me, she says. Show me that you're ready.

In the front the girls turn to face the mirror and standing quietly watch Silvia. As usual in the boys' row behind, Anthony hits an imaginary baseball and Byron and Leo join in his homerun celebrations.

Silvia turns to look at the boys. Leo stops and looks guilty.

I'm not going to start until you stop and face the front, Silvia says. Remember the system, she adds, pointing to the corner of the mirror. You need to watch me and pay attention or I'll put your name on the mirror and then you can't play the game at the end of class.

Rachel, the assistant slides into the class behind the boys and turns each one to face the front. You need to stand still and watch Silvia, she whispers.

Just watch me first, Silvia calls and, turning to face the mirror, runs through a pattern of stepwork. When she turns to face the children again, she claps out the beats and they try the steps. Focus! she calls out.

March 19, 2013.

Observation was a key feature in experiences of dance enskilment in both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* contexts. In *learning to dance*, as Silvia's class above suggested, learning practitioners were to watch the model closely with this intent observation a characteristic of *learning to dance*. In *learning* contexts, space was used to facilitate this kind of observation. *Learning* took place in areas cleared and well lit with the instructor generally standing in front of the learning practitioners who in turn stood spaced apart in lines facing the instructor (Image 33). This facilitated intent observation in that it allowed the practitioners the space to see the instructor easily. For my companions, this configuration was a feature characteristic of *learning to dance* in its own right and it was used to transform spaces—gymnasiums, driveways, patios (Image 34), parking lots, and garages, for example—into places of *learning*. This speaks to the understanding of place and space in the work of Lefebvre (1991[1974]) and de Certeau (1984) who advocate space be viewed as 'a (social) product' (Lefebvre (1991[1974]: 26) or 'practiced place' (de Certeau 1984: 117), that is, as a material place transformed through social processes and relations. A certain form of bodily comportment was also seen to facilitate this intent observation. As the young girls in Silvia's class demonstrated, learning practitioners were to face and closely observe the instructor, remain quiet, listen carefully, and, as the oft repeated instruction '*just watch me first*' indicated, hold themselves with a degree of stillness while observing. This comportment, this intent observation, was viewed as something that practitioners had to learn to do, making learning to learn a part of *learning to dance* (see Folkestad 2006).

Learning in *learning to dance* contexts was presented as more than observation, however, as practitioners in these contexts were also frequently told about the importance of focus.

You need to practice focusing, Silvia says to the group as she calls a halt to their dancing. Dancing takes a lot of focus, a lot of attention. What happens is when you lose your focus, you lose your clarity. And when

you are a group, what happens with dominoes or janga? she asks. They fall. It only takes one to mess is all up. Once you lose focus and you stop paying attention, it's easy to lose it. Let's try it again.

Part way through, nodding, Silvia says, see, you made sure to focus and this time it was clean, clear, and strong. If you see something distracting you, you have to bring yourself back to what is happening right here and right now. The music, the beat, your steps, other people's steps, the movements.

Silvia asks Stephanie to try to distract her and the other children are soon laughing as Stephanie pulls faces and tries to tickle Silvia in an attempt to get Silvia to falter in her dancing—all without luck.

You see, says Silvia when she stops dancing. You have to focus. Don't get distracted.

November 19, 2012.

Focusing referred to attending to particular elements within, and important to, the activity of dancing through watching, listening, and *feeling* (see Chapter 7). It was through this focusing that my companions were understood to be able to coordinate their movement (and, in some dance forms, sound) with the movement and sound of the music and other practitioners. Learning to focus corresponded to the concept of an education of attention (Gibson 1979; Ingold 2000), that is, the 'fine-tuning of [the] perceptual skills' (Ingold 2000: 22) needed to engage in and become proficient at a particular activity. While most scholars use the notion of an education of attention to address those elements to which practitioners are expected to attend, just as important in my companions' experiences of *learning to dance* was learning not to attend.

I tell them if, you know, their hat falls or something, just keep going. If you make a mistake, keep moving, don't stop, move to your spot when you remember and keep moving. I tell them, Victoria says, just forget the people watching and enjoy what you're doing. People are going to look so don't worry, keep going.

August 17, 2015.



Image 33 Watching and following Victoria



Image 34 Angel's patio dance practice

Distraction was seen to come in many forms from costuming issues to making mistakes to being overly aware and concerned with those watching (see Chapter 3 and 4). As Victoria and Silvia suggested, *learning to dance* thus involved both learning to attend in particular ways and learning to control one's attending so as to ignore distraction. Explanations about the importance of focus and/or not becoming distracted along with opportunities for practice were a regular part of *learning* experiences. This discussion and directed practice is important for it was only within *learning to dance* contexts that attending and the process of coming to attend was flagged and made an explicit learning objective and a particular subject of the instructor's guidance. This meant that in experiences of *learning to dance* dancing was overtly presented as an activity based in perceptual processes; the learning practitioners' awareness of the role of these perceptual processes and the understanding of dancing this fostered was characteristic of *learning to dance*.



Image 35 Casting an eye over the dancers

In contrast, while intent observation could also be a part of *just dancing*, in general people in *just dancing* contexts seemed to engage in much less directed and intense observation.

That's our godson, shouts Antonia over the music as Diego approaches our table with a child weary with the long day of celebrating his baptism.

The music is loud enough that after a few moments of shouted greeting and handshaking we fall back into the companionable silence I am learning to adopt. Antonia and Kim alternate glances between their mobiles and the dance floor, occasionally leaning together conspiratorially to point out something on Facebook or in the action in front of them. Raúl and Diego shift their chairs to stretch out their legs and idly sip at cold cans of beer as they cast an eye over the hall. Close to the end of the table, Rachel, now eight, jumps and spins beside a friend the same age. There is whispering and giggling and with a nod from Antonia, the girls skip off through the dancers to the dessert table.

August 23, 2015.

This broader and less concentrated form of observation—both watching and listening in—in *just dancing* contexts (Image 35) corresponded with open attention, a ‘wide angled and abiding [form of observation, the scope of which] is distributed across a wide field. [This contrasts with] most models of attention that presume a narrow focus applied sequentially to a number of objects or events’ (Gaskins & Paradise 2010: 98). That my companions still reported learning in *just dancing* contexts despite the general absence of the intent observation linked to enskilment in *learning* contexts suggested that for my companions learning occurred through a number of different forms of observation. As well, while open attention and focused observation have been linked respectively to indigenous communities and non-indigenous, ‘Western’ communities (see de Haan 1999; Rogoff *et al.* 2003; Paradise & de Haan 2009; Paradise & Rogoff 2009; Gaskins & Paradise 2010; Silva *et al.* 2010; Urrieta 2013), my work demonstrated instead that these different forms of observation co-existed within my companions’ community and experience with one type

emphasized over another depending on the enskilment context. This differing emphasis shaped and helped to differentiate the experience of dance enskilment encountered in *just dancing* and *learning to dance* contexts.

Imitando • Imitating

Just watch my feet and try to follow, Martha says as she stands in front of me. And then it seems her feet take off.

Wait! Wait! I exclaim. You're going way too fast, I say.

Okay, here, let me stand beside you and we'll do it together. Start with right, she says placing her foot down. Step with your whole foot, she says pointing my foot where I balance on my toes—then it's the toes on your left, toes on your right, and then your whole left foot. That's it. Then do the whole thing starting with your left, she says as her feet take off.

As simple as they are, I am stumbling through the steps at a snail's pace and feel like my feet belong to someone else.

Watch my feet, Martha says, and she runs through the steps again. Don't think so much. Just try and feel the movement and the rhythm. She pauses to watch me for a moment again and adds, Just relax and find your own way, before her steps take her off quickly again into a turn first one way and then the other.

I plod on and try hard not to be put off by Lupita and Raúl who are watching (and filming) me and now wiping away tears from their laughter. You look like a stork, Lupita sputters out before crumpling into a fit of giggles once again.

Pinches! I call out beginning to laugh in part because of their laughter and in part because I feel so alien to myself. You jerks! This isn't easy for me.

July 1, 2014.

As I demonstrated here in a *learning* context and as Selina, for example, suggested was her experience of learning *banda*—‘*I just watched and followed*’—in a *just dancing* context, imitation was a feature of dance enskilment in both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* contexts, drawing learning through *learning to dance* and *just dancing* together. Imitation, or mimesis, has been recognized as a crucial element in the process of learning bodily practices by scholars from Mauss (1973: 73)—who speaks of borrowing movement from others—to those working more recently—O’Connor (2007) on glassblowing, Hahn (2007) on dancing, Marchand (2001; 2010) on masonry and carpentry, Venkatesan (2010) on weaving, and Habeck (2006) on reindeer herding, for example. Imitation is understood to occur as learning practitioners experience a ‘reciprocity of viewpoints’ (Jackson 1989: 130), that is, as they experience and understand the actions of others from their own first-person perspective aided, Gieser (2008) argues, by an empathic relationship between the learning practitioner and the model. This understanding is supported by recent work on the mirror neuron system which has shown that seeing someone perform actions (even experience emotion) activates the same parts of the observer’s brain used in performing the same actions and experiencing the same emotions (Gallese *et al.* 2004; Iacoboni 2009).

This isn’t to suggest, however, that imitation is a straightforward activity.

You have to find the step, Silvia tells the class as she turns to watch them. You have to find it in your own body. We’re going to exaggerate right now so you can find the step and can get to a comfortable spot.

The class joins her in moving their hips in wide circles and working on the step. It’s almost like having a hoola hoop but you’re adding a step, Silvia says. The kids laugh at her exaggerated hip circles. Keep going, she calls. Dancing takes a lot of focus, a lot of attention, and sometimes we have to practice until we can do it without thinking. The movements feel uncomfortable but then you’ll find it and it will be easier. You have to dig in there, Silvia says point to her chest, until you feel comfortable and easy with the step.

When I ask Silvia later she tells me, as to learning how to dance, there's a lot going on that's hard to articulate. The students are learning to focus and concentrate, they are learning to find solutions and face uncomfortable new situations with their bodies.

September 13, 2012.

Learning practitioners were encouraged to experiment and 'find [their own] solutions' to the movements they were expected to produce from the models as they moved. While this wasn't explicitly articulated in *just dancing* contexts my own experience indicated that it was true for these latter contexts as well.

I'm determined to crack that dance with the double pulse. It seems that most of the women manage to pulse their upper bodies twice for every step either to or fro. I can't seem to manage this. I've tried making two steps for every one everyone else makes which just doesn't work. It tires me out, throws me off balance, and makes me look like a humming bird Gabriela informed me last week with her usual jubilation. So that's out. I've now found a middle way I think. I don't make a full step but a pulse on my toes. This gives me the upper body pulse without having to coordinate something different with my legs. Raúl's been very patient with all this mucking about and is happy to go back to the simpler step when I wear myself out with the pulsing step and all my messing around.

July 25, 2014.

This experimentation suggested that the dance enskilment associated with both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* contexts was neither understood nor experienced by my companions—those who danced at least²⁶—as a transfer or acquisition of a fixed skill from a more knowledgeable practitioner to a less knowledgeable one. Instead, as Silvia noted in her comment about learning practitioners facing 'uncomfortable new situations with their bodies,' dance

²⁶ One of my companions told me once that an instructor's job was to give his or her students everything that they knew. While I'm unsure whether or not my companion intended this to mean she understood dancing to be a transferable skill, what is important is that it highlighted the possibility of different understandings of dance enskilment. Thus while what I present here is what I encountered during my fieldwork, I don't discount the possibility of there being many other understandings and experiences of dance enskilment, *learning to dance*, and *just dancing* within the community.

enskilment was experienced as an exploration and reworking of corporeal schemes and a development of new corporeal techniques or potentialities (Dilley 1999: 44). This made dance enskilment, as others have suggested of enskilment in general (Bourdieu 1990; Lave & Wenger 1991; Dilley 1999; Wacquant 2004; Marchand 2010), a transformative process, altering my companions' being-in-the-world (see Jackson 1989; Simpson 2006; Dalidowicz 2015).

There was, however, no guarantee of the outcome of this reworking and development process.

Tear stained and still sniffing, Stefanie says, I can't do it.

Crying takes away your focus and you need that to learn, Silvia says. It's important not to be too hard on yourself because then you can't focus on learning. The next time you encounter something difficult, you need to say to yourself, it's okay, I'm going to give myself the time to learn.

Silvia comes to sit with me on the edge of stage and as we watch Rachel work with the class, she says in a somewhat dispirited tone. Sometimes they just don't get it no matter how many times they do it. As she slips off the stage to rejoin the class, she adds, it's hard because they're not willing to take any risks so it takes double my energy and double the time to teach them.

October 3, 2012.

Silvia indicated that enskilment involved both uncertainty and risk speaking to Erickson's description of learning—"To learn is to entertain risk," (1987: 344; see also Pye 1995[1968] & Chapter 3). It was uncertain if the learning practitioners' efforts would result in the desired action and learning practitioners had to engage in risk as they experimented with their bodies, potentially facing discomfort and frustration and being revealed as incompetent (which, as I discovered, could lead to ridicule from others). Steps were taken to limit this risk and uncertainty. In *learning* contexts non-learning practitioners were often excluded from the learning space and my companions suggested that they did something similar in *just dancing* contexts (see also Chapter 4).

*When I see something cool, I might, like, try it once there [at the party]
but if I don't get it, I'll, like, try to remember and practice it at home,
says Laura.*

Ya, say Maria, then you can mess up and nobody sees.

August 15, 2014.

Practitioners in both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* contexts also repeated movement so as to become more comfortable and confident. Over time this repetition not only reduced the experience of risk and uncertainty as practitioners developed skill but also led to an inscription of this movement within the practitioners, allowing them to move with ease and seemingly without thought. As Silvia suggested, while practitioners were expected to produce the models' movements, the ultimate goal of dance enskilment in both *learning to dance* and *just dancing* contexts was the development of this ease of movement. In sum, then, learning, whether in a context of *learning to dance* or *just dancing*, involved watching, imitating, repetition, patience, effort, and risk.

It is important to note that while my companions indicated imitation was used in dance enskilment, they didn't speak of this imitation, either in the ideal or in practice, as the production of an exact copy of the movements presented by the model. While this understanding was most evident in regard to *just dancing*, it was also a part of my companions' perception of dance enskilment through *learning to dance*.

So everybody does the same step in ballet folklórico? I ask Kimberly and Martha as we stand in the cool of the kitchen. Outside Lupita cooks lunch, frijoles and nopales, in the heat. The musicians sit playing cards in the slim shade offered by the apple tree, resting before tonight's baile.

Ya, confirms Kimberly, everybody does the same step. You know, like the teacher.

Ya, the same, Martha agrees and then adds, but everybody has, like, their own style. They do the same step but different, in their own style.

Ya, Kimberly says nodding, everybody has their own style.

And in other kinds of dancing? I ask.

In, like, normal dancing, everybody has their own step aannnddd their own style, Martha says.

Ya, Kimberly says, in normal dancing you can do what you want.

August 9, 2015.

Kimberly and Martha indicated that while learning practitioners were expected to learn and use the same stepwork as their instructors, in essence, imitate the models' movement, they weren't expected to execute this movement exactly as the model or as each other. In other words, although engaged in imitation, practitioners were seen to produce rather than replicate movements. For my companions this was because practitioners were each understood to have their own way of moving as a result of their unique life experiences. This made an exact copy of the models' movements impossible and variation an inherent and acknowledged part of the skill developed through *learning to dance*—just as it was of *just dancing*—despite the particular emphasis in *learning* contexts on a close correspondence between the models' and the learning practitioners' movements. This variation, a practitioner's own style, was something valued, with one instructor lamenting the fact that too much concern over copying had prevented her learning practitioners from allowing their own style to emerge. This supported Sperber and Hirschfeld's notion that in many situations 'imitation [...] is a means to an end rather than an end in itself' (2007: 157).

My companions recognized that variation also existed within a single practitioner's practice.

How was the performance? I ask Adriana and Jorge when they burst into the kitchen through the garage.

It was okay, Adriana replies, her voice unusually flat.

Just okay? I ask.

Ya, they didn't have a good place to dance and we had to dance on the carpet. It was hard because we had to step so hard to make any sound. And it was kind of slippery so we had to be careful.

April 20, 2013.

As Adriana hinted, while practitioners might be understood to have learned a particular movement, this movement wasn't fixed but instead was continually adjusted by the practitioners in response to the circumstances in which they found themselves. This speaks both to Marchand's description of 'the state of 'knowing' [as] one of constant flux, update, and transformation' (2010: S12) and to Hallam and Ingold's (2007) work on cultural improvisation which suggests that variation and difference is characteristic of all action—including repeated movements—as people adjust and respond to the world they encounter. For my companions, this adaptation of dancing practice was acknowledged to take place not only in response to the external elements they encountered but to changes in their own abilities as well.

People change their dancing as they get old too, says Lupita. You know, they change because of their own capacity, their bones, any problems, any surgeries that they had.

August 1, 2014.

Many of my companions made statements about how their dancing practice changed as they aged, as they learned to adapt their practice to bodies which no longer allowed them to dance as they had done when younger. These changes were part of my companions' ongoing experience of dancing and in themselves, I suggest, were a form of enskilment—'intellectual growth [and here we include dance enskilment],' wrote Einstein, 'should commence at birth and cease only at death' (Bugos 2016: 3). Given that practitioners in every type of practice

experience this form of enskilment as they age, it seems odd so little attention has been given to learning on the latter side of a practitioner's practice. Possibly this is because enskilment is still widely associated with a notion of expansion and/or elaboration of skill rather than what appears to be a simplification and/or reduction in this later-in-practice learning. Without this later-in-practice enskilment, however, we are left with the impression that the bulk of enskilment—that which results in the greatest transformation for practitioners—occurs only at the beginning of the practitioners' engagement in the practice and that, with some minor adjustments, the skill developed during this period remains fairly constant through a practitioner's practice. This, as Lupita indicated, was not what my companions observed and experienced with these changes not insignificant but bringing differences to my companions' experience of dancing particularly in that dancing became an activity within which my companions' past youthful physical state was brought into embodied comparison with their current one. As well, many of my companions spoke about elderly relations still dancing with a great deal of pride indicating that this later-in practice enskilment which allowed these older practitioners to continue dancing was valued. This suggests we need to begin to explore the experiences of practitioners in the latter portion of their practice so as to balance our understanding of enskilment.

