



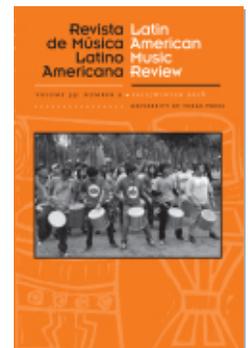
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Voices of Villa El Salvador, Peru

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*Fractal Performance in a Neo-Andean Fiesta:
Kaleidoscopic Voices of Villa El Salvador, Peru*



ABSTRACT: This article investigates the intricacies of an intergenerational communal event carried out in the underprivileged district of Villa El Salvador (Lima, Peru) in 2013. In this event, which celebrated the reinauguration of a soccer stadium, an *orquesta típica* brass band, an Afro-Brazilian *batucada* ensemble, and a school marching band performed simultaneously, creating a thick unified texture that was reflective of underlying, mostly unspoken conflicts inside the community. This type of multiensemble rendition is an example of the novel forms of expressive culture and performance modalities developed by Lima's emerging neo-Andean identities, which fluidly traverse local and global ideologies while adhering to a set of long-lasting Andean ethical guidelines.



keywords: Peru, performance, Andean cultures, innovation, social ethics

RESUMEN: En este artículo se investigan los pormenores de un evento comunal e intergeneracional llevado a cabo en 2013 en Villa El Salvador, un distrito de bajos recursos ubicado en Lima, Perú. En dicho evento, el cual fue organizado para celebrar la reinauguración de un estadio de fútbol, participaron una orquesta típica, un grupo de batucada afro-brasileña y una banda escolar. Los tres ensambles produjeron música simultáneamente, lo cual conllevó a la formación de una textura musical densa y unificada. Esta textura expresó los conflictos internos, mayormente no verbalizados, existentes dentro de la comunidad. Asimismo, esta forma de ejecución multiensamble se aproxima como ejemplo de las nuevas formas de cultura y modalidades de acción impulsadas por las identidades neo-andinas en Lima, las cuales navegan ideologías locales y globales sin dejar a un lado principios éticos propios de las culturas ancestrales andinas.



palabras clave: Perú, *performance*, culturas andinas, innovación, ética social



In this article, I examine an intergenerational communal event I attended during my fieldwork in Villa El Salvador (VES) in 2013. VES is a deprived district on the urban fringes of Lima, Peru. The area where it is

now located used to be an inhospitable desert. Today, it is home to a thriving, though poor, community of more than half a million citizens of Andean and mestizo origin. Surrounded by the sierra foothills and the cold, raucous waters of the Pacific Ocean, VES's arid landscape is filled with saline humidity and a constant drizzle that falls throughout the year, especially during wintertime. These environmental conditions render the land mostly sterile for agricultural purposes, but this did not stop the communal efforts of thousands of settlers who arrived to transform the area into a livable city. They went to VES from multiple rural areas across the country in the early 1970s, escaping the extreme poverty and disease that decimated their villages. Settlers believed that by bringing their physical presence to Lima and taking possession of this forgotten land, Peru's central government, based in Lima, would be forced to recognize, and perhaps even address, the migrants' urgent needs that otherwise were largely ignored when they were living in rural locations.

In the winter of 2013, I was doing preliminary research and conducting interviews among cultural activists in VES, searching for possible topics for my doctoral dissertation. One morning in July, I had planned to meet with Dante Abad Zapata, the director of the Center of Documentation of Villa El Salvador, a community-owned institution that administers an archive of documents tracing the origins of VES. As I was riding the bus from metropolitan Lima, my excitement about this meeting with Abad, a civic activist and knowledgeable native historian of the district, took me out of reality for a minute. I suddenly realized that I had missed my bus stop, and I decided to jump out of the vehicle onto an unknown dusty road, trying to orient myself. To my surprise, at that precise moment, a boisterous parade comprised of school-age musicians was marching along the same road.

The marching band was crossing the Avenida Mariategui, one of the district's main roads (see Figure 1). Tidily uniformed teenage musicians were vigorously playing xylophones, tubas, snare and bass drums, trombones, and cymbals. A few adults escorted them. I joined the parade and followed their march, which ultimately reached a fenced gate and entered a building located a few blocks from Avenida Mariategui. The building, I soon learned, was the municipal soccer stadium Estadio Iván Elías Moreno (IES). Inside IES, a grand celebration was under way, a fiesta with hundreds of attendees of all ages. It was an unnamed festival organized by the Municipality of VES to present the newly revamped soccer stadium to the community. IES's green turf and athletic tracks looked impeccable, and mingling around them were musicians, dancers, political figures, soccer players, journalists, photographers, and costumed characters.

I was surprised to notice that the event was saturated by the sounds produced by three different musical ensembles performing simultaneously.



FIGURE 1. *A school marching band parades down Mariategui Avenue in the direction of IES.*

Located in different points around the turf, there was an Andean *orquesta típica* (traditional orchestra) comprising brass and woodwind instruments, a cohort of Afro-Brazilian *batucada* drums, and the school marching band, which I followed in from outside. As I show in this article, this communal festivity, and most especially the interwoven sonic and symbolic texture constituted by the aural interactions created by the ensembles, not only celebrated the benefits of a rehabilitated stadium but also articulated and reinvigorated the cohesive quality of a diverse community that has relied on an ethos of reciprocity and solidarity to subsist. The three ensembles, playing all at once, generated different fields of sound that merged into a thick and complex soundscape. Individually and collectively, the ensembles brought to the fore particular aspects of tradition that characterized the generational clashes between sectors of the VES population. Yet by all performing at the same time, the music of the groups became enmeshed as an emblem of social cohesiveness, even in the face of cultural and generational divisions.

Theoretical Framework

In what follows, I analyze the IES festival from an ethnographic perspective and through the lens of cultural studies. The analysis does not claim to be purely ethnographic, as I gathered the bulk of information presented here through a host of sources (e.g., in situ interviews, online videos, TV shows, Skype conferences, interpretive textual analysis, and scholarly

research). These sources helped me to contextualize and interpret the texture of the performance. My reading is not conclusive. I emphasize two facets of analysis: one is the attendees' and performers' articulation of local social concepts that are endemic to a migrant community with a diverse Andean and mestizo heritage; the other is the correspondence between what I see as VES's fractal social organization and the kaleidoscopic texture produced by the ensembles at IES.

VES should not be seen as a homogeneous Andean polity, because most of its citizens migrated from diverse Peruvian rural locations. At least 80 percent of the original population came from the Central Andes (Ancash) and the southern departments of Puno, Cuzco, Abancay, Huancavelica, Ayacucho, and Arequipa. However, the evidence I provide reveals that, as Rodrigo Montoya (2010) has argued, VES is perhaps Peru's most emblematic congregation of varied Andean cultures cohabiting in an urban setting and actively developing an innovative expressive culture in dialogue with global trends. This is why I choose the term "neo-Andean" to describe their expressive culture. Such neo-Andean heritage is shown not necessarily in ethnic terms but in the residents' reliance on institutions that have shaped the socioeconomic organization of the city and historically connected the VES community with highland rural traditions. For example, via praxes learned while living in their original agricultural economies, the builders of VES relied on communal work, self-help, reciprocity, and commitment to the community rather than the pursuit of individual profit as a strategy for survival (Burga and Delpech 1998; Burt 1988; Burt and Espejo 1995; Blondet 1991, 1996; Degregori et al. 1986). VES settlers also incorporated left-wing revolutionary values to inform their political stance on matters of social organizations (Chávez 2011; Ramos Quispe 2010; Burgos-Vigna 2003; Cortázar and Lecaros 2003; Imparato and Ruster 2003, 73; Favreau et al. 1993). Thus, when speaking about the innovative quality of VES neo-Andean culture, it is important to note that socialism and Andean moral values—and even a host of principles coming from the revolutionary teachings of liberation theology, a progressive movement within the Catholic Church in Latin America (Gutierrez 1988), and from Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed—have been mutually influential in shaping its local organization.

I link these organizational tools, found operating in both the VES community at large and the IES in particular, to the idea of kaleidoscopic cultural performance. The term "kaleidoscopic" refers here to a performance modality that congregates diverse, even clashing, patterns of action subtly bounded by ethical guidelines. VES actors praise diversity and impel cultural multiplicity. Simultaneously, the community strives to reunite and homogenize the very multiplicity it creates to foster solidarity. Thus, I perceive concepts of fractality playing a role in the process of symbolic and

material behavior, understanding fractality as the quality of a multifaceted, kaleidoscopic, and interactive (social) system that adapts and reaches evolving equilibrium through the intersubjective action of diverse social agents (Fyer and Ruis 2004). My goal is to show how this fractal and kaleidoscopic organization of VES society was articulated through symbolic and sonic terms at the IES fiesta.

I employ fractality to interpret the discrete aesthetics and performative modalities of each IES ensemble as an embodiment and prolongation of the body politic and the organizational strategies present in VES. While not framing VES kaleidoscopic culture through the lens of Amerindian perspectivism, my use of “fractality,” a term borrowed from chaos theory, builds on anthropologist José Kelly’s (2005, 114–131) description of Amerindian personhood as a dynamic field of relationality in which not only “groups and persons . . . can appear as one person when compared with other groups or persons” but in which also “part of an Other becomes the Self [and] affinity is transformed into consubstantiality,” especially when specific forms of rituality are pursued. Along these lines, I see the fields of sound produced by the ensembles as protractions (“parts”) of the musicians and the sectors of the population they represented, namely, the seniors, young adults, and children attending the event. These fields were overlapped and “consubstantiated” to constitute the whole (“self”) of the society at a sonic level. Kelly’s take on fractality is helpful in interpreting the performance dynamics at IES. However, this construct cannot be applied without some nuance to VES society at large because of the risk of creating essentialist analogies. Using the term “Amerindian” per se may negatively imply the conflation of the ethnic and cultural diversity found in the district.

Michael Uzendoski (2012, 181–182) has also applied fractality to his analysis of Napo Quechua cultural thought in Ecuador. When discussing the “displays of fractal relations” in the song “Nettles Leaf,” he affirms that “self-scaling relations, which are present in many aspects of Native Amazonian thought and practice . . . are forms that emerge in complex nonlinear ways. Like a drop of water that suddenly becomes the entire world, or a leaf that becomes a tree, or a body that becomes an entire society, fractal relations allow parts to become wholes [and] whole to become parts.” Similarly, I perceive the IES overlapping texture as an emblem of the parts and whole of the local community. Furthermore, fractality is helpful in describing the festival’s soundscape as an arena of sonic struggle and reconciliation and in accounting for the relational and transactional aspects of VES personhood.

Transactional Identities

VES society comprises first- and second-generation Quechua, Aymara, and mestizo migrants who continue incorporating various organizational

strategies such as communal work and participatory governance into the everyday life of the community (Mayer 2002; Trawick 2001). In this light, the “set of peasant knowledge and values [*tradición campesina*] they have brought about [still] appears as an element of continuity in the history of VES” (Zapata 1997, 88). As many of my research assistants suggested, this rural heritage does not necessarily disclose itself in the color of the inhabitants’ skin or even in terms of their localized ethnic provenance; the implicit and matter-of-fact recognition of their heritage is made evident in their defense and appreciation of the organizational strategies that were borrowed from highland economic and moral systems by the first settlements. A case in point is settlers’ direct allusion to the Quechua concept of *ayllu* (household, community, familial kinship) and *ayni* (reciprocity, communal work) when undertaking their first efforts to organize the community (see Montoya 2010).

Building on this, I review the performative dimensions of the IES soundscape in terms of its moral and social undercurrents. The soundscape was an arena where kaleidoscopic fields of performance (Smith 2016; Bourdieu 1995) cohabited, actively shaping each other, and where the children, youth, and elders worked out relational aspects of their contending identities to reach agreement. The term “kaleidoscopic” describes the multidimensional and inclusive quality of the performance as well as its material presence as a paradigm of social unity in the face of diversity. It also emphasizes the interconnection of the variegated sonic discourses that, at first sight, may seem unrelated due to their dissimilar structures.

This kaleidoscopic gathering of fields can also be described using Turino’s (1993, 55–56) concept of “thick unified texture.” The concept refers to a musical feature, not rare in traditional Andean music, that involves the simultaneous performance of at least two panpipe ensembles, clashing tuning systems, or different compositions in order to produce loud and compelling renditions as symbols of communal power and beauty. Even though there were no panpipe cohorts participating at the VES stadium, the term is applicable to the IES case study because the participating ensembles produced the preconditions for “thick textures” described by Turino (i.e., performance of clashing tuning systems or different compositions).

Describing the IES soundscape as “fractal,” “kaleidoscopic,” and a “thick unified texture” permits contextualization of the sonic features of the event as embodiments of local socio-moral discourses. Assembled in the heightened circumstances of a ritual communal gathering, the seniors, young adults, and children of VES became dramatically personified and reunited through the overlapping texture generated by the ensembles. The resulting soundscape provided a platform for evoking and mediating intergenerational/intercultural conflicts that are still endemic to a community that seeks innovation in their social practices but has also generated in this

attempt rivalry and clashes between the youth and the politically empowered *vecinos* (adult and senior neighbors). For this reason, I perceive the kaleidoscopic rendition as a dramatization of a crisis born from a sense of breach in the district's social organization (Schechner 2002, 621; Turner 1991). The type of disharmonic sonorities staged by the clashing ensembles related to the difficulty of conciliating two seemingly opposite moral principles upheld by *vecinos*: namely, to defend a premier moral command established by the founding fathers of the district that the local youth be treasured as the only, most empowered elite of the district (CUAVES 1973), while simultaneously seeking to reduce the amount of juvenile crime, in response to which *vecinos* have developed a propensity to impose political barriers that silence the emergence of innovative youth cultures. In light of this conflict, the kaleidoscopic texture produced both an ethnogenesis of mutuality and a ritual dramatization of the intergenerational struggle. This struggle was enacted through the particular dynamics of sound production and the synchrony of differing fields of performance.

Setting the Problem: Policing or Liberating the Youth?

In his speech on November 2, 2015, given at the beginning of a VES forum on issues of civic governability, Dante Abad highlighted the key themes that have guided my analysis of the events at IES. Abad gave this speech as an introduction to a communal discussion on the need for supporting an emerging "sociocultural movement" to provide creative outlets for at-risk youth. This movement, the Arts in the Street Program (ASP), was led by young artists and musicians who support themselves independently through self-help and fund-raising activities. ASP was seeking assistance from the VES municipality and *vecinos* to launch and sustain a larger grassroots initiative. The artists' intention was to offer street art workshops on music, graffiti, social theater, and circus performing arts to the area's troubled teenagers. Youth involvement in the arts, the artists believed, might help reduce the proliferation of juvenile crime. In this sense, Abad's speech is helpful in contextualizing not only the general situation of the VES youth, but also the role of expressive culture and the public space in the district. I reproduce a portion here:

Tonight, we are meeting in this historical place called Plaza de la Paz [Peace Square]. What a beautiful name for a square! That "peace" attributed to the square is the same that shines in the face of our youth, with sparkles of hope, tonight. They [our youth] are here tonight, a night in which the sky and God himself are favoring us by stopping the drizzle. As you see, this is an event that is taking place in beautiful weather

and the entire firmament is our roof! That is the kind of feeling that the Arts in the Street program is trying to awake in us. Let's seize the public space! But not for stealing, getting drunk, using drugs, or insulting our *vecinos*. Let's take control of the public space to cohabit like real human beings, with solidarity, with education. And if we can do this through art and culture, then that would be much better!

When we organize public communal forums like this one, tonight, the people who speak up are always the seniors, the communal leaders, the authorities, all our official institutions. But who of us [*vecinos*] have listened to the youth ever? When have you ever heard the voice of a young man or woman speaking up in a public forum? We need to hear their voices now! . . . If we open our ears, we can move ahead and create a real message of hope and say together and aloud that, yes, it is possible to live in a safe environment here in Villa El Salvador!

Abad's speech touches on the type of intergenerational conflicts that were addressed at IES. He underlines three issues that have been a source of struggle among VES inhabitants since the massive migration that took place in the early 1970s: the view of the youth as a symbol of hope for a better future; the defense of a self-governed community based on solidarity; and the continuous fight against the perils of a harsh coastal environment. Paradoxically, some of the intergenerational conflicts addressed by Abad arose from *vecinos'* relentless efforts to establish peaceful cohabitation within the diverse body politic. The conundrum appears as the result of *vecinos'* determination to accomplish two goals that apparently contradict themselves. On the one hand, VES has one of the highest rates of crime in Lima.¹ This is due to the numerous *pandillas* (juvenile gangs) and *bandas criminales* (organized criminal gangs) that thrive locally. Gangs actively recruit dropout teenagers who have left school because of family problems or to work in the streets. Thus, *vecinos* continually seek strategies to battle the surge of crime that they believe is due to the wrongdoings of the youth.