In sum, in this chapter I've shown observation and imitation to be an important part of both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. I've suggested that at least two different forms of observation were utilized by my companions—*learning to dance* connected principally with intent observation and focus while *just dancing* with open attention—although these weren't exclusively tied to one experience of enskilment or the other. Both of these forms of observation assisted my companions in imitating others, the way in which my companions understood enskilment to take place in both *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. Importantly, I've demonstrated that this imitation wasn't a copying ending a fixed skill but a process of ongoing variation, variation occurring across practitioners, from one dancing moment to the next, and over broader swaths of time. This reveals enskilment, through experiences of *learning to dance* and *just dancing*, to be a

process in continued action across contexts and dance forms and throughout my companions' lives. We turn now from the practitioners' work of observing and imitation, to the work of the instructors, guiding and evaluating.

11 Guiando

Guiding

In this chapter, I draw attention to the different interpersonal dynamics my companions encountered in their experiences of *learning to dance* and *just dancing*. I argue that these interpersonal dynamics along with the intent of the enskilment experience shaped the guidance and evaluation which were a part of *learning* and *just dancing*. Despite these differences, however, I highlight some of the shared elements within the guidance and evaluation offered through *learning to dance* and *just dancing* to once again suggest that these enskilment experiences were interconnected.

Dinámicas • Dynamics

Are you free tomorrow? Marcus asks, half shouting into the phone over the noise of the truck as he travels home from work. You know El Chino? He's going to teach me some cumbia at his place. He knows a lot.

Cumbia? But you already know cumbia, I say.

Yah, but he knows different turns and stuff. That's what he's going to teach me. Can you come?

September 3, 2013.

Another key difference between *learning to dance* and *just dancing* were the roles assumed by the practitioners. The deliberate and sustained instruction that was characteristic of *learning to dance*—whether within structured classes and workshops or less structured practices and sessions with instructional DVDs and YouTube videos—meant that someone usually assumed the role of the designated instructor. While this person wasn't necessarily formally trained nor called instructor or *maestro/maestra*, he or she did need to be more skilled than the attending learning practitioners and was recognized as such and as the

instructor by the others in the practice as Marcus suggested. This didn't mean, however, that instructors were alone in offering guidance in *learning to dance* contexts.

Norma stands with Marisol and Griselda, padding out a problem she is encountering with the stepwork.

Marisol stamps out the pattern, stepping heavily to mark the downbeats. Norma watches, attempts the pattern, but falters in the same place again.

Griselda joins them and sandwiched between the two more experienced dancers Norma tries again, paying close attention to where Griselda and Marisol indicate with stomps she is missing a step.

After a couple of run-throughs, Marisol and Griselda nod but any further practice is interrupted by Myra, the instructor, calling all the dancers and the three women take their places in the lines again.

November 10, 2013.

Frequently more skilled practitioners helped those less skilled—echoing Lave's (Lave & Wenger 1991) finding with apprentice tailors—and/or practitioners engaged with others in what Wulff (1998) describes as peer-coaching, working together to figure out how to execute a movement or piece of choreography. This assistance from the practitioners' peers wasn't always welcome, however, countered at times by statements such as '*you're not the teacher*' or by a turning away and ignoring as in Daphne and Sara's music/noise encounter in Chapter 5. As this indicated, despite taking on some of the guiding work usually associated with instructors, these learning-cum-guiding practitioners and those they attempted to assist didn't mistake their place within the *learning to dance* context. Nor, normally, did those belonging to the third group often involved in *learning*, those observing. These were parents and/or siblings who, having dropped off the practitioners, waited through the practice to take them home again. In some places observers waited in a separate space but in many others

they sat along the edge of the practice, on occasion offering guidance to the learning practitioners.

¡Ven! Laura, Fernanda's aunt, beckons Karyna from the sofa. With her mother's coaching, Karyna reluctantly moves to stand in front of Laura.

You have to really move your arms, Laura says, clasping Karyna's hands which still hold the edges of her skirt. That way, when you move—Laura swings Karyna's arms forward and back—your skirt moves too. Okay?

Karyna, looking down, twists back and forth in answer and when released skips off to join the other girls spinning in the centre of the room.

It's hard, Victoria, the instructor, says later when I ask. I'm the teacher and the girls need to listen to me. It's confusing to them to have other people telling them. It's not easy to say anything though so I let it go, you know, unless it gets bad then I have to say something.

April 14, 2016.

Guidance from observers, no matter their level of expertise (Laura was once a *ballet folklórico* practitioner), was generally left unheeded by the recipients and was often viewed as a tolerated but unwelcome interference into the work of the instructor and learning practitioners as Victoria indicated. This response to instruction from the sidelines along with the fact that those observing usually sat quietly further indicated that for my companions clear roles existed within *learning to dance* contexts—instructor, learning practitioner, observer—with the majority of participants understanding their role, the role of others, and the relationships between these roles within the process of learning.

The division of practitioners into these clear roles around learning activity produced an asymmetrical relationship within *learning to dance* contexts between instructor and learning practitioner. While this dynamic was slight at best in casual *learning* sessions such as that with Marcus and El Chino, this asymmetrical relationship was a prominent feature in most other *learning*

experiences. *Learning to dance*, then, was characterized for my companions by the authority of the instructor and the discipline he or she demanded of the learning practitioners. As Silvia's class with the baseball playing youngsters above demonstrated, instructors often used observation and the standardization of behaviour, recalling Foucault's work (1991[1975]; see also Schrift 2013) on hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement, to control the learning practitioners' behaviour, punishing those who didn't conform. This punishment included, for children, speaking to parents or limiting participation in games while uncooperative teenagers and adults were questioned privately about their motivation and their desire to continue *learning*. Learning practitioners also asked the instructor for permission to use the bathroom, take a break, or drink water, again pointing to the instructor's authority over the practitioners and the use of their bodies in *learning to dance* contexts. Not everyone was thought to be equally open to this discipline.

It's difficult, Victoria says. Some people asked me to start a class for like three and four years old but it's hard when they're so young. They want to play. It's better to wait. When they're little, they can't follow, they can't remember. You have to show them again and again. It's hard. They just want to play.

November 2, 2015.

Learning to dance, Victoria indicated, was seen to require a certain degree of maturity with especially young children understood to lack both the motor control and the ability to concentrate in the way and for the length of time necessary to *learn*. Dance academies rarely offered classes to practitioners under the age of six and where they did, these classes were often called movement, rather than dance, classes. Teenagers too were seen to find the commitment and discipline required by structured *learning* programs difficult.

I took classes with my mother until I was 19, Tonya tells me as we sit in the hallway after lunch. Then I stopped. You know, when you're a teenager, you have different interests. It was time consuming and the teachers were really demanding. They were so picky.

And you don't think about joining again? I ask.

Now I'm too busy, Tonya replies. I work, my kids all do sports and ballet. It takes a lot of time. Money too. I'd like to but no.

July 22, 2015.

Tonya's experience was typical of many *ballet folklórico* practitioners who often stopped *learning to dance*—taking instruction as well as performing—as teenagers or young adults as their interests and circumstances changed. Adults did take part in community and college dance groups, in the classes run by nightclubs, and in casual sessions like that between Marcus and El Chino. The time and/or money usually required to attend classes and groups meant that generally these adult learning practitioners were well-established members of the community (new arrivals had neither the time nor the money), usually women with older/no children or single men without families to support. The involvement of these particular groups meant that *learning to dance* was a learning experience primarily associated with children and young people along with adults of a certain level of economic security.

In contrast, *just dancing* was seen to be open to all, from infants (Image 36) to the elderly, from the newly arrived to the well-established. Reflecting the principal aim of *just dancing* activity—dancing and socializing—these practitioners weren't divided according to their roles in enskilment. This was true even when on the rare occasion practitioners made learning and guiding a clear intention during a *just dancing* event.

Camila has gone all out for her 50th. There's a DJ and a band and a mechanical bull. She didn't get a quinceaños so she's making up for it now, someone says with a laugh. Amidst the racing coloured lights, I catch sight of two teenage women in the far corner. They stand beside each other and it's easy to see that the young woman on the left is getting a mini cumbia lesson. It's mini indeed as after a minute of pointing and modelling and repeating the young woman on the right nods at her partner's efforts and draws a clear line under the moment of

instruction by moving to face her partner and resuming her dancing as before. Her partner, still watching her feet, haltingly dances with her.

They're cousins, I think, Miri says when I ask about the young women we've been watching. Maybe Camila's nieces?

April 17, 2013.

Miri didn't describe the young women in terms of the learning activity they shared, indicating that although observable moments of activity recognized as learning took place at times in *just dancing* contexts, these moments didn't lead my companions to view the practitioners as instructors and/or learning practitioners. In part this was because these recognizable moments of learning activity were brief in comparison to the rest of the event's activity but another factor was also important. Instead of describing the young women in terms of their shared learning activity, Miri described them in terms of their familial connection to each other and to Celina, the celebrant. This description suggested that my companions viewed the roles and relationships within *just dancing* contexts—within *learning to dance* contexts as well—through the lens of the activity primarily associated with each. For *just dancing* this primary activity was not learning but dancing and spending time with others, usually family and friends. The emphasis on this activity—particularly its socializing element—acted as a filter and meant that my companions viewed the roles and relationships of practitioners within *just dancing* contexts principally in terms of family and friendship ties. This meant that unlike the learning experience associated with *learning to dance* (which was dominated by the instructor-learning practitioner dynamic), the learning experience connected with *just dancing* usually took place within, and was associated with, relationships experienced principally as familial ties and friendships.

Without the division of practitioners according to their role in learning activity, the instructor-learning practitioner asymmetrical relationship so characteristic of the experience of *learning to dance* was absent from the experience of *just*



Image 36 Dancing with a babe-in-arms

dancing. This didn't mean that *just dancing* was devoid of all asymmetrical relationships.

As the song draws to a close, Valeria, miming (or not?) exhaustion with her head and arms hanging down shuffle-glides over to where we sit. Just as she swivels and begins to lower herself into her seat, however, her mother blocks her way with an arm and pushes Valeria back towards her father. Go dance with your Dad again, she says to her

daughter, sending me a wink as she does so. Valeria acquiesces, walking with an exaggerated swaying motion back to her Dad.

Jorge, glistening with sweat, slips into the seat Valeria didn't get and is fanning himself with his sombrero when Valeria's mother turns to him and says, holding out a hand, Dance with your auntie, and they're off back to the dance floor.

November 4, 2014.

As both Valeria and Jorge experienced, *just dancing* events that involved spending time with family inevitably also involved the relationship dynamics brought by these familial relationships. Older relatives—parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings—could influence younger ones (and their learning experience) by guiding which events were attended, how long they stayed, when, with whom, and how often they danced.

Guiando • Guiding

David's feet strike the floor—heel of the right foot, a flat left followed quickly by a flat right then the same pattern beginning with the left. He stops and repeats the whole pattern twice more as the group watches.

Conmigo, with me this time, he calls and the group joins him. They repeat the step a couple of times and then David turns to watch the group, mirroring their movements in front.

Start right, he calls. Right, left, right. Left, right, left. The steps are muddy, he says, stopping the group in the middle a few repetitions later. They need to be clear. Let's try it again.

This time David claps and counts the beats, clapping loudly in places to stress where the heaviest steps should fall.

Spotting one of the younger practitioners having trouble in the front row, he runs through the steps beside her, still vocalizing the beats and clapping.

Moving back to the front of the group, David asks, Any questions? With no one speaking up, he says, Okay, show me. You do it.

July 23, 2015.



Image 37 David leading his workshop group

My companions understood learning practitioners to learn from—that is, observe and imitate as in Chapter 10—someone else. While more apparent in *learning to dance* contexts, characterized as they were by the presence of an instructor, this was true too in *just dancing* contexts as Marcus—*Well, everybody learns from somebody else*—indicated above. How much a part of this learning was seen to involve guidance differed between these contexts, reflecting the different primary goals of activity in each and further differentiating *learning to dance* and *just dancing* for my companions. In *learning* contexts, in which learning practitioners were to imitate, that is, produce, particular movement, instructors provided a significant amount of guidance. That offered by David above was typical of the guidance given in most *learning* contexts (Image 37). While the learning practitioners observed, instructors modelled (but didn't

usually give a verbal description of) the movement, often exaggerating and slowing it down. They often faced the same direction as the learning practitioners (a leading orientation according to Downey 2008)—making it easier for the practitioners to produce the same movements—and worked initially without music—decontextualizing dance enactment. As the practitioners attempted to imitate the model, the instructors supported them by moving with them, highlighting the beats and stresses by counting, clapping, vocalizing, snapping, and/or pulsing their bodies, and giving cues by calling out, pointing, or miming the movements and/or the direction of these movements. As the learning practitioners became more proficient, this support was gradually removed although, as David demonstrated with the younger practitioner, this was reintroduced if learning practitioners encountered difficulty. This guided learning speaks to the concepts of the ‘zone of proximal development’ (Vygotsky 1978; see also Hobsbaum & Peters 1996; Wood & Wood 1996) and ‘scaffolding’ (Wood *et al.*, 1976; see also Bliss *et al.* 1996; Downey 2008), both of which are related to the process in which learning practitioners master a task just beyond their ability with another’s support which is gradually removed as the learning practitioners’ skill advances. The application, gradual reduction and reintroduction of this support if needed along with the way instructors asked for and responded to the learning practitioners’ questions underscored the responsiveness of instructors to their learning practitioners. Contrary to the commonly-held assumption that in contexts such as *learning to dance* learning activity is entirely directed by instructors, this indicated that even in structured *learning to dance* contexts learning was positioned as a co-operative experience between all involved (see Vygotsky 1978; Downey 2008; Dalidowicz 2016).

Instructors in *learning to dance* contexts also used parsing and task sequencing (see Greenfield & Lave 1982) to support learning practitioners.

*First I start with more easy stuff. Clapping to the music, maybe stepping.
Then I teach a step, simple, you know, and when I know they can do it...*

How do you know? I ask Victoria.

When I see they can do it without me. I'm just watching not counting or anything. When I know they can do it, I teach a more difficult one. Then I make the combinations of steps and then at the end we do the choreography.

August 20, 2014.

In parsing and task sequencing, the larger task—a performance dance piece in Victoria's case—was broken down into components and sequenced according to difficulty with the learning practitioners working from simplest to most complex. In more structured *learning* contexts, this parsing and sequencing pattern was repeated on several levels as practitioners moved from simple to complex within a dance piece, practice session, and series of practices, and across the different levels of instruction available in academies. One of the consequences of this parsing and task sequencing was that dancing in *learning to dance* contexts was presented as an activity made up of discreet movement sequences.

With start of the music the young women begin to move across the stage with Ricardo clapping out the beats. There is a scramble as the last of the young women rushes to get into position.

Ricardo stops the music. You've got sixteen counts with that step, he says as he moves across the stage demonstrating. You need to get all the way into your positions by the end of those sixteen counts without rushing or waiting. Use your math! Try to time it so you get there just in time.

The group tries it again with Ricardo counting and clapping loudly. Count! he shouts sensing trouble. Seeing all the young women in their correct positions at the end of the sixteen counts, he lets the music play on but there is confusion as a couple of the young women move in opposite directions and almost collide. You have to remember, he calls, remember the moves and which way you go otherwise it won't work.

November 30, 2013.

The notion that dancing was an activity composed of smaller, combinable segments was openly fostered in *learning to dance* contexts. Music was divided into segments of equal length (often eight or sixteen counts) with these segments used as building blocks in the choreography in presentational dancing. The counting cues offered to support learning practitioners as well as the naming of set sequences of stepwork emphasized this segmentation as did the fact that learning practitioners were usually required to learn pieces of dance phrase by phrase. Together these elements fostered an understanding of dance as a segmentable activity and led to an experience of dancing that involved remembering and sequencing discreet sets of movement. This meant that dance enskilment in *learning to dance* contexts was seen to involve more than simply learning to move as the model did. As Ricardo indicated, learning practitioners—particularly those engaged in presentational dance—were expected to ‘use [their] math’ as well as their memory to remember movements and timing and to identify both their place in the music and their physical position in relation to other practitioners and the dancing space. Learning in *learning to dance* contexts, then, was explicitly connected to these other (related) skills—counting and remembering—with learning practitioners regularly reminded of the importance of these skills to dance enskilment.

Evaluando • Evaluating

Reflecting the goal of producing movements that closely corresponded to those provided by a model, evaluation was also a part of guidance in *learning to dance* contexts.

As the group begins, Roberto nods animatedly but a few moments later calls them to stop by raising a hand. Más suavecito, more smooth, he says. You guys are like—and he mimics a robot to the delight of the group—and you need to be like—and Roberto begins to move as if he’s liquid. Okay? Let’s try it again but with the music.

The group begins again and Roberto nods. Good, good, he calls as he passes his gaze over the different dancers. A few moments later, he calls

them to a stop again. The steps need to be clearer, he says. Beckoning a couple over, he adds, watch David and Elena. They've got it.

September 20, 2013.

Instructors in *learning to dance* contexts evaluated the learning practitioners' efforts, measuring these against the model that they had in mind and offering correction or praise depending on what they observed. This was achieved through verbal comment, body language such as nodding or shaking one's head, and facial expressions such as smiling or frowning. This evaluating positioned the instructors as the holders of knowledge and keepers of local aesthetics in *learning to dance* contexts and helped to establish and support the instructor's authority in their relationship with the learning practitioners. This speaks again to Foucault's (1991[1975]) work on disciplinary power, specifically the concept of evaluation which combines observation and normalization to reinforce authority. Often the correction offered by instructors was accompanied as in Roberto's class first by demonstration either by the instructor or (becoming a form of praise) by learning practitioners judged skilled enough and then by repetition as learning practitioners repeated steps and sequences until the instructor deemed the learning practitioners' efforts acceptable. This repetition added to the sense of segmentation in *learning* contexts as learning practitioners not only came to understand dancing as a segmentable activity but also experienced dance enskilment itself as segmented for learning practitioners started and stopped and started again, repeating sections of dance over and over again throughout *learning to dance* classes and practice sessions.

While such explicit evaluation from instructors was most prominent in structured *learning* contexts, evaluation also came from the learning practitioners.

Let's do it again and I'm going to record, Silvia says to the group. Then you're going to watch so that you can see how you can improve. Then we're going to go back and fix the things that need to be fixed.

After the next run through, the students gather around Silvia and her mini iPad. Rhythm, Silvia says periodically, as they watch the recording. You have to keep listening and make sure you're on the beat. See, this looks good, you are all doing it together, Silvia says, pointing to the screen, you guys need to match.

What do you guys think? Silvia asks, as the video ends.

We need to stay in line, says Divina.

And start together, says Amy.

We need to have more energy, says Alyssa.