On the other hand, *vecinos* feel an obligation to honor the ethical mandate established by the Comunidad Urbana Autogestionaria de Villa El Salvador (Self-Managed Urban Community of Villa El Salvador, or CUAVES), which envisioned the VES youth as the sole privileged sector of their society. CUAVES was a council organized by migrants to aid in the settlement process in the 1970s (Hordijk 2005). As a response to the lack of support from Lima's central government, it arose as an independent, self-help grassroots organization based on a system of democratic participation. It also produced a written constitution that is still a major reference for understanding the social conceptions of self and other in VES. The document lists a series of principles and commands that every *vecino* is

expected to follow. Even though CUAVES was transformed into the Municipality of VES to acquire political recognition from the Peruvian government in 1983, its precepts are still a vital force for devising strategies of survival and adaptation. Among the principles included in the document, which for the most part deals with techniques of reciprocity, communal self-help, and sustainability inspired by Andean institutions and socialist principles (Zapata-Velasco 1997, 194), the statute that focused on the youth highlights a key point: “As a PRIORITY, CUAVES orients all its resources and actions towards the only PRIVILEGED sector of the community, that is, the youth; CUAVES will integrate the youth in every mechanism of self-government (CUAVES 1973; capitalized in the original).” The document explicitly positions the youth as an elite deserving maximum attention and resources. In reality, however, today’s youth are the most deprived sector of the population. They suffer a lack of affordable education, access to health-care providers, and facilities and programs to promote creative activities to ensure for them an optimal developmental process. To be fair, this lack of basic services has not necessarily been caused by the *vecinos* themselves but comes as a result of generalized ethnic segregation (Moreno and Oropesa 2012; Greene 2007) and economic inequality in Lima (Barrón 2008; Figueroa and Barrón 2005).

Rafael Virhuez, leader of the Casa Infantil Juvenil de Arte y Cultura (Youth-Oriented Community Arts Center for the Arts and Culture, or CIJAC), an important youth organization in VES, points out that even teenagers who wish to invest time in the arts faced forms of discrimination from *vecinos*:

When I used to go out to the streets with the kids [to perform parades], people would greet and cheer us for the positive work we do with the youth. But, when I invited *vecinos* to bring their children to be part of our activities, I realized that our space had been stigmatized. Parents started to say that it was great to have kids involved in the arts, but they still wouldn’t want to send them to CIJAC because they believed that ours was a place for gang members only. They identified our organization as a space created for violent kids with [psychological] problems. . . . That attitude really affected the members of CIJAC and created in them an [identity] conflict. Kids didn’t see themselves as gangsters, but adults would discriminate against them as if they were criminals. (Personal communication, April 28, 2017)

In the same manner, Enrique Zevallos, director of the VES municipality’s Division of Civic Engagement, has described the municipality’s central goals in terms that contradict the CUAVES principles in relation to the

youth. In an interview, Zevallos stated that the municipality does not pursue the implementation of any cultural program to benefit the youth and that “the primordial focus is to build or repair roads and sidewalks.”² He added that “there is no budget for promoting the arts and that a policy regarding the arts in the district has not been determined yet.”³ Zevallos’s and Virhuez’s statements demonstrate that a host of prejudices, stereotypes, bureaucratic barriers, and economic constraints problematize the fulfillment of the CUAVES mandate and problematize even further the intergenerational conflict.

This moral dilemma experienced by *vecinos* and elders in relation to the youth may be enunciated as follows: “If we, *vecinos*, want to create a safer city, should we still consider the youth as our privileged group and be indifferent to the fact that most thieves and gangsters in VES are teenagers and young adults?” Finding an answer to this question, which arguably may not be representative of every consideration involved in the intergenerational schism, is the igniting force behind the many expressions of struggle and agreement that shape *vecinos*’ efforts to devise paths to accomplish their dream society. These preoccupations were also at play in the celebrations at IES. Furthermore, they were expressed through the dynamics of sound production rendered by the ensembles that the Municipality of VES invited as key participants in the communal gathering.

Innovation and the Voice of Violence

In his 2015 speech, Dante Abad presented a positive stance. He was passionate about the inclusion of the youth in the public discussion. His own research as a journalist and activist has focused on analyzing the reasons behind the mounting gang-related violence in the district and on seeking creative alternatives to mitigate young people’s discontent (Abad 2006). In a study, Abad argues that most of these issues, that is, the propagation of crime, drugs, and a general lack of civility, spring from the fact that the youth have responded, perhaps justifiably, with modes of organized violence to the generalized inequality and prejudice exerted by Lima’s racially empowered elites, which disdain rural migrants. According to Abad, this is even more the case when recognizing that, as mentioned earlier, there is an absence of educational programs to channel the teenagers’ frustration into more constructive endeavors.

In such a context, VES communal leaders have contributed in part to exacerbate the detrimental situation, especially by repressing and excessively policing the youth’s outlets of expression, fearing that, by allowing the spread of alternative cultures, they would ultimately endorse the deviation of the youth onto paths of social marginalization and alienation. Abad

(2006, 28) writes: “In Villa El Salvador the youth have manifested their nonconformity with violence since the very origins of the district.” Politically empowered *vecinos* have gradually developed an image of the youth that builds upon the idea that “being young or being a teenager . . . is itself a threat to the society” and, in consequence, the youth “have not been able to participate with their peers in any type of collective civic endeavor” (29). In this way, the youth have been banned from the system of democratic participation proposed by CUAVES: they have been segregated and kept in silence not only by Lima’s prejudiced society but also by *vecinos*, who urgently seek to establish peace by repressing young citizens in their belief that the youth constitute the root of crime.

In the same study, Abad provides another layer of depth to the analysis of the intergenerational conflict at IES: the facility where the event took place, the Ivan Elías Moreno Stadium, was named to commemorate Ivan Elías Moreno, a promising VES high school student who was stabbed to death by a juvenile gang in 1983. Building the stadium in honor of Ivan Elías Moreno demanded a great amount of manpower and resources. Still, it had to be done, so that the stadium could function not only as a resource for the youth, but also as a symbol by which *vecinos* and elders wished to remind everyone about the importance of pledging adherence to the original CUAVES precept on youth, that the children and teenagers of VES are to be the sole privileged sector of the society.

Historical Context: VES as a “Little Peru”

The themes presented by Abad in his speech, that is, the *vecinos*’ search for peaceful cohabitation, the view of the youth as a sign of hope, and the defense of a self-governed organism based on solidarity, also tell the story of a community whose efforts to survive have involved a continual renovation of social practices. The development of VES has involved a process of cultural innovation informed by several strands of practical and moral knowledge (Montoya 2010; Zapata-Velasco 1997; Coronado and Pajuelo 1996; Quijano 1996). For example, Antonio Aragón, a founding father of the district who actively participated in the creation of CUAVES, pointed out that the VES “migrants who came from the sierra constituted the majority of the population and had a communal concept in mind.” He added: “We [migrants] carried with us the knowledge of our ancestors, which was still very alive. We knew about the meaning of the *ayllu*, we knew what it meant to do communal work, what was the purpose of the *ayni* And so, we endeavored to take advantage of this knowledge to make the city grow. We used this knowledge to produce a functional organization in the district.”²⁴ Aragón and other activists who work with

grassroots youth organizations have stressed the importance of highland guiding referents such as the *ayllu* and *ayni*. For example, Arturo Mejía, director of the youth organization Arena y Esteras, states, “We are a community of migrants with our own modes of thinking and talking, which build upon our Andean heritage” (Malca 2008, 142). César Escuza, director of Vichama, another emblematic youth institution, is emphatic when saying that “in our work [with the youth] we want to address the encounter and articulation of the Quechua, Aymara, and Amazonian cultures and other cultures that coexist [in VES], because Villa El Salvador is a laboratory for the encounter of multiple cultural dimensions.”⁵ Escuza further elaborates: “They say that migrants came and built VES with their empty hands. That’s not true; we, the artists who make culture, reply that we certainly didn’t bring anything material but instead brought with us the entire history of our cultures.”⁶ Rafael Virhuez describes his pedagogical stance as follows:

We are interested in making art from a specific perspective. We want our kids to use art as a space for remembrance and for [the building of] identity. We want them to be able to know about, recognize, and remember the migrant past of this community, so that they can identify with it. (Personal communication, April 2017)

These statements show that even though creative endeavors may be inspired in part by the presence of an Andean heritage, especially as it manifests in the local societal organization, VES expressive arts articulate a diversity of cultural influences.