The steps need to be clear, says Wendy.

Ya, say Silvia. You need to shake your shoulders at the same time and your energy levels are not completely together. Sometimes you cover each other up, she adds before turning the iPad off.

December 11, 2012.

Learning practitioners evaluated their own efforts and the efforts of their peers—*'Everyone watches and judges you,'* Alexis told me once. This peer evaluation was encouraged by instructors who urged learning practitioners to monitor and openly evaluate themselves and others. The presence of this evaluation from within and potentially from many voices without meant that learning practitioners were frequently reminded of the principal aim of their learning activity in *learning to dance* contexts, that is, learning a certain something according to a particular model. Over time this practice of evaluating oneself and others in relation to a particular model led learning practitioners in *learning to dance* contexts to develop a sense of the local aesthetic in regard to their own particular practices. It also meant that learning practitioners came to speak in the same way about dancing and learning as their instructors did. This speaks to findings made by Lave (Lave & Wenger 1991) and Pelissier (1991) who both highlight how apprentices come to think, speak, and act like the masters with whom they learn.



Image 38 Evaluating their dancing

Although my companions understood learning practitioners to learn from someone else in *just dancing*—‘*Well, everybody learns from somebody else*’ said Marcus above—my companions didn’t readily associate their experiences of dance enskilment with the explicit guidance that was such a defining feature of their experiences of *learning to dance*.

Valeria watches her older sister, Mía and her cousins, Adriana, and Jorge, intently as they dance in a circle. Mía cups her hand to her mouth and leaning in says something to Adriana who nods exaggeratedly.

Valeria is still intent on the older girls’ steps. I watch Valeria’s feet closely and I see her footwork change—a different pattern and much less confident. It’s just for an instant and then she’s back to her usual, comfortable pattern. I wonder if she’s tried one of the more complicated steps she’s seen her sister and cousins do.

October 10, 2013.

As (perhaps)²⁷ Valeria demonstrated, in *just dancing* contexts learning activity was (for the most part) inconspicuously blended into dancing as practitioners observed—watched and listened to—other practitioners and attempted to incorporate new movements into their dancing (or kept these movements in mind for later practice). This experience of learning didn't usually involve the overt guidance of others, leaving practitioners to make their own decisions about what to learn, who to use as a model, how to approach the learning, when to begin, and how to judge success. As a result, learning in *just dancing* contexts wasn't tied to the control or direction of an instructor but was instead understood to be principally the responsibility of the practitioners, a characteristic of much observational learning (see Rogoff 1991; Gaskins & Paradise 2010). This self-direction was highlighted in my companions' statements about learning through *just dancing*—'I just watched [...] and tried to do it myself,' said Selina—and granted the experience of learning in *just dancing* contexts a looseness that contrasted with the structured and controlled experience of learning brought by the guidance that was such a predominant part of as *learning to dance*.

This isn't to say that guidance wasn't a part of *just dancing* contexts at all. At times, as in a number of the *just dancing* vignettes above, this guidance resembled that encountered in *learning to dance* with deliberate modelling and focused observation, even explicit instruction, although these activities were usually brief. More often, however, guidance in *just dancing* contexts was much more subtle, often occurring 'when a caregiver or other 'teacher' [had] no specific intention to teach, and sometimes even when the [learning practitioner had] no specific intention to learn' (Gaskins & Paradise 2010: 87).

Leticia sits with us watching the dancers. Sitting beside her, her aunt nudges her and Leticia join her aunt in singing along and swaying to the beat. When she spots her parents dancing in one corner she skips off to join them. They stop dancing in a couple hold and offer her their

²⁷ I found it difficult to identify moments of learning activity in *just dancing* contexts with any certainty. I insert '(perhaps)' here to acknowledge the ambiguity of these moments and highlight how blended learning activity and dancing were these contexts.

hands. She reaches up to her father, indicating she'd rather be picked up like some of the younger children, but he shakes his head and instead clasps his daughter's hands in his own. He dances with simple back and forth steps and Leticia follows along, although not with the beat, and turns, one black patent Mary Jane tripping over the other, when her father spins her. Two young boys race through and Erica stops stepping and turns to watch them. After a few moments her father shakes her hands, smiling down at her, to get her moving again.

July 20, 2013.

Those guiding—although, as above, often unaware of the function of their activity—guided practitioners' attention as well as movement in *just dancing* contexts. Practitioners were positioned so that they could see the dancing and dancers of interest—family members, dancers of the same age, someone dancing in a skilled or amusing way—were pointed out to them. This directed the practitioners' attention towards dancing in the space and presented them with many potential models (who were often also unaware of their role). Reflecting the fact that the goal of *just dancing* wasn't the close imitation of these models' movements, for the most part practitioners weren't expected to pay attention to the dancers all of the time nor, when they did, to observe with the same highly focused concentration that was a key part of *learning to dance*. This meant that the instruction and discipline used to achieve this form of intent observation in *learning to dance* contexts was generally absent from the guidance directing the practitioners' attention in *just dancing*.

Guidance in *just dancing* contexts was also directed towards moving with the music although again rarely involved the explicit instruction characteristic of *learning to dance*. The movement of dancers and, when seated, their clapping, swaying, and tapping along with the vibration from the speakers and from the dancer's stepwork—even, for younger practitioners, the rocking, patting, and jostling of their caregivers—offered visual, aural, and kinetic cues to the beat and presented practitioners with opportunities to attend to the music and pair this with movement. When dancing, those guiding like Leticia's father might slow down and/or simplify their movements, possibly even modelling more

complicated footwork briefly (although generally facing towards the learning practitioner, an orientation which doesn't facilitate learning (Downey 2008) and reflected the fact that the close imitation of movement wasn't expected). This adjusting to the learning practitioners' abilities indicated that like in *learning to dance* scaffolding was a part of the guidance encountered in *just dancing* contexts although not explicitly acknowledged (see Wood *et al.* 1976; Hobsbaum & Peters 1996; Bliss *et al.* 1996). A form of sequencing was also present although this was centred not in the difficulty of the task but in the maturity of the practitioners—Erica's father expected her to dance herself rather than being carried as she had been when younger. Unlike in *learning to dance* and speaking to the principal aim of *just dancing*—dancing and socializing over the production of particular movements—learning practitioners danced with music from the outset, dancing to the entirety of a piece of music without being either presented with parsed movement or asked by those guiding to stop and repeat sections. As a result, the experience of dance enskilment in *just dancing* contexts was not segmented nor was it decontextualized—learning practitioners instead learned to dance *as they danced* and were seen to do so. As segmentation and decontextualization were both particularly prominent features in the experience of learning in *learning to dance* contexts, their absence in *just dancing* contributed to the difference my experienced in learning in *just dancing*.

As in *learning to dance*, evaluation was also a part of *just dancing*.

Well, you can see that man, that older man, he doesn't really know how to dance huapango, Adriana says as we sip our hot drinks and pull our sweaters closer. He's not moving with the music and, you know when you're supposed to stop to listen? He just keeps dancing. She pauses then says, but what's good is he's doing it. Lots of people, when they get old, they don't. Then she adds with a laugh, maybe he doesn't stop because he likes dancing so much!

August 24, 2014.

Adriana indicated that evaluation was passed both on a practitioner's skill and on their participation in *just dancing* contexts. While this was true in *learning*

contexts the experience of evaluation in *just dancing* contexts differed significantly. Where in *learning to dance* evaluation, both positive and negative, was a key tool seen to help practitioners improve and/or maintain their skill and so was purposefully shared with practitioners, evaluation in *just dancing* contexts was viewed much more ambiguously with those making evaluations in these contexts often not sharing their observations with the practitioners in question. When people did intentionally share their evaluations in *just dancing* contexts, these tended to be only positive and directed principally at children²⁸ in the form of praise.

Mira! Eduardo says excitedly as Orlando stomps about enthusiastically but not exactly expertly in the centre of our dancing circle. Mira! Ya sabe como a zapatear, He already knows how to dance with zapateado. Around the circle people smile and nod in Orlando's direction.

Orlando, smiling, doubles his efforts to make noise with his steps until his mother steps, Ya, papi, ya. Tus pies van a dolarte. That's enough. Your feet are going to hurt.

November 13, 2014.

Positive evaluation arrived in the form of body language and facial expression—smiling, nodding, and clapping, recordings—taking photos and videos acted as a form of approval, and verbal praise to the practitioner and/or to caregivers and parents when learning practitioners were within earshot, a phenomenon also noted by de Haan (1999). What I found interesting was that this shared praise, while superficially directed towards a practitioner's skill, instead often served (and was intended) to reward and encourage participation, speaking to this aim of activity in *just dancing*.²⁹ On occasion my companions also used gentle negative evaluation to the same end.

²⁸ While I was often offered praise—a thumbs up frequently along with comments about how my dancing improved—this was consistent with what was offered to the children in the community and was likewise designed to encourage my participation more than anything else.

²⁹ In contrast, when on rare occasions adults were praised for their dancing this was generally because of their exceptional skill and wasn't intended to encourage participation, usually because these adults already actively engaged in dancing.

We've been watching videos of the kids dancing at the fiesta, an all day and all night affair. And where were you, muchachio? You didn't dance? Pedro's mother chides him, squeezing him to her and attempting to plant a kiss on his cheek.

Noooo, Pedro replied defensively, wriggling. I danced, I danced, I danced a lot. I'm just not in the video.

He was already sleeping by that point I think, Pedro's sister explained.

January 10, 2015.

It's important to note that the gentle negative evaluation used to encourage (or cajole) practitioners in *just dancing* addressed participation, not skill. The negative evaluation of skill in *just dancing* contexts wasn't something that was usually expressly shared with practitioners. Instead it was often encountered as here in passing through laughter or commentary overheard.

Pedro is dancing some distance from his mother using his patented karate moves. Someone else's younger brother passes through and, pointing a thumb behind him at Pedro, says with laugh and a smile, do you see how he's dancing? This is said just loud enough that Pedro overhears. He stops dancing immediately and beats a hasty retreat to our table where he buries his face in his sister's chest.

July 8, 2013.

For the most part the sharing of the negative evaluation of skill in *just dancing* contexts was avoided as it was understood to have a detrimental affect on budding practitioners.

She used to dance all the time, says Maria Elena of her daughter. Then once she danced at a family party and my brother-in-law, I think he laughed or said something, joked, you know, because after that, she didn't dance anymore. I hope she starts again but, I don't know. She's not interested.

September 16, 2013.

Being teased or mocked about one's skill (even imagining this), and for young men in some families about participating in dancing at all, was often seen to result in practitioners abandoning dance or never starting to begin with. Just as positive evaluation was understood to encourage participation and so learning, the negative evaluation of skill and at times participation in *just dancing* contexts (as well as excessive negative evaluation of skill in *learning* contexts) was seen to potentially discourage practitioners from engaging in dancing and learning. This spoke to the fact that my companions understood affect to influence learning, both in *learning to dance* (recall Stefanie's frustration and upset above) and *just dancing* contexts, with negative affect—anxiety, embarrassment, and boredom for example—along with positive affect—such as enjoyment, excitement, and pride—seen to effect the practitioners' motivation to learn (see Milton 2002; Hascher 2010). It also suggested that those offering guidance in both of these contexts were understood to guide (at least in part) the affective experience these practitioners' encountered in the process of learning despite the significant difference in the form and extent of guidance associated with *just dancing* and *learning to dance*.

In sum, in this chapter I've suggested that *learning to dance* was characterized by the division of participants into roles centred on learning. The asymmetrical relationship and experience of authority and discipline that resulted from this division in *learning to dance* contrasted with the experience of learning amongst friends and family in *just dancing*. In both contexts of enskilment, guiding practitioners were shown both to offer support through scaffolding, parsing, and task sequencing and to evaluate others although here again differences in the style and intensity of the guidance and the type of evaluation marked *learning to dance* and *just dancing* as overlapping but different kinds of enskilment experiences.

Conclusión

Conclusion

In this section, I've explored my companions' experiences of dance enskilment. I've shown that learning for my companions was an ongoing process in which my companions interacted with others and one which involved the use of observation, imitation, and the guiding support of those more accomplished to develop, but without certainty, dancing skill. While this understanding of learning corresponds to much of what has been written about learning in anthropology, I've demonstrated that by looking more closely at our companions' actual understandings of, and the practices involved in, this learning, variation emerges. In my companions' case, this revealed that at least two different experiences of enskilment were at work. These involved different intents, different understandings of the learning practices, different focuses of learning, different participants in different kinds of relationships, and different contexts. An examination of these different experiences of learning is important. It offers a better understanding of our companions' actual and varied experience of learning which I've shown can have important consequences for our understanding of learning more generally. Here, for example, my exploration of *learning to dance* and *just dancing* has suggested that enskilment encompasses moments long before and long after those moments explicitly connected to learning, it has challenged the notion of participation as relying on enskilment, and it has pointed to the significant place of coercion and self-motivation or desire in learning, a topic underrepresented in the literature but of great importance to my companions.

Section

IV

Connectando

Connecting

In this section I look at how dancing, dancing events, and the variety of activity that was a part of these events served to connect my companions together with others. I highlight the range of connections my companions fostered through these events and activities and point to a shared way of knowing as forming a basis for these relations (Chapter 12). I also explore the ways in which these relations were generated and articulated through the concrete activity and actual interactions in which my companions engaged within dancing and dancing events (Chapter 13).

Prefacio: **Estando juntos**

Preface: **Being together**

In the danza Azteca workshop, the danza instructor, barefoot with a long ponytail trailing down his back, says, Baile social is fun. It's about being together, being with people. Danza is different. It's about being with nature, bringing nature to us.

He reaches up and sweeps his arms downward, repeating the lightning move he's just taught the group and filling the studio with sound from the rattles tied to his wrists and ankles.

It's about honouring your ancestors, he says as he repeats the kneeling, bowing, and offering move the students have just learned.

Some weeks later I ask Juan, another instructor, about what I observed.

Danza's not just about connecting us to our ancestors, he says. It's more than that. We're also like a family, like a second family. We spend a lot of time together, I mean, a looot of time. Practices, travelling, we eat together, some of them do stuff together outside of class, go to each other's parties, that sort of thing. It's really like a family.

July 25 & August 19, 2015.

Dancing was an activity through which my companions generated, fostered, and articulated connections with others. According to the first *danza Azteca* instructor above, for example, dancing generated relations between broader and disparate categories of things—here practitioners and nature, essentially the social world and the natural one conceived of by my companions as separate entities. The instructors also both suggested that through dancing my companions forged connections with other people, connections Strathern (1995) refers to as concrete relations (as opposed to abstract relations, the relations between ideas). The relations between people are the focus of a great deal of work on dancing with the literature on dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States no exception. The emphasis in much of this work,

as I suggest in Chapter 4, tends to be on the role of dancing as a practice through which practitioners were made a part of an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1983). This is a group of people who experience a connection to one another often through a shared sense of identification—the notion of indigeneity that was a core feature of *danza Azteca* above, for example—regardless of their separation in either time or physical space. While membership in such communities was an important aspect of dancing for my companions, as Juan notes this wasn’t the only type of concrete connection that my companions fostered within their dancing practice. They also fostered actual, face-to-face relations with other people—the ‘second family’ of which Juan spoke, for example—individuals with whom my companions could actually meet in contrast to the more ephemeral others of imagined communities.

In comparison to work on dancing and imagined community, these concrete face-to-face connections and how they are generated are a much less frequent topic of study, a fact Amit (2002: 3) suggests reflects the scholastic interest in globalization, deterritorialization, and displacement which has led to the more pronounced focus on sociality as idea or quality over actualized social forms of relations. There are exceptions. Shoupe (2001), for example, looks at how people come together within the context of Scottish country dancing, while Hamera (2007) does the same with groups of ballet and Pilates practitioners. For the most part, however, these face-to-face relations go unexplored in work on dancing despite the fact that the majority of scholars anchor their studies within groups of practitioners—whether in performance dance groups, dance classes and competitions, and dancing events—who undoubtedly share and generate face-to-face connections with one another. At times this results in studies in which these groups of practitioners appear more as generic access points to the underlying themes of interest—often identification—than as the complex groups of people that we know them to be. Work such as van Ede’s (2014) study on Japanese flamenco reveals just how much the relational dynamics within these groups can shape the practitioners’ understanding and experience of dancing, highlighting the importance of exploring the face-to-face relations between practitioners even when other themes such as identification and imagined

community are the focus of research. Indeed, Amit (2002) proposes that imagined communities and actualized social forms of relations aren't independent from one another. Instead, she suggests these are interconnected within the same relational process, a notion that works to address the issue often identified within Anderson's (1982) work, that is, how it is that people experience a connection to others they will never meet.

An exploration of my companions' concrete face-to-face connections with others within dancing and dancing events is of value apart from the contributions it might make to work on imagined community. This is because for many of my companions, a, if not *the*, principal value in dancing and in dancing events lay in the opportunities these provided for socializing, that is, meeting, spending time with, and developing face-to-face relations with others. In choosing to focus predominantly on these concrete face-to-face relations, then, I have allowed the interests and values of my companions to guide my hand, finding myself at the same time working to answer Rapport's call for more attention to be paid to how people 'create and sustain actual, emplaced social relationships' (Rapport 2010: 145; see also Amit 2002, 2010).

In this section, then, I ask how my companions generated, fostered, and articulated relations with others through dancing and its related activities, with a particular, but not exclusive, focus on concrete face-to-face connections. In this exploration I follow in the footsteps of both Shoupe (2001) and Hamera (2007) although in contrast to these scholars my interest is in all relations, not only those experienced as unifying. In this, my discussion falls more in line with Moore and Long's (2013) work on sociality which they define as 'a dynamic and interactive relational matrix' (2013: 2). The understanding that this definition offers of the concrete relations that my companions developed and articulated through dancing is particularly useful. It makes space for a number of different forms of connection by avoiding the equation so often made between sociality and sociability or 'we' feeling (see, for example, Szanto & Moran 2016). As well, understanding my companions' relations as 'dynamic' and 'interactive' underscores the processual nature of the connections between people and the

fact that these connections are neither given nor enacted in situ but rather are developed and negotiated through action with others over time, an understanding also to be found in the work of Ingold and Vergunst (2008) on walking, Pink (2008) on community gardening, and Vergunst and Vermehren (2012) on slow cycling.

Here I look at the variety of relations my companions cultivated through dancing and dancing events, the shared way of knowing within and through which these developed, and the ways that my companions fostered, contested, and articulated their connections with others through the myriad activity of dancing events.

12 Se relacionando

Relating

In this chapter, I argue that a multi-layered shared way of knowing allowed my companions to develop and articulate relations with others and that the relations produced through this shared way of knowing within dancing and dancing events weren't singular in form but multiple and shifting. This reveals dancing and dancing events to be a relational process for my companions.

Sabiendo compartido • Shared Way of knowing

Fue mi papá, Gabriela says when I ask how she first started to dance. It was my Dad, he was a really good dancer. He could do banda, pasa doble, everything. And muy suelta, muy facile, really smooth, really easy. He had, he had, I don't know, sason, Gabriela says, shimmying her shoulders and giving me a taste of the flavour of her father's dancing. He always said to me, Gabriela Maria, come with me, all the time, every party. I have good memories of that. I danced with him all the time, every party. Nunca se cansaba, he never got tired. He was always full of energy, very happy, joked a lot.

And your mother? I ask, thinking at the same time that Gabriela has inherited more than just her father's love of dancing.

Oh, she was quiet, Gabriela says. She stayed in her seat all the time, just watching my brothers and me with my dad. I used to say, mami, prestame mi papá, mom, loan me my dad, so that we could dance.

June 24, 2013.

As Gabriela indicated here, my companions developed their dancing practice through their relations with others making the activity of dancing innately relational, the product of my companions' relations with others as I note in Sections II and III. As the circumstances of Gabriela's learning hinted, the

connections which produced my companions' dancing practice weren't limited to those between learning practitioner and guiding practitioner. Rather my companions' dancing practice grew from the connections shared between many people within a whole web of relations. As Toren's (2012) work reminds us, there is a historical depth to these relations and so to the practice of dancing, making the activity of dancing the product not just of a single web of relations but of multiple interconnected webs of relations over time. The same can be said for my companions' understanding of dancing which, through their relations with one another, they came to understand as an activity that involved movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm, as I suggest in Section II. This understanding of dancing was shared³⁰ by my companions, allowing diverse individuals to recognize the same efforts in the same way, as dancing. Together with other elements as explored below, this shared dancing practice and understanding was a part of a shared way of knowing. This shared way of knowing offered my companions a mutually intelligible framework which facilitated 'interpersonal and communal exchanges' (Hamera 2007) between my companions; in essence, it was a flexible framework through which my companions were able to generate and foster connections with others.

Looking at some of the other elements in this shared way of knowing, it's important to keep in mind that my companions developed this way of knowing, this framework, through their interactions and relations with one another. This means that this shared way of knowing with its many facets wasn't a pre-existing base from which my companions' interpersonal connections arose but rather was an emergent framework, developing alongside these connections, at once the product of, and producing, these relations.

³⁰ Here I use 'share' and 'shared' with some reservation for they might be taken to suggest a sameness to or complete coherence within my companions' ways of knowing in regard to dancing. This is not what I intend as each person's way of knowing necessarily varied from all others, shaped as it was by each person's own unique life experiences. There was, however, enough overlap in my companions' varied ways of knowing in regard to dancing to speak of a roughly 'shared' way of knowing. This overlapping but not identical 'sharing' is what I intend here.

In addition to a broader shared understanding of what dancing was, my companions' shared way of knowing in regard to dancing also included a shared, more local standard of practice. By this I mean that my companions danced, that is moved and generated an interaction with the music/rhythm, in ways that were coherent with the practice as generally held within my companions' community. This shared standard of practice facilitated joint activity.

I have to find somebody to teach me banda, Marcus says when I ask how his search for a steady girlfriend is going. I need to know how to do banda. Nobody here knows how to dance cumbia good. All the women here, the ones born here too you know, they like to dance corridos and rancheras. It's always corridos and rancheras. So I need to learn that then I can dance more.

September 6, 2013.

Dancing and dancing particular styles of dance meant that that people could engage in the same activity in a similar way, that is, dance together. While a simple idea, this was significant. As Marcus indicated, a shared practice brought my companions into close contact with one another and provided them with a common activity, both of which facilitated, as above, the exchanges from which the connections between people developed. Importantly, this shared standard of practice allowed people from different generations and backgrounds to dance together. As Pink (2008) and Vergunst and Vermehren (2012) also note in their studies of gardening and cycling respectively, the fostering of my companions' connections through this joint activity suggested that the relations between my companions weren't simply the static and given product of a pre-existing structure but instead emerged and were shaped through my companions' activity and interaction with one another.

My companions' shared way of knowing in regard to dancing also involved shared communicative and interpretive conventions.

Do you want to see the flowers he got me? Adriana asks and she shows me a slim bouquet of roses tied to a teddy bear embroidered with the

words 'I love you'. It has pride of place in her room where it will live along with all her other trophies as 'memory of first date'.

So you had a good time? I ask.

Ya, Adriana bubbles. We danced to everything, even the baladas. It was funny because when we first went out to dance I got all mixed up with our hands, like I was going to do like normal but then he got my hand and put it on his shoulder and then only danced with one hand. I was surprised. I never danced like that before. He danced holding my waist too.

So everybody who saw you thought you were a couple, I say, smiling seeing how happy this makes her.

Ya, definitely, Adriana says smiling back at me. We looked like a couple.

July 5, 2014.

A shared local standard of practice, as above, not only facilitated joint activity but also allowed for a shared system of interpretation and understanding. As Adriana indicated, this made dancing readable and it was experienced as conveying a variety of information—much of it pertaining to the connections between and of the practitioners—which others, because of this shared system of interpretation, could understand. For example, because of the association between music/dancing and place, often the music and style of dance in which my companions chose to engage revealed their connections with people in other places—*huapango*, *corridos*, *rancheras* with those in rural, often western states in Mexico, *salsa* and *cumbia* with those in Mexico City and more urban areas, *hip hop* and English language pop with those in the United States. The frequency with which people danced together, the distance between them as they danced, and the partner hold employed all signalled the type of connection between them (romantic or otherwise, enjoyed or not), both to each other and to those watching. As might be expected, my companions also shared a local aesthetic (see Chapter 11). This guided my companions in aesthetically evaluating the dancing that they encountered—their own and that of others—in a similar way. These shared conventions were what Hamera (2007) calls a 'shared vernacular',

a common mother tongue which allowed my companions to communicate through dancing, sharing in the interpretation and evaluation of the dancing efforts they encountered. This 'shared vernacular' was shared across practitioners and non-practitioners alike, indicating that my companions' shared way of knowing in regard to dancing wasn't a framework exclusive to a few but rather was a part of living amongst my companions more broadly. This meant that this shared way of knowing had the potential to foster relations between non-practitioners as well as practitioners.

What is interesting here is that while these communicative and interpretive conventions facilitated concrete relations between my companions, they also introduced another form of relation into my companions' dancing, abstract relation.

See, he's not pausing where everyone else pauses. He just keeps moving, my young companion says just loudly enough for me to hear and quietly enough for me to understand that asking about whether the older gentleman is a good dancer isn't really a question I should have asked, or at least not here.

He doesn't change his steps either, she adds watching him again. You know, when the music changes, you have to change your steps but he doesn't. He's just doing the same thing for the whole song. That means he's probably making the same beat for the whole thing too.

I have a lot to learn, I think to myself, having noticed none of this, not the difference in stepwork nor the difference in sound, in the gentleman's dancing.

January 19, 2015.

Abstract relation, according to Strathern (1995: 11), is the connection between ideas which emerges through the use of logic, cause and effect, class and category and can be found as my companions compared and categorized, as here for example, the dancing they encountered in their efforts to read and evaluate it. Dancing, then, was a dynamic relational activity on two fronts, generating both

concrete and abstract relations for my companions. Acknowledging the part played by these abstract relations, at least those which resulted from comparison and classification, in my companions' dancing is important because it draws attention to the fact that in addition to sharing a dancing practice and a way of interpreting this practice, my companions also shared in a way of perceiving dancing. By this I mean that through their involvement in dancing over time with others, that is their attunement and responsiveness, my companions developed a shared, skilled way of seeing (see Grasseni 2008) and of listening (see Downey 2002; Rice 2010)—neither of which I had above—along with a shared way of moving (Downey 2005) in combination with other senses. This shared enskilment meant that my companions shared not only in ideas about dancing but also an understanding of the activity along with the world around them on a perceptual level.

My companions' shared way of knowing in regard to dancing—their shared understanding of the activity, their shared standard of practice, their shared communicative and interpretive conventions, and their shared perception—was embedded within, and shaped by, a broader shared social world.

Lupita laughs after I tell her I feel a bit funny about eating the sweet empanada she's taken from the altar and placed on a scrap of paper towel in front of me.

But you said they eat it, I say to her, my funny feeling about eating the Día de los Muertos offerings for her late brother and a recently deceased uncle not abating.

Aye, Margaret, Lupita says, a refrain I hear again and again from her for the many things that I don't know but should. Everybody knows they don't eat like us, she explains. They just take the taste of the food, the smell, el sabor. That's how they eat.

November 3, 2013.

According to Schütz (1972[1932]), in coming together people create and are immersed in shared worlds of sedimented meaning and come to share an

understanding of their social world as a result. Lupita's frequent admonishments of me, as above, were evidence of the social world that my companions shared, one which I often struggled to navigate. This shared social world encompassed not just my companions' shared way of knowing in regard to dancing but also the immense variety of other thoughts, activities, and places which were a part of their lives. The shared understanding that was possible through this shared social world of meaning generally occurred without my companions having to reflect on that understanding, this only coming to my companions' attention when, for example, they encountered someone like me who didn't share the same ideas—about the dead, about how to properly turn tortillas, about what shoes to wear to particular dance events. The connections between my companions, then, were fostered not only by a shared way of knowing in regard to dancing but also by the shared social world of which this way of knowing and my companions were a part. Together this social world and my companions' way of knowing in regard to dancing provided a fundamental and generally unremarked upon shared framework through which my companions could understand what others said, thought, and did, so facilitating relations between them.

Relaciones • Relations

It's Chela's birthday and the small cement patio out back is packed. We wind our way between and around the dancing couples, our progress marked by a ripple of pats on the back, handshakes, nods, shouted greetings, waves. When we reach the back we squeeze ourselves into seats at the table with Lupita, Eduardo, Adriana, Inez, Laura, and another couple I recognize but can't place. Laura introduces us to her aunt visiting to secure her permanent resident status.

Conversation swirls – a recent trip the kids have made to Mexico to visit their grandmother and attend the huapango festival, diabetes and someone's attempt to eat more healthily, how steady work is compared to last year, Susie's anxiety-inducing plans to go back to college in the fall, how long I'm staying this time, Laura's aunt's news from home. Lupita asks who the trio is and if they have a card. She's always looking

for good groups to hire for her parties. Adriana wonders if Manolo, her crush, will show up although it's unlikely. The kids thump a soccer ball against the back of the house.

Inezito arrives and somewhat seriously introduces his new girlfriend, Rubi, all smiles, red lipstick, and curls. This is followed by another introduction as Maricela's cousin pauses at the table, puffed with pride, to introduce his new granddaughter, so cocooned against the cold in pink fleece that we catch only a glimpse.

Ven a bailar, Enrique says, placing a hand on his long-time friend Eduardo's shoulder and motioning with the other towards the crowded dance floor. Come and dance.

Ahorita, ahorita, Eduardo says, squeezing an inch of cold air between his thumb and index finger to ask for more time. Holding a tequila bottle aloft and turning back to the table to fill shot glasses, he says with a laugh, I need more help first.

January 17, 2015.

With the shared way of knowing examined above providing a shared framework through which relations could be developed, my companions fostered a variety of connections with others through dancing and dancing events. This variety included both face-to-face relations with those around them and connections with people outside of the actual dancing and dancing events. Often different kinds of dancing and dancing events were associated by my companions more principally with one or the other of these types of relation. Private celebrations like Maricela's birthday here, for example, along with social dances, and nightclubs and the *baile social* these involved were thus principally connected to the cultivation of face-to-face relations and it's easy to understand why. These events drew a large number and wide variety of people together in the same place and at the same time, providing my companions with an opportunity to both foster their existing face-to-face relations as well as established new ones. Turning to the first, with busy schedules and living at a distance from each other, my companions infrequently gathered to spend casual time with friends and extended family. Dancing events, then, offered a welcome exception, providing

my companions with the chance to socialize—that is to talk, to drink, and to dance—with others. These events, especially those marking more significant rites of passage such as *quinceañeras* and weddings, often also drew people both from other places in California and, for those few who were permitted to travel, from Mexico. This made these events opportunities to visit with people my companions had often not seen in many years, as with Laura's aunt above, for example. Here the same was also true in reverse with those who could travel—those who couldn't at times sent their children in their stead—coordinating visits to Mexico with public or family dancing events, enabling them to spend time, and so connect, with many others.

My companions didn't only cultivated existing face-to-face relations at dancing events but also fostered new ones. As Inezito and Maricelga's cousin did, my companions frequently used these gatherings to declare their new relations to the wider group—a new girlfriend and a new family member here. In doing so, my companions also generated new relations between these new additions and others as introductions were made around the gathered group. These dancing events, particularly nightclubs and social dances (although the system of invitation in common used—invitees were permitted to bring a number of their own guests with them—meant also private celebrations), also served as my single companions' principal opportunity for meeting potential partners as men and women so often travelled in different circles from one another.

See you, José says almost immediately when we hit the hall. He pulls at his collar and his shirt tails to make sure his shirt is smooth. He offers us his broad impish smile and a wink and then is gone through a silvered break in the sea of bodies that steps and turns around us.

At the end of the night we are tipped out, sweating and blinking, into the brightly lit corridor. We don't have to wait long for José for soon he saunters towards us, passing knots of young women who hobble along the carpet in bare feet, impossibly high heeled shoes swinging in their hands.

So? I say and José holds up his phone and wiggles it back and forth as proof of the number...or numbers?...he's collected.

She lives in Richmond, he says as we head for the escalator. We're going to get together next weekend maybe, a bunch of us, and go out dancing again.

January 29, 2015.

As José demonstrated, my companions often danced at these events to develop new face-to-face relations with others. Significantly José's plans for the following weekend pointed to the fact that building one's web of face-to-face relations even by just one connection inevitably meant that the web grew exponentially to include relations to others not present at the event—connections to the new connection's friends and family, for example. This is important as it highlights the fact that the relations between my companions were never simply just a relation between two but a compound relation involving many. On a side note, these new relations meant the growth of my companions' webs of connections not only in terms of number of connections but also in terms of geographic range, for example, as people were connected to different places in the United States and Mexico.

Related to this was the fact that these dancing events also offered my companions the opportunity to foster relations with others, those with whom my companions had existing face-to-face connections, who were not present. As Laura's aunt and those visiting from Mexico usually did, people arrived with, distributed, and took away news and greetings from and to family and friends through dancing events. As well, those people invited to private functions but unable to attend often sent something consumable in their place—generally alcohol—so that the tequila Eduardo was distributing above was a relation made liquid and consumed by those at the table. Although not everyone who imbibed was likely to know exactly who had sent the offering, the hosts did, meaning that at minimum the hosts' relation with the guest unable to attend was fostered through this contribution at the event. The musical group at Maricela's party, a

huapango group, is also worth mentioning here. *Huapango* is a style of music that is often very regional, composed and played as in this example by local musicians. As a result, the lyrics often speak to places, people, and local happenings familiar to my companions, so cultivating a connection between those present at the event and the people present through song. As these examples demonstrate, my companions fostered concrete face-to-face relations through dancing events with both those present and those absent. The latter is interesting as it points to variation in the way my companions' face-to-face relations could be fostered, that is, not just through face-to-face interaction but also mediated through a third party—whether Laura's aunt, tequila, or song.

Importantly, while dancing events like Maricela's party and the *baile social* encountered within it were principally associated with this range of concrete face-to-face relations, in practice my companions also fostered connections with broader, more abstract groups of people within imagined communities (Anderson 1983). As so much of the literature has suggested, dancing is a particularly potent practice in regard to generating these latter connections (see Chapter 4). The *huapango* in the event above, associated as it was not just with Mexico and its more rural regions but with the home state and hometown of many in attendance, provided a point of cohesion or shared identification linking my companions to others not just on the dance floor but in a number of imagined communities—communities of Mexicanos, *campesinos* (country folk/farmers), *Michoacanos* (people from the state of Michoacán), and *Aporense* (people from the town of Aporo). As Shoupe (2001) also finds in her work on Scottish dancing, the lyrics of the songs reinforce the connections evoked by the dance and music style speaking as they did of Mexico, its citizens, and way of life. Although this music and dancing can easily be seen to foster my companions' connections to imagined communities, it's important to note that within the context of my companions' dancing events these connections were generated in myriad ways, through music and dance practice but also through food, dress and footwear, language, and custom. As music and dancing rarely occurred apart from these other elements for my companions, the connections my companions fostered with imagined communities should be viewed as the product of a compound of

these practices rather than music and dance alone as is so often the case in work on dancing.



Image 39 Dancing at the Latino Arts Fair

Just as private celebrations, nightclubs, and social dances were principally associated with the cultivation of concrete face-to-face relations, many of the dance classes and presentations which were a part of my fieldwork as well as the ‘presentational’ dance that frequently characterized these were associated with the generation of membership within imagined communities.

The dancers push their way past the knitting and floral arrangements, the cake, jello, and religious literature that fill the tables to reach the stage at the other end of the gymnasium. Yolanda holds a squealing microphone and manages to announce the next dance.

Anyone here from El Salvador? she calls out and is immediately answered by a smattering of clapping and whooping, some those standing next to us wave wildly.

This next one is from El Salvador, Yolanda says and dancers fill the stage with blue and white ripples. Yolanda waits until the spectators finish clapping and asks, Anyone here from Jalisco?

Half the room erupts in cheers and whistles.

After the performance I follow the group out to where they're packing up their costumes.

November 9, 2013.

Here again a number of features within this dancing event served to generate connections between those present and others in imagined communities. These features included the music and dancing as well as, for example, the fact that the presentation was a part of the Latino Arts Fair (so suggesting a connection to a pan-Latin American community) and the announcements Yolanda made identifying the origin of each dance. Concrete face-to-face relations were also fostered through the event as, for example, the dancing practitioners worked together to produce their performance and Yolanda scrambled with the DJ to fix the microphone. The reactions of the crowd to Yolanda's announcements are also interesting here as this clapping, cheering, and whistling served to generate connection between those present at the event as they were made aware of their commonalities through joint action and between those present and the imagined communities associated with the places Yolanda called out. This indicated that a variety of relations—concrete face-to-face relations with those present and absent along with connections to others in imagined communities—were generated within my companions' dancing events regardless of their principal associations and that often these varied relations were fostered together at once. Dancing events were thus relational in two directions serving as a contraction in that they brought my companions together within the same physical space and time to generate face-to-face relations with others and as an expansion in that through these events my companions fostered their relations with people in places and even times well beyond the immediate.