In this regard, most VES scholars and inhabitants usually describe VES as a kind of “little Peru” (*un pequeño Perú*). This alludes to one of the most fundamental tasks of CUAVES, which was to take in and protect all migrants, without devaluing or segregating their ethnic backgrounds. Thus, the process of building a solidaristic society has prioritized finding ways of consolidating such original diversity through fostering a sense of shared and transactable identity. Notably, the process of forming social alliances was driven, and in fact triggered, by the plain necessity of survival. Migrants who arrived in Lima by the thousands during the 1970s were rapidly expelled from the city’s metropolitan area and relocated to the southern wastelands.

President Velasco’s government initially sympathized with the settlers because of their peasant background and the socialist ideas that infused their constitution. Nonetheless, the government eventually gave way to the political pressure of *criollos*, Lima’s conservative white and mestizo elites. *Criollos* found the presence of peasants outrageous and a danger to the

project of modernization of the Peruvian capital. Thereafter, Velasco sent military troops to remove the first groups of “pioneers” (Golte and Adams 1990; Degregori and Blondet 1986) from the area known as Pamplona, which was the first occupied and is located next to an upscale neighborhood. The troops destroyed the migrants’ shacks and transported hundreds of families in open trucks toward La Hoyada Baja de Lurín, today’s district of VES. La Hoyada Baja lacked electricity, sanitation, and clean water and was not prepared to shelter the families. Despite this, the pioneers were left out in the desert. They had to undertake massive communal efforts to tame the wastelands and produce a livable environment.

To address their needs, migrants established CUAVES and assigned a specific duty to each member of the community. All families were expected to settle their ethnic differences and to observe moral commands derived from “traditional communal norms and values” (CUAVES 1973). Through this, the original diversity that characterized the pioneers’ backgrounds did not present an obstacle to unifying a system of communal cooperation. In the following years, the system provided enough workforce to build VES. As this shows, CUAVES’s search for agreement and concerted communal efforts relied on the development of a shared transactable identity based on organizational principles derived from rural experience. The regulations established by the founding fathers were born “as the fruit of the most extreme urgency” and focused on invigorating “the communal norms and values that are traditional to Perú in order to fortify the organization of the people” (Zapata-Velazco 1997, 94). Since then, successive waves of migrants have continued to arrive from rural locations, adding new layers of diversity to this little Peru. It is in this historical context that VES needs be understood as a multifaceted society immersed in a process of cultural innovation.

The Founding Fathers and the *Orquesta Típica*

The first sounds that surrounded me when I entered IES were the festive melodies of the *orquesta típica* performing traditional *marineras* and *huaynos*, two popular Andean or mestizo dances (see Figure 2). This was a medium-sized ensemble positioned next to a covered area on the west terrace. It consisted of snare and bass drums, cymbals, a tuba, clarinets, a tenor saxophone, and a trumpet. In the nearby covered area, some fifty seniors were calmly following the activities. Flanked by towers of massive loudspeakers, the seniors were the only attendees protected by a tent, which sheltered them from the drizzle. The rest of the attendees, which included school-age students and *vecinos*, were scattered around the turf and exposed to the winter’s light rain.



FIGURE 2. Orquesta típica performing at IES.

Next to a tower of loudspeakers, there was an emcee actively greeting and cheering the seniors. He wanted to keep the seniors and *vecinos* emotionally engaged with the importance of the grand celebration. The emcee continually stressed the major accomplishment of having an up-to-date stadium in VES. Through his many announcements, he commended the quality of the event's program and the presence of public figures such as VES mayor Guido Iñigo and a retired soccer player from Peru's national team. After finishing his announcements, the emcee introduced one of the main acts of the program: a dance act performed by the Solier Dance School, an academy run by a young and successful VES native, Michael Solier. As a professional dancer who grew up in the district, Solier had become a source of pride and focus of admiration among locals. He had gained popularity as one of the most successful professional choreographers in the country. For this occasion, his troupe had prepared a special number inspired by the Walt Disney blockbuster *The Lion King*, and the emcee announced that Solier's adaptation involved the participation of dozens of actors wearing colorful costumes and exotic makeup. Moreover, the choreography was expected to feature Solier's particular fusion style, which combines Hollywood-inspired imagery with Andean, hip-hop, and reggaeton elements.

Framing these announcements, the *orquesta típica* continued to perform dance music. According to Raul Romero (1990, 19), the type of orchestral format used by this ensemble emerged during the turn of the twentieth century in the central Peruvian Andes. *Orquestas típicas* originated in this area as expressions of a “mestizo style” devised by Andean and mixed-blood citizens, especially in the Mantaro Valley and in cities such as Huancayo and Tarma (Katz-Rosene 2014; Ferrier 2010). Building on previous research, Romero (1990, 20–21) notes that the *orquesta típica* has constituted a fundamental lineup used to accompany festivities within the highland’s fiesta system:

The predecessor of the orchestra was called *conjunto*, which consisted of the ubiquitous Andean *quenás* (notched flutes), mandolins, guitars, harp, violins, and a *tinya* [an Andean membranophone]. Early in the [twentieth century] the *quenás*, mandolins, and the guitar had already disappeared from the *conjunto* and from the Mantaro Valley at large. In the 1910s the clarinet was added to the group, and a decade later the saxophone—especially the alto and tenor—was also introduced The total acceptance of the saxophone and the clarinet by the mestizo peasantry of the region is clear evidence of their capacity to adopt modern elements without rejecting their traditional roots. In fact, despite the relatively recent introduction of these European instruments, the *orquesta típica* performs exclusively a traditional regional repertoire.

Following Romero, the idea of a “mestizo style”—exemplified by the use of European instruments to perform an indigenous repertoire—can be employed as a vantage point from which to explore the role of the traditional (yet modern) sounds produced by the *orquesta típica* at the stadium. This music can be approached as an iconic musicultural tradition that, in a way, synthesized and expressed the various experiences of life shared by the founding seniors attending the fiesta. Consistent with their institutional mission of promoting cultural diversity in the district, the type of distinctive reference signaled by the *orquesta típica* was introduced by one of the event’s organizers, the VES municipality’s deputy manager of culture and sport programs, to appeal to the seniors’ rural heritage as a symbol of pride. The municipality pursues the mission of protecting and maintaining the CUAVES mandates that foster a district in which “there are no socioeconomic or gender biases” and where *vecinos* can be “empowered with a democratic participation.”⁷ Thus, the decision to include the *orquesta típica* in the festival can be considered a tribute to the seniors, most of whom devoted their youth to the building of VES.

Providing a backdrop to the emcee's announcements, the *orquesta típica* kept performing energetic *marineras* and *huaynos*. Their amplified sounds crossed the stadium and boomed rhythmically, generating tones that unfolded with a syncopated and steady feel of triple and duple meters latched together. These supple rhythms were underlined by strong downbeats and a few off-the-beat accents by the bass drum, tuba, and snare drum. The amplified sounds embodied what the municipality and the attendees may have perceived as an authentic highland spirit infusing the celebration. The emcee, for instance, made sure to praise the quality of the music that was performed by the "authentic *orquesta típica* brought directly from Yauyos," a high-altitude province located in the eastern part of rural Lima. Making clear that the *orquesta típica* did not comprise, for example, migrant or acculturated musicians but, in fact, true sierra musicians seemed to provide a stronger sense of legitimacy to the festivities. In that way, a validated highland identity served to establish a stronger connection with the seniors, who, in turn, found themselves flattered by the physical proximity of the Yauyos orchestra located on the west terrace.

Furthermore, the sound of *huaynos* and *marineras* was amplified and spread throughout the stadium, creating a ritual acoustic environment (Lee 1999, 89). This sonic space surrounded all attendees and provided the means for further intercommunal identification that involved the inclusion of not only the elders but also the numerous school students located on other terraces. Signaling a sense of tradition through this particular "soundmark" (Murray Schafer 1977, 10), which presupposed the recognition of a migrant heritage, the *orquesta típica* helped reconnect attendees to one another by highlighting that most VES citizens share a similar background. In one sense, the *orquesta's* music had a conciliatory purpose: its repertoire intended to appeal to all generations.