A quick survey of some of the face-to-face connections I've mentioned above hints that the face-to-face relations my companions fostered through dancing and dancing events weren't a single type of connection but a variety.

You know I met Juan dancing, Liliana tells me over enchiladas in her tiny kitchen.

You did? I say in surprise, recalling that Liliana, a busy mother of two taking ESL classes and volunteering at the elementary school, has said she doesn't dance much.

Ya, when I was a teenager. Me and my sisters went to the same party and he was there. He was a really good dancer. He still is. A few times after that we saw him and then once he asked me to dance. I was really shy then but I danced anyway and we danced together more after that. Then one day he came to my house with flowers and asked if we could go out. You should have seen my dad! He was so strict but he let me.

October 16, 2013.

Liliana's description of how she met her husband Juan highlighted the fact that my companions experienced a variety of connections through dancing and dancing events. These included the ephemeral connection she and Juan developed through simply being present at the same dancing event as well as the connections they experienced dancing together for the first time, as a couple, as married couple, and finally with their two young sons in the living room with Just Dance on the Wii. These relations varied, then, from the fleeting connections of shared presence through those less permanent but potential-imbued connections of first and second meetings for example, to the bond or pact between husband and wife and to these bonds made flesh in my companions' children. These different relations carried with them different obligations, expectations, and rights and were accompanied by different senses of solidarity or unity, or none at all. Significantly, Griselda and Juan demonstrate how these relations weren't fixed but could alter with time. This suggests, as Long and Moore (2013) also note, that my companions' relations were neither singular in form nor static but instead were various—some particularly strong, others not—

and shifting, with dancing and dancing events playing a hand in the fostering of, and reflecting, this variety of ever-changing connections. Dancing and dancing events, then, generated a wide range of connections of which the strongest, Liliana and Juan's bond made physical through their children for example, was but one form and certainly not the only meaningful relation fostered through this activity and type of event for my companions.

Just as the connections generated through dancing and dancing events weren't singular and static, neither they were always experienced by my companions as particularly 'positive'.

Sabes lo que es una zorra? a friend asks me. Do you know what a zorra is? It's a woman who will try to steal your boyfriend or your husband. I had a friend like that. We had a party here, we used to have lots of parties, and as soon as we put the music on, she went straight to David and started dancing with him really close. I was so mad. You can't do that, that's my husband. She said, 'it's only dancing' but I know her. I kicked her out. I told her get out and don't come again. She never came to another party that we had here. We don't see her anymore.

August 13, 2014.

At times dancing and dancing events resulted in connections that were experienced negatively by my companions. Here dancing—because of the relational potential it was seen to have—dramatically and 'negatively' altered³¹ the existing relationship between two friends. Young men, accused of dancing with someone's girlfriend, similarly reported getting into scuffles with other men at dancing events while young woman spoke of being touched inappropriately by dance partners, in both cases my companions fostering connections with these others as a result of dancing but connections which were negatively experienced. This is an important finding as it contrasts with the long held portrayal of dancing as an activity and dancing events as gathering which engender positive

³¹ I have chosen the verb 'alter' here purposefully because my friend's connection with *la zorra*, the vixen, didn't cease to exist after this incident but rather persisted, as her story, every telling of which preserved this connection, indicated.

feeling and a sense of coming together or *communitas* (Turner 1995[1969]) amongst practitioners—take, for example, Radcliffe-Brown’s description of dancing as an activity in which ‘all the members of a community are able harmoniously to cooperate and act in unity’ (1964[1922]: 249). This is a portrayal that persists in more contemporary work as well—Shoupe (2001: 125), for example, in an otherwise interesting study, suggests that dancing creates ‘an experience of [...] collective connectedness’ with ‘connectedness’ portrayed as a heart-warming union of the practitioners. Instead, my companions’ experiences demonstrated that dancing and dancing events were more complex and ambiguous, an activity and a gathering that fostered both ‘positively’ and ‘negatively’ experienced connections between people.

What I also found interesting was that my companions used dancing and dancing event not only to foster their own relations but also the relations between others.

When I first met Diego, I didn’t dance, Antonia says, elbows pressing into the plastic table to lean into our conversation over the band. At parties he always danced with his sisters or cousins or somebody and I was always just sitting, you know, doing nothing. It was so boring. I was like, oh no, I have to dance. Giving me a raised eyebrow, Antonia adds, Anyway you know if I don’t dance, he’s going to find someone who does. That’s not going to happen, no way, so I started dancing with him.

November 19, 2016.

Antonia’s comment indicated that she managed Diego’s face-to-face relations with others through dancing as well, dancing with Diego to openly declare their connection to one another as well as to prevent him from dancing, and so establishing a connection, with another potential partner. This managing of the connections between other people through dancing and dancing events was a frequent occurrence at family gatherings as parents attempted to foster the relations between their children and other family members by bringing them to the events and encouraging them to dance together. This occurred within dance academies and clubs as well as parents enrolled their children also in an attempt

to foster a connection, this time with imagined communities. This meant that through dancing and dancing events, my companions cultivated a range of relations, their own as well as those between others.

In sum, in this chapter I've demonstrated that a shared way of knowing—including an understanding of what dancing was, a shared local standard of practice, shared interpretive and communicative conventions, and a shared social world—offered my companions a shared framework through and within which they were able to develop and articulate relations with others. I've shown these relations to be diverse so that within dancing and dancing events my companions fostered face-to-face connections with and between particular people both present at dancing events and at a distance as well as connections with others within broader imagined communities. These relations also varied in form from ephemeral connection to cemented bond, shifted over time, and were ambiguous, at times experienced 'negatively', at others 'positively'. Together the shared way of knowing underlying my companions' practice, developed as it was through my companions' relations with one another, along with the fact that this shared way of knowing enabled relations to be generated through dancing and dancing events revealed dancing and dancing events to be a relational process, produced by and producing my companions' relations with one another. This was something my companions themselves acknowledged in the way in which they used dancing and dancing events to develop and articulate their relations with those around them, the topic we turn to next.

13 Actividades

Activities

In this chapter, I continue my argument that dancing and dancing events were a relational process for my companions. I look more specifically at concrete situated activities to demonstrate that my companions used these activities to foster and articulate their relations with one another. This is only a selection of the myriad activities which were a part of dancing events for my companions and I present them in the order in which they occurred—before, during, and after the occasion.

Planeando • Planning

Some girls get padrinos for eeeverything, Martha says as we watch the quinceañera, basically a torso and tiara-ed head atop a huge mass of pink ruffles, make slow circles around her chambelan of honour.

Like what? I ask not looking at her but glued to the dance floor. This is my first quinceañera celebration and the family laughs at how many questions I have about everything.

Like they'll have one for the church, she says, beginning to count off on her fingers. For the hall, the cake, the dress, the shoes, , for, ummm, the limo, for, like, makeup and hair and jewellery and stuff, the music, the photos and video. Like everything.

During the evening I've noticed some adults with boutonnieres and corsages. Who are they? I ask Martha as this group drifts towards the dance floor, the men taking turns dancing with the quinceañera, the women with her chambelan.

Them? she asks, pointing. They're all her padrinos, I think, the people who helped pay for everything.

April 15, 2013.

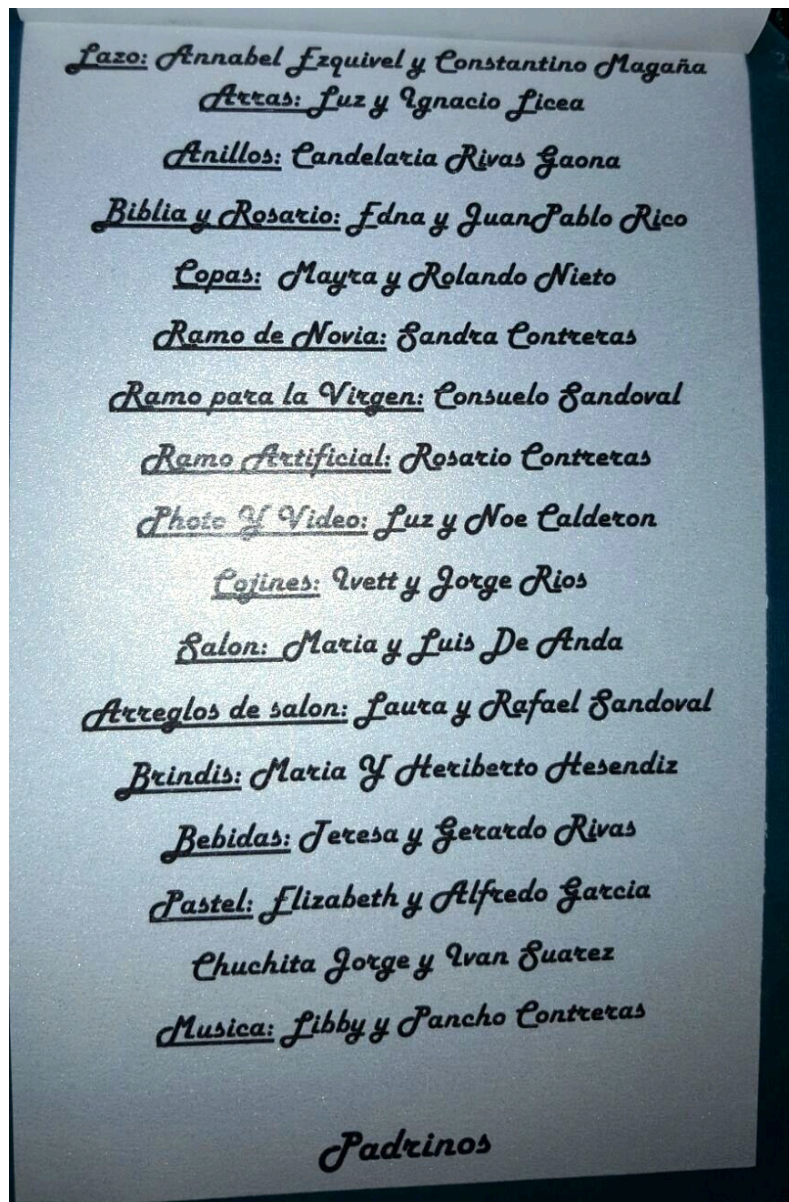


Image 40 Padrinos listed on a wedding invitation

(From top down: *lazo* - marriage cord; *arras* - coins given by groom to bride; *anillos* - rings; *biblio y rosario* - bible and rosary; *copas* - cups, *ramo de novia* - bride's bouquet; *ramo para la Virgen* - bouquet for the Virgin; *ramo artificial* - artificial bouquet; *photo y video* - photo and video; *cojines* - cushions; *salon* - hall; *arreglos de salon* - hall decorations; *brindis* - drink for toast; *bebidas* - drinks; *pastel* - cake; and *musica* - music)

In looking first at the planning that went into these events, it became immediately apparent that these functions didn't spring from a vacuum. Rather, in putting together dancing events, my companions drew on their existing connections, strengthening these and fostering new ones in the process. This was particularly clear in the planning and financing of events such as *quinceañeras*, the celebration used to mark a young woman's (and now sometimes also a young man's) 15th birthday. *Quinceañeras* along with baptisms, first communions, confirmations, and weddings frequently involved elaborate and costly celebrations. The cost of these festivities was usually distributed across my companions' existing webs of relations principally through *compadrazgo*, a system of co-/god-parenthood. Members of the family or close friends asked, or were asked, to become *padrinos*, or godparents—often at least in part in unspoken return of a similar relation between their children and the *quinceañera*'s parents and the expenses they bore—becoming ritually related kin in the process (see Mintz & Wolf 1950; Gill-Hopple & Brage-Hudson 2012). This permanently established and intensified their connection to the celebrant(s) and the celebrant(s) parents, forever then being the celebrant's *padrino/madrina* and the celebrant's parents' *compadre/comadre* (co-parents), both titles drawing on the words for father (*padre*) and mother (*madre*) and so emphasizing the closeness of this connection. The role of *padrino/madrina* involved accompanying the celebrant to receive particular sacraments but also often involved incurring some of the expenses for the dancing event that followed. This made the relations between my companions and their *padrinos* or *ajihados* (godchildren) at once familial and economic. These contributions and so the *padrinos*' connection to the celebrant and the celebrant's family were publicly acknowledged and affirmed as their names and roles were listed in the invitations sent out before an event (Image 40) and, as above, at the event itself as the celebrant(s) and *padrinos* danced together. This revealed dancing to be an activity through which my companions not only generated connections but performed and exhibited them as well.

While this leveraging of relations to finance dancing events was common, it was an ambiguous practice that had to be utilized with care.

I can't believe they asked for more, Fabi says from the front seat as we zoom along the freeway. I hope my family won't be mad I said no. They don't get that we have to work here for what we've got. You know, I wouldn't mind so much, it's just a couple hundred extra, but last time I went she didn't even thank me for what I brought. It was like she didn't care, she didn't appreciate it. My aunt, you know, she came to see me, we went out for coffee and she paid. If my cousin did that, ya, I'd be happy to give more for their wedding. But just like that, asking for more, no. Maybe I should give them nothing, Fabi laughs but it's all bravado.

November 26, 2012.

Drawing on relations to help pay for events wasn't a simple ask-and-receive process. Instead, speaking to the variability and ambiguity within the dynamics of my companions' relations with one another, it was a delicate business that often involved a careful weighing of the existing connection between the celebrant(s) (and their family) and the sponsors, as well as the economic situation of both, in order to determine what could be reasonably expected. As Fabi suggested, asking for too much risked damaging the relations between people while asking for/accepting contributions from too many people, as Martha suggested, diluted the significance of being a *padrino* or *madrina* and made the connection between celebrant and sponsor less exclusive and so potentially less desirable. Disagreements and so disruption in relations also resulted when sponsors reneged on their offers or expected to make the decisions about the items they financed (choosing the band or the dress, for example). Just as *compadrazgo* could foster and strengthen relations, then, so could it also damage and disrupt them. This made dancing events in regard to my companions' relations ambiguous from the outset. A number of my companions chose to accept only very few offers from close family or to finance the entire event themselves to avoid both potentially unsettling these relations with others and (I suspect but was never told) any obligation to reciprocate at future events, a strategic 'un-reciprocity'. Even in choosing not to leverage their relations so as to help pay for a celebration, then, my companions often placed these relations with others at the heart of their planning and financing of dancing events.

My companions drew on their webs of relations in other ways as well when planning events, here *quinceañeras*.

It's a big commitment, Sonia says as we stand with the other mums surveying the backyard where Martha and her damas and chambelanes—her younger brother the chambelán de honor—are practicing their waltz and surprise dances. And not just for the kids. Ya, they have practice every week or whatever but we have to drive them and wait around. It's a lot of time and money too with the gas and everything. I mean, we're happy to do it but it's not nothing, you know?

June 14, 2014.

Quinceañera celebrations involved presentational dances which were prepared and presented by the *quinceañera* and her *chambelanes*, male chaperones, and on occasion also *damas*, female chaperones. In selecting her *chambelanes* and *damas*, the *quinceañera* and her family made use of their existing webs of relations, choosing from the *quinceañera's* siblings, cousins, and close friends as well as from the children of family friends. As with *padrinos*, an appointment as a *chambelán* or *dama*, serving as an affirmation of one's connection to the celebrant and her family, was a designation that persisted even if contact with the *quinceañera* ceased after the event. This was cited as a main reason not to have a young woman's boyfriend serve as the *chambelán de honor* for this relationship was thought not likely to last while his connection to the *quinceañera* as her *chambelán* along with his presence in photos, videos, and memories was. This suggested that in drawing on their webs of relations in planning dancing events my companions considered not just their current connections with people but also their future connections, as the financing of these events also hinted. In addition to considering their own connections, my companions also considered the connections that the *chambelanes* and *damas* brought with them. As Sonia's comment suggested, these young people each drew on their own webs of relations in order to participate as parents, grandparents, and/or older siblings were called upon to help them attend practices and fittings, for example. This occurred as well within dancing

academies and clubs as parents organized, fundraised for, and helped out with presentations and trips, developing their own connections with one another in the process as Dyck (2002) also observes in the context of children's sports clubs. Given the importance of these 'facilitators' to the dancing events, it's unsurprising that in making choices about *chambelanes* and *damas*, the *quinceañera* and her family weighed the young people's relations with these 'facilitators', how likely it was that they would assist the young people in fulfilling their obligation. As this suggested, the planning and preparation of a dancing event saw my companions weigh, draw on, and foster relations not just with people within their own immediate web but with people over multiple webs of relations.

My companions also used their existing connections to hire and/or purchase what they needed to bring their events together.

You should have seen her cake, Beti says to me when I ask about a mutual friend's recent wedding. It had six tiers with each cake like this big, she says masking out the size and height of the layers with her hands. It was so beautiful and you know what? It tasted good too. You know how it usually is, they look great but they have no taste. I took a card because I was thinking about my mum's party. So I called and asked for prices, just for a little one, you know, just for us.

No vas a creer, Beti says to me and pauses. You're not going to believe it. Six hundred dollars! Six hundred dollars! For one little cake! Forget it! I can shop for weeks with that.

December 17, 2015.

As Beti indicated, while attending dancing events my companions frequently scouted out halls, DJs, bands, caterers, dance instructors, and here bakers with thoughts of their next gathering or dancing event. This was such a common practice that these vendors usually distributed their business cards around the venue—on the tables, by the cake, next to the napkins in the line for food. In later putting together their own events, my companions often relied on vendors with whom they'd connected at events previously hosted by friends and family, tried

and tested as the vendors were through my companions' own experience. If the service provided was satisfactory, my companions often hired the same vendors repeatedly, strengthening their connection to the point that some were considered friends by my companions (see Chapter 11 for shifting relations), with attendees to these events continuing the cycle as they then connected with and hired these vendors for their own occasions. As this suggests, dancing events were home to—that is, produced, and were produced by—both personal and commercial connections. For my companions, then, particular forms of relations weren't compartmentalized but could be encountered and cultivated within the same context. As the food, drink, music, dancing presentations, even venue were the products of these relations, these various elements at dancing events then became these relations made material—'[s]ouls are mixed with things; things are mixed with souls,' following Mauss (1990). This is significant because it meant that in consuming the dancing event, those in attendance imbibed both the personal and commercial relations of the host, making these relations a part not just of the other connections that they fostered through the event but also of themselves, quite literally in the case of food and drink.