The sounds of the ensemble were certainly pleasing to the seniors, who seemed not to be disturbed by their proximity to the blasting loudspeakers. The amplified sounds filled up the fiesta's soundscape, reproducing that same "aesthetic ideal" seen by Romero (1990, 23) in the Central Andes *orquesta típica* performances, an ideal that refers to the use of rising volume and dynamic intensity to express power and beauty in musical renditions. As Romero points out, in *orquesta típica* performances "it is not enough to blow [brass instruments] harder to achieve a higher volume of sound, but the *orquesta* must display collectively a big sound," not merely to ensure musical achievement but, more important, to generate a "source of prestige" among musicians and audiences alike (75). In IES, the preference for rising volumes was evidenced not only by the *orquesta típica* playing loudly, thus precluding a sense of dynamic range; the "big sound" that is praised in the Central Andes was also achieved by using loudspeakers

and, most noticeably, by juxtaposing simultaneous music performances carried out alongside two other ensembles.

Batucada

The *orquesta típica* had a serious rival competing for prestige and an iconic place in the soundscape. Concurrent with the Yauyos ensemble and the school marching band was an Afro-Brazilian *batucada*-inspired group positioned on the north terrace of the building (see Figure 3). This *batucada* group, known as Rumba Urbana, was performing drum music along with coordinated dance movements. Most of the members were teenagers and young adults. They were surrounded by school students who watched attentively as Rumba Urbana played their *tambores* (drums) with command and power.⁸ The various rhythmic parts produced by members constituted an interlocking texture that had as its spine a stream of continuous downbeats stressed by the *bombo* (bass drum). Other instruments, such as the *tarola* (snare drum) and the *repique* (tom-tom), added layers of complexity to the texture.

Led by VES cultural activist Jesus Peña, the Afro-Brazilian–inspired music and choreographies performed by Rumba Urbana are an example of a larger community-based grassroots movement I have described elsewhere as the “VES *pasacalle* movement” (Odría 2016, 2017). The VES *pasacalle* movement is an innovative civic effort of the local youth based on the street practice and performance of *batucada*-inspired music, social theater, and circus performing arts. As a grassroots initiative, the *pasacalle* movement joins together the work of several nonprofit cultural organizations that focus their activities on the weekly rehearsals of *tambores* and such circus arts as clowning, juggling, and acrobatics. These street rehearsals have become platforms for creative individual and collective expression.

Describing the goals of his group, Peña says:

My work with the children and teenagers of the district is closely connected to the history of VES, because the organizational aspect of playing *batucada* music is very important and similar to the organization of VES. [In *batucada*] all musicians need to be articulated and synchronized in relation to the task [of playing *tambores*]. Musicians have to always maintain a direct communication. From my own experience, I can tell you that VES was born out of these same procedures. People had to organize themselves, they had to be able to communicate effectively. They had to coordinate activities and build grassroots institutions, so that all leaders and groups could carry out communal action



FIGURE 3. *Rumba Urbana performing at IES. On the right, wearing a hat, is the leader Jesus Peña.*

in a quicker and more effective way. That's also the way in which all *batucada* groups in VES have been able to blossom. (Personal communication, April 17, 2017)

Other local groups such as Kataplum Suena, La Retumba, and Kilombo, which define themselves as “cultural organizations” and “families,” are formed mostly by teenagers who are the offspring of the VES settlers. They use the word *pasacalle* (to walk along the street) to describe not only their distinctive musical expressions and circus disciplines but also the street parades they organize a few times a month to celebrate civic festivities.

Batucada ensembles have become very popular among VES youth, especially because they are seen as fresh, fun, energetic, and cosmopolitan. During my fieldwork in the area, I gathered accounts in which the emergence of these groups was described as an effort to provide a creative space for the youth. Many leaders and artists mentioned that they felt the need to perform but that they also wanted to avoid any reference to highland folklore. For example, Pamela Otoya, the founder of Kilombo, stated that Andean music (e.g., *huaynos*) is associated with memories of racial discrimination in Lima and should therefore be avoided among youth (personal communication, August 2013). According to Otoya, after a process of music experimentation and research, *pasacalle* organizations determined that Brazilian *batucada* music could provide a means of fostering ethnic pride and solidarity. Playing *tambores* with power and grace is a

source of *energía* (energy), which gives young musicians the opportunity to experience self-confidence. Otoyá argues that most teenagers in VES are “introverted, stiff, and timid” because they have inherited these traits from parents and grandparents who were subject to systematic discrimination. Therefore, according to her view, the traditional Andean music praised by the elders is associated with these kinds of negative connotations. As a response, the playing of *tambores* is intended to engage second-generation migrant teenagers in an activity that leads them to decolonize the body, that is, to loosen up and learn modes of bodily expression that rely on a display of confidence through rhythmic fluency and sonic power.

Along these lines, Peña affirms: “The first thing that we do with our new students is to teach them to interact with their bodies” (personal communication, April 2017). He explains: “For us, music is inside ourselves. We believe that we need to manifest and bring to the surface what we have inside and put that in the *tambores*, so that the instruments can amplify what we feel and, in that way, make people enjoy our music.” In relation to the generational divide with older generations of *vecinos*, he adds:

We strive to gain recognition from the community and the society that we effectively intervene with our work. *Vecinos* usually complain that the youth hang out in the streets wasting their time, which leads to the formation of gangs and wrongdoing. *Batucada* provides a space that in the long run helps to engage these at-risk kids in an activity that is fun but that also requires discipline. Eventually, kids learn to make the right decisions to direct their lives toward something positive. This is a kind of education that deals with character formation and helps to keep them away from gangs.

The *batucada* group performing at the IES festival was not an isolated case of an unusual world music ensemble performing at the fiesta. Rumba Urbana was the ambassador of a youth movement that has channeled ideological and political preoccupations of this sector of the population. According to Peña, the Municipality of VES invited the group to perform as a symbolic recognition and validation of their political voice:

As a group, we used to have a nice relationship with the municipality, especially during a time in which they actively supported the arts and culture. The person in charge of the culture and sport programs was our friend and she wanted to promote the grassroots work of VES youth cultural organizations [such as ours]. She is the one who created a budget to benefit youth programs in the district.⁹ So, when she invited us to perform at the stadium, that was part of her office’s trust in a series of youth assemblies that they started to organize to support us.

Mainly, they wanted the youth to have a space of their own; they gave us some materials [e.g., instruments, uniforms] so we could partake in the everyday life of the community.

Her office proposed a very interesting idea. They wanted the municipality to stop embracing the district as a whole [monolithic] entity; instead, they wanted to accomplish their work by articulating their youth programs within the grassroots organizations that were already enmeshed in the community. In that way, they tried to reach a larger number of teenagers. (Personal communication, April 2017)

Analogous to the art collective endorsed by Dante Abad in his speech, Peña's organization seeks to engage at-risk youth through creative practices. Thus, by giving them a sonic "space" in the event, the invitation extended by the municipality acknowledged the important work that the group carries out. In IES *batucada* musicians kept playing *tambores* with gusto because their physical effort and rising volumes were markers of power and grace. In the view of VES *pasacalle* practitioners, *batucada* music has to be forceful and loud. This constitutes an ideal expression of *energía* that, according to some, reflects what they see as the material and symbolic "power of the drums" (*la potencia y fuerza de los tambores*).

Nonetheless, despite its official endorsement, Rumba Urbana still introduced a disruptive element into the fiesta's soundscape. Its music contrasted with the accepted standards of beauty and tradition among seniors. The type of percussion-based music played by Rumba Urbana, inspired by a mostly unknown and foreign genre, is often dismissively described as "noise" by *vecinos*.

Even though *vecinos* have tended to play down or openly reject cultural expressions developed by the youth for the potential risks these may incite, the *tambores* of Rumba Urbana expressed a mounting political voice in the stadium. The invitation extended by the municipality was a move toward a more collaborative and solidaristic conception of the local society. By having Rumba Urbana perform in an event that was intended to display the true spirit of a VES fiesta—that is, a kaleidoscopic, intergenerational, and diverse celebration—organizers decided to open channels for more inclusive communication and mutual recognition among seemingly antagonist segments of the community. Through this means, and in real and metaphorical terms, Rumba Urbana and the youth whom it represented gained a seat in the public arena.

Desfile Escolar and the Presentation of the Youth

The third ensemble performing at IES was the school marching band I followed from Avenida Mariategui. After entering the building, the students

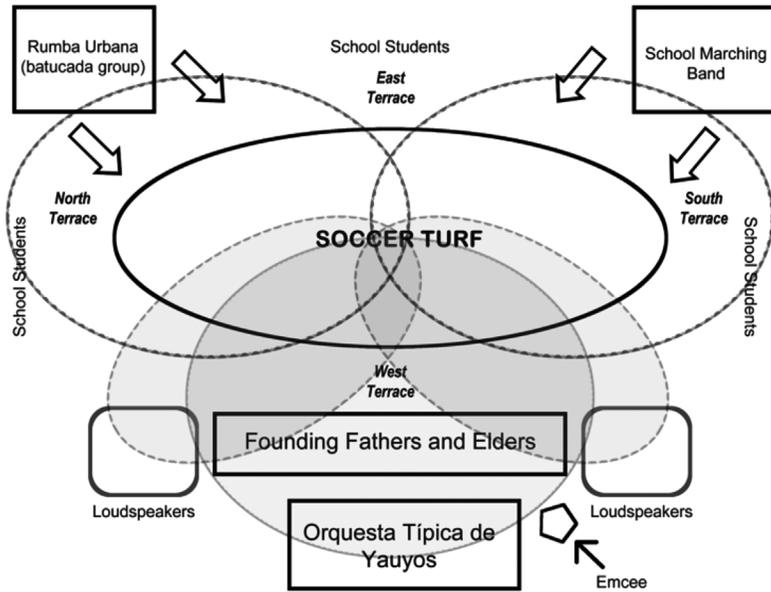


FIGURE 4. Mapping of the IES festival's soundscape. The ellipses and circles show fields of sound generated by performing ensembles and sound reinforcement. These fields spread and overlapped to create a thick texture.

kept marching and performing until reaching the south terrace. At that point, the marching band, the Rumba Urbana group, and the *orquesta típica* were performing simultaneously. They formed a triangular scheme of overlapping sounds that projected toward the center of the soccer field (see Figure 4). From the east terrace, students and teachers witnessed the event.

Michel Rojas is a local music teacher and activist who has worked extensively with young VES students, band directors, and other educators to address the need for forming capable musicians oriented toward community service in the area. He affirms that school marching bands are common in VES. These ensembles rehearse throughout the year with the purpose of achieving technical proficiency in order to be selected for the Gran Parada Militar (grand military parade) that takes place in metropolitan Lima on Independence Day (Michel Rojas, personal communication, July 2016). As a result of the lack of rehearsal spaces, marching bands usually practice in the streets and take advantage of any local festivity, such as the IES festival, to perform publicly. These performances are described in VES as *desfiles escolares* (school parades). Rojas points out that band directors base their orchestral arrangements and repertoire on existing *marchas*

militares (military marches). Nonetheless, since the early 2000s, marching bands maintained by leading VES public schools such as Colegio Daniel Alcides Carrión and Colegio Peruano Japonés focus their work on diversifying the repertoire. Directors want to incorporate pieces of national folklore to celebrate students' diverse heritage. Therefore, instead of merely performing *marchas militares*, *desfiles escolares* seek to develop a more "provincial sound" (Rojas) to appeal to the elders and to reflect the students' pride of belonging to a city that was built through the communal efforts of migrants. Thus, the IES *desfile escolar* served to highlight the presence of a new generation of soon-to-be *vecinos*. Building on CUAVES guidelines, the presence of the students signaled the municipality's intention of opening up a dialogic space for more inclusive communication, relying not on spoken words but on musicultural fields of performance (see Podhajcer 2015, 2011).

VES school marching bands constitute examples of the civic efforts being carried out to interrelate the elders' legacy and the rising political voice of an educated youth. At present, marching bands perform arrangements of *marineras*—a dance usually associated with the coast, which is nonetheless performed in the highlands as well—to root their work in notions of a common heritage. A consequence of this, Rojas adds, is that *marineras* are rhythmically constructed on a sesquialtera time that conflicts with the steady double time of the marching pace inherited from military music:

[School marching bands] utilize *marinera* in a daring way, because students attempt to march following a walking meter of 2/4 while establishing a two-dotted-quarter-note feeling with their instruments. In other words, they play music written in 6/8 while marching in 2/4. For me, this is an incredibly surprising way of pulling out your hair! (Personal communication, July 2016)

However, this rhythmic conundrum does not pose a problem for musicians. It is accepted as the fruit of an innovation with a practical purpose, namely, to reimagine the music of the founding fathers through the lens of younger generations.

VES school marching bands incorporate both standard Western instruments such as trumpets, clarinets, tubas, and snare drums and indigenous instruments such as *charango*, *bombo*, and *queñas*. During their performances, students are cheered by *vecinos* and local authorities, who see in these young musicians the promise of a better future. Their *desfiles* are lauded not only for their aesthetic value but also because the celebrations function as platforms for presenting the youth to adults and seniors. Marching and performing are physical activities that presuppose group

coordination, strength and stamina, creative thinking, and rigorous training. Seeing the students perform, with their impeccable uniforms and concentrated faces, generally provides *vecinos* with a sense of civic fulfillment. In many respects, and as native historian Edinson Ramos (2010) indicates in his historical account of VES, the view of an active youth inspires *vecinos* to keep observing the CUAVES precepts. Ramos affirms that *vecinos* expect the youth to grow into healthy adults in order to revitalize the cultural dynamism needed to endure as an eclectic society.

Ramos describes the founding fathers as people whose individual and collective identities were and still are shaped by the urgent demands of basic subsistence, demands around which all social, economic, and cultural institutions have emerged and developed throughout the district's forty-six years of existence. According to this view, Ramos (2010, 317–318) describes the youth as a sector embracing “the sons and daughters of the Peruvian provinces[, a progeny that have] become the radiant cells of Andean culture”; hence, Ramos sees the youth's ability to be in constant movement as its foremost potential:

When people invaded the area of Pamplona, and were subsequently removed from there and taken to the deserts of Lurín, hundreds and thousands of workers and unemployed migrants were relocated forcibly. It was a fight against the landlords and against the Government, who moved the migrants against their will in order to favor the guards of private property. . . . [Since that time,] the people of Villa El Salvador have never ceased to be in constant movement. (126)

Ramos's explanation conveys a survival-oriented worldview, that is, a type of collective attitude that arises commonly in “conditions of power imbalance and where perceptions of vulnerability and danger are present” (Danesh 2007, 34). While facing the material and emotional challenges posed by an existence in which uncertainty shapes everyday life and daily activities focus on finding solutions to satisfy basic needs or circumvent discriminatory policies, VES has opted to strengthen its capacity for developing fluid and kaleidoscopic identities. The “constant movement” discussed by Ramos seems in fact a strategy for continuous adaptation to tackle adverse conditions. In this sense, *desfiles escolares* have become reassuring events for the community. The presentation of a healthy and creative youth constitutes tangible proof of real accomplishments and the realization of the CUAVES dreams. *Desfiles* provide *vecinos* a reason to experience hope. While listening to and observing these performances, *vecinos* witness the synergetic presence of a new generation, the privileged sector on its way to entering the public arena to keep moving forward the mechanisms for cultural innovation.

In a *desfile escolar* celebrated in 2015 to commemorate the forty-fourth anniversary of the district's foundation, the Municipality of VES invited local public schools to feature their marching bands. This was a high-profile event presided over by Mayor Iñigo himself. As the proud emcee announced the arrival of the first band making its way down the road, the ensemble performed in strict formation, playing a *marinera* with eagerness. As it passed close to Iñigo, the emcee praised the students with a statement that evidenced the significance that *desfiles escolares* have for the community:

Brimming with pride, [our students] pay homage to the older generations that preceded us and who made possible for us, today, to live peacefully and free, enjoying the beauties of our own land, Villa El Salvador!

The presentation of the youth became here and at IES a reciprocal enactment of cultural pride, hope, and gratitude that informed intersubjective relations in local youth-adult partnerships. On the one hand, *vecinos* relish the view of their growing children performing traditional music with command and grace. On the other hand, students rehearse and polish their skills to perform folklore that evokes and reaffirms a migrant and diverse heritage. Thus, marching bands serve to present the youth as the keepers of social dynamism, as an acting elite with the potential ability to effect social change. The *desfile escolar* at IES enacted the explicit message of the CUAVES main dictate, that the youth be the sole privileged sector of society. When inviting the school marching band and hundreds of students to attend the celebrations at the stadium, the Municipality of VES aimed to comply with these commands.

Thick Texture

The IES festival featured a dramatic aggregation of dissimilar musical-cultural fields of performance. Musical interactions among the three discrete structures of sound provided by the *orquesta típica*, Rumba Urbana, and the marching band resulted in a unified overlapping texture. However, the production of this soundscape was not the outcome of preplanned orchestration but the sign of an ongoing process of social conflict and reconciliation. While performing, each ensemble maintained careful adherence to its own formal stylistic traits. Their respective fundamental structures were preserved, as were their distinctive instrumentations and presentational modalities. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Municipality of VES suggested the arrangement of a multiensemble performance. In short, the resulting texture was spontaneous and improvisatory. It evidenced the importance of the performance process itself as a mirror of

inclusive and participatory dialogue. The matching of pitch and rhythmic relationships within the juxtaposition was not a priority. For that reason, as the overlapping texture signaled a phase of civic unity, it also became a musical work per se, which subsumed the individual parts of each ensemble into an aggregate of contrapuntal musical voices.