Asistiendo a los eventos • Attending Events

Juana nudges Miri beside her with her elbow, raises her eyebrows, and using her chin points to where Josefina, barely visible for the crush of people, is standing on the dance floor taking a video of the newly married couple.

Miri rolls her eyes in response and when she sees me watching smiles, leans in, and whispers, Nobody wants her here but of course she's here.

Later I'm told Josefina's had not one but two fallings out, all with cousins—an old disagreement with the father and uncle of the groom and a more recent one with Juana over the organization of another dancing event.

No está bienvenida pero le vale, another cousin says. She's not welcome but she couldn't care less. If it's anything to do with our hometown or our family, she's going to be there, he adds.

March 2, 2015.

The many activities which were a part of the dancing events themselves on the day continued to foster my companions' connections with one another. One of the most important and yet easily overlooked of these activities was being present. For my companions, attending an event, that is, showing up, was an act that served several functions in regard to their relations with others. Firstly, being present served as a demonstration of one's connections (however unwanted these connections may have been, as above) with the hosts, with the group in general, and/or with those issuing the invitation (remembering that the system of invitation allowed invitees to invite their own guests). Tied to this first function, attending dancing events also fulfilled the obligations which were a part of some of my companions' relations with others—family, close friends, dance academies and clubs—helping to maintain these connections. Finally, attendance at a dancing event could also serve as a rapprochement, a way to heal damaged relations. This was the case with Lupita who'd had a falling out with the groom's family and had used her attendance at this wedding to spark and signal the warming of their relations once again. The quality of these connections could be further articulated and exhibited within the context of a dancing event by arriving early, staying the length of the event, and remaining afterwards to help with the clean up. As this demonstrated, in combination with choosing who to greet and where to sit, my companions used their attendance and length of stay at dancing events to publicly affirm (for Josefina, forcibly assert) and foster their connections with others. The same was true with non-attendance which my companions used both to signal a disruption to, and to distance themselves from, certain connections. Attendance, non-attendance, and length of stay at dancing events were, then, powerful relational tools wielded by my companions in cultivating, articulating, and demonstrating their connections. Given this potency of (non-)attendance, it's no wonder that when faced with multiple invitations for the same day, my companions weighed their connections carefully before

choosing which dancing events to attend, or indeed in which order and how long to stay.

Attending dancing events alongside others resulted in a co-presence, that is, a being together with others in the same physical space at the same time. This afforded my companions the opportunity to foster their relations with others by allowing them to engage in a range of concrete activity together, as below, and to share in a number of experiences which were supported by and also generated a shared understanding or intersubjectivity between them. One such shared experience was the shared journey my companions made through the dancing event.

We arrive early and secure ‘the best seats’, those with a clear view over the dance floor. The band slowly sets up and Alicia’s older sisters and aunts, dressed in peach to match Alicia’s gown, dash about putting the finishing touches on the hall.

The room fills, at our table the remainder of the seats taken by a woman and her late teens, early twenties children and their partners. She embraces me and I suddenly place her—a friend of Mari’s I’ve met several times at various events, the last time at the mechanical bull party she reminds me. I must get better at remembering names and faces, I think not for the first time.

The quinceañera arrives with her entourage and they make their slow entrance to an exceptionally long song. Alicia teeters in front of her father as he struggles to replace her converse runners with towering high heels, a sign she’s now left childhood behind.

The mariachi circulate, taking requests and those around me sing along, taking a break from their plates of rice and carne asada. The waltz is announced and is dutifully performed by Alicia and her chambelanes with only one hazardous moment as two young men fumble to get her in her huge gown to sit on their shoulders but they manage.

Not long after Alicia and her entourage, in new outfits and now including the young women, reappear to perform their surprise dance

to Rock around the Clock. There are cheers and whistles and calls for it to be repeated. The speeches and toasts follow and finally the band starts up.

We dance and sit and watch late into the night. There is a slice of cake that is passed around by Alicia's mother and later for a scoop of ice cream from a vendor who's been hired for the evening. At some point, Alicia passes out the recuerdos, souvenir fans with her name and the date on them.

When we leave—the dancing is still going strong—we take the centerpiece with us, the usual reward for arriving before everyone else.

July 22, 2013.

Being present at a dancing event with others involved moving with these others in a temporal sense through the duration of the event. This resulted in three experiences connected to time which served to cultivate my companions' relations with one another. As above in the *quinceañera* practice, the first and perhaps most obvious of these was that being together with others throughout a dancing event meant that my companions spent extended periods of time with one another. These blocks of time offered them the chance to engage repeatedly in the shared activities and experiences which fostered their relations with one another. My companions also processed through the event together from one point or landmark within the event—the *quinceañera's* arrival, the mariachi serenades, the speeches and the distribution of the souvenirs—to the next. This meant that they shared in the happenings of the event as well as in the embodied experiences³² that the sensory context of the dancing events afforded—the loud squealing of the mic during the speeches and the cool and welcome breeze that sent the napkins flying when someone propped an outside door open, for example. This built a shared history and so connection between my companions, 'momentarily fus[ing] or bring[ing] into phase the otherwise divergent and unsynchronized life trajectories of individual participants into a unified tale' (Ingold & Vergunst 2008: 9). The fact that this shared history generated

³² Although this is not to suggest that my companions had the exact same experiences.

connections between people was interesting because it hinted that my companions didn't necessarily have to spend long blocks of time in dedicated interaction with others in order to forge a connection with them through dancing events. Rather, as in my relation with Mari's neighbour, connections could be fostered through shorter bursts of time together in combination with the slow accrual of a shared history through attendance at the same dancing events. This highlights the fact that dancing events afforded a number of ways in which relations might be generated.

Finally, in addition to the blocks of time spent together and the shared histories built, my companions also shared in an experience of, and developed together, pace or tempo. In journeying together temporally through dancing events, as work on walking (see Lund 2005; Ingold & Vergunst 2008) suggests, my companions shared in 'the rhythms of the event's movement, crisis points and resolutions' (Pink 2008: 178). This meant that my companions were immersed in and generated a shared pace with others, both as they participated with these others in particular activities—dancing, playing, sitting, for example—and within the larger context of the whole event which encompassed these activities and other paces. These shared experiences of time involved my companions attuning themselves to the tempo of others, an innate skill that Malloch and Trevarthen (2009: 5) call 'musicality' and one which, they argue, provides 'a shared, intuitively communicated understanding' which allows us to coordinate tasks, and, significantly here, foster connections, with others. While Vergunst and Vermehren in their work on cycling posit that the connections between people, in their words 'sociality', 'might have a particular pacing associated with it' (2012: 130), Malloch and Trevarthen's work suggests that it is *that* the interactions between people have a shared pacing and that this pacing is actively attended to rather than the rate of the pace itself which cultivates this connection. Sharing in the journey of a dancing event, then, an experience which for some extended to include, for example, the long hours of dance practice as well as the diverse happenings and the inevitable last minute rush of the preparation, thus meant for my companions blocks of time spent together, the development of shared histories, and an experience and generation of shared

pace, all of which contributed in various ways to the fostering of their relations with others.

My companions' co-presence at dancing events, their proximity to one another and the time they spent together, facilitated a range of other activities through which my companions also developed and articulated their relations with others. This included conversation. While it's true that conversation was an activity that fostered my companions' connections almost wherever it took place, it's important to remember that dancing events, as I suggest in the previous chapter, were crucial for many of my companions as they served as one of the principal occasions which brought them together in large groups to socialize with others, *conocidos* and *desconocidos*, those familiar to them and those not, alike.

I sit at the bar and have a drink first, Tomás says. That way I can look at the women and see who has a boyfriend. When they're dancing with a man maybe it's a boyfriend so then no. Sometimes they can look at you, even when they're dancing with a man, maybe a boyfriend, and sometimes they...what do you say? and here Tomás pauses to wink at me from across the table—

Wink, I reply.

They can wink at you or maybe just look and I like – now Tomás raises his cup, looks at an imaginary partner, and nods his head slightly. Then maybe I ask her to dance later or if I see her on the way to the bathroom I can ask her name, if she has a boyfriend, if she wants to dance later.

Do you talk while you're dancing? I ask.

Sometimes, he says. Always the same kind of stuff. What's your name? Where are you from? What do you do? That kind of thing. If she talks back, maybe she's interested and you can ask for her number. If not, sometimes they don't say anything, not their name or nothing. They hardly even look at you. Then you know, Tomás says laughing. Better find somebody else!

December 16, 2013.

My companions fostered and demonstrated their relations with others through conversations at dancing events in three respects. The first was in the conversing itself. Participating in the give and take of a conversation—and, as Tomás's exchanges of eye contact suggested, these conversations were not necessarily verbal—was an act which signalled a willingness to engage in and so foster a connection with others, whether a new connection as here between Tomás and his dance partners or an existing one. As Tomás hinted, one person speaking to or looking at another didn't make these connections. Rather, it was in the return response within these conversations that the connections between people were sparked and/or cultivated. This speaks to turn-taking and recalls Malloch and Trevarthan's work on 'musicality' once again which positions the shared rhythms of turn-taking (in a number of forms) as a fundamental component of intersubjectivity and so of our understanding of, and connection with, one another. As Sheets-Johnstone writes, in our most basic experiences as infants with our caregivers, turn-taking signals and fosters a mutual attentiveness to, a mutual interest and pleasure in, and a mutual appreciation of the other (2000: 363). That my companions used their return responses—full sentences, vocalizations, and nods, for example—or lack there of to signal their interest and intent in regard to their relations with others suggested that this experience of turn-taking wasn't limited to infancy. In addition to this turn-taking, my companions indicated their interest in the conversation and in the conversation partner(s) through eye contact as Tomás suggested, slightly orienting themselves towards each other, and a certain physical proximity especially in venues with loud music which required people, often those who didn't engage in such physical proximity in other contexts—the men, for example, to lean in together to hear and to be heard, sometimes even putting mouth to ear. My companions, then, employed conversation, both through turn-taking and these various responsive acts, within dancing events to both foster (or not) their connections with others, and, as these were all visible to others, in the process demonstrated these connections to those gathered around them.

The content of these conversations also served to develop and articulate my companions' relations with others.

Have you done the mile run yet? Josie asks Araceli as they sit, folding over their extended legs but twisting to look at each other. Knots of other practitioners are scattered about the room doing the same.

We don't do it 'til next month, Araceli says straightening. How about you?

Ya, we did it yesterday, Josie replies, straightening and then twisting to the other side. I'm still sore, she says slightly louder so Araceli can hear over her back.

I hate it, Araceli says. There are always those guys who are like (and here Juana adopts a funny mocking tone) I'm better than you, I'm faster.

Ya, Josie says, smiling and nodding. Hey, how are you getting there on Saturday? she asks of their upcoming presentation at the town festival.

My mom doesn't have to work so she's driving, Araceli says. We can give you a ride if you want.

August 16, 2014.

Such conversations were a routine part of dancing events. My companions spoke of school and work and sports teams, shared news of family and friends on both sides of the border, told funny stories, offered opinions while gently arguing about American and/or Mexican politics, and tantalized each other with snippets of gossip. While seemingly inconsequential, these conversations were important. Through them my companions identified points of common experience or interest with which to foster their connections with others. One companion told me that he stuck to speaking about work and politics in groups as these were topics everyone could talk about suggesting that at times certain topics were strategically employed to foster connections, an observation Bauman (1972) also makes in his gentle study of fishermen's conversations. In conversing with others my companions also yielded information about themselves with these mutual disclosures, however mild, serving to build my companions' relations with one another as they came together repeatedly through dancing events and learned

more of each other and of each other's lives, as Hamera (2007) also finds in her study of Pilates practitioners. In general dancing events didn't see my companions more purposefully sharing very intimate confidences—this did happen but rarely—which instead were usually shared at other times and in other, usually quieter and less crowded, places. When party to these confidences wherever they were made, I often found that they made my connection with people stronger, reflecting a new sense of trust between us, with the result that I was privy to more personal disclosures within the following dancing events. This indicated that what was shared during conversations at dancing events was reflective—and so a demonstration for the participants and anyone overhearing—of the type of connections that my companions shared with one another. It also pointed to the fact that while dancing events played an important role in my companions' relations with one another, these relations existed and were cultivated outside of these events as well.

Finally, the language that my companions used within these conversations also fostered and exhibited their connections with others.

You need to lock in with the music, Silvia says and she begins to conduct the down beat very slowly with both hands on the front of her thighs.

The students begin to step, a much slower version of what they've just done. This is hard, Amy groans, twisting her upper body and speeding up the steps into a mess of sound in frustration and protest.

Doing the steps slowly helps you to lock in the rhythm, Silvia explains to the disintegrating group. It's tricky because you have to listen but you also have to let go of your legs. At first the movements feel uncomfortable, she says over-exaggerating the slowness of her steps, but then you will find it and it'll be easier.

Better, Silvia says moments later to the flushed students. But you have to dig in your steps more. We're going to repeat until your zapateado is clean and clear, she says.

And strong! Amy shouts, completing the mantra that Silvia is using these days.

November 26, 2012.

Metaphors such as *'lock in with the music,' 'dig in your steps,'* and *'let go of your legs'* were a typical part of the dance classes and practice sessions my companions attended. These metaphors, along with phrases such as *'clean, clear, and strong'* which spoke to notions of local aesthetics, varied from instructor to instructor and weren't normally a part of the general lexicon outside of the learning contexts in which they appeared. This made this language into what Hamera describes as 'a technology of intimacy, an in-group discourse' (2007: 32). The use of this language, in a process Ted Cohen suggests involves 'the speaker [issuing] a kind of concealed invitation [and] the hearer expending a special effort to accept [it]' (1978: 6), demonstrated my companions' connection to particular people, imbuing it with a certain exclusivity. The same process appeared to be at work for my companions as they used nicknames and swore affectionately at each other at dancing events, calling each other *pinche cabrón* or *cabróna*, bloody bastard or bitch. This language too served as a confirmation and cultivation of a particular type of relation. Through conversation at dancing events, then—in speaking and responding to one another, in sharing information about themselves, and in using particular language—my companions developed and articulated their connections with others in a way that also served to publicly exhibit these relations.

My companions also engaged in a wide range of other activities at dancing events in which they assisted each other—by giving items and by engaging in tasks, with these, like my companions' conversation and attendance, serving to foster their connections with one another.

Sitting together before class starts, Adriana and Astrid chat about their fall break while replacing some of the duct tape on the bottoms of their shoes.

He's not taking advantage of it, Adriana says of Jorge, handing him some pieces of tape expertly torn from the large, wide roll, because he has to get up early to come with me to school.

Jorge nods as he takes the tape his sister hands him to cover up places where the nails have broken through on the heel of his zapatillas.

Can you do mine? Stephanie asks in a pleading tone, waving her scuffed and weary shoes at Adriana.

You can do your own, Adriana replies, without looking up.

I know but you do it better, Stephanie says. Pleeeeease? with another hopeful wiggle of the shoes.

Adriana sighs. Alllllllriiiiiight, she says in mock resignation, holding her hand out for the shoes.

January 23, 2013.

Along with helping to tape shoes, my companions tied each others skirts before presentations (Image 41), saved seats, bought rounds of cold water and beer, minded bags, telephones, and sleeping children during dances, lent blankets and extra sweaters at outdoor parties, assisted in serving food and drink, took photos, brought cases of beer, made runs to the store to top up supplies, sent texts to warn each other of police stops close to the venue, gave each other rides to and from events, and the list goes on. In general, within the context of dancing events, those from whom my companions asked for help and those to whom they gave it were people with whom my companions had already established connections—Adriana and Jorge as siblings, Adriana and Stephanie as close friends—suggesting a degree of obligation to assist inherent in these relations. Asking for help and assisting—whether by providing something material or engaging in particular tasks—served, then, as a way for my companions to both demonstrate and cultivate their existing relations with one another. Although less frequent, assisting was a strategy that my companions also employed to foster new connections as I observed as parents, new to dancing academies and



Image 41 Getting help from the instructor and an older dancer



Image 42 Me pleased to be a part of the inner circle

clubs, develop their connections with other parents by helping out. The quality of these relations in both cases was demonstrated and cultivated not just in *that* my companions were asked for, or offered, assistance but in *what* they were tasked with doing. More crucial tasks—minding children (Image 42), managing money, supervising the alcohol—were assigned to those with whom my companions shared more trusted connections, while other, less important tasks were left to those with whom my companions had less of an established connection.

Importantly, my companions didn't rely solely on the obligation inherent in their established connections when offering or asking for assistance. Instead, they weighed the character of their relations through past acts of assistance, not just that there was reciprocity (although this was a factor and pointed again to the place of turn-taking in the fostering of my companions' relations with one another) but that these others assisted well, in a manner that maintained the quality, the trust, of the relation.

It's so good that I asked Don Santi to do the drinks. Imagined if Polillo had done it like he offered! Lupita says of her cousin. Did you see him? Drinking all night! It would have been a disaster. We would have had the police for sure. He promised to help clean after but by then, pffffff, I think he was gone. Too drunk.

Not long after Lupita receives a phone call – Polillo profusely apologizing for his drunkenness and his lack of helpfulness and making promises about the next time.

June 22, 2014.

Don Santi's careful management of the of alcoholic drinks was, for Lupita, a confirmation of both the wisdom of her choice and the long and trusted connection she shared with him. In contrast, Polillo's drunkenness and his failure to help even with the simplest of tasks, the clean up, was read as a confirmation of his unreliability which called into question the quality of the connection Lupita shared with him. This suggested that the activities within dancing events, whether assistance, conversation, or attendance, for example, weren't simply

ways to foster and demonstrate my companions' relations with one another but also served as tests of them as well. My companions employed these in a variety of ways to assess and reaffirm the quality of these connections. Following both Geschiere (2013) on witchcraft amongst the Maka in Cameroon and Amit-Talai (1995) on high school friendship, this suggested that my companions' relations, even those experienced as trust-ful, weren't ever fixed in quality but instead were in constant flux to some degree with my companions continually probing and negotiating them through their interactions with others.

Bailando • Dancing

The hall is so hot. Someone props open the door for a moment but it's swiftly shut. No one wants the police to show up on a noise complaint so we boil.

Arnold holds me very formally and so not too close. He has a wife after all although she refuses to come to dances. He's laughed about what people here will think, what they'll tell people in his home village, that now he's dancing with gringas. It doesn't seem to matter that I'm his sister's friend and that she's had to pressure him teasingly to get him to dance with me.

I can feel the heat radiating between and from us as we step and turn. My hand on his back, I resist the urge to pluck up the fabric of his soaked shirt to send him a bit of cool. The sweat pools on his brow and I wonder about the wisdom of wearing sombreros and jeans onto the dance floor.