Overlapping textures of this kind are also practiced in the Andes. Focusing on the music produced by panpipe ensembles in the southern Andean region of Puno, Turino has described a tendency among musicians to produce overlapping and conflicting fields of sound in which melodic intonation and accurate pitch matching are not primary concerns. He (1993, 55–56) defines this feature as a “dense sound quality” characterized by a “consistent overlapping and blending of discrete sounds” to produce thickly unified textures (see also Romero 2008, 444; Romero 1993, 55–56; Turino 1989). These fuzzy textures, which for some Western-educated listeners might sound harshly “out of tune,” are present in panpipe ensembles, in which the players’ goal is first and foremost to act as a unit rather than to intonate pitches according to a given tuning system. Turino (1993) adds that this boisterous type of texture is praised among musicians because it sponsors an “ethos of egalitarian relations” in which individual performance is less important than that of the group. Henry Stobart (2006, 193) makes a similar case when discussing the predilection for “cacophonous” textures among Bolivian musicians: “In many highland regions,” he writes, “large consorts of wind players join together to ‘play as one,’ sounding a shared melody in unison. . . . [This type of performance] becomes emblematic of the particular *ayllu*, moiety, hamlet or patrilocal group the ensemble represents.” Within this modality of performance that enacts iconic modes of solidarity, Stobart (2006, 193) adds, aesthetic priorities do not involve musical accuracy, especially because “individual voices blend rather than dominate [and] pitch discrepancies or differences in style are subsumed in preference for a dense texture or wide unison.” Yet even though solidarity is the igniting force behind the very fabric of dense textures, implicit in the dynamics of sound production are always balancing forces that express individual and collective struggles to maintain distinctive boundaries and differences. These conflicting expressions are impelled by broader ethical concerns regarding the reciprocal aspects of life and existence in the Andes and the implied quest for prestige and power among musicians. In the context of multiensemble performances, such conflicts of interest become discursive through the sonic tensions that emerge in the clashing of dissimilar frequencies and rhythms. In this regard, Andean fiestas usually become real “musical battlefields where [simultaneous] ensembles explicitly compete to dominate the soundscape, to capture symbolically powerful spaces,” and to gain prestige by expanding overpowering fields of sound that aim to conceal the music played by

other musicians and ensembles (Bigenho 2002, 178–179; Stobart 1988, 84–85). Taking into account the strategic use of a multiensemble performance to cue solidarity and the implicit generational conflict played out through clashing sonorities at IES, these descriptions of thick-texture scenarios are applicable to the VES soundscape. The use of thick textures at VES testifies to the community's reliance on kaleidoscopic modalities of performance, which embody social tensions and cultural clashes within an urban context.

Fractal Performance

The Andean fiesta sonorities constitute one among several influences in the practices and ethical concerns of VES expressive culture. For example, musicians and audiences who attended the stadium were part of an event in which ensembles competed to gain a prominent place in the soundscape. By presenting loud and compelling performances, the contending ensembles exhibited their determination to be heard over the others. For that purpose, they wished to conquer the auditory recognition of the participants. Yet the ensembles competed to achieve other goals as well. Their presence in the stadium and their willingness to perform all at the same time demonstrated that they were keen on defending CUAVES precepts of solidarity and egalitarianism. Playing together meant that the idiosyncratic and nuanced features at the core of their respective styles of music were subsumed and integrated into a fractal field of performance that, in a sense, blurred the musical identities of each group. Thus, this fractal field became an inclusive symbol of social unity and, ultimately, helped most attendees to also feel accepted and included despite their ethnic diversity.

Within the ritual frame of the fiesta, the *orquesta típica*, the Rumba Urbana ensemble, and the school marching band brought to the fore music traditions that were iconically perceived, by both the attendees and the Municipality of VES organizers, as distinctive political voices representing the ideals and aspirations of competing sectors of the society. The underlying confrontation between a civically conscious youth and *vecinos* who sought to bring peace to the district was played out through the dynamics of sound production, which materialized into a thick, multifaceted texture. An ethically correct resolution to this conflict was achieved through the rendition of a combined and loud stream of sounds that both reenergized and incorporated all listeners and performers in the field of performance. To put it in Stobart's (2006, 194) words, the type of "musical multiplicity" performed in the stadium "clearly express[ed] the excitement and activity critical to festive performance"; therefore, "[f]rom this perspective, cacophony might be seen to evoke a sense of unity and collectivity."

The fractal field of performance produced by the three ensembles was physically experienced by all attendees. Its fractality was shaped by the attendees' participation in "relations in which the whole and its parts [were] made similar, creating a relational world based on self-similarity" (Uzendoski 2010, 40). Such a description of fractal relationships should not be attributed only to certain highland or Amazonian cultures; because of their practical *modus operandi*, fractal relationships can also be attributed to the musicalized interactions that took place at IES. The boisterous soundscape exceeded the specificities of discrete stylistic traits to incorporate a larger, more encompassing sonic arena that was conducive to boundary crossing, protracted and transactional identities, and the acceptance of diverse ideologies. In a way, the ensembles acted as persons and groups of persons (e.g., youth, elders), while at the same time embodying their distinctive political voices. Through performance, they ritualized the conversion of self into other and vice versa so that affinity could be transformed into consubstantiality, leading to the temporary suspension of generational disagreements.

Following Kelley's conceptualization, the three ensembles acted as iconic parts and mirrors of a VES society momentarily unified. Building forms of extended polyphony and competing music heteroglossia (Bakhtin 1981), the ensembles behaved first as isolated and opposed parties. By means of the ritual dynamics of sound production, the parts became the whole, and self and other were reunited in sonic terms. These groups that were initially opposed, and the sectors of the society they represented, were restored to a condition of wholeness that respected the ethical parameters of CUAVES. Furthermore, consubstantiality was achieved by combining and loosely synchronizing sounds that served the purpose of opening up a "micro-geography of the moment," that is, a "field of interaction [that] became a channel, a fluid, a flux of voice and urgency, of play and drama, of mutuality and sharing" (Labelle 2011, xvii). In Jacques Attali's (1985, 45) words, the overlapping texture provided a communal organization strategy that functioned as a "cartography [of sounds that recorded] the simultaneous conflicting orders, from which a fluid structure [arose], never resolved, never pure." VES transactional identities were "sonified" (Von Glahn 2013) into mutuality to ease intergenerational conflict, resulting in cacophonous tensions between ensembles.

A VES Ethics of Sound

I propose that the VES proclivity to generate clashing soundscapes comes as a result of the communal organization practices in the district. These practices include a set of ethical commands that explicitly call for the

defense of egalitarianism. The founding fathers asked settlers and all future generations to devote their lives and work to the establishment of a new social order based on guidelines that formally sanction an ethics of collective work and solidarity. These ask *vecinos* to do the following:

- Promote the development of mutual aid and cooperation in different forms
- Invigorate the communal norms and values that are traditional to Peru to fortify the organization of the people
- Permanently contribute as a community to reach and consolidate a socialist, humanist, and solidaristic society
- Master the mechanisms of local self-government as a revolutionary expression of a social democracy defined by citizens' full participation (CUAVES 1973)

Through following, negotiating, or contesting these communal expectations and guiding principles, VES society articulates its political and creative endeavors. The organizational strategies promote a search for social innovation, the practice and mastery of economic mechanisms to ensure equality, and a valorization of togetherness, reciprocity, and political outspokenness as effective tools for material and cultural endurance. Thus, these values and attitudes have been progressively articulated and coded through joint modes of performance practices. An example of this way to articulate diversity through collective action is the emergence of the VES *pasacalle* movement I described earlier, which reimagines traditional rural rituals to foster social synergy in the local youth. Another example is the ethnography of the IES festival discussed here.

Consequently, the aesthetic thought that shaped the IES festival needs be approached as expressive of emergent VES identities that are fluid and transactional in their quest to forge strong communal bonds. Shaped not merely by a sense of diverse ethnic provenance but more precisely by tensions arising from intergenerational conflicts, VES identities are not conclusive and resist essentialist conceptualizations (Tucker 2013, 35; see also Tucker 2011, 388). Inhabitants have learned these strategies from the migratory process itself, experiential knowledge, and the navigation of Western-influenced urban cultures.

In this sense, VES encompasses an originally disarticulated community that, once established, was able to close ranks and devise modes of social articulation that fostered communal participation through self-government. The migratory experience, the ongoing adaptation to the environment, and the encounter with a disadvantaged social reality, plus the discovery of a host of urban expressive cultural forms, together provided

a multifaceted body of empirical knowledge. As anthropologist Michael Jackson (2013, 3) affirms in his study of global migration flows, “critical to these processes of capturing or commanding life [during migration and adaptation processes] is a capacity to move to where life appears to be most abundant and accessible, or to orient oneself so as to see what other possibilities may exist where one is.” Thus, both movement and migration may be seen as organizational modes of agency. When successful, these processes allow individuals to orient themselves toward the optimization of life and the expansion of fulfilling experiences.

Speech without Words: Kaleidoscopic Voices of Villa El Salvador

At the stadium, VES identities displayed their capacity to reinvent existing traditions and indigenous modes of performance that do not necessarily pertain to the production of a hybrid culture on the surface but that, moving perhaps at a more profound level, rely on local ethical concerns and a broader understanding of the meaning and function of music within contemporary societies that have been influenced by Andean cultures (Tucker 2013, 34–35). The fundamental issue at stake was the *vecinos*’ choice between either praising the youth and allowing them a political space, or silencing their voices outright. Ultimately, the tensions emerging from this conflict were expressed not discursively or with spoken words, but through sonic differences. This strategy, which integrates the debate of ethical or political ideals with the generation of novel processual modalities in the expressive arts, is found elsewhere. Depicting an analogous circumstance in a different cultural context, Barbara Hoffman has discussed processes of conflict and reconciliation carried out by Mande griots through novel modes of speech and sound production that break with cultural conventions. Hoffman (2000, 53) affirms that, in their role as social commentators, griots use music innovation to generate “social difference and the reinforcement of social boundaries through a repertoire of strategies for recreating old structures as well as for creating new ones.” Yet in another context, Denise Von Glahn has explored the use of music innovation, and more specifically thick overlapping textures, in the work of American composer Charles Ives. Focusing on Ives’s *From Hanover Square North* (1919), She affirms that Ives advocated for the primacy of human relationships over the preservation of aesthetic ideals, as he pursued a connection between the work’s particular dynamics of sound production and the egalitarian relations he attempted to convey. Von Glahn (1995, 266) describes Ives’s use of simultaneous ensembles and the resulting cacophony produced by dissimilar melodic or harmonic material and contrasting meters as a sonic depiction of the “multi-dimensionality of an urban environment

and its complex, fomenting energy.” Furthermore, the unified texture developed by Ives is a paradigm of social unity that pictures the “kaleidoscopic diversity of the urban place” and sounds out “the essential relatedness of strangers who underwent a powerful collective experience” (266). As explained earlier, even though the overlapping texture produced at IES was not preorchestrated, it nonetheless articulated the sensibilities and empirical body of knowledge that shapes VES society with the same kind of kaleidoscopic diversity that Von Glahn sees in Ives’s work. Without the use of spoken words, the voices of VES were made manifest through sound and performance modalities that celebrated the disparate yet interconnected aspects of its community. By revealing processes of conflict and reconciliation that are ordinarily hidden behind the moral commitment to solidarity, VES inhabitants were able to temporarily consolidate a unified sense of political agency.

Conclusion

Within the fluid structures of ritual performance, crisis can be seen as a stage in which conflict potentially becomes an energizing force that dissolves stagnation to ignite social innovation. The rise of a crisis situation is usually marked by the intensification of intragroup antagonism, which cannot be further addressed through standard institutions (Schechner 2002, 621). When a crack in the social fabric is imminent, the performance of ritual processes enables the parties involved to find alternative ways to vent their aspirations, frustrations, and ambitions. At IES, this crisis and ritual articulated through the dialogic counterpoint of a multiensemble performance involved a thick texture associated with a local ethos of reciprocity and solidarity. I have argued that, although through differing mediums, both highland societies and the community of VES used this kind of rituality. In both cases, however, thick textures and boisterous rising volumes teach audiences and musicians about the social benefits of giving up individual aspirations to pursue unified action.

Furthermore, understanding the events at the stadium as ritual performance and social drama articulated through the dynamics of sound production helps to “rethink cultural production and expression from a place other than the written word, which has dominated Latin American thought since the conquest” (Diana Taylor, quoted in Schechter 2013, 12). Thus, VES kaleidoscopic soundscapes cannot be explained simply as accidental phenomena. On the contrary, they respond to the need to articulate an empirical body of knowledge that escapes the sovereignty of the word as the accepted carrier of information. The VES multiensemble performance functioned as a speechless and dramatic reenactment that subverted

Lima's generalized notions of epistemic power based on the spoken or written word. This was the case especially when considering that "orality and literacy have come to function as a hegemonic register of signification for all semiotic activity in Latin America" (Acosta 2014, 73). Therefore, examining VES fractal modes of performance also carries a criticism of overvaluing the written or spoken word as the only means to communicate ethical values in indigenous cultures.

As I have shown, the body of empirical knowledge performed at the IES appears at the intersection of cultural innovation, Andean ethics, and Western-influenced ideas. Therefore, this knowledge may be described as expressive of an emerging neo-Andean thought rooted in socioeconomic forms of organization that favor unity within relentless innovation and multiplicity while not subscribing one-sidedly to a unified highland rural heritage (Montoya 2010; Zapata-Velasco 1997; Murra and Watchel 1986, 6). In relation to this last point, Montoya (2010, 13) argues that an analysis of the foundation and subsequent development of Villa El Salvador needs to be used as a vantage point to debate the present and future of Peru's Andean civilization in the context of a globalized world.¹⁰ He writes:

[Within both rural and urban Andean cultures,] education and the formation of successful citizens are processes articulated through a simple norm: one teaches by example, showing others how to properly carry out an action or defend a moral position. Spoken words are perceived as secondary accessories.

In VES thought, performance is a way to transmit knowledge, information, emotions, embodied histories. It emphasizes the role of bodily and sonic literacies in the context of the fiesta rituality. As seen herein, fiestas are scenarios in which cultural diversity, sameness, crisis, and divergence are ritualized and redressed, so that intergenerational and intercultural conflicts can be negotiated (Cervone 1998, 101). In a dramatic attempt to celebrate the thriving cultural scenario that Dante Abad commended in his 2015 speech, the differing fields of knowledge deployed by the three ensembles became a multifaceted fractal unit. This unity expressed modes of interrelationality framed by theories of self and other that pertain to the VES personhood as fractal and transactable. Relatedness was therefore carried out as musicians engaged one another via the diverse aesthetic constructions of their musical practices. In a performative context characterized by eclecticism, affinity and mutuality were sonified. Within the kaleidoscopic performance, the experience of metrical, harmonic, and aesthetic disparities as a sign of cohesiveness and beauty revealed the extent to which ethical priorities played a preponderant role in the VES community.

Notes

1. *La Republica*, "Chorrillos y VES tienen mayor índice de delincuencia en distritos de Lima Sur," August 31, 2015. <http://larepublica.pe/sociedad/700024-chorrillos-y-ves-tienen-mayor-indice-de-delincuencia-en-distritos-de-lima-sur>.
2. "Agentes de cambio: Espacios culturales en el Sur de Lima," *Conexión directa*, conexiondirecta.blog.wordpress.com, last modified November 29, 2016, <http://bit.ly/2roar5Y>.
3. "Agentes de cambio."
4. "*El Chango*": Antonio Aragón (Amigos de Villa, Villa El Salvador, Perú, n.d.), DVD.
5. "César Escuza, arte y compromiso, Teatro Vichama." RBC Television, filmed March 2012, YouTube video, 12:24, <https://youtu.be/rY7IRiblsrE>.
6. "César Escuza, arte y compromiso."
7. MUNIVES, "Misión. Visión," <http://www.munives.gob.pe/WebSite/Municipalidad.html>.
8. All the Spanish terms used in this section were introduced to me by VES *batucada* musicians themselves.
9. [Although the name of the municipality's employee was given to me by Jesús Peña, I keep her identity anonymous. I attempted to interview her and other employees in charge of the culture and sport programs without success.]
10. Quechua is a family of Amerindian languages spoken primarily in the Andes and the Amazonian region. By extension, the word *Quechua* is used by Montoya to designate diverse indigenous highland groups in Peru.

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