Around us other partners step and turn. I spot Laura and Inez, fitting snugly together and gently pulsing up and down, their 40 years of marriage evident. Laura gazes up at Inez and he down at her. He says something and she smiles, then laughs, then looks past his shoulder once again as they jostle amidst the other dancers.

My hip is killing me, I say to my partner who laughs and says, Mine too. Let's try turning in the opposite direction.

It doesn't really work and by the time the song ends I feel like a runner who's just barely dragged themselves across the finish line. There's a few moments of pause and we stand idly to see what the next song will be. It's huapango and despite feeling body-weary we dance on.

When the change of rhythm comes with the chorus, it's amazing. For the first time I can hear the rhythms of everyone's steps and stomps fall together, not as one dancer as in ballet folklórico but as a many-but-one voice to the same beat. With the next change in rhythm, I lose it but the moment's been exhilarating.

February 16, 2013³³.

As Arnold's concerns about the others' speculations indicated, my companions understood and experienced dancing as an activity imbued with relationality. It's unsurprising, then, that my companions made active use of it in shaping their relations with one another. They sparked connections by making and accepting dancing invitations with new people and cultivated and articulated existing relations by dancing with family and friends. In both cases, by dancing and indeed also by refusing my companions made their connections to others visible. But why should dancing be experienced as so relational? I suggest that in addition to allowing my companions to spend time together, dancing also offered my companions the chance to share in a number of sensory experiences—here I briefly explore experiences of kinaesthesia³⁴, sound, touch, heat, and pain of those encountered while dancing. Together³⁵ these generated a sense of

³³ Here I draw on my own experiences of dancing as no other avenue to these felt experiences is open to me (Sklar 2000). I do so admitting that my experiences weren't the same as my companions' given my own unique personal history but also with the thought that my companions' experiences were unlikely to be the same as one another's either. I make my observations here then by drawing on what Okely (1994) has called the 'vicarious knowledge' of the fieldworker, that knowledge, sensory and other, accrued through close living with our companions.

³⁴ Following Sklar (2000) and Potter (2008), I have opted to use the term 'kinaesthesia' as opposed to 'proprioception' to highlight the fact that I am describing the felt experience of movement rather than the biomedical understanding of the same more frequently associated with 'proprioception'.

³⁵ Although some studies (see Howe 2003, for example) explore individual senses suggesting these function independently of one another, I prefer the model proposed by Ingold (2000) amongst others which suggests the senses work as an integrated whole. The sensory experiences addressed here are addressed individually only for the purposes of discussion.

intimacy, that is, a sense of closeness (although, it should be noted, that this wasn't necessarily affection-laden), through which my companions' relations with others were fostered.

Turning to the first of these intimacy/connection-generating experiences, while dancing my companions and I shared a kinaesthetic sense of moving together both with partners and more broadly with those dancing on the same dance floor or stage. This was principally a sense of rhythmic affinity—moving and sounding together in the case of *huapango*, *ballet folklórico*, and *danza*—although there were also visual and choreographic components to this sense of moving and so connecting together as we used similar movements and saw each other do so. Why such an experience of moving and sounding together should generate a sense of connection—something scholars (see McNeil 1995; Lindsay 1996) suggest—may lie in part with the fact that moving together relied upon our attending together to the music, particularly to its rhythm. This speaks to joint attention which, while more usually associated with vision (see Bruner 1995), encompasses listening as well (see Cochrane 2009). Joint attention—'a meeting of the [body-]mind' to co-opt Bruner's (1995) portrayal—is another of the key capacities which allow for a shared understanding, or intersubjectivity and so the development of our connections with one another. Moving and so sounding together also relied on the related activity of attunement (see Section II) as my companions and I attended not just to the rhythmic elements of the music, for example, but also to each other and to each other's movements as well. Sheets-Johnstone posits that in attending to others, 'what [we] *grasp* metaphorically, but in no less a sentient sense, is the body of another: it is analogous to my own felt body. [This results in a sense that] [w]e are of an intercorporeal piece' (2000: 348), an experience, I suggest, which generated my companions' and my own sense of connection to others through moving together. This attunement is also linked to the ways in which affect can appear to be shared between people (see Chapter 7), a sharing which also contributed to the development and articulation of my companions' relations with one another as they came to feel that together they were experiencing not just similar motions but also similar emotions.

My companions recognized moving together as a key component in their relations with one another through dancing, identifying it as both producer and product of these connections.

Sometimes they don't know how to dance. You just can't move with them, Marcus says of the women he meets at nightclubs. You might try for a bit and then you ask if they want to sit down. Usually they say yes. Then you say you're going to the restroom or something but you don't come back, he says with a smile. Other times, even the woman says she can't dance good, she can move with you and you can move good together. Then maybe you spend the whole time dancing together, I mean, the whole night. That's really good. Then you hope you can see her again.

September 23, 2013.

As Marcus indicated, my companions exulted when they met someone with whom they could move together easily, dedicating much more time to dancing with that individual and so fostering a stronger connection with them as a result. The reverse, as Pedro also indicated, was also true with some of my companions ceasing to dance with, or refusing invitations from, partners with whom they had difficulty moving together easily. This reduced the chance that they would develop a stronger connection with one another. Equally, in spotting people who moved together easily, who 'moved (and sounded) as one' as my companions described it, my companions attributed this movement to a particularly strong connection between the practitioners, either because of hard work as was often the case with dance classes and clubs or, as in Inez and Laura's case, the length of time spent dancing together. For my companions, then, moving together when dancing was key to the development of relations through dancing (keeping in mind that my companions cultivated their connections to others in many ways which meant not moving well together didn't necessarily halt the development of a relation) with moving well together an ideal that many of my companions both hoped for and worked towards.

As my experience above demonstrated, there was more to dancing than simply moving together. Dancing also involved the intimacy/connection-generating experience of touch. Touching is a sense which involves an immediacy of experience as whatever you touch, at the same time also touches you. This, according to Hsu, results in 'a partial melding of subject and object' (2000: 264). For my companions and me, in touching and being touched on the dance floor, this meant that we experienced a melding with each other, one which I suggest generated connection between us. This connecting capacity of touch made touch within dancing a particularly potent feature of the activity. Just touching on the dance floor suggested to practitioners and those observing alike that a connection, whether established or in that moment developing, existed between the dancers. A further nuanced experience of this relation again for both practitioners and observers was presented by the way in which people touched while dancing. Compare, for example, my dancing above with David's description here.

I like reggaetón, Martín says over the clattering in the restaurant. You can...cómo se dice pegarte a la muchacha? he asks Marcus on the other side of the table.

Um, get close, Marcus replies³⁶.

*You get close to the girl, says Martín. Sometimes she lets you touch her or kiss her. You get **very** close, he adds with a smile and a hip circle that is suggestive despite the fact he's seated.*

I can feel my face flushing and David and Martín laugh.

November 28, 2013.

Quickly evident from a comparison of these examples is that the way my companions touched each other was guided by their relation with their dance partner as well as with others, Arnold's wife, for example. Also evident was that the way they touched one another fostered their relations in particular ways for all to see. My companions thus often employed touch to shift their connection

³⁶ *Pegarse* literally means to glue oneself to another.

with their partner, touching more to generate a closer relation as David did, or the opposite, as here.

If I dance with someone's who's drunk, I tell them okay but don't hold my hand, Jenny says. You can dance next to me. And hands above the waist! Most people, you know, they try for more, she says matter of factly. I just walk away. I'm like don't touch me! And, she laughs, if my father was there, he'd be like get a broom!

November 16, 2013.

Here Jenny suggested that she kept her partner at arm's length, leaving the dancing altogether to limit touching, pointing to that the fact that not touching was also a tool my companions employed in articulating their relations with one another and hinting that dancing, touching included, didn't always generate closeness (intimacy) and connections which were 'positively' experienced by my companions. Also of significance in the touching both between Martín and his partner and me and mine was that this type of touching, indeed that Arnold and I touched at all, wasn't something that normally happened outside of dancing events. This indicated that my companions marked off both dancing and to some extent dancing events as play and places of play. This bracketed this activity and this type of gathering off from the conventions associated with ordinary life (all convention didn't disappear however as instead my companions were guided by the conventions associated with dancing and dancing events), providing space for my companions to behave and interact with—here importantly touch—others in ways they wouldn't have in other contexts (see Carlson 2004[1996]; Schechner 2013). It was this bracketing off of dancing and dancing events from the ordinary, then, that allowed for my companions to touch one another as they did, this play in part at least, then, making dancing the powerful relational activity that my companions experienced it to be.

While dancing my companions and I also grew hot together, sweated, and felt pain. These shared experiences, heat, perspiration, and aching, were the product of dancing and were, following Hsu (2008), 'the materiality of sociality', our

connections fostered through dancing made material. Hsu suggests that a connection arises from such ‘joint experiences of real stuff’, indicating that my companions’ shared experiences of heat and pain were experiences which didn’t only reflect my companions relational work together but also fostered these connections. What was interesting was that these sensory experiences—heat and pain as well as experiences of kinaesthesia, sound, and touch—weren’t exclusive to dancing but instead were a part of the experience of attending dancing events more generally. Sitting together to watch others dance, my companions and I moved and sounded together, swaying back and forth, tapping our feet, clapping, pulsing children up and down all to the beat of the music. This indicated that we too, although not dancing, attended together to the music, to those dancing, and to those moving and sounding around us, generating a connection with others through this intercorporeal attunement. Likewise we leaned on each other, hugged and kissed, held infants, sat pressed together in chairs and along benches and on each other’s knees when space was limited. Dancing events, then, brought the melding experience of touch to those off the dance floor as well as those on it. Similarly, characteristic to any dancing event and recalling Chau’s (2008; see also Potter 2008) work on ‘red-hot sociality’ at Chinese temple festivals, these occasions washed those in attendance over with heat, bringing a shared material experience of all of the connection-fostering and –articulating activity of the event to each person. These sensory experiences, then, were a particularly important part of dancing events as they served to generate a connection between those in attendance, not just those directly involved in dancing, conversing, and assisting, for example.

While my companions cultivated and demonstrated their relations with others through dancing and dancing events, as the examples above of the ‘negatively’ or ‘ambiguously’ experienced relations built between my companions suggest, these relations weren’t inherently infused with the ‘positively’ experienced sense of connectedness or belonging so often assumed by scholars. This highlights a need to separate sociality, as a dynamic relational matrix, from sociability, a ‘positively’ experienced form that the relations in this matrix can take. For my companions, sociability and the sense of connectedness it brought was very often

an experience of the relations fostered and demonstrated within dancing and dancing events. Speaking to the difference that I note between sociality and sociability, this latter wasn't for my companions something that was automatic but rather required effort. My companions often spoke of '*una buen ambiente*', a good atmosphere. This was an experience of sociability and was understood to require the efforts of all involved in order to generate the experience. Many people needed to attend, there needed to be ample food and drink which everyone helped provide, people needed to be enthusiastic participants in the dancing, and an effort needed to be made to keep things cordial—'*no andamos buscando problemas*. Estamos alla a divertirnos' one companion said. We don't go looking for problems. We're there to enjoy ourselves. *Una buen ambiente* and the sociability it embodied appeared to be an ideal of the relations my companions shared with one another. Dancing events which offered this *ambiente*, then, offered an experience of this ideal while at the same time on a practical level my companions continued to foster relations experienced both 'positively' and 'negatively' through dancing and the other activities at the event.

Después • Afterwards

Just as my companions fostered and articulated their relations with one another before the dancing event itself, this relational process continued after the dancing events as well.

For me the dancing, the party and everything, that's just like, how do you call it? Edith asks me from the other side of her kitchen table.

Foreplay! she announces with a huge grin, pulling a word out of the air that surprises me but shouldn't given Edith's candour.

Ya, foreplay, she says laughing. Dancing is just like a warm up for me. It's when I get home and we get into bed that the real party!

August 27, 2013.

For some of my companions, the intimacy and the connection this helped to cultivate within dancing events was carried out of the event and home where further activity generated other experiences of intimacy and connection as Edith suggested here and as David above hoped. This continuation of the fostering of relations wasn't limited to sex, however. Frequently, upon returning home, families sat up into the early hours sharing a last tequila and speaking about the events of the evening. When the dancing event was a large celebration with catering—a baptism, *quinceañera*, or wedding—the following day often saw the core family and friends gather again for a *recalentado*, a re-heating. This gathering was not only a chance to re-heat and eat the leftover food from the day before but was also an opportunity to 're-heat' the events of the celebration and so continue 'heating' the connections between my companions.

Even at a further distance from the event, weeks, even months or years later, my companions' connections with one another continued to be cultivated through dancing and dancing events.

How are your parents? Raúl asks over our orange chicken and chow mein at Panda Express.

Good, says Vanessa. Mira! and she passes her mobile with a video from her trip home some months ago. The camera scans across a band and outdoor party in the dry sierra. It's someone's wedding, I don't hear whose. It settles and stays on an older couple dancing, her parents.

Vanessa's mother, shoulders draped with a reboso and a long braid down her back, sings along to the music as she dances with Vanessa's father. He always wears a sombrero, Vanessa's husband comments. The video lasts the length of the song, four or five minutes at least, and Vanessa's parents spend the length of it dancing together, smiling, chatting, changing places, Vanessa's mother pulling up the shawl when it drifts from her shoulders.

Vanessa seems proud her parents are still youthful enough to dance.

A ver? says Tomasa and Vanessa calls up the video again before handing the mobile to her young niece.

Tomasa's mother leans over Tomasa's shoulder and begins to point out people, family members, in the video making a game out of asking Tomasa to identify them and correcting her when she's mistaken.

January 8, 2015.

My companions shared photos and videos of dancing and dancing events through social media and invited friends and family to watch the official videos of *quinceañeras* and weddings taken by professional videographers. Recalling work on the maintenance of transnational relationships (see Baldassar 2008; Bacigalupe & Cámara 2012) these photos and videos served to foster my companions' relations with one another over distances. Often conversation was a part of these viewings with my companions sharing remembrances and remarking on who was in attendance, their relation to one another, and any changes in these connections since the event—marriages, divorces, and deaths, for example. These recordings, then, also served as a record of my companions' relations with one another. This meant that in viewing and in remembering these events and the people who were a part of them, my companions not only cultivated their connections with those with whom they watched and spoke in the present but also fostered their connections with those in the videos and remembrances, those in the past.

In sum, in this chapter, I've demonstrated that my companions fostered, articulated, and conveyed their relations with others through the concrete activities in which they engaged within dancing and dancing events. These began well before the events themselves—decisions about financing, the roles people would play, and the hiring of vendors, continued during the events—dancing and the sensory experiences this provided in combination with the activities of attending the event, conversing with others, and assisting, and after the events—intimacies carried home, gatherings the following day, and events watched and reminisced about long after. In addition, I've shown these relations fostered through the concrete activity at dancing events to vary, not all experienced as 'positive', and that these relations weren't static but were continually emerging

and being tested through these activities. This points to dancing and dancing events as relational process.

Conclusión

Conclusion

In this section, I've explored the place of dancing and dancing events in the fostering and articulation of my companions' relations with one another. By examining my companions' shared way of knowing and the activities that were a part of dancing and dancing events, I've demonstrated dancing and dancing events to be an ongoing relational process, produced by and producing my companions' varied and shifting relations with one another. Significantly, I've pointed to the place in this process of this shared way of knowing including a shared perception as well as turn-taking, joint attention, attunement and responsiveness. These point to the place of intersubjectivity within dancing. As work on this subject suggests (see Sheets-Johnstone 2000; Toren 2009), it is through and within intersubjectivity and so the relations with others this enables that we are constituted over time. This made dancing not simply an enjoyable past time as many of my companions suggested nor a tool for the construction of identifications as many scholars argue. Rather, or in addition, this made dancing and the activity that was associated with it constitutive of my companions, practices through which my companions became and continued coming into being amongst others in the world around them.

14 Conclusión

Conclusion

Smoke from the grilling burgers drifts through carrying with it the mobile's tinny salsa and bachata music. We are in the park to celebrate Arturo's third birthday.

Some way down the line of chairs Roberto sits next to Xochi who is restless, wriggling in her mother's lap. He leans in, takes her feet in his hands and pulses them back and forth to the music.

*With his face close to hers, he smiles, opens his eyes wide, and asks in a voice designed only for her, *Quieres bailar? Do you want to dance?**

His daughter beams intently up at him, giggles, and moves her arms and legs even more animatedly.

Tú quieres bailar? Quieres bailar? her father repeats softly, looking into his daughter's face and moving her legs. In reply he receives more toothless, dribbly grins and soft kicks to the palms of his hands.

Something piques Roberto' interest and he turns back to the conversation. Xochi dances on by herself for a few moments before she too is drawn elsewhere – the line of green balloons that bobs on a string above us.

January 18, 2014.

Within this simple moment, a few brief seconds, the themes of my thesis come together.

As I indicated in Section I, dancing for my companions included a wide range of practices. These included those eye- and ear-alluring practices—*ballet folklórico*, *danza*, and *quebradita*—which have enticed so many scholars as well as those more commonplace practices—*baile social* and here Xochi's dancing—which so often go unremarked. All of these varied practices, I demonstrated in Chapter 3, were a part of dancing as a broader activity, an activity which spanned and

encompassed these multiple dance styles and contexts. With this notion of a broader activity in hand, in Chapter 4 I established how dancing as thought and action wasn't apart from, but rather threaded through, my companions' everyday, emerging as here, for example, in soft kicks against a hand at a birthday picnic. As Xochi's age suggested and as I showed in examining the many reasons behind my companions' dancing, the activity was present not only throughout this everyday, but also throughout the breadth of my companions' lives, incorporated into a variety of important life events such as *quinceañeras* and weddings along with more commonplace activities such as exercising and socializing at picnics.

As I demonstrated in Chapters 5, 6, and 7, dancing for my companions was an activity that involved movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*, feeling the music/rhythm. I showed that this understanding of dancing was flexible, multiple, and shifting, allowing my companions to move in a variety of ways and to recognize, as Xochi's father did, a range of movement as dancing movement. I argued that these three features along with my companions' understanding of dancing as a whole were the product of a process of attunement and responsiveness as my companions interacted with one another and the world around them. This makes Xochi's moment of dancing with her father a moment in which they weren't only enjoying each other's company but cultivating an understanding of *baile*, dancing.

For my companions' enskilment in this activity, as I highlighted in Section III, was the result of at least two different learning experiences, *learning to dance* and, as above, *just dancing*. As I demonstrated in Chapter 8, a principal difference between these lay in the intent of the practitioners, with *learning to dance* associated with learning, *just dancing* associated with dancing and socializing. While I showed that these different experiences of learning were mutually influencing and that common to both were processes of observation, imitation, and guidance, I also pointed to differences in the understanding and sensory experience of learning in Chapter 8, in the focus of learning and the value assigned to it in Chapter 9, and in the dynamics between practitioners in Chapter

11 to demonstrate that for my companions, although both involved enskilment, *learning to dance* and *just dancing* were very different experiences.

As I demonstrated in Section IV, my companions fostered and articulated relations with others through dancing and dancing events, with Xochi and her father above revealing nothing less. These relations varied and shifted in form and were facilitated by my companions' shared way of knowing as I revealed in Chapter 12. The concrete activities before, during, and after dancing events that I describe in Chapter 13 were similarly employed by my companions in cultivating and negotiating relations with others. Together these suggested to me that my companions' dancing and dancing events were usefully thought of as a relational process, one produced and producing relations between them. I showed that elements of intersubjectivity were at work within the development of my companions' relations through dancing and dancing events, a fact that I used to suggest that dancing and dancing events played a hand in the becoming of my companions.

Within this thesis I stepped back from the conventions usually encountered in work on Mexicanos and Mexican Americans, dancing, and learning to see what could be learned if I moved away both from a study of identification and borders and individual styles of dance and from the use of generic definitions and a singular notion of learning. As a result the portrayal of dancing that I offer here differs from those encountered in much contemporary work on dancing amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States. It revealed my companions to understand dancing not just as individual dance styles but also as a broader activity characterized by movement, music, and *sentir la música/el ritmo*; to have many reasons for engaging in dancing beyond the development of particular identifications; to engage dancing outside of formally organized dancing events pointing to its inclusion in the everyday; to learn to dance within different kinds of interconnected enskilment experiences; and to generate face-to-face relations with those close at hand in addition to those connections established with imagined communities. My intention here is not to provide an replacement approach, however, but a complementary one which further fleshes

out our understanding of dancing—as well as other processes at work such as the development of concepts, learning, and the generation of interpersonal connections—amongst Mexicanos and Mexican Americans in the United States.

With this study, then, I hope to have provided a rich portrait of my companions, their dancing, and their dancing events, activities which were a prominent and valued part of their lives. In offering an alternate but complementary portrayal and understanding to what is commonly encountered, this thesis also encourages others to take small steps off the path to find new perspectives. This often involves not just dancing with our companions but paying heed, and giving weight, to their varied experiences. Such an endeavour inevitably leads to our companions' understandings, experiences, and practices being revealed as complex, flexible, and ongoing processes, pointing to the place of movement in all things.

Elenco de personajes

Cast of Characters

Abril, 16, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She had been born in the United States to parents from Mexico City.

Adriana, 15, was the daughter of Marta and Eduardo and sister to Jorge and Pedro and had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. She attended a local high school and took afterschool dance and music classes at the Arts Centre where she also worked as a dance instructor and performed with the professional performance group. She was a dama, or female escort, for many of her cousins and friends at their quinceañera celebrations.

Aracelie, 16, was a student at a local high school. She had been born in the United States to parents from southern Mexico and took classes and performed with a local folklórico dance studio.

Alexis, 19, was a student at a local college. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and took classes, taught, and performed with a local folklórico dance studio.

Alma, 42, was a married stay-at-home mother of three. She had come to the United States as a teenager and had received documentation through her marriage.

Andrés, 16, was a student at a local high school. He had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and took part in the school's dance club. He had been a chambelán, or escort, in many quinceañera celebrations.

Angel, 25, was a trained dance instructor who ran zumba and dance classes and worked choreographing and training people in dance routines for private functions such as quinceañeras and weddings. Angel was unmarried and lived with roommates. He had come to the United States from El Salvador with his family as a child.

Antonia, 40, was a mother of three children under the age of 16 and was married to Diego. She had spent most of her adult life living in the United States and had trained as a nurse. Antonia had a stable job working as a nurse at a local hospice.

Arturo, 18 months, was the son of Beti and lived with his parents and two older siblings. He had been born in the United States to parents from Mexico City and attended a local daycare program aimed at immigrant families with his mother a few times a week.

Astrid, 14, had been born in the United States to parents from Mexico City. She attended a local high school and took afterschool dance classes at the Arts Centre.

Berta, 40, was a married mother of two and had come to the United States from central Mexico in her early 20s with her first husband.

Beti, 40, had come to the United States in her late teens with her mother from Mexico City. She was a married, stay-at-home mother of three children, two teenagers and Arturo, a toddler, and ran a small business making cakes to order from her home.

Blanca, 17, was a student at a local high school. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and was a student and instructor with a local folklórico studio.

Brandon, 13, was a student at the a local middle school. He had been born in the United States and had one set of grandparents from Mexico.

César, 30, was the director of a small folklórico dance studio.

Claudia, 8, was the daughter of Josefina and the sister of Daniel and had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. She was a student at a local elementary school and took classes in dance, music, and art at the Arts Centre.

Daniel, 19, was the son of Josefina and the brother of Claudia. He had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. He was a student at a local college and took classes in dance and music at the Arts Centre.

Daphne, 11, was a student with a local elementary school who had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. She attended dance classes at a local dance studio and had been with the studio and performing since the age of 6.

Diego, 41, was a married father and lived with his wife, Antonia, and his three children, all under the age of 16. He had come to the United States from central Mexico in his early 20s and was working as a chef in an upscale restaurant in another community.

Edith, 40, was the married mother of two sons. She was a stay-at-home mother and attended English classes at the local English as a second language program. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her late teens.

Eduardo, 45, was a married father and lived with his wife Marta and their three children. He had come from central Mexico in his early 20s and had developed his own successful landscaping business in the local area. His children were involved in dance and music classes.

Emily, 16, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Erika, 10, was a young girl who attended a local middle school. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and didn't take any formal instruction in dance or music.

Erica, 19, was the daughter of Beti and older sister of Arturo. She attended a local college and had been born in the United States to parents from Mexico City.

Francisco, 47, was a married father of three children under the age of 14 and lived with his children and wife, Miri. He had come from central Mexico in his early adulthood and, with his wife, had taken advantage of the amnesty in the late 1980s. He worked for the parks department of a local community but also sang and played with a local trio and was actively involved in the musical programming at his local church. His children were involved in dance and music classes.

Gabriela, 39, was a married mother of three, one adult son and two younger children. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her early 20s and worked as a seamstress. She had received documentation when her eldest son reached the age of 21.

Heri, 43, was a married father of two adult children, Rubi and Marisol. He had come to the United States from Mexico City in his late teens and was working three jobs, one at the local high school, one at a fast food restaurant, and one running his own Spanish language classes for children.

Jenny, 15, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She had been born in the United States to parents from Mexico City.

Jorge, 12, was the son of Marta and Eduardo and brother to Adriana and Pedro. He had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and attended a local middle school. He took afterschool dance and music classes at the Arts Centre. He was a chambelán, or escort, for his sister and many of his cousins at their quinceañera celebrations.

José, 26, was Marta's younger brother and had come to the United States from central Mexico in his late teens to live with his siblings. He lived with his brothers and worked with them as a builder with a construction company.

Josefina, 44, was a stay-at-home mother of three including Claudia and Daniel. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her early 20s.

Josie, 17, was a student at a local high school. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and took classes and performed with a local folklórico dance studio with her cousin.

Juan, 49, was a well-known dancer and dance instructor who ran his own folklórico dance company in central California and was involved in dance instruction and programming at several central Californian universities.

Karyna, 7, was a student at a local elementary school and took part in dance classes and performances offered at a local folklórico studio.

Kati, 34, was the married mother of two young boys. She was a stay-at-home mother who took English classes at a local school. She had come to the United States from Mexico City with her husband in her mid 20s.

Kimberly, 15, was the daughter of a musician. She took dance classes with a local dance studio and performed as a part of her father's musical group. Kimberly had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Laura, 20, was the sister of Maria and lived with her sister and parents. She had been born in central Mexico and had been brought by her parents to the United States as an infant. She had a university degree and had a job in social work. She was a part of the DACA programme.

Leticia, 8, was Orlando's sister. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Liliana, 36, was a stay-at-home mother of three who had come from central Mexico to the United States with her husband in her early 20s. She was an active volunteer at the local elementary school.

Lupita, 42, was a stay-at-home mother of three who had come from central Mexico to the United States to join family in her early 20s. Her three children were involved in dance and music classes.

Luis, 28, was the married father of two. He had come to the United States from southern Mexico four years before I met him to live with his uncle and work construction.

Marcus, 30, was a single man who had come to the United States from Mexico City three years before I met him. He had developed his own construction business and took English classes at the local night school programme.

Marisol, 22, was the daughter of Heri and the sister of Rubi. She attended a local college taking classes in a variety of subjects. She worked as an assistant at in an English as a Second language program and at a local ice cream shop. She had come to the United States from Mexico City as a child and was a part of the DACA programme.

Manuel, 19, was a single man who had come to the United States from central Mexico some months before I met him. He worked with cousins in construction and took English classes at the local night school programme.

Margarita, 43, was the married mother of a daughter. She was a stay-at-home mother and had come to the United States from central Mexico with her husband in her early 20s.

Maria, 22, 20, was the sister of Laura and lived with her sister and parents. She had been born in central Mexico and had been brought by her parents to the United States as a young child. She had a university degree and worked in an office. She was a part of the DACA programme.

Maria Elena, 42, was a married mother of one. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her late 20s and had received documentation through her marriage. She worked as an assistant in an English as a second language class.

Martha, 42, was the mother of three children, Adriana, Jorge, and Pedro, and was married to Eduardo. She was a stay-at-home mother and ran the accounting side of her husband's landscaping business. Her children were all involved in dance and music classes.

Melissa, 16, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She had been born in the United States to parents from El Salvador.

Mercedes, 14, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Mía, 14, was the daughter of Miri and Francisco and sister to Valeria. She had been born in the United States and attended a local high school. Mía took afterschool dance and music classes at the Arts Centre and other music classes with another music programme. She was a dama, or female escort, for many of her cousins and friends at their quinceañera celebrations.

Mimi, 45, was the married mother of three daughters. She attended English classes at the local school and had come with her husband to live in the United States from southern Mexico in her early 20s.

Miri, 40, was the married mother of three – Mía, Valeria, and a younger son and the wife of Eduardo. She was a stay-at-home mother, volunteering at the local elementary school. Her children were all involved in dance, music, and art classes at the Arts Centre.

Natalia, 3, was a young cousin of Adriana, Jorge, and Pedro. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico and took dance classes at the Arts Centre.

Nerida, 28, was a married mother of two daughters. She was a stay-at-home mother and had come from central Mexico to the United States when she was in her early 20s.

Norma, 30, was married and had come with her husband to the United States from central Mexico a year before I met her. She worked several jobs at a bakery and at a tomato packing factory.

Orlando, 4, was the brother of Leticia. He was born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Pedro, 3, was the son of Marta and Eduardo and brother to Adriana and Jorge. He had been born in the United States and took afterschool dance and art classes at the Arts Centre.

Rachel, 17, was a student at the local high school. She had been born in the United States to a father from central Mexico and an American born mother. Rachel took afterschool dance classes at the Arts Centre where she also worked as a dance instructor and performed with the professional performance group. She was a dama, or female escort, for many of her cousins and friends at their quinceañera celebrations.

Raul, 36, was a single man living with his brother and sister-in-law. In his early 20s, he had come to the United States from central Mexico with one of his siblings to join other siblings already established there and worked at a local construction company as a builder.

Roberto, 35, was a dancer and dance instructor who worked with his family to run a well-known dance studio and professional touring company. His children took dance classes at the studio.

Rocio, 35, was a married mother of two teenage daughters. She had come to the United States from central Mexico with her siblings and husband in their early 20s. She worked as a hostess at a local rental hall.

Rosie, 28, was a married mother of an infant daughter. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her early 20s and was a stay-at-home mother.

Rubi, 18, was the daughter of Heri and the sister of Marisol. She attended a local college taking classes in translation and, like her sister, worked both as an assistant at in an English as a Second language program and at a local ice cream shop. She had come to the United States from Mexico City as a child and was a part of the DREAMers programme.

Samantha, 14, attended a local high school and participated in the school's afterschool dance club programme. She and her young brother had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Sara, 10, was a new student with Victoria's folklórico studio and had been taking dance classes only some few months.

Selina, 18, was a local college student who had been born in central Mexico. She had been a part of the high school's afterschool dance club and continued to volunteer with the group after graduation.

Silvia, 36, was a single woman who worked as the principal dance instructor at the Arts Centre. She had come to the United States from central Mexico as a child and had been able to take advantage of the 1980s amnesty. She lived with roommates and also performed – singing, playing, and dance – as one of the principal members of the Arts Centre's professional performance group.

Sonia, 45, was the mother of Rachel. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. Her daughter was actively involved in the Arts Centre.

Stefanie, 11, had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico. She was a student at the local elementary school and took dance classes at the Arts Centre.

Tenosh, 28, was a single man living with roommates and had come to the United States from southern Mexico in his mid 20s. He worked as a short order cook at a local restaurant.

Tomás, 25, was a single man living and working with his uncle and cousins in the painting business. He had a university degree and had come to the United States from central Mexico some two years before I met him.

Tomasa, 7, was Vanessa's niece and attended a local elementary school. She had been born in the United States to parents from central Mexico.

Tonya, 32, was a married mother of three children under the age of 15. She had been born in the United States and her three children were all involved in dance classes and performed with their dance studios.

Valeria, 10, was the daughter of Miri and Francisco and sister to Mía. She had been born in the United States and attended a local elementary school. Valeria took afterschool dance and music classes at the Arts Centre and other music classes with another music programme.

Vanessa, 38, was the stay-at-home mother of a teenage son. She had come to the United States from central Mexico in her 20s and received documentation through her marriage.

Victoria, 44, was a mother of two children, an adult daughter and a teenage son. She had moved to the United States from Michoacán in her early adulthood where she had trained as a folklórico dancer and had completed a university degree in the art. Victoria ran her own small dance studio giving group classes to

children and adults and had a business choreographing routines for private functions such as quinceañeras and weddings. She lived with her husband and their children.

Yolanda, 35, was a dance instructor who worked at a local high school as a community support worker and ran both a school dance group and a community dance troupe on the weekends. She was a married mother of two young sons and had come to the United States from central Mexico as a teenager with her family.

Glosario

Glossary

aplausos	applause
atole	a sweet, hot beverage made with corn flour and flavoured with chocolate and/or cinnamon
bachata	a partnered social dance originally from the Dominican Republic
Baila!	Dance!
bailar	to dance
baile social	social dancing
baile sorpresa	surprise dance, a presentational dance that is often a part of quinceañeros celebrations
bajo sexto	a twelve-stringed guitar-like instrument
balada romantica	romantic ballades
ballet folklórico	a presentational dance form characterized by colourful costumes and percussive footwork
banda	a type of music produced by a large ensemble which includes wind and brass instruments and percussion; also the ensemble itself
Caballeros Dorados	Golden Cowboys, a version of the song No Rompas Más Mi Pobre Corazón that increases in speed throughout
catrina	an elegantly dressed skeleton woman who represents death
César Chávez Day	March 31 st , a day that commemorates the life and work of the civil rights and labour movement activist César Chávez
chicano/a (also Xicano/a)	a person of Mexican descent, usually born in the United States; sometimes used as a synonym of Mexican American
Cinco de Mayo	May 5 th , a day that commemorates the Mexican victory over the French in 1862
Cómo se dice?	How do you say?
con ganas	with willingness, with enthusiasm
conchero	a presentational dance linked to indigenous groups which typically uses a lute-like instrument made from an armadillo shell

corrido	a narrative ballad derived from a poetic form of the same name that usually speaks of historic events and peasant life in the countryside
cumbia	a partnered social dance originally from Colombia
danza	a presentational dance form linked to indigenous groups in a pre-Colombian past as well as to Catholicism
danza Azteca	a presentational dance form linked to indigenous groups in a pre-Colombian past
danzantes	practitioners of danza
Día de la Virgen de Guadalupe	December 12 th , a day that commemorates the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe and the adoption of Catholicism in Mexico
Día de los Muertos	November 1 st , Day of the Dead, a day on which the deceased are honoured with offerings and prayer
duranguense	a type of music closely related to banda and norteño with a heavy reliance on synthesizers; also the related partnered social dance form
faldeo	skirt twirling technique that is a fundamental element of ballet folklórico
fiesta	a party
frijoles charros	beans cooked with sausage
guitarrón	a six-stringed guitar-like instrument
huapango	a type of music characterized by the use of the violin, huapanguera and jarana and by the use of improvisation; also the related dance form which uses percussive footwork
huapanguera	a large eight-stringed guitar-like instrument
huaraches	leather sandals
Jalisco	state in central Mexico
jarana	a small five-stringed guitar-like instrument
merengue	a partnered social dance form originally from the Dominican Republic
mexicanidad	Mexican-ness
Mexicano/a	a person from Mexico
Mi burrito sabanero	My Little Donkey, a popular Christmas carol
música	music

música sonidera	deejayed music
No Rompas Más Pobre Corazón	a Spanish version of the English song Achy Breaky Heart
norteña	a type of music produced by an ensemble which includes the accordion and the bajo sexto; also the ensemble
papel picado	paper cut into elaborate designed and used for decoration
papi	Daddy
quebradita	an acrobatic partnered social dance
queso fresco	fresh cheese
quinceños (also quince)	the celebration of a young woman's 15 th birthday
ranchera	a type of narrative ballad that speaks about love, nature, and notions of home
recuerdo	a memento
reggaetón	a type of music originally from Puerto Rico that combines hip hop with other types of music
rezos encarnados	embodied prayers
rock en español	Spanish language rock
salsa	a type of music originally from Cuba; also the related partnered social dance form
samba	a dance form originally from Brazil
sentir el ritmo	to feel the rhythm
sentir la música	to feel the music
sobriño/a	nephew/niece
sombrero	a broad-brimmed hat of either felt or straw
sonidero	a deejay
sousaphone	a type of tuba that can be used when marching or standing
tamale	a steamed corn meal based dumpling stuffed with usually with chicken or pork
tarima	a wooden platform used for dancing with percussive footwork
traje	an outfit or costume
tubo	a pole for dancing around
twerking	a dance form that involves hip thrust from a low squatting position
vals	waltz

zapateado

Zumba

percussive footwork

a dance based fitness program

